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HOW MANY LOAVES HAVE YOU?

Matthew 9:36-38; 15:32-38.

Some people tell me that the greatest challenge facing the church today is right here in the United States. And they may be right. This is the only world class power left. And to try to determine what part the American churches should play toward the right use of that power is an awesome challenge. Others say, that the greatest challenge is the 20th century rise of Islam. And perhaps they are right. Muslim countries are the most difficult in the world to penetrate with the Christian gospel. And what if militant Islam begins to move west again as it did 500 years ago? ^{or some to be ans.} That would be a world-class disaster. [^]

But I have a different challenge to suggest. I think our greatest challenge in the 21st century will be Asia. The whole continent. And let me begin not with world politics, but with the Bible.

I have two texts this morning, two incidents in the life of Jesus as described by Matthew: ^{one in} chapter 9:36-38, and ^{one in the bible} 15:32-34. [^]

"And seeing the multitudes [Jesus] had compassion for them... He said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.'"

"Then Jesus called his disciples and said, 'I have compassion on the crowd,..they have been with me three days and have nothing to eat...And the disciples said "Where are we to get bread enough in the desert to feed so great a crowd. And Jesus said, "How many loaves have you?"'

In those two scenes I find my missionary challenge for the church for the next two hundred years, and it doesn't even mention money, at least not yet.

I. The great missionary challenge of Jesus to his church begins with love, not money, with compassion not with programs. And begins at home, not at the other end of the world. Jesus and his disciples were just across the lake from their homes in Galilee, when they were surrounded by the multitudes that day. Jesus saw how tired and hungry the crowd was, and he wanted to help them. Mission begins with compassionate love in your own neighborhood, or you'll never get around to the greater needs of the neighbors beyond your neighbors. Which brings me to Asia.

Where are the largest, the poorest, the hungriest crowds in the world today? Not in Los Angeles or Seattle. Not even in New York. In another 30 years, I am told, Bombay, India will have more of an absolutely poor and hungry population than all the people in all five of New York city's boroughs combined. Asia has more people than any other continent on this earth. Here in North America we have 6% of the people in the world. Asia has 60%. That's more than half of the world's population.

And Asia's multitudes of the poor and hungry are increasing every year. Take the city of Seoul. Seoul is the sixth or seventh largest city in the world, about 12 million people. But when my father arrived there 106 years ago in 1890, Seoul had only about 150,000 people. There

were tigers in its hills in those days; today the hills are covered with high-rise apartments. From 150,000 to 12 million, from tigers to skyscrapers in only two generations, my father's and mine. That's Asia.

All the other continents shrink in comparison. Asia's second largest country is India -- only the second largest, ~~not the largest country in Asia~~ which is China. But until recently even its ^{Asia's} second largest country, India, had more people than the entire population of the two whole continents of Latin America and Africa combined! And out of every ¹⁰⁰ 15 babies born in Asia, 15 will die before they are five years old.

A year ago January Eileen and I were able to break through the barriers ^{which make} into North Korea, the most isolated nation in the whole world. ^{We may be able to say a little more about that at noon today.} ~~And of the hunger and starvation there, Eileen and I may be able to say a little at noon today.~~

But now, all ^{the misery} ~~iw~~ want to say is that I wonder if Jesus who ^{Asia's multitudes, masses} knows all about ~~Asia's hungry, unreached, oppressed multitudes~~, is not saying to us here in comparatively wealthy, healthy America, "Don't you ^{the multitudes} love them any more?"

"The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few".

II. The next few sentences in our text, however, are a disturbing surprise. When Jesus saw the multitudes, and was filled with compassion for all those hungry, tired people, what did ^{he} ~~Jesus~~ do about it? Look at the text. He said, "Pray". "Pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest." I suppose to most people, even to some Presbyterians, that sounds like a cop-out. "I'm so sorry for

→ Most of the world's hungry, poor, sick multitudes are in Asia

There's all that need but so few who want help

them. Let us pray." Why didn't he get busy and find them food? Or start a protest march on city hall. He didn't even tell his disciples to go and preach to them, to start a revival. He told them to pray! *what a let-down.*

But in Korea, Korean Presbyterians, who take the Bible very seriously, don't think that prayer is ever a cop-out. Last May, in Seoul, when I preached in one church the pastor told me that every day of the week except Sunday his church holds a daybreak prayer meeting. That didn't surprise me. Most churches in Korea do the same. But he said in his church they have to have two daybreak prayer meetings, because 5,000 people come to the 4 a.m. meeting, and 5,000 more come to the 5 a.m. meeting. Perhaps that is why his Presbyterian church has 30,000 members in ^{that} his one congregation, and is still growing. And perhaps that is why Korean Christians have more foreign missionaries than our American Presbyterian churches do. What his people pray for is not for more members; they pray for Asia and for all the ^{untold} multitudes on that continent who still do not know the Lord Jesus Christ. Effective Christian mission begins with prayer.

Some years ago, one of our Presbyterian missionaries
 In 1913 an American missionary, Mrs. Lockett, *was about to set out* ~~the first~~
~~about to set out with a Korean "Bible women" Education churches send lay men + lay women out from villages, churches to~~
~~unreached villages for evangelism - and the missionaries often go with them. But the Bible woman late. When~~
 dorm-matron at PYFS, spoke to a Korean Bible woman who was
 delaying her trip to country villages for evangelistic work much longer
she finally arrived,
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I was praying.
 late, The answer was: "It does no good to go out without prayer".

Nothing in the Christian life has anything like the power of prayer to vitalize the missionary outreach of the Church. It's the power that

motivates ^{the} senders and sends the missionaries. Jesus said, "Love ~~and pray~~ ^Λ ~~--even for your enemies.~~"

"The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

III. GIVE. The third step in Jesus' response to the challenge of human need shifts the action to his disciples. The command to pray was part of the shift. Now he carries them a step farther. He tells them to give. This is also implied in our text, but is made even clearer a few chapters later in Matthew's account (Matt. 15:32-38) of Jesus and another crowd. It's the story of the feeding of the four thousand. Jesus again is filled with love and pity for the poor. "They've been here three days, and they're hungry," says Jesus to his disciples. They ^{do} shrug their shoulders. "There's no food out here", they tell him. But this time, instead of telling them to pray, Jesus puts them on the spot. "How much food do you have?" "Oh, not enough for this many people" they say quickly. "How much?" says Jesus. "Well, seven loaves and two fishes," they say. And Jesus says, "That's enough. Give them to me." And we all remember what happened. Jesus took the "not enough", and made it ["]enough. They not only fed the four thousand; they had seven baskets full left over. It was a basic lesson in ^{the power} ~~mission~~ stewardship. Give what you can, and with God, that is enough.

But it is a hard lesson to learn, and I think our Korean Presbyterian brothers and sisters have learned it better than we. When

Eileen and I were stationed for three years out in the hill country in Korea, we used to watch how the farmers and country people came ⁱⁿ to their little churches. They would take off their shoes as they entered the bare sanctuary. NO pews. They sat on the floor, men on one side, women on the other. But as they came in the women, most of them, were carrying a little white cloth bag. And before they sat down they would go over to the side wall where little wooden pegs had been placed around the room. First they would hang up the little bag on the peg marked with the family's name. Those were their collection bags, holding uncooked rice. In those days, just after the Korea War, times were hard. [^] They had no money for the offering. So every day, at each meal, the wife as she prepared the rice, would take one spoonful out of every ten, and place it in the bag for the church. Korean Presbyterians tithe. They faithfully give back to the Lord one-tenth of what ^{God} has blessed them with through the hard times. No wonder their churches grow. *Here's how*

they grew. Presbyterianism started in Switzerland with John Calvin, but the four largest Presbyterian congregations in the world are not in Switzerland They are in Seoul Korea.

Methodism started in England with John Wesley, but the three largest Methodist congregations in the world are not in England. They are in Seoul, Korea.

Pentecostalism in its modern form started in Southern California, but the largest Pentecostal church in the world is not in Southern California. It is in Seoul, Korea.

~~How is that Korea has such large churches, and probably the~~ ^{WHY DOES KOREA HAVE} fastest growing number of Christians in the world. There are more Presbyterians in Korea than in the United States. One of the reasons,

surely, is that they believe in missions - Christian mission. They believe what they preach: that Jesus saves. That Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and our only Saviour, and that when Jesus said "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel" - he was speaking not only to his then disciples - he was speaking to us who follow Him today.

surely is that they send out more foreign missionaries than we do here in rich America. ³¹⁵ The more missionaries they send outside Korea, the faster their own Korean churches grow at home. For Korean Presbyterians will tell you that the greatest gift they can give to others is not money, not rice, but the gift of faith and hope which they themselves received from missionaries, and which they now want to pass on to the hungry and the poor, the helpless and the depressed, the unreached and the unsaved on their own continent of Asia, and then on around the world.

Now I know that some think Asia already has enough religion. All ^{five} six of the world's ^{NON-CHRISTIAN} great religions were born in Asia: --Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Islam, Judaism--and some say well, they already have their religions, why try to bring them another, Christianity. Try to tell that to Asia's Christians. They've already tried ^{old} the old religions and found them wanting. ^{They're} Not the story book religions we Americans study in our college classes on the "great Eastern religions", but those same religions as they are actually practiced in the villages, in the shrines, in the streets. Close-up those religions don't look so good. Hinduism, for example, is held up to us as a very kind and tolerant religion. It believes that all roads lead to heaven. ^{HINDUISM'S} But ^{actually,} its greatest curse is its intolerance. ~~It isn't a missionary religion.~~ It tolerantly says that all the religions lead to God. Some find God in Christ, they say; we find him in our god, Krishna. ^{which all & very} That sounds nice. Heaven for everyone. But ^{in practice it has made} India ^{a hell on earth for} is ~~no heaven to~~ the millions upon millions of untouchables, the

outcasts who are considered so unclean that they were not even allowed in Hindu temples. The leader of the "outcasts", Dr. Ambedkar, some years ago shouted angrily against the age-old Indian injustices of the Hindu caste system. "Hinduism is not a religion; it is a disease", he cried.

~~In actual Hindu mythology, Krishna is a killer god. It is Jesus who loves and who saves. And~~ Jesus said very clearly, "No one comes to the Father, but by me." Jesu, who loved the multitudes, who told his disciples to pray to God, the Lord of the harvest to send laborers to reap the harvest, who told his disciples to give from what they had to feed the poor--this is the same Jesus who said that He (not Krishna) is the way and the truth and the life." That is why the third world Christians themselves are sending missionaries to Asia and around the world. They consider themselves to be stewards for God not only of their possessions, of the God;s gift to them of the good news of Jesus Christ, and they want to share it with the world. The day of the missionary is not over.

Hinduism is from Asia, and there are more Hindus in Asia than anywhere else in the world.

Buddha was born in Asia, and there are more Buddhists in Asia than anywhere else in the world.

Confucius was born in Asia and there are more Confucianists in Asia than anywhere else in the world.

Muhammad was born in Asia, and there are more Mohammedans in Asia than anywhere else in the world.

So also the Lord Jesus Christ was born in Asia. But are there more Christians in Asia than anywhere else in the world?

No! The sad fact is that Asia is numerically the least Christian continent in the world. Only 7 Asians out of 100 know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. That is the greatest challenge facing the Christian church today, the old, old challenge of Jesus and the multitudes. The Korean church seems to ^{know that} believe better than we. Every year the number of foreign missionaries the mainline churches send out seems to get smaller and smaller. But in Korea, the Protestant churches 20 years ago had only about 300 foreign missionaries at work abroad. Today the number is 4,000!

A couple of years ago a church in Seoul asked us to fly down from Princeton to Chile for the groundbreaking for a new Christian hospital. We had never even heard the name of the church, it was a fairly new church, not one of the largest Presbyterian churches in Seoul--only about 3000 members. But when they celebrated their 25th anniversary, they said to themselves, we mustn't just celebrate for ourselves, we must do something for missions. But where? Well, they said, the Lord said "the uttermost parts of the earth". Where are the uttermost parts for us? So they asked for a globe map of the world. And they put a pin in Seoul Korea. Then they took a piece of string and stretched it around the globe ^{to find} for the farthest point away from Korea. It turned out to be Chile. So they said, "We'll start a mission in Chile." ^{Then} ~~But~~ they soon found out that there were already Korean Presbyterian missionaries in Chile. "Well, let's build a Christian hospital, with missionary doctors, in Korea. That's what the first missionaries did for

us here in Korea. So they did. They found it would cost them 4 million dollars. Well that didn't stop them. They raised it and built a hospital for the Mapuche Indians, the largest Indian tribal group in Chile. *And what*

"Seeing the multitudes, Jesus had compassion on them..." He said to his disciples. "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Pray therefore the Lord of the harvest that he will send out laborers to the harvest"

We Americans have more money, more "loaves and fishes" than those Korean Presbyterians. Don't we love the multitudes any more?

[Love, and Pray, and Give (that makes you a sender), and then some of you may even be able to hear him say, "Go".]

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In those two scenes I find my challenge for stewardship for this your stewardship month, and it doesn't even mention money.

I. Stewardship begins with compassion, not money. And it

begins at home, not at the other end of the world. Jesus and his disciples were just across the lake from their homes in Galilee, ^{when} Jesus saw the hungry multitudes and ~~he~~ wanted to help them. Stewardship begins with compassionate love in your own neighborhood, or you'll never get around to the greater needs of the neighbors beyond your neighbors. Which brings me to Asia.

Where are the largest, the poorest, the hungriest crowds in the world today? Not in Stamford. Not even in New York. In another 30 years, I am told, Bombay, India will have more of an absolutely poor and hungry population than all the people in all five of New York city's five boroughs combined. Asia has more people than any other continent on this earth. Here in North America we have 6% of the people in the world. Asia has 60% That's more than half of the world's population.

And Asia's multitudes of the poor and hungry are increasing every year. Take the city of Seoul. Seoul is the sixth or seventh largest city in the world, about 12 million people. But when my father arrived there 106 years ago in 1890, Seoul had only about 150,000 people. There were tigers in its hills in those days; today the hills are covered with high-rise apartments. From 150,000 to 12 million, from tigers to skyscrapers in only two generations, my father's and mine. That's Asia.

All the other continents shrink in comparison. Asia's second largest country is India -- only the second largest, not the largest country in Asia which is China. But until recently even its second largest country, India, had more people than the entire population of the two

whole continents of Latin America and Africa combined! And out of every 15 babies born in Asia, 15 will die before they are five years old.

I wonder if Jesus seeing Asia's unreached, oppressed multitudes, is not saying to us here in comparatively wealthy, healthy America, "Don't you love them any more?"

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II. But the next few sentences in our text are a disturbing surprise. When Jesus saw the multitudes, and was filled with compassion for all those hungry, tired people, what did Jesus do about it? Look at the text. He said, "Pray". "Pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest." I suppose to most people, even to some Presbyterians, that sounds like a cop-out. "I'm so sorry for them. Let us pray." Why didn't he get busy and find them food? Or start a protest march on city hall. He didn't even tell his disciples to go and preach to them, to start a revival. He told them to pray! *A cop-out.*

But in Korea, Korean Presbyterians, who take the Bible very seriously, don't think that prayer is ever a cop-out. Last May, in Seoul, when I preached in one church the pastor told me that every day of the week except Sunday his church holds a daybreak prayer meeting. That didn't surprise me. Most churches in Korea do the same. But he said in his church they have to have two daybreak prayer meetings, because 5,000 people come to the 4 a.m. meeting, and 5,000 more come to the 5 a.m. meeting. Perhaps that is why his Presbyterian church has 30,000 members in his one congregation, and is still growing. And perhaps that

is why Korean Christians have more foreign missionaries than our American Presbyterian churches do. What his people pray for is not for ^{numbers, more} more members; they pray for Asia and for all the multitudes on that continent who still do not know the Lord Jesus Christ. Effective Christian mission begins with prayer.

In 1913 an American missionary, Mrs. Luckett, the first dorm matron at PYFS, spoke to a Korean Bible woman who was delaying her trip to country villages for evangelistic work much longer than the missionary expected. When Mrs. Luckett asked her why, the answer was: "It does no good to go out without prayer". Nothing in the Christian life has anything like the power of prayer to vitalize the missionary outreach of the Church. It's the power that motivates senders and sends the missionaries. Jesus said, "Love and pray"--~~even for your enemies.~~

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III. GIVE. The third step in Jesus' response to the challenge of human need ^{is Give. Love, Pray, Give - and that third step is important. It} shifts the action to his disciples. The command to pray was part of the shift. Now he carries them a step farther. He tells them to give. This is also implied in our text, but is made even clearer a few chapters later in Matthew's account (Matt. 15:32-38) of Jesus and another crowd. It's the story of the feeding of the four thousand. Jesus again is filled with love and pity for the poor. "They've been here three

- add - To Christ hands in prayer is the beginning of an opposing against the border of the world - 14. Barth

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But it is a hard lesson to learn, and I think our Korean Presbyterian brothers and sisters have learned it better than we. When Eileen and I were stationed for three years out in the hill country in Korea, we used to watch how the farmers and country people came to their little churches. They would take off their shoes as they entered the bare sanctuary. NO pews. They sat on the floor, men on one side, women on the other. But as they came in the women, most of them, were carrying a little white cloth bag. And before they sat down they would go over to the side wall where little wooden pegs had been placed around the room. First they would hang up the little bag on the peg marked with the family's name. Those were their collection bags, holding uncooked rice. In those days, just after the Korea War, times were hard. They had no money for the offering. So every day, at each meal, the wife as she prepared the rice, would take one spoonful out of

disciples to pray to God, the Lord of the harvest to send laborers to reap the harvest, who told his disciples to give from what they had to feed the poor, also said, "No one comes to the Father but by me". That is why the third world Christians themselves are sending missionaries to Asia and around the world. They consider themselves to be stewards for God not only of their possessions, ^{but also} of the God's gift to them of the good news of Jesus Christ, and they want to share it with the world. They know all too well that the day of the missionary is not over.

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every ten, and place it in the bag for the church. Korean Presbyterians tithe. They faithfully give back to the Lord one-tenth of what ^{it's} has blessed them with through the hard times. No wonder their churches grow.

The largest Presbyterian church in the world is not in....
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And no wonder they send out more foreign missionaries than we do here in rich America. ^{They send them out with their tithes - their offerings} For Korean Presbyterians will tell you that the greatest gift they can give to others as faithful stewards of what God has given them is not money, not rice, but the gift of faith and hope which they have received, and which they now want to pass on to the hungry and the poor, the helpless and the depressed, on their own continent of Asia, and on around the world.

So they tithe, and they sacrifice to give their gifts to the Lord who gave Himself to

Now I know that some think Asia already has enough religion.

All six of the world's great religions were born in Asia: --Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Islam, Judaism--and some say well, they already have their religions, why try to bring them another, Christianity. Try to tell that to Asia's Christians. They've already tried the old religions and found them wanting. Not the story book religions we Americans study in your classes on the "great Eastern religions", but those same religions as they are actually practiced in the villages, in the shrines, in the streets. [Ambedkar: Hinduism is not a religion; it is a disease]

The same Jesus who loved the multitudes, who told his

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So let me talk about Jesus and people, crowds of people, Jesus and the multitudes. I have two texts, two incidents in the life of Jesus as described by Matthew: chapter 9:36-38, and 15:32-34.

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Stewardship Sunday

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And Asia's multitudes are increasing every year. Take the city of Seoul. Seoul is the sixth or seventh largest city in the world, about 12 million people. But when my father arrived there 106 years ago in 1890, Seoul had only about 150,000 people. There were tigers in its hills in those days; today the hills are covered with high-rise apartments. From 150,000 to 12 million, from tigers to skyscrapers in only two generations, my father's and mine. That's Asia.

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I wonder if Jesus, seeing Asia's unreached, poor, oppressed multitudes, is not saying to us here in comparatively healthy, wealthy America, "Don't you love them any more?"

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"The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into

his harvest."

III. GIVE. But there is a third step in Jesus' response to the challenge of human need. It is extremely important, because it shifts the action to his disciples. The command to pray was part of the shift. Now he carries them a step farther. He tells them to give. This is implied in our text, but is made even clearer a few chapters later in Matthew's account of Jesus and another crowd (Matt. 15:32-38). It's the story of the feeding of the four thousand. Jesus again is filled with love and pity for a multitude. "They've been here three days, and they're hungry," says Jesus to his disciples. They shrug their shoulders. "There's no food out here", they tell him. But this time, instead of telling them to pray, Jesus puts them on the spot. "How much food do you have?" "Oh, not enough for this many people" they say quickly. "How much?" says Jesus. "Well, seven loaves and two fishes," they say. And Jesus says, "That's enough. Give them to me." And we all remember what happened. Jesus took the "not enough", and made it enough. They not only fed the four thousand; they had seven baskets full left over. It was a basic lesson in stewardship. Give what you can, and with God, that is enough.

But it is a hard lesson to learn, and I think our Korean Presbyterian brothers and sisters have learned it better than we. When Eileen and I were stationed for three years out in the hill country in Korea, we used to watch how the farmers and country people came to their little churches. They would take off their shoes as they entered the bare sanctuary. No pews. They sat on the floor, men on one side, women on the other. But as they came in the women, most of them, were carrying a little white cloth bag. And before they sat down they would go over to the side wall where little wooden pegs had been placed around the room. First they would hang up the little bag on the peg marked with the family's name. Those were their collection bags, holding uncooked rice. In those days, just after the Korea War, times were hard. They had no money for the offering. So every day, at each meal, the wife as

she prepared the rice, would take one spoonful out of every ten, and place it in the bag for the church. Korean Presbyterians tithe. They faithfully give back to the Lord one-tenth of what has blessed them with through the hard times. No wonder their churches grow.

The largest Presbyterian church in the world is not in....
 The largest Methodist church....
 The largest Pentecostal church....

And no wonder they send out more foreign missionaries than we do here in rich America. For Korean Presbyterians will tell you that the greatest gift they can give to others as faithful stewards of what God has given them is not money, not rice, but the gift of faith and hope which they have received in Jesus Christ, and which they now want to pass on to the hungry and the poor, the helpless and the depressed, not only in Asia, but on around the world.

Now I know that some think Asia already has enough religion. All six of the world's great religions were born in Asia: --Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Islam, Judaism--and some say. "Well, they already have their religions, why try to bring them another, Christianity?" Try to tell that to Asia's Christians. They've already tried the old religions and found them wanting. Not the story book religions we Americans study in your classes on the "great Eastern religions", but those same religions as they are actually practiced in the villages, in the shrines, in the streets. [Ambedkar: Hinduism is not a religion; it is a disease]Hinduism is from Asia, and there are more Hindus in Asia than anywhere else in the world.

Buddha was born in Asia, and there are more Buddhists in Asia than anywhere else in the world.

Confucius was born in Asia and there are more Confucianists in Asia than anywhere else in the world.

Muhammad was born in Asia, and there are more Mohammedans in Asia than anywhere else in the world.

So also the Lord Jesus Christ was born in Asia. But are there more Christians in Asia than anywhere else in the world?

No! The sad fact is that Asia is numerically the least

Christian continent in the world. Only 7 or 8 Asians out of 100 know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. They are hungry, not just for the bread that perishes, but for the bread of life. Only Jesus is the bread of life. And that is the greatest challenge facing the Christian church today, the old, old challenge of Jesus and the multitudes.

"Jesus said, "I have compassion on the multitude...they have nothing to eat...And the disciples said, "Where are we to gete bread enough in the desert to feed so great a crowd. And Jesus said, How many loaves have you?"

- Samuel Hugh Moffett

but for all those who follow as well.

So now the yoke, staff, and fiery ring,
the song and soul-deep gifts you bring,
are given over and blessed.

Kneeling, beginning the journey anew;
a leader now, may God empower you,
and fill you with holy light.

May God be with those you serve and lead,
May they open their soul, and hear, and heed
the voice of the Holy Spirit.

Travelling valleys and spiritual heights,
Blazoning sunrises, ever-dark nights,
May God guide your leadership, hearing your prayers,
May God's great protection keep you from snares,
May your ministry accord with God's will,
Empowered by Spirit, vital, strong, still.
Clyde Davis, pastor, Calvary Church, Salineville, Ohio.

The Gift Without The Giver Is Bare

Ralph W. Chamberlain

Pequot Lakes, Minn.

AS WILL ROGERS said, "All I know is what I read in the papers." So with me when it comes to conditions in the world; very few situations we see firsthand. So when it comes to what the National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches are doing in many parts of the world; most of us only know what we read and hear.

The *Reader's Digest*, and "60 Minutes" gave us their point of view; others give different insights. For many years I

have been most grateful for what the National and World Councils of Churches have done to help us as denominations to work in harmony in our land and world.

But a trend I have seen coming is a tendency on the part of government, our denominations, and the councils of churches just to give out money—\$5,000 to this cause, \$20,000 to another, \$85,000 to still another, or half a million here or there, given unselfishly, often with no strings attached.

1983

Yet, Jesus said, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." And again Jesus' last instruction before his ascension was, "Ye shall be witnesses unto me." And Peter wrote, "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold - - - But with the precious blood of Christ - - - ."

Jesus did not say send your money into all the world. If money would solve our problems, God could shower the world with billions of dollars. What people need most is to hear that Jesus loves them. Money can only express the love of God when it sends that love in a person who is filled with the love of God. "The gift without the giver is bare." That is not from the Bible, but it is loaded with Bible truth. "God so loved the world that He gave His only Son." "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us."

It is told of Thomas á Kempis that when he visited The Pope in Rome, he was shown the treasury room. The Pope pointed to all the jewels, silver, and gold, and said, "No longer does the church have to say, 'Silver and gold have we

none.'" Thomas á Kempis replied, "And no longer is the church saying as Peter said to the lame man, 'Rise up and walk.'"

In the Gospel of Luke there is the beautiful account of Jesus' story of the Samaritan who helped the man who fell among the thieves. The Samaritan first gave his concern, then his time, his substance, poured oil and wine into the wounds, bandaged him up, gave him transportation, and his hospitality all night. The last thing he gave was his money to pay for the victim's lodging, then the Samaritan gave his promise to pay if there was more need. The last thing he gave was his money. Often with us we first give our money and that is all we give.

For 25 years I was sent by our Presbyterian Board of National Missions to the Sandhill cattle country of northwestern Nebraska as a mobile minister. Sometimes as I visited the isolated ranch homes the cowboy husband would say, "I've got to go out to check the cattle, would you like to ride along?" As I rode along one day in the pick-up truck over the bumpy sand trails, Gordon McLeod slapped me on the knee and asked, "Do you know why we like you?" I said, "I can't imagine." He replied, "It's because you come way out here to visit us."