

**DESIDERATA<sup>1</sup>**  
**WHY SHOULDN'T CHRISTIANS JUST MIND THEIR OWN BUSINESS?**  
**ALDERWOOD COMMUNITY CHURCH**  
**ROMANS 10:14-21**

**BIG IDEA:** Christians can't just mind their own business because the Bible says the telling the Gospel is their core business.

I. BECAUSE OF THE NEED OF THE WORLD--Do You See a "Plan B" Here? (or anywhere in the Bible?) **Verse 14**, "*How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?*"

1. If general revelation is enough for people to get saved, why is **Romans 10:14**, so insistent on the need for a preacher? Look at **Verse 17**: *faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ*. There is no hint here that people can get saved aside from hearing about Jesus Christ. And this is from the same man who wrote about General Revelation in chapter 1. Here's why: General Revelation is enough to condemn you, but not enough to save you. General Revelation is enough to make you realize you have a problem, but not enough to provide you with the solution. Did you catch how **Romans 1:20** ended? *For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities-- his eternal power and divine nature-- have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, [so that men can respond to the light they have and be saved] so that men are without excuse.*

2. *The noted atheistic philosopher Bertrand Russell was once asked, "If you met God after you die, what will you say to Him to justify your unbelief?"*

*"I will tell Him that He did not give me enough evidence," Russell snapped.<sup>2</sup>*

--Sorry, Russell, that won't work on God.

3. The idea of the "God-seeking savage" may have some merit, but is often overplayed. For instance, Adoniram Judson landed as a missionary to Burma in 1817. It took him 7 years before he won his first convert among the Burmese Buddhists.<sup>3</sup>

4. On the other hand, there is the incredible account of the headhunting Wa people in eastern Burma. One day about a hundred years ago a tribesman named Pu Chan saddled a pony and told his disciples to follow it in search of a "white brother bearing the book of Siyeh, the True God."

*The pony led those amazed disciples over approximately 200 miles of mountainous trails and down into the city of Kengtung. Then it turned into the gate of a mission compound and headed straight for a well....*

*The Wa tribesmen heard sounds in the well. They looked inside it and saw no water [it was still being dug] but only two clear blue eyes looking up at them....*

*"Hello, strangers!" The voice...echoed out of the well. "May I help you?" William Marcus Young climbed out of the well....the Wa messengers asked, "Have you brought a book of God?" Young nodded. The Wa men, overcome with emotion, fell at his feet and blurted out the message from Pu Chan. Then they added: "This pony is saddled especially for you. Our people are all waiting. Fetch the book! We must be on our way!"*

Young couldn't go with them, but he and the Christian Lahu tribespeople taught the Gospel to the Wa messengers and sent them back to their own people. Soon there were 10,000 baptized Wa converts.<sup>4</sup>

If that account seems incredible to us, Richardson has 2 questions for you: *Does anyone doubt that God could cause a pony to lead those Wa men so unerringly over so great a distance? Surely the God who used a star to lead the Magi to the manger in*

<sup>1</sup> *Desideratum: Something considered necessary or highly desirable.*

<sup>2</sup> Ravi Zacharias, *Jesus Among Other Gods*, Word Publishing, Nashville, 2000, 47.

<sup>3</sup> Don Richardson, *Eternity in Their Hearts*, Regal Books, Ventura, CA, 1981, 92.

<sup>4</sup> Richardson, 102-103.

*Bethlehem could use a mere pony to find a certain well in Kengtung?* PS: As part of his research of this story, Rickardson traveled to Mentone, CA to visit the retired missionary grandson of William Marcus Young. His name was Vincent, then 80 years old. He showed Don old photos of the pony and photos of hundreds of Wa people being baptized with thousands watching from the surrounding hillsides.<sup>5</sup>

5. In some cultures, there has been no evidence of a Cornelius-type person who was prepared by God and was hungry for the message of the true God. In other cultures, there have been Cornelius-type seekers. *“But truth has not come to them through a supernatural revelation but through the sending of missionaries with the gospel. The contact has been normal and natural and in the God-ordained and divinely appointed way. Instead of granting the unregenerated heart some supernatural revelation, God has brought them under the hearing of the Gospel of Christ and they have been saved.”*<sup>6</sup>
- II. BECAUSE OF THE BEAUTY OF “GOSPELLING” **VERSE 15**, *And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”*
1. Quote from **Isaiah 52:7**, *How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, “Your God reigns!”*
  2. True beauty needs no justification.
    - God’s proliferation of beauty in creation. It seems wasteful, but God sees no need to justify it. Cf. **Matthew 26:6-13**.
    - What the world devalues, indeed scorns and hates, is the delight of the angels, will be rewarded by God, and will be told around heavenly campfires throughout all eternity.
  3. What is the essential beauty of evangelism?
    - **NOTE:** Feet really aren’t all that beautiful. Particularly the feet of missionaries. They probably have blisters, calluses, bunions, and are dirt-stained.
- III. BECAUSE GOD HOLDS US RESPONSIBLE [**VERSES 14B-15**]
- NOTE: *“A student once asked C. H. Spurgeon if he thought the heathen who had never heard the gospel would be saved. The great preacher answered, ‘It is more a question with me whether we who have the gospel and fail to give it to those who have not, can be saved.’”*
1. **Matt Friedeman** was on a TV panel discussing community problems in Jackson, Mississippi. The city council president and another councilmen were on their way to jail for re-zoning back-room deals. *The panel moderator looked at me and asked, “Matt, whose fault is all this?....*  
*One of the panelists sitting next to me was a gentleman named John Perkins....Before I could respond, Perkins answered, “It’s my fault.”*  
*All heads turned his way.*  
*He elaborated. “I have lived in this community for decades as a Bible teacher. I should have been able to create an environment where what our council president did would have been unthinkable because of my efforts. You want someone to blame? I’ll take the blame. All of it.”*<sup>7</sup>
  2. Here is my role and your role in **Romans 10:14**, *And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? 15 And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”*
    - Some of us are supposed to be preachers.  
This kind of preaching is not precisely the typical Sunday morning sermon—Lit., **Heralding**. (1) denoting the official activity of a herald *announce, publicly proclaim* (**RV 5.2**); (2) *make known extensively, tell everywhere* (**MK 5.20**); (3) in a religious sense, denoting proclamation of a sacred message *proclaim, preach, publish* (**MT 4.23**); (4) as proclaiming the necessity of a course of action *preach* (**MK 1.4**).

<sup>5</sup> Richardson, 104

<sup>6</sup> (Quote from Harold Lindsell’s *A Christian Philosophy of Missions*, in J. Oswald Chambers, *How Lost Are the Heathen?*, Moody Press, Chicago, 1972, 75)

<sup>7</sup> (“To Illustrate,” *Leadership*, Winter 2002, 73)

**MORRIS:** *His verb properly denotes the action of a herald, someone who was given a message and told to proclaim it. The notion of a higher authority is implicit in the concept: a self-appointed herald is a contradiction in terms. Paul is saying that the preaching of the Christian message is impossible without the divine commission.* (390)

- **NOTE:** This is grammatically double good news: Lit in NAU, <sup>NAU</sup> **Romans 10:15** *How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, "HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!"* [agatha=**MORRIS:** *It emphasizes the goodness of the good news.*
  - And the rest of us are supposed to be senders of preachers. Take a look at one of those offering envelopes right there in front of you. Look at the 3<sup>rd</sup> line down. That's one way you can be a sender of preachers. If you haven't already done so, why don't you write a number on that blank line, and put a check or cash in the envelope and put it in the offering basket this morning?
3. It was 1906 and 20-year-old James Fraser was doing well in college, planning a career in engineering. Then a friend gave him a little pamphlet. It said, *If our Master returned today to find millions of people unevangelized, and looked, as of course he would look, to us for an explanation, I cannot imagine what explanation we should have to give.*

*Of one thing I am certain – that most of the excuses we are accustomed to make with such good conscience now, we shall be wholly ashamed of then.* <sup>8</sup>

Fraser accepted the challenge and became a missionary to the Lisu tribe in China. He died there of malaria **8 years younger [in year 2009]** than I am today, but saw more than 60,000 Lisu baptized as believers in Jesus Christ in his 27 years as the "apostle to the Lisus."<sup>9</sup>

4. **This quote from the OMF website November 2005:**

*"On September 25, 1938, while in Baoshan Yunnan, China, James Fraser [1886-1938] died at the age of 52. Due to land erosion, West Yunnan's Christian church decided to move the grave from the mountain slopes of Baoshan to this location, renewing the headstone on behalf of the Lisu church as a way of expressing their cherished memory of J.O. Fraser. Fraser's life has reaped a large harvest although many tears had first to be sown through his labours.*

*"The Lisu church at Baoshan plans to commemorate J.O. Fraser every seven years at a special Easter service in the new Bible training center they have started there. Another memorial to J.O. Fraser has been erected by Lisu believers in Weixi County in far northwestern Yunnan. Inscribed in Lisu, Chinese and English the English reads: "IN LOVING MEMORY. JAMES O. FRASER 1886-1938. How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news. WITH DEEPEST LOVE REMEMBER YOU ALWAYS—THE LISU CHURCH." The Chinese states additionally: "Erected by the Christian Church in the Lisu Autonomous County of Weixi on 15 March 2004."*

*"The Lisu church has seen spectacular numerical growth in recent decades. In 1950 the Nujiang Lisu Autonomous Prefecture had 14,800 believers. By 1995 that number had risen to over 100,000—most of them Lisu. In the early 1980s the Yunnan Christian Council printed several thousand copies of the Lisu Bible. Then in 1995 a further 45,000 Lisu Bibles were published, as well as 65,000 Lisu hymnbooks. Both printings were in the special script devised by J.O. Fraser. However, the church is still hampered by endemic poverty, illiteracy and lack of trained pastors and evangelists. The rapid development of Yunnan as a tourist region and the tidal wave of emigration of young tribal people from the remote mountain valleys to the cities in search of work are bringing many changes to the Lisu church, not all of them positive."<sup>10</sup>*

- IV. BECAUSE IF "THEY" DON'T WANT IT, SOMEBODY ELSE WILL. **VERSES 16-21**, *But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our message?" [Isaiah 53:1]* <sup>17</sup> *Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message*

<sup>8</sup> (Mountain Rain, 3-4)

<sup>9</sup> James and Marti Hefley, *By Their Blood*, Mott Media, Milford, MI, 1979, 60

<sup>10</sup> Wikipedia

is heard through the word of Christ. <sup>18</sup> But I ask: Did they not hear? Of course they did: "**Their voice has gone out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.**" [Psalm 19:4] <sup>19</sup> Again I ask: Did Israel not understand? First, Moses says, "**I will make you envious by those who are not a nation; [Morris: Suggestive of Hosea's Lo-ammi, "not my people"] I will make you angry by a nation that has no understanding.**" [Deut. 32:21]" <sup>20</sup> And Isaiah boldly says, "**I was found by those who did not seek me; I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me.**" [Isaiah 65:1] <sup>21</sup> But concerning Israel he says, "**All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and obstinate people.**" [Isaiah 65:2]

1. QUOTES:

- **Verse 16 is from Isaiah 53:1** Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?
  - **Verse 18 is from Psalm 19:1-4** The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. <sup>2</sup> Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. <sup>3</sup> There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. <sup>4</sup> Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world. In the heavens he has pitched a tent for the sun,
  - **Verse 19 is from Deuteronomy 32:21,** They made me jealous by what is no god and angered me with their worthless idols. I will make them envious by those who are not a people; I will make them angry by a nation that has no understanding.
  - **Verses 20 is from Isaiah 65:1,** "I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me; I was found by those who did not seek me. To a nation that did not call on my name, I said, 'Here am I, here am I.
  - **Verse 21 is from Isaiah 65:2,** ' <sup>2</sup> All day long I have held out my hands to an obstinate people, who walk in ways not good, pursuing their own imaginations--
2. And thus, by Israel's rejection of the Gospel, we Gentiles got to hear and we have become saved.
3. **Dawson Trotman,** *I never talk to anyone about the Gospel against his will [but you can pray!]*
4. **Joe Aldrich:** *Look for the schooling fish!*

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