

## Chapter 11 – A Plan: Obey As You Regularly Build Your Vision

To keep a world vision warm we need to band together like coals gathered in a hearth. But World Christian groups can only burn hot when they are regularly fired-up with combustible world-sized facts! We need to *study* Christ's global cause.

An informed world vision will ignite us to make significant strides as we reach out in the Gap and as we share our world vision with other believers. In all of our other studies and reading the building of a world vision must remain central. One of the most important subjects we can ever tackle concerns what God is doing throughout the earth, and how to be co-workers in it with Him.

What percentage of your efforts at Christian discipleship in the next year will be spent just educating yourself for more effective involvement in the Gap? How will you move beyond just accumulating missions facts and start building them into a *framework* for strategic action?

Let me illustrate why this is so vital. We've all tried a connect-the-dots picture puzzle. Scattered around the page the numbered dots make little sense until they're drawn together by individual lines. Then a picture emerges. Even so, you can't clearly see the big picture of world missions until you connect together, in manageable and meaningful ways, the grand themes that comprise a genuine world vision.

**The world you care about will be no bigger than the  
"tribal deity" you've made out of Christ.**

The "Catch the Vision!" chapters (8-10) provide the "dots" that help form this big picture. You'll discover that what you read these days on world missions will either sharpen your understanding of one or more of those dots or draw lines for you that connect some of the dots together. Only those disciples actively doing this—who regularly *build* the world vision they've already caught—will be able to move out creatively and intelligently to fulfil that vision and give it to others.

There is another supreme benefit from these efforts, however. J.B. Phillips once cautioned: "Your God is too small!" But an equally important warning is: "Your world is too small!" The world you care about will be no bigger than the "tribal deity" you've made out of God. But if your world is too small then you'll never fully appreciate how big your God is nor desire to glorify Him the way He deserves to be glorified: worldwide. All efforts to build your vision are really efforts at getting to know *God* better, as well as make Him better known throughout the gap.

Resources and ways to develop a plan to regularly build your vision are abundant. Certainly the place to begin is through Bible study with a world dimension. It's important that you learn all you can about the key biblical passages on Christ's global cause. And there are hundreds of them!

### *How to Create a World Christian Bible Study*

Focus your Bible study on *four basic questions*:

1. What does it *say*? Investigate the passage with what? where? when? how? why? And then ask, How do my various discoveries relate to one another?
2. What does it *mean*? What is God trying to say through this passage? What are its implications for other biblical truths? What warnings does He give? What promises? What

principles for daily living? What should be the impact of the passage on God's people anywhere?

3. What does it mean to *me*? Apply the passage in a very personal way: What does it mean to my walk with Christ? To my dreams? My needs? My life-style? My daily responsibilities? My priorities? My relationships to other people? To my church? My family?
4. What does it mean to me as a *World Christian*? What aspects of my world vision does it help me build? Purpose? Possibilities? People? Part? How could it help equip me, train me, direct me, and challenge me in the specific ways I'm seeking to reach out in love right now? How could it help me give a world vision to someone else? What have I found here that I could share with another Christian to help them grow as a World Christian?

For a group Bible study you may want to wrap up with this question:

5. What does it mean to us as a team of World Christians? How do the discoveries we've made in the study apply to our ongoing plans to follow Christ together into the Gap? How does it stimulate, reinforce, or reshape all we're trying to do together with Him?

Finally, here's a *bonus project* in World Christian Bible study. Purchase an inexpensive edition of the Scriptures. Then use a coloured marker to highlight every verse that refers to God's concern for, evaluations of, intentions toward, actions toward, or involvement with the nations. You might go book by book from Genesis to Revelation. Look for references to specific nations outside of Israel (small and large) as well as references to "the nations" in general. For example, a passage on Edom, or the sojourner, or worshiping Baal or other gods and idols, or foreign kings or "the peoples," or the ends of the earth, or Creation (the heavens, the earth)—all would be eligible for your pen.

Determine what all these highlighted verses mean to your understanding of the passages that remain uncoloured. After completing one book, go back and read the colour passages only. What do you learn in them about God's worldwide purpose in Christ? Or about the possibilities today for closing the Gap? Or about reaching unreached people? Or about your own world-sized part in it all? How should the discoveries change your life?

#### *Other Ways to Build a World Vision*

1. Keep a *map of the world* handy. Write to Operation Mobilization for a special "prayer map:" P.O. Box 444, Tyrone, GA 30290. Use your map to locate missionary reports, news events, places you read about, places your friends go. Let the world become your friend!
2. Study key *books on world missions*. Write to Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship for their listing of the best: *The World Christian Book Shelf*. The list indicates which books help to build the four aspects of a world vision. Or you might want to join the Global Church Growth Book Club of William Carey Library, which qualifies you to order, at a discount, books covering the whole spectrum of world missions.
3. Subscribe to key *missions periodicals* from the leading evangelical mission societies. Or take the Evangelical Missions Information Service, offering up-to-date news of world missions events and monthly study papers on key issues in missions today. Write: Box 794, Wheaton, Illinois 60189. (See Appendix for more ideas.)
4. Subscribe to key *secular periodicals* with international perspectives. They can keep you informed of world events, personalities, and needs that might relate directly to missions strategies and activities you learn about from Christian literature.

5. Take *world-related* and *missions-related courses* as part of an ongoing education project. Linguistics, world history, cultural anthropology, and international politics are a few possibilities. You may want to study the correspondence course called “Perspectives on the World Christian Movement” available through the U.S. Center for World Missions. Another option is to spend a summer or a semester studying the big picture of God’s global purpose at the Institute of International Studies at the U.S. Center for World Missions in Pasadena, California.
6. Attend *missions conferences* in local churches. Consider attending IVCF’s Urbana Student Missions Convention. Or, bring a World Christian Conference to your church via video through the World Christian Video Training Curriculum (see Appendix).
7. Sit at the feet of *missionaries* who have been involved at the front lines of world missions. For help in developing profitable discussions with a missionary visitor, write for InterVarsity’s “How to Interview a Real Live Missionary!”
8. Also, learn from *Christian international students*, asking them the same questions you would ask a missionary.



**Update Note:** To explore how my thinking has expanded the past thirty years – in terms of how I see Christ, His global cause, the hope He sets before the nations, what it means to be a World Christian in today’s world, how to mobilize a renewed missions movement – be sure to look at my most recent book (by visiting [www.ProclaimHope.com](http://www.ProclaimHope.com)): **CHRIST IS ALL! A Joyful Manifesto On The Supremacy of God’s Son** (New Providence Publishers).