

GO! Seed the Nations - March 1986

His eyes blazed with fiery zeal as his words blasted through the last walls of my mental defences: 'You don't need a call to go. That's a command. You need a call to stay!' Duncan Campbell was no manipulating missions recruiter but a passionate revivalist whose Spirit filled life had been the instrument of God in bringing revival to the Hebrides of Scotland. 'Go! Go! Go! What right have you to stay'?' he cried out. That was 28 years ago. I was suddenly awakened from my religious stupor and have been going ever since. South America, North America, Africa, much of Europe and most parts of Britain - everywhere, men and women finding Christ and churches being established and strengthened. 'Go! Go! Go!' is still the command of Jesus to all Christians, not a special call to the few.

Our Generation Waits

Britain has been described by the international news media as a onetime great nation now embarked on the final twist in its continued downward spiral from a third- to a fourth-rate nation. Our politicians, bemoaning this prospect, point accusingly to the policies of the other party as the cause while assailing us with all kinds of fail-safe, quick-cure possible answers. Each party vainly claims the manifesto for greatness again. As God's people, we know that a nation's dilemma is not rooted in either the economic or the social evils of our time, such as unemployment, poverty, deprivation and bigotry, though undoubtedly there is too much of them all. These are merely symptoms of the sickness rather than its cause. The root is a spiritual problem. A nation is its people and people won't change until the way they think and feel does. That calls for a heart change. Christians hold the key to spiritual revolution in any land. That key is the dynamic power of God lived out through people scattered like seed across the nations. We must stop standing around waiting for some special call to reach our generation. 'Go!' is a command, not a special call.

Evangelise or Fossilise

The early church were a highly mobile people. Their living communities were constantly giving birth to new ones so that the people remained open at all times to moving forward. They bore little resemblance to the static, institutionalised Christianity of our time. They were the life and power of God fleshed out in men and women on the move. They didn't need urging to go. 'Go' for them was a command that motivated their lives with the destiny of God. This dynamic evangelistic surge of the early church should still be ours today. We should offer to pray for those in need at work, in homes and on the streets. We can share our faith vocally at every opportunity. We need to have outward-bound faith and feeling. Instead of simply praying for our own needs we should let our prayers focus on the lost people around us. Then we need to give feet and voice to our prayers. One young man recently said how a town was turned upside down when he arrived for the regular evening service at the local church and opened the meeting by closing with prayer! He then led the congregation out on

to the streets of the city and into its pubs, clubs and discos. Within three weeks the church had more new converts than the size of the original congregation. Something he said at the time lodged in my mind: 'Go is two thirds of the word God.' Corny? Yes. But very true. This man had caught God's heart.

Seed is Involved

From the beginning God planned for the ends of the earth to be his. He intended — and still intends — to rule. And his kingdom will encompass all people. His covenant agreement with Abraham included world blessings: 'In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed' (Genesis 22:18 NASB). This meant that Israel would never be able to lock God inside her ethnic boundaries, nor Judaism inside her legalistic religious traditions. People have tried for centuries to fit God into their narrow thinking, to imprison him in beliefs, practices, Bible interpretations, race, class and prejudices. God refuses to think or plan for anything smaller than the ends of the earth and all families of mankind. When the early church were in danger of becoming settlers, he provoked them into new pioneering progress by scattering them through persecution. 'A great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria' (Acts 8:1). God intended to bless all men through his seed sown across the nations of the earth.

Scattering Seed

When you examine the life of Jesus, from his birth in Bethlehem to his ascension from the Mount of Olives, you discover that it was not haphazard and disjointed but had a beautiful design to it. Yet at the time there was a spontaneity to his daily life, making the design all the more beautiful because it was not apparent. Paul's movements carried the same hallmarks of destiny. At times his missionary journeys were disrupted with imprisonments, cut short by persecutions and set back by shipwreck and other delays (1 Corinthians 11:24-28). But today when we look at the maps of those regions and see where he planted churches, we are amazed at the way circumstances apparently helped him reach his generation (see Philippians 1:12). It is very clear that God's wisdom directed the scattering of the seed purposefully in the early days of the church. 'Go!' was the command that merely focused the Christians' love into spontaneous actions to be directed by the invisible hand and mind of their king.

Going is Sowing

Jesus spoke two parables concerning sowers. One was about sowing the word of God and the resulting response of those who listen (Matthew 13:1-23). The other concerned sowing into a hostile world the sons of the kingdom - those who had submitted their lives to Jesus Christ as Lord (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43). Jesus explained to his disciples: 'The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom'(v37-38). Jesus saw his disciples as the ones who would bring in his kingdom and extend his rule and authority into their generation. By sending them out in the power of the

Holy Spirit, he was 'seeding' the world with living expressions of his life and power. Christians today are the extension of his days on earth: 'He will see his offspring and prolong his days' (Isaiah 53:10). In other words, Christians would be the continuing Christ in the earth. Sowing suggests the planned scattering of seed across the field of the world. In their going into all the world God was sowing his living Word. When we read of the believers being scattered by persecution, this was not with a view to the disintegration of the church but, in the purpose of God, to its multiplication. It was for growth, not collapse. God knew that the fastest way to bring his rule over the nations was to sow into the cities and towns where the people lived new communities of his children, scattered within the community of the world. These Christian families, joined together in common life and love, would quickly grow, multiply and reach their neighbourhood, friends and relatives with the good news. And so it proved to be. They were so filled with the life of God that they didn't need coaxing, urging, cajoling or pleading with to run an evangelistic outreach.

They were already thrilled with his rule in their life, excited about their God and so spontaneously 'gossiped the gospel'. What's more, they were fired with a sense of destiny. The command of Jesus to 'go and make disciples of all nations' (Matthew 28:19) had pushed them out into an alien society. They didn't sit around waiting for direction. They had it; they lived in it. Obeying his command, they intended to seed the nations in their generation with disciples of Jesus. Our own generation affords us unparalleled opportunities. Millions around the world are searching after God. The Christian church is growing faster than ever before. What is happening in your life and church? Are you standing on the sidelines watching the field of play, waiting for some mystical call to invite you into the action? Or has your spirit caught the sound of his voice commanding: 'Go! Go! Go!?' It's time to leap over the mental and religious obstacles to get where the action is. It's time to reach our world. Jesus Christ has given us everything necessary to achieve his objective. We can heal the sick, cast out demons, lead men and women to Christ. We can see them baptised and filled with the Holy Spirit. They can then become part of the same living community of going and growing Christians.

Going is Growing

If you're not going you're not growing. Our holy huddles and cosy cuddles must explode with the zeal of God. Our nice tidy services must welcome the disruption that accompanies newborn life. Go is a command, not a call. Christians everywhere need to be outward-bound in their thrust to reach this generation. We now have 100 or so young men and women in teams across Britain who have said: 'I'll go.' They have become our GO! Teams. They work in conjunction with local churches that have been pioneered during the last 10 years. These churches are themselves now planting new kingdom communities in other towns and cities. We're en route with others to seeding our nation. Already hundreds of people have been brought to Christ. The stories of lives changed and the demonstration of God's power fill us with excitement. Week after week we hear of the great things that are being accomplished as young men and women are going out to reach their own generation.

The New Testament days are with us now. We are the extension of the life of Jesus in our generation. We are God's tomorrow people in today's world. Back to the Future is not just a film — it's us, here and now, representing the new age of the future. Never has our generation in Britain been more ripe for the gospel of Jesus Christ. Ringing in our ears are the words: 'Go and make disciples of all.' People have become used to moving from one area to another in order to further their careers. It's time to display even greater readiness to move in obedience to his command to go and make disciples. Some reading this need to consider moving into forsaken inner city areas, neglected and dying northern cities and towns, and the overlooked rural districts of Britain. Your obedience enables God to sow the field of the world with his people. If you're wondering how to get started, write to me and I'll help you. It's time to advance the kingdom and cause hell to tremble. It's time to escape from the religious ghettos of the institutional mind and rise up in faith and power to go for God. 'You don't need a call to go. That's a command. You need a call to stay,' said Duncan Campbell. Let's seed our nations.

Let's do it together.

Let's go!