

# Pressing On!

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(Heb. 10:24)

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## Christmas and The Christ

Dave Hunt

Christmas as generally celebrated is one of many carry-overs from Roman Catholicism that survived the Reformation. Historian Will Durant reminds us that Roman Catholicism grew out of the merger between paganism and Christianity which took place under Constantine in the early 300s. Commenting upon the resulting "Christianization" of the Roman Empire, Durant wrote: "Paganism survived...in the form of ancient rites and customs, and was condoned... by an often indulgent Church... Statues of Isis and Horus were renamed Mary and Jesus...the Festival of Saturn in celebration of the winter solstice was replaced by Christmas celebration... Incense, lights, flowers, processions, vestments... which had pleased the people in older pagan cults were domesticated and cleansed in the Ritual of the Church..."

In spite of its pagan/Roman Catholic origins and crass commercialization, we can rejoice that Christmas annually brings a reminder of the Savior's birth. Unfortunately, however, Christmas festivities generally perpetuate the confusion concerning who Jesus Christ really is, why He came and what He accomplished. This is not surprising, considering the misunderstandings even among his own disciples at the first advent—and the far greater confusion which the Bible warns will precede his second coming. Indeed, the whole world - including millions of (so-called) "Christians" — will follow and worship the Antichrist, convinced that he is the true Christ.

Christmas celebrations remind us that the same misunderstandings which prevented so many from recognizing Christ, when He came to earth, will prevail when He returns. The causes of confusion, 1,900 years ago, remain the key issues today: What is the Messiah's true mission—and the nature of his kingdom? When and how will the Kingdom be established? Many "Christians" today are blind in the same way as those early "disciples" who turned from Christ because He didn't meet their false messianic expectations.

Even John the Baptist became so disillusioned that he demanded of Christ, "Are you the Coming One, or do we look for another?" (Mt. 11:3). Such doubts seem impossible for the one whom God had sent to "prepare the way of the Lord"! Already filled with the Holy Spirit as a six-month old embryo, John had leaped in the womb of his mother Elizabeth upon hearing the voice of the virgin Mary, who had just learned that she would give birth to the Son of God. Called and inspired of God to be the "forerunner of the Messiah", John testified, **"He who sent me to baptize... said to me, 'Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, this is He...' And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God"** (Jn. 1:33-34). Confident in that supernatural revelation, John boldly declared, **"Behold! The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"** (Jn. 1:29). Yet the day came when, in despair, he sent two disciples to ask Christ whether He really was the Messiah after all!

Although given supernatural revelation as to his identity, John totally misunderstood Christ's mission. Hadn't the prophets said that the Messiah would set up his kingdom and reign in Jerusalem? Then why was *he*, the herald of the Messiah, in prison? John did not understand that Christ had come to die for our sins so that both Jew and Gentile could go to heaven. Nor did he comprehend that there had to be a *Second Coming*.

So it was with the disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane. Amazed, they watched the One whom they thought had all power, as, seemingly powerless, He was arrested, bound and led away. Obviously Jesus of Nazareth couldn't be the Messiah after all! Dreams shattered, they fled for their lives. Likewise the two on the road to Emmaus: **"[they] crucified him. But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel!"** (Lk. 24:19-24).



His death, the very heart of the gospel, without which we have no life, convinced Christ's contemporaries that He could not possibly be the Messiah, the Savior of the world.

"If He is the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him" (Mt. 27:40-44), was the jeering taunt of the bloodthirsty mob and the religious leaders. "If you are the Christ, save yourself and us!" (Lk. 23:39), echoed one of the thieves hanging beside him. *Whom* He came to save, *from what, to what, and how* was clearly not understood at the time by anyone - not even by his closest disciples.

When Christ tried to explain that He must die for the sins of the world, Peter rebuked Him for being so "negative". Yet Peter, only moments before, had declared by revelation from the Father that Jesus was the Christ (Mt. 16:16-17). Obviously he didn't understand the Messiah's mission, even though he knew who He was. Christ's immediate retort to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan!" (Mt. 16:22-23), showed the importance of correcting such a gross misunderstanding of his mission.

So it was with those in Jerusalem (Jn. 2:23-25), who "believed in his name, when they saw the signs which He did". They believed He was the Messiah but had a false view of what that meant. "Jesus did not commit himself to them" because He knew what was in their hearts and that they would not believe the truth. We see the same error in those in John 6, who, because Christ had healed and fed them, wanted to "take him by force to make him king" (Jn. 6:15). There were many who called themselves his "disciples" (today they would be called "Christians"), who had a false view of the Messiah, and when He tried to explain the truth to them, would not hear it, but "went back and walked with him no more" (Jn. 6:66).

We learn from Christ how to handle the multitudes who want to follow him for the wrong reasons. Many came "forward" to tell Jesus they believed in him; they would follow him faithfully. Contrary to today's methods, Christ didn't have his disciples quickly sign up such persons as "church members" and get them involved, before they'd change their minds. "**Foxes have holes and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head**" (Mt. 8:20), Jesus told the eager would-be converts.

"So you want to follow me?" And his virtual answer would be: "Let me tell you where we're going. I'm heading for a hill outside Jerusalem, called Calvary, where they'll nail me to a cross. So, if you would be faithful to me to the end, you might as well make up your mind: Take up your cross right now, and follow me, because that's where we're going!"

Today we're far too sophisticated to present the gospel in such 'negative' terms. We've studied success-motivation, psychology and 'how to win friends and influence people'. So we fill the churches with multitudes who imagine that Christ's mission is to make them feel good about themselves by building up their self-esteem, answering their selfish prayers and fulfilling their self-centered agendas.

There are those who refuse to walk in the rejection of Christ, bearing the reproach of his cross, because that would be "defeatism". Some imagine we're in the millennial kingdom already - we're supposed to act like "King's kids". They think it is our task to establish that Kingdom through taking "dominion" over the media, educational institutions and political leadership. The "signs and wonders" promoters imagine they are in the process of taking dominion over all disease and even over death itself....

It is all very 'positive', and ecumenical. Be willing to work with Moonies and Mormons and all others who are in favor of

bringing traditional values back. And at Christmas time once again, we must be able to publicly display a cross or a crèche. In defense of such folly, Christian leaders stoutly defend the correctness of working with all those "who call Jesus Lord". Seemingly forgotten are Jesus' words: "Many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, have we not done many wonders in your name?' Then I will declare, 'I never knew you; depart from me...!'" (Mt. 7:22-23). There are multitudes, such as Mormons and Catholics, who call Jesus "Lord", but are not saved...!

Christmas, with its emphasis upon "baby Jesus", tends to perpetuate serious Catholic heresy: the pernicious myth of Christ's subservience to his mother which Roman Catholicism has deliberately promoted for centuries. Mary certainly should be called "blessed" as the mother of our Lord—but she is not "Co-Mediatrix" and "Co-Redemptrix" as Rome teaches. In Catholic 'sanctuaries' throughout the world, for example, one quickly notices that the paintings and sculptures give Mary the dominant role. *She* is even at times shown on the cross as our Redeemer. Jesus is either a helpless babe on his mother's breast, a small child between her knees, or a lifeless victim of the Cross in her arms. Never is she seen as subject to the Son of God. Rarely, if ever, is his resurrection depicted. *She* is the "Queen of Heaven" - Jesus, the child, is subject to her.

Typical is the 13th-century stained-glass window we recently observed in a church in France. At the top are the words *Le Purgatoire*, indicating that "purgatory" is depicted. Mary and Jesus are shown on a cloud, while the tormented souls in the flames of purgatory below them, extend their arms upward in supplication. Are they crying out to *Christ* for help? No, they are appealing to *Mary*. *She* wears the regal crown.

And Jesus, the Lord of Glory, who triumphed over Satan at the Cross and now sits at the right hand of the Father—how is He depicted? *As a child about seven years old*, standing between the "Queen of Heaven's" knees! No wonder the souls in "purgatory" do not appeal to him for help. At the bottom of the stained-glass depiction of this abomination are the words: *Mère Marie, sauvez nous!* ("Mother Mary, save us!")

Such heresy does not originate in the imaginations of the artists, but in the traditions and dogmas, promoted by the RC Church. The fear of purgatory is very real to a Catholic, and "Mary" has provided an escape for those faithful to her. She allegedly appeared to St. Simon Stock on July 16, 1251 and gave him what is known as "The Great Promise": "Whosoever dies wearing this Scapular [two pieces of brown cloth containing Mary's promise on one, her picture with "Baby Jesus" on the other, worn one in front, one in back, connected over the shoulder by two strings] shall not suffer eternal fire". Like the Mormon's magic underwear, the RC's scapular will supposedly accomplish what the death, burial and resurrection of Christ could not. In 1322, Pope John XXII received a further promise from "Mary" known as "The Sabbatine Privilege": "I, the Mother of Grace, shall descend on the Saturday after their death and whomsoever I shall find in Purgatory [having died wearing the scapular], I shall free." St. Simon Stock's famous prayer ends thus: "O Sweet Heart of Mary, be our *salvation!*"

Christmas offers a rare opportunity to share the true gospel of Jesus Christ, exposing the false it presents annually. Millions are seduced into thinking they are Christians because they have a sentimental feeling for "baby Jesus". Let us remember what Christ said to those who believed on Him: "If you abide in my word, you are my disciples indeed. And you shall know **the truth**, and **the truth** shall make you free" (Jn. 8:31-32). We *must* proclaim that **truth** in clarity and power.

*Adapted from The Berean Call.*





# God Needs Men and Women Who Stand UP, and so He Teaches Them to Kneel DOWN!

Jim vH.



Daniel and his many friends and cousins were young men of royal lineage, who lived in or around Jerusalem until Nebuchadnezzar, in 606 BC, deported them forcefully to Babylon. There they were made eunuchs and thoroughly groomed for service in the king's pagan and idolatrous court (Is. 39:5-7). In spite of the utter depravity of their own kings and the people of Israel, which brought upon them God's judgment, Daniel and three other young men stood out among their many companions: they served God with all their heart.

Twenty years before it happened, God had already told the prophet Habakkuk (in his first chapter) that the Chaldeans (Babylonians) were coming. It was a nightmare that Habakkuk just couldn't come to terms with, but then God's grace got him ready to face whatever it might be: "Indeed I am raising up the Chaldeans, a bitter and hasty nation which marches through the breadth of the earth, to possess dwelling places that are not theirs. They are terrible and dreadful..."

Habakkuk complained: "They take up all of [the nations] with a hook, they catch them in their net, and gather them in their dragnet. Therefore they rejoice and are glad... Shall they therefore empty their net, and continue to slay nations without pity?"

In chapter 2 God continues the conversation: "Though it tarries, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry. Behold the proud, his soul is not upright in him; but **the just shall live by his faith**. Woe to the Wicked. Indeed, because he transgresses by wine, he is a proud man, and he does not stay at home. Because he enlarges his desire as Sheol, and he is like death, and cannot be satisfied, he gathers to himself all nations and heaps up for himself all peoples."

Nebuchadnezzar was not yet king of Babylon, but God already knew him - what he was like and what he was going to be like: "Wicked and proud", and fond of wine, possibly an alcoholic. In sharp contrast, God also mentions "the just who live by faith". In the terrible times of the moral decline that was bringing on God's judgment, there still were a few 'just persons' in Israel. They stood out; **they lived by faith**. Habakkuk would be one of them, but though Daniel and his friends would still be children at this time, God certainly had his eye on them. Perhaps their mothers were home-schooling them in 'kneeology'...

There is no sign that these young men resented being 'punished' for the wickedness of others. They were not only God-conscious, they were God-fearers, and determined to do his will. We don't know at what point in their young lives they had begun to experience the love and the care and the faithfulness of the God of Abraham, but we find that they fully trusted him from the moment we meet

them in Daniel 1. In chapter 2 we discover that when they prayed, they weren't reciting perfunctory prayers. They simply were in touch with the throne of the Almighty - in awe they spoke to him. And God answered - wonderfully!

Then in chapter 3 Daniel's three friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego hit a snag - such a snag, it became their baptism of fire! Yet it only ever was a simple choice: "Are we kneeling down or are we standing up?"

From the story we learn that the immense statue, some 27 meters (90 feet) high, which the king had erected, represented his god (or gods). All peoples, nations, and languages of the empire, represented by their governors and administrators, were commanded to fall down and worship it. Daniel evidently wasn't there on this occasion, but the three friends, who were over the affairs of the province of Babylon, they had no choice: they couldn't avoid taking their places in the crowd.

When the music sounded, it was like a mega-enactment of the old children's game when they shout: "We all fall down..." In this case it was, all **minus three!** In the vast multitude three young men stood out like sore thumbs, their knees stiff as rods... They didn't have to do anything, or say anything, just to stand there was enough. A ripple of alarm and consternation must have gone right through the huge throng of worshipers. The king's attention was drawn to the fact that three Jews, high officials, were defying his express orders. It left King Nebu beside himself with fury, yet even so, he was willing to give them a second chance.

But no second chance was needed. Their reply to the king was: "**Let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up.**" Three times in the Old Testament Nebuchadnezzar and successors are called "*king of kings*". That is also the case with the Lord Jesus Christ in the New Testament; three times He is called "**King of kings**", but in his case the additional title of "**Lord of lords**" is added every time.

The three friends were directly facing the most powerful man on the face of the earth, the "king of kings" - their lives as a bit of dirt between his fingers, and he demanded to know: "*Who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?*" All this happened centuries before the New Testament, yet there was not a doubt on their part. They knew the One "**who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords**" (1 Ti. 6:15). Realizing full well that if they kept standing up for their God, and if He didn't intervene right then and there, the fiery furnace would be unavoidable. And... into the furnace they went!

If things hadn't exactly left them cold, what really matters is that they were resolute! The thrilling story of God's faithfulness to his servants then unfolds - it is about



his faithfulness to those who stand up for him! Their testimony was never marred by any compromise, they'd held their heads high from the beginning, and God saw to it that now, in the midst of the furnace, they could do the same: stand up, walk around unbound and hold their heads high. He, or his angel, looked after them right there, in the furnace!

There is more to this story than just the "standing up for the Lord of heaven and earth". We mustn't kid ourselves into considering this a wonderful case of human fortitude in the face of adversity. Far from it; these young men, right through the preceding chapters, are seen to be truly humble servants of the Most High. On the one hand, we see them being carefully trained and groomed by the men of Nebuchadnezzar. Yet at the same time we find that they were consciously 'enrolled' in a far more important school - they were learning the disciplines of 'kneeology'! When, in chapter two, their lives are in imminent danger, they know where to go. They take to their knees, bowing deep before the Lord of life and death.

That is what God honors, there and throughout the book. Even as the story of Daniel's long life starts to draw to a close in chapter 6, once again it seems to hang from a slender thread. For thirty days, all citizens of the empire, which is now Medo-Persian, are forbidden by law to petition any god or man, except the king himself. Any prayer or petition directed to someone else will be punished by immediate execution of the petitioner - he will be thrown to the lions.

Daniel knows that - for a while - his esteemed colleagues have been out to get him, like the "accuser of the brethren" in Revelation 12, always out to find grounds of accusation. However, his testimony in the world is blameless and they are stumped... Until they remember his "kneeology".

At this point we come to realize that the world around Daniel and his friends was fully aware that the strength, courage and testimony of these Jews had everything to do with their daily appointments with the Lord of heaven. So the attack centers on Daniel's knees: no more praying for one whole month! Of course, the enemy knows, as Daniel knows, that the new decree will not make the slightest difference to his prayer habits. And so they gloat - the "noose is practically around his neck"... Or should we say, their ears already catch the sound of bones being crushed?

***"When Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down... three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days."***

Daniel could have sat down, he could have closed the windows, he could have kept his voice down, but there was no going back on his time-honored custom. The emphasis is on his 'kneeling'! He continued to fully trust his Lord and to simply unburden his heart to him, 3x-a-day! Wouldn't his God take care of him?

And that is what happened. Kneeling down to God is a prophet's secret. Nebuchadnezzar saw the "standing up", but God saw the "kneeling down". It also is the Christian's secret! There has never been a Christian truly used by the Holy Spirit in testimony in this world, who has not been trained in 'kneeology', even if his 'theology' might not be quite up to scratch.

Satan saw both the standing up and the kneeling down. He realized that if he could not get at God's servants and witnesses in the matter of their bold "stand" for God, then he must get at them through their daily humble rendez-vous with the King of kings: all knees were to remain unbent!

Daniel and friends triumphed - their secret lay in their kneeling bodies (and kneeling hearts)! God was mightily glorified in these pagan empires through four of his servants who had discovered, and learned, that the secret of standing up to Satan is the kneeling down to God!

### **IT IS NO DIFFERENT TODAY!**

When Daniel was thrown to the lions, he was prime minister in the Medo-Persian Empire, which comprised both modern Iran and Iraq. Daniel's real successors in modern Iran, a staunchly Muslim nation, are not 'government ministers' like he was, but, like him, they are **God's ministers** - ordinary men and women, but God's beloved servants. The Gospel is spreading and the number of secret house meetings continues to multiply, with the number of Muslims, who experience the saving power of the Jewish Messiah, increasing ever more rapidly. The ayatollahs are getting very jittery and desperate. The death penalty has now been decreed for any Muslim who becomes a follower of Christ. It is hanging over the heads of thousands of young followers of the Lamb - there are prison sentences, there is torture. Through the years, many an imprisoned Christian has eventually been set free, mainly through foreign pressure, only to be assassinated in mysterious circumstances shortly afterwards.

The Islamic government uses radical Muslim groups to terrorize and threaten Christians. Nevertheless, the church is growing. One source said: "We praise God for the Islamic government in Iran because God has used it to strengthen the church. Before the fundamentalist Islamic revolution, most people were satisfied with economic prosperity and nominal Islam. At the time of the Shah there was religious freedom but churches were empty, or full of nominal Christians. The persecution has purified the church and now those who come are genuine."

Christians can't openly preach but they evangelize. "They are a people of relationships and what you teach must first be seen as your lifestyle. Sharing the Gospel is not just communicating your words but, in the first place, communicating your life. It is person-to-person!"



**'Kneeling down' to God in times of persecution  
Leads to 'Standing up' for Christ, even thru execution!**

# Get Going!

Howel Jones

## Lessons from 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy

This is one of four letters to individuals, sometimes called “pastoral letters”, written by Paul during his captive period in Rome. Like the others - 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy, Titus and Philemon - it is intended to encourage young leaders to exercise their ministry boldly within a hostile and contrary world, and in that way, continue Paul’s own ministry which is now coming to an end. He had also written from Rome to churches - Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians - but these letters to individuals are more personal and specific.

In 1 Timothy he issues a charge to the young, somewhat diffident, Timothy to fulfil the role that God has for him. That charge is: **“to teach and urge these things”**. There are three aspects to carrying out that challenge.

The first is the **context**. Timothy is called to exercise his ministry in a godless world. Paul provides a list of typical contemporary behaviors in society which include: lawlessness, disobedience, murder, sexual immorality, and anything that is contrary to sound doctrine. These - and their many variants - are typical of ordinary human behavior and represent the natural tendency for everyone - unbeliever and believer alike. It is reminiscent of his reminder in Ephesians 2, that “we all lived (among worldly people) fulfilling the passions of the flesh”, etc.

That is the context in which Timothy must minister. But it is not all dark, for

Paul himself, the blasphemer, was guilty of these very characteristic behaviors; yet he “received mercy”. Indeed, he affirms that **“Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.”** It worked for him: it will work for others. The gospel proclaims grace and forgiveness: it is a positive message. That is why Timothy can have confidence in it.

With that confidence in a gospel, pronounced **“the power of God unto salvation”**, the MOTIVE which should spur Timothy on is **“love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith”**. That will enable him to practise a stewardship from God that issues from faith.

Thirdly, in discharging his role in PRACTICE, he is to be concerned with teaching “how one ought to behave in the household of God.” That covers a number of practices. For example, prayer is to be made for all people and especially rulers and those in authority. There is a social dimension to this responsibility: to seek God’s help for the benefit of others. There is to be decorum in behavior and expression. Within the church, overseers are to be worthy and earn the respect of others; deacons are to be tried and tested. It is all epitomized in the concept of the “mystery of godliness”, as typified in the Lord Jesus: **“God manifest in the flesh”**.

It will not be an easy task. Some will depart from and reject all this; but Timothy is to continue and discharge his responsibilities, regardless.

And, in the light of the magnitude and significance of that responsibility, Timothy is to attend to his own needs and

obligations. For example, he is to be a good servant; he must not get entangled in worldly affairs or trivia; he must attend to discipline and training; he needs to know the Scriptures; he is to be circumspect in his dealing with others; he should be alert to warnings arising from the behavior of renegades. In short, he is to **“fight the good fight”** and to guard the deposit entrusted to him as a good steward.

### What can we learn from this letter?

The obvious one is that Timothy - as a believer and as a sensible leader - has a responsibility and obligation to exercise a ministry, albeit in a context of adversity and godlessness. In doing that, his motive is to be right, his discipline strong, and his diligence resolute, but with respect and sensitivity. In our roles we are not isolated or independent. We are the answer to the prayers and longings of others who have gone before. We are raised and placed in accordance with the providence of God. We are a part of the fulfilment of the purposes of God in this world: we too, have a ministry to fulfil. So we need to acknowledge that, and be faithful and responsible as good servants and stewards. It involves what we see, what we do and what we are. Or, as the hymn puts it: We are

**“Chosen to be soldiers in an alien land;  
chosen, called and faithful  
for our Captain’s band”**.

With that privilege and responsibility, our response should be:

**“In that service royal let us not grow cold.  
Let us be right loyal,  
noble, true and bold!”**



## Today

Amy Carmichael

O God, renew us in Thy love today,  
For our tomorrow we have not a care,  
Who blessed our yesterday  
Will meet us there.

But our today is all athirst for Thee,  
Come in the stillness, O Thou heavenly Dew,  
Come Thou to us - to me -  
**Revive, renew!**



## The Three ‘Let Us’-es of Hebrews 10

<sup>19</sup> **Therefore, brethren**, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, <sup>20</sup> by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, <sup>21</sup> and having a High Priest over the house of God, <sup>22</sup> **let us draw near** with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. <sup>23</sup> **Let us hold fast** the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. <sup>24</sup> And **let us consider** one another in order to stir up love and good works, <sup>25</sup> not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching!





# Catching the Missionary Spirit

Nathan Busenitz

The “missionary spirit” is utterly contagious!

Even just one life burning brightly for the gospel can ignite the hearts of hundreds of others for generations to come. What a powerful thing it is to contemplate that reality in the history of missionary work! Consider, for example, the following chain of gospel influence:

1. **John Elliott** (1604–90) was a Puritan settler in New England who began evangelizing the native Americans. Known as the “apostle to the Indians”, he translated the Bible into their native language, helped to establish churches, and sparked a missionary zeal among Christian settlers in the ‘New World’.
2. That missionary spirit inspired men like **David Brainerd** (1718–47) to similarly devote their life to reaching native American Indians with the good news of the gospel.
3. Though Brainerd died at only 29 years of age, his friend **Jonathan Edwards** (1703–58) was so impressed by the young missionary’s passion that he edited Brainerd’s diary and published it. Edwards himself would later work as a missionary to the native American Indians of Stockbridge, Massachusetts.
4. In 1785, an English cobbler, named **William Carey** (1761–1834), read a copy of “*An Account of the Life of the Late David Brainerd*” by Jonathan Edwards. The book had a profound impact on Carey’s thinking, igniting a passion in his heart to take the gospel to India. William Carey left for India in 1793 and the modern missions movement was born.
5. In 1802, a British preacher, named **Charles Simeon** (1759–1836), was speaking about the good that William Carey was doing in India. Upon hearing that message, a young man in the congregation, named **Henry Martyn** (1781–1812), determined that he too would go to India, rather than going to law school.
6. Martyn died young. Yet his memoirs influenced many in England. In particular, his biography had a significant impact on **Anthony Norris Groves** (1795–1853), who is considered by some to be the “father of faith missions”. (Groves was a missionary to what is now Iraq, and later to India). In his own memoirs, Groves writes: “I have today finished reading, for the second time, Martyn’s Memoir. How my soul admires and loves his zeal, self-denial and devotion; how brilliant, how transient his career; what spiritual and mental power amidst bodily weakness and disease! O, may I be encouraged by his example to press on to a higher mark”.
7. In 1825, Groves published a booklet entitled “*Christian Devotedness*”, in which he encouraged Christians to live frugally, trust God for their needs, and devote the bulk of their income to evangelistic efforts around the world. That booklet had a major impact on the thinking of men like **Robert C Chapman** (1803–1902), **George Müller** (1805–98), and **James Hudson Taylor** (1832–1905)—significantly shaping the way they thought about missions.
8. **Hudson Taylor** was the first modern missionary to penetrate the interior of China. He established the ‘China

Inland Mission’ and recruited hundreds of missionaries to join in evangelistic efforts there. At one point, Taylor returned to England where he urged Christian young people to join him in China. A famous Cambridge cricket player, named **CT Studd** (1860–1931), was among those profoundly affected by Taylor’s preaching. Studd left behind a life of leisure to serve Christ overseas. Six other students joined Studd and together they became known as “The Cambridge Seven”.

9. The publicity garnered by CT Studd and “The Cambridge Seven” in England—especially in British universities—influenced the beginnings of the **Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions** (1886) in North America. Under the leadership of men like **DL Moody** (1837–99) and **Arthur T Pierson** (1837–1911) (author of George Müller’s biography), hundreds of American students would commit themselves to foreign missionary work.

10. The testimony of Hudson Taylor was also particularly influential in the lives of later missionaries, like **Amy Carmichael** (1867–1951), **Eric Liddell** (1902–45), and **Jim Elliot** (1927–56).

Speaking of that impact, Elizabeth Elliot - Jim’s widow - explained: “When I was a college student, my father lent me the two-volume ‘Life of Hudson Taylor’. Another college student, Jim Elliot, read it too and this was one of the great things he and I had in common—a huge hunger for that sort of godliness, for a true missionary heart”.

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As this brief history demonstrates, ‘missions’ is contagious. From **John Elliott** to **Jim Elliot**, a perceptible chain of influence and gospel faithfulness can be traced from one fervent missionary to the next. From David Brainerd to Jonathan Edwards to William Carey to Henry Martyn to Anthony N Groves to Hudson Taylor to CT Studd, Jim Elliot, and others.

Interestingly, this particular chain brings us full circle—from the Americas around the globe and back again. John Elliott took the gospel to the native American Indians of New England. Three centuries later, Jim Elliot took the gospel to the native American Indians of Ecuador.

Some of the missionaries listed above only lived a short time. David Brainerd was 29 years old when he died. Henry Martyn was only 31. Jim Elliot was 28, when he and his four friends were murdered in the Amazon jungle. Yet, the impact of their lives extends far beyond their short tenure on this earth. Their self-sacrifice inspired thousands of others to give their lives for the sake of the gospel. It is pretty amazing to consider.

Of course, this is only one small thread in the great tapestry that God has woven throughout the centuries. (There are many other connections, links, and influences that could have been traced.) Yet, it illustrates a profound lesson in a vivid way:

***Never underestimate the power for influence of a life fully invested in serving the Lord Jesus. Sacrificial faithfulness to Christ in one generation reverberates for many generations to follow!***



Dear reader,

We think and we hope that you will enjoy this latest issue of **PRESSING ON!** Like every other true Christian, you're in the "race", in the spiritual one. And you know that after a while it's easy to start dragging your feet, lose sight of the "finishing line", get side-tracked, faint, even turn back. **Pressing On!** is here to inform you, to encourage you and to challenge you about **counting on God's grace for all of the race...**

As Philippians 3 informs us, there's the **goal** and there's the **prize** that are set before us, but then Hebrews 10 tells us that the "**considering**", the "**stirring up**", the "**exhorting**" are the things **all** of us are involved in: "**Let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching**". It will be obvious to you that the 'considering, stirring up and exhorting' have everything to do with the "assembling". Jesus says that two or three in his name are sufficient for him to be very much present in the midst of them with all that He has to offer. It is absolutely basic for fruitful encouragement and challenge, that you and I plus other 'runners in the race' do so very humbly around HIM, looking to HIM and his open word. You too can be wonderfully used for your fellow "athletes". **Pressing On!** prepares and encourages the encouragers, and can prove to be a very worthwhile tool in your hands...

Picture yourself traveling round the planet, say from Canada, to Croatia, to Cameroon, to the Comoros, to Cambodia, to the Cook Islands, to Colombia or to Cuba. In every one of these countries you'll find true Christians. You may find some big groups, meeting in churches, and you'll find there are small groups, meeting in homes or wherever, even in prisons, but as you get to know them, you'll also find that among them a high percentage are feeling the effects of Satan's 3-D strategy - **Discouragement, Depression, or outright Defeat** - Christian "athletes" falling, or fallen, by the wayside. The crown laid up for them (2 Tim. 4:8) is receding and could be taken from them (Rev. 3:11).

*Discouraged  
Depressed  
Defeated*



Not in every country can such folks read English. In many of the 75 countries to which we send **Pressing On!**, English is not even the second language. However, there usually are individual Christians who know sufficient English to grasp the message. And some of these are receiving up to 30 or 40 copies for regular distribution.

We are fully persuaded that you too can become a most valuable encourager of the brethren! And we want you to plainly realize that **PRESSING ON!** is entirely at your disposal to help you, in other words, free of charge!

**Please, consider the form below, pray over it, then fill out what applies and send it to us:**

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  2. Once printed and filled out, scan and email the form to: **presson@telefonica.net**

**"And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward"** - Mt. 10:42.