

The Angel of the Lord declared to Abraham: **"I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the Heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gates of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."** Genesis 22:17-18

**Blessed in Order to be a Blessing** History testifies how God has blessed and multiplied the descendants of Abraham and they, more than any others, have possessed the gates of their enemies. It is clear that all the nations of the earth have been blessed by the faithful children of Abraham, who have proclaimed God's Word to the very uttermost ends of the earth.

**All Nations Blessed**

Almighty God restated His Divine call and commission to Abraham's son, Isaac:

**"In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My Commandments, My statutes and My Laws."**

Genesis 26:4-5. Throughout the centuries Isaac's sons have faithfully contended for the Faith, preserved and translated God's Word, Reformed the Church and vigorously proclaimed the Word of God to all nations.

**A Fountainhead of Faith and Freedom** Great Britain has a great Christian heritage.

Missionaries from the British Isles have won whole nations to Christ. In the 5th century, Patrick succeeded in establishing over 300 congregations and baptising 120,000 people in Ireland. In the 6th century, Columba and his missionaries, mobilised the effective evangelisation of Scotland from the Mission base at Iona. Columba and his men undertook missionary outreaches as far afield as France, Germany, Switzerland and Italy.

**Winning Nations to Christ**

In the 8th century, Boniface left Wessex to labour as a missionary to the Germans. Through his bold, courageous and persistent labours, Boniface succeeded in bringing to Christ multitudes in Friesland, Thuringia and Hesse. Boniface was one of the most successful missionaries of the first Millennium. He not only converted multitudes of individuals, he disciplined an entire nation.

**King Alfred the Great**

King Alfred the Great of Wessex lived through tumultuous times and has to be recognised as one of the most intelligent, devout, industrious and effective of all medieval monarchs. Alfred was soldier and scholar, lawmaker and educator, author and reformer. For most of Alfred's 30 years reign, he was a soldier King, leading his people in a desperate war for survival against great odds as Danish Vikings overwhelmed most of the British Isles. Alfred personally commanded in 54 pitched battles. Alfred has justly been called **the Father of the English Navy**, as he built a fleet superior to any that had previously been seen to beat the sea-faring Danes. Through virtue and valour, tactics and tenacity, King Alfred fought the Viking invaders to a standstill and then worked to bring them to Christ.

**The Common Law**

King Alfred the Great was determined to build this nation upon the Law of God. The Domesday Book of King Alfred began with the Ten Commandments, the case laws of Moses, the Golden Rule of Christ, and other Biblical principles from the Sermon on the Mount. This formed the basis of the Common Law which has helped to establish Justice wherever the company of nations has been established.

**Field Workers of the Reformation**

Professor John Wycliffe was the Morning Star of the Reformation. Oxford was the greatest university in the world and John Wycliffe was its greatest professor. Wycliffe championed the Independence of England from Papal control and attacked the corruptions, superstitions and abuses of the friars and monks. Wycliffe translated the New Testament from Latin into English and mobilised lay preachers, **the Lollards**, to travel throughout the land to read these handwritten Bibles, preach in the market places and

sing the Scriptures - in English. These field workers of the Reformation sowed the Gospel seed that flourished during the Reformation.

**The Bible in English**

The man whom God used to translate the Bible into English, from the original languages, was William Tyndale. Tyndale was a gifted scholar and linguist, a graduate of both Oxford and Cambridge Universities. Prevented by law from translating the Bible into English in England, Tyndale worked in Germany to translate and print the Bible in English. The first printed edition of the English New Testament needed to be smuggled into England. For his Bible translation and Reformation work, Tyndale was betrayed, arrested and imprisoned for 500 days in a dark, cold, damp dungeon. On 6 October 1536, he was burned at the stake. His last reported words were: "Lord, open the King of England's eyes."

**A World Language**

The Lord did indeed answer the dying prayer of Tyndale in a most remarkable way. Within two years, by order of King Henry VIII, every parish church in England was required to have a copy of the English Bible available to its parishioners. While English was one of the minor languages of Europe in the early 16th century, with less than 3 million speaking it, today it has become a truly worldwide language with over 2 billion people communicating in English. Not only can William Tyndale be described as the Father of the English Bible, but in a real sense, the foremost influence of the shaping of the English language itself.

**Through the Fires of Persecution**

Bloody Mary's Counter-Reformation was counterproductive. The fanatical obsession of Bloody Mary to return England to Catholicism spectacularly backfired. As Foxes Book of Martyrs records, neither the hundreds of executions of prominent Protestant leaders, nor all of the cruelties, torments, tortures and oppressions unleashed under the Catholic Queen were sufficient to crush the Protestant Reformation in England. By attempting to exterminate the Reformation, Bloody Mary only succeeded in entrenching it, convincing the vast majority of Englishman in the resolution and determination to never again succumb to such tyranny, superstition, intolerance and error.

**A Candle Burns in Africa**

On 16 October 1555, two Protestant bishops were burned at the stake in Oxford. The bishop of Worcester, Hugh Latimer, declared: "Be of good cheer, Master Ridley and play the man! We shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out!" His colleague was the bishop of London, Nicholas Ridley, respected as one of the finest Theologians of England. Indeed, more than 455 years later we can rejoice that the Protestant Faith of Bishop's Ridley and Latimer burns brightly in Africa. Every Sunday there are more than 2 million Anglicans gathered in churches in Sudan alone. Nigeria has 18 million Anglicans gathered in church every Sunday. Millions more in Uganda and Kenya. There are now vastly more Anglicans who are faithful to The 39 Articles and follow the Book of Common Prayer, as set out by Archbishop Thomas Cranmer, in Africa, than in all of North America and Great Britain combined.

**The Modern Missionary Movement**

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is life-changing, history making and nation transforming. In 1793, the Modern Missionary Movement was launched by William Carey. William Carey had proclaimed from Isaiah 54:2-3: "Expect great things from God! Attempt great things for God!" William Carey and his co-workers established over 100 Christian schools for over 8,000 Indian children of all casts. He launched the first Christian college in Asia, Serampore College, which continues to this day. William Carey succeeded in translating the entire Bible into six languages and the New Testament and Gospels into another 29 languages!

**Social Reform in India**

William Carey successfully fought against Sati (widow burning), child sacrifice, child prostitution, slavery and other

social evils. Carey established the first newspaper ever printed in an oriental language, and the first savings bank. He introduced the steam engine and pioneered the idea of lending libraries. Carey founded the Agri-Horticultural Society in the 1820s (30 years before the Royal Agricultural Society was established in England!) 50 Years before the government made its first attempt at forest conservation, Carey was already pioneering forestry conservation in India.

**World Missions** William Carey certainly lived his challenge to expect great things from God and to attempt great things for God! As William Carey declared: "God's cause will triumph!" In the over 200 years since William Carey launched the Modern Missionary Movement, English speakers have made up over 80% of Protestant missionaries worldwide.

**Livingstone the Liberator** Scottish missionary, David Livingstone, became the best friend Africa ever had. Livingstone was a great Missionary pioneer pathfinder. Three themes dominated his life: Evangelisation, Exploration and Emancipation. He listed Member of Parliament, William Wilberforce's book: *Practical Christianity*, as one of the most influential books he ever read. Livingstone determined, at his conversion at age 12, to devote his life to the alleviation of human misery. To this end he trained as a medical doctor and went out under the London Missionary Society. Livingstone walked across Africa, from coast to coast.

"I shall open up a path to the interior, or perish!" Battling rains, chronic discomfort, rust, mildew and rot, totally drenched and fatigued, laid low by fever and attacked by hostile tribes, yet David Livingstone persevered on foot across the continent.

"Can the love of Christ not carry the missionary where the slave trade carries the trader?"

"These privations I beg you to observe are not sacrifices. I think that word ought never to be mentioned in reference to anything we can do for Him, who though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor."

Many hundreds of slaves were set free by David Livingstone's direct intervention. In his public speaking engagements and books published between missionary tours in Africa, Livingstone spoke of his primary concern to enlighten people on the evils of the Islamic slave trade, and to spread the Christian Gospel to the heathen. He dedicated his life to bringing the Christian Faith and freedom to Africa.

The challenge of Livingstone rings out to us today: "Can that be called a Sacrifice which is simply paid back as a small part of a great debt owing to our God, which we can never repay? it is emphatically no sacrifice! Say rather, it is a privilege!"

**Mary Slessor of Calabar** One of the daughters of Abraham whom God sent as a missionary to Africa, in response to the challenge and example of David Livingstone, was Mary Slessor. Born the second of seven children into a poor and troubled home in Scotland, Mary was brought up in abject poverty, sleeping on the floor in a one-roomed home that had no plumbing, no lighting and hardly any furniture. Like her great example, David Livingstone, Mary began working at the Cotton Mill at age 10. The news of the death of David Livingstone galvanized Mary Slessor into missions. She undertook missionary training in Edinburgh and was appointed by the United Presbyterian Church as a missionary teacher for Calabar (present day Nigeria).

**Courageous Love in Action** Red headed Mary confronted the rampant witchcraft, drunkenness, immorality and slave trading in Calabar. She cared for the many abandoned children, treated the sick and fed the starving. She set up schools, and interposed herself between the witchdoctors and their victims. Mary is revered in Nigeria as the *Mother of all the people*. She passionately campaigned against the Nigerian practise of killing twins, rescuing these doomed infants and raising them as her own children. She confronted notorious

slave traders and cannibals and established many schools and churches in some of the most remote heathen villages. As a result of her tireless missionary work, the killing of twins ceased, slave trading in Calabar was eradicated, drunkenness, killing and witchcraft diminished and most of the people came to embrace the Gospel of Christ.

**Cricketer for Christ**  
As the famous English cricketer turned Pioneer missionary to China, India and Africa, C.T. Studd declared: "If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for Him." As he suffered malaria and other attacks, C.T Studd wrote: "Some like to live within sound of church or chapel bell, I want to run a rescue shop within a yard of hell!"

"Only one life, it will soon be past. Only what's done for Christ will last!"

**Saved from Slavery**  
One of the many fruits of William Wilberforce's lifelong crusade against the Slave Trade was the rescue of Samuel Ajayi Crowther. Samuel was born in 1807, the very year Great Britain abolished the slave trade. At age 13, Samuel Crowther was captured by slave traders and sold to Portuguese traders for transport across the Atlantic. But he was rescued by a British Naval Squadron.

Samuel was converted to Christ and received an education, first in Sierra Leone and then in England. In 1843, he was ordained as a minister of the Church of England for service with the Church Missionary Society. His language, Yoruba, became the first African language to have the Book of Common Prayer translated into it. To this day the Church of England in Nigeria uses Samuel Crowther's Yoruba translation for their liturgy. In 1864, in an overflowing Canterbury Cathedral, Samuel Ajayi Crowther was ordained as the first African bishop of the Church of England. Today Nigeria is the largest nation in Africa. Despite having suffered under a succession of Muslim dictators, more than half of the population of Nigeria has been won to Christ.

**A Light for the Gentiles**  
God has certainly made the Saxons a light for the Gentiles to bring Salvation to the ends of the earth. Just as God's Word has gone out from these British Isles to the very ends of the earth, setting captives free, blessing all the families of the nations on the earth, in so many ways, so now from the very ends of the earth, the word comes back to these Isles, declaring: "Here are the ancient paths walk in them Contend for the Faith once delivered unto the saints. Listen, you islands, hear this you distant nations you are My servant Israel to restore the tribes of Jacob"

**A Missionary Calling**  
No other nation has been more used of the Lord to advance Protestant Missions worldwide, to proclaim the everlasting Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to all nations. In Bible translations, literacy work, campaigns to end the slave trade and to set the captives free, in medical advances, in works of mercy and laying foundations for justice through the rule of Law, the legacy for Faith and freedom of Great Britain is unparalleled.

"All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to Lord, and all the families of the nations shall worship before you. For the Kingdom is the Lord's and He rules over the nations. All shall bow before Him a posterity shall serve Him. It will be recounted of the Lord to the next generation. They will come and declare his righteousness, to people who will yet be born, that He has done this." Psalm 22:27-31

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