

ACTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT '74

W. Stanley Mooneyham

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Narration (with slides): Since the beginning of time the earth has been a symbol of God's creative power. But for us here tonight in Lausanne, the earth symbolizes more than that initial creative act of an omnipotent God — it represents the circle of Christian faith as by the power of God men and women from every tongue, from every tribe, from every nation, have become one in the Spirit.

Introduction

Good evening, and welcome to the "Acts of the Holy Spirit '74." When closing his account of the life of Jesus, the Apostle John said the whole world could not contain the volumes if all the events in that miraculous life should be recorded.

The same could be said of the Acts of the Holy Spirit. While the book of Acts in our New Testament closes after chapter 28 with Paul in Rome, thousands of faithful servants of Jesus Christ have been writing church history with their lives, their witness, and their deaths. 1974 is no different except in one respect. Right now — as Jesus anticipated in Acts 1:8 when he said, "Ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem and in Judea, in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth" — we have gone beyond Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria. Tonight Christ has his witnesses at the ends of the earth. And their witness and their work bear the mark of supernatural power, for people are being confronted with the claims of the Gospel and many are being converted to Jesus Christ.

Tonight we want to share with you some of the things the Holy Spirit is doing. Without him, evangelism languishes and dies. It is he who is the great evangelist. It is *he* who lifts up Christ. It is *he* who empowers and blesses the witness of believers.

We will travel to some big cities and to some out-of-the way villages. We will meet a variety of people — some on the screen and some in person — each illustrating in his own way something of what the Holy Spirit is doing today. They do not think of themselves as being unusually talented or specially gifted. But through their lives they are having an extraordinary impact on the lives of others. Many of these people are here tonight. In fact, every single one of you, as you serve others in the name of Christ, is a part of the Acts of the Holy Spirit '74.

The world of youth

Narration (live): Within our world, there is another world. It is the world of young people. In some societies they make up as much as 65 per cent of the population. Young people are certainly important for the church tomorrow, but their talents, their strengths, their lives, are equally vital for the church today. To ignore our youth or overlook them simply because they are young is both foolish and dangerous.

In Asia alone there are more children than the combined populations of Europe and Africa. The church had better come up with a strategy and a commitment to accept, love, and evangelize these young people. Youth today are more free and more mobile than at any time in history. They are challenging established, long-cherished traditions in every area of life. We adults are sometimes frustrated and distressed by this, but it also means that youth around the world are more open to truth and eternal realities than ever before.

Everywhere I go in the world I see young lives being dramatically transformed. In some parts of the world the most dynamic segment of church life is found among the youth. The energy and commitment which these young people bring to the task of evangelism continues to remind the Church that God will not be frustrated by traditions which exclude them. God will have a witness.

For the next few minutes let's take a global look at God at work in the world of youth.

Narration (film): Music and young people are almost synonymous, and the Christian youth of Latin America are no exception. Whether in small performing groups or in large church choirs these youthful followers of Jesus Christ express their faith through song and instruments. They even take their music to the streets and challenge the cities and villages with the Good News.

But it is devotion to the Scriptures that ultimately guides the life and testimony of Latin American youth. These young Christians meet in small Bible study groups. Many invite their friends, and through these sessions the numbers confessing Christ increase more than ever before.

Narration (slides): In Africa, the Holy Spirit continues to stir the hearts of young people. More and more of Africa's most talented youth are accepting vocational opportunities within the church. Many are rejecting the more lucrative benefits of secular employment to place their talents in direct service to the church. Their youthful enthusiasm and dedication will become the legacy of tomorrow's leadership within the Church of Africa.

In some churches the young people prepare dramas and compose songs for the worship services. They lead in prayer and testify of their faith in Jesus Christ. Other young people observe their dedication and place of responsibility, and as a result are challenged to follow the way of Jesus. The Rev. Gottfried Osei-Mensah, pastor of the Nairobi Baptist Church, comments on the renewed interest in Christianity expressed by youth.

G. Osei-Mensah: I think as far as Africa is concerned, during the days when the national spirit was high we thought as soon independence was obtained from the colonial powers, everything would be smooth. I think the young people have seen over the last decade or so that this is in fact not so, and so they cannot find reality in nationalism. I think they are looking desperately elsewhere for reality and many in tropical Africa are looking to Christianity to find it.

Narration (slides and film): Last December in North America, 14,000 students attended the triennial Inter-Varsity Missions Convention. Five thousand of these young people expressed a desire to serve God in a mis-

sionary capacity. This response was five times greater than ever before. It reflects the growing commitment to world evangelism evident throughout the student population. Many authorities see the resurgence of evangelism among youth as a result of the Jesus Movement. The Rev. Chuck Smith is a pastor in California whose ministry has touched on the lives of thousands of young people. He reports on the continued growth of the Jesus Movement.

C. Smith: The Jesus Movement is really the wide acceptance by young people of Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior and complete, total commitment to him. I believe this is a growing factor. They were seeing that materialism wasn't happiness. So they were saying that the answer must lie someplace else and they began searching for the answer. Apostles and evangelists of the drug culture came along and said, "Look, kids, here's where it is." But many began to see the discrepancies in the drug culture itself and found that drugs weren't really it. Then, of course, they were in a greater void than ever before. Jesus Christ and his teachings of where you can find love and a relationship with him were what they were looking for, and after finding him many became fantastic evangelists and began to share their faith openly. For instance, I anticipate that our next baptismal service will be the largest baptismal service we have ever had.

Narration (slides): A convention of Asian Christian students held a short time ago in the Philippines, indicates that students in Asia are accepting the evangelism mandate in a new and exciting way. Dr. Isabelo Magalit, Asian director of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students, reports.

Dr. Magalit: We are seeing the beginnings of an Asian missionary movement and the clearest evidence of this has been the recent first Asian missionary convention in Baguio, held last December, when almost 800 young people from all over Asia came together. The majority were Filipinos, but almost 200 people were from a dozen other Asian countries. It is a very thrilling prospect and I believe that the convention has been used greatly by God, and all the feedback that we have received since the convention has been that there is a continuing work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of many young people.

Narration (film): All of us here this evening have a deep concern for the life of the Church in those nations which openly oppose the Gospel message. Yet we are convinced that the Spirit of God continues his work in spite of the most formidable obstacles. Even the censorship and rigid control maintained by a political ideology cannot restrain the growth of Christ's Church. Observe how the Jesus Movement has penetrated the borders of Eastern European countries, so that hundreds of young people under Communism are expressing their faith in public rallies. Even the great cultural revolution of China cannot stop the testimony of the Holy Spirit. David Wong interviews in Hong Kong a Chinese youth who found Christ in the Peoples' Republic of China.

D. Wong: This is Ah Kim. Just a few months ago Ah Kim and four of his friends risked their lives and swam across the deadly ocean between China and Hong Kong. Ah Kim was born in 1949, the same year the "new" China was born. Ah Kim experienced Communism and found his

life empty. He found Communism could not satisfy him. Ah Kim found the Lord as his own personal Savior through an old, faithful Christian lady when he was sent to a commune. Ah Kim typifies many, many young people in China today. They are searching, they are longing, and they are seeking the truth that can satisfy them. Ah Kim found Christ as his own Savior in Mao's China. We praise God, for he himself has preserved his witnesses inside the mainland of China.

Narration (live): Ah Kim, like thousands of other young people around the world, reminds us that the search for truth can be fulfilled only in Jesus Christ. As the Holy Spirit invades these searching hearts, the growth of the Church continues.

What an exciting opportunity faces us as we follow the Holy Spirit out into the world of youth today.

Evangelism-in-depth

Narration (live): In the early 1960s, a new concept in evangelism was introduced in Latin America and it brought great blessing to the churches. The concept was called "evangelism-in-depth." It was an attempt to organize an entire country for evangelism and outreach. Churches cooperated in the training of laymen, in house-to-house visitation, in public marches and demonstrations for the Gospel, and in evangelistic crusades.

So important was this concept of in-depth evangelism in Latin America that it wasn't long until similar programs were launched in many places — New Life for All in Africa, City Penetration Plan in India, Sodoim Dendo in Japan, Evangelism Deep-and-Wide in South Vietnam, and Christ the Only Way Movement in the Philippines are but a few of these efforts.

Now, a decade later, Evangelism-in-Depth is pioneering again. The leadership of this movement evaluated both the successes and mistakes of the past. As a result, a new experiment has begun in Santiago, Chile. The original concept of evangelism-in-depth was for a one-year, pre-packaged program which was then applied to a local situation. It was often evident that a pre-packaged program not sufficiently anchored in the culture would fail to take root and grow.

At the heart of the new experimental program is a series of community studies which make it possible for the Christian leadership to develop a program based on a thorough understanding of all the local spiritual, social, and cultural factors. In other words, the evangelism program arises out of the social situation rather than being imposed on it.

After the community study is finished, the Christians come together in small "reflection groups" for serious study of the demands of Scripture in the light of their actual living situation. This confrontation of the Word of God with everyday realities forces each Christian to consider his own responsibility for personal spiritual renewal.

The third step is the formation and beginning of a program of evangelism which is truly relevant. It is a program the Christian community itself has helped to design, and therefore Christians are motivated to action.

The fourth phase of the experiment is consolidation. The purpose of this last phase is to make the program continuous and cyclical with the prayer and expectation that two things will happen: (i) The churches will experience continual renewal, and (ii) a life-changing experience will be produced in every believer.

Let me give you the four steps again: (i) community studies, to define the actual situation; (ii) reflection groups, to confront community and personal needs with the Word of God; (iii) action programs, to implement an evangelistic strategy defined by social situation, and (iv) consolidation, to make the program cyclical with continual revival in the churches and a definite life-changing experience for every believer being the result.

Now let's go to Santiago, Chile, for an on-the-scene report.

Narration (film): Santiago, capital of the Republic of Chile, is a city of great culture and sophistication. It is a city of workers, students, merchants.

In recent days, the winds of political change and unrest have swept through the country. At the same time, the non-violent breezes of a spiritual awakening have been stirring in the hearts of many Chileans to respond to the Christian message. A new experiment in in-depth evangelism has been initiated. The past year-and-a-half has been a time of building relationships, of training key Christian leaders, of community research to form a knowledge base on which to build a multi-faceted strategy and the beginning of "reflection" groups where people are confronted with the demands of the Scriptures.

Alberto Mottesi is director of Evangelism-in-Depth in Chile, and Jeff Myers talks to him about his ministry.

J. Myers: Brother Alberto, I am very much interested in evangelism-in-depth. Can you tell me, what is evangelism-in-depth?

A. Mottesi: Many have tried to define evangelism-in-depth, but synthesizing, we can say that it is a serious intent to mobilize all Christians to become witnesses for Jesus Christ.

J. Myers: Good. What are the goals of evangelism-in-depth?

A. Mottesi: We have three overall goals. The first has to do with the mobilization of the church. And when we speak of mobilization, we are not referring simply to activism. Rather, we refer to that which the Holy Spirit does in the heart of the pastor; the mobilization that the Spirit and the Word perform in the heart of the servant of Jesus Christ, amplifying his vision and placing in his ministry a more missionary dynamic. I refer also to the mobilization that the Word and the Spirit perform in the homes of Christians, and to the church a new missionary attitude within the community.

The second goal has to do with total evangelization. We believe that it is possible to bring together all methods, all men, and all talents in order that, before the second coming of Jesus Christ, the present generation shall have been confronted with the demands of the Gospel.

And the third goal that we have is visible unity of the Body of Christ in evangelization.

We are commencing here a new epoch in the ministry of Evangelism-in-Depth. The year 1974 is the year of renewal and reconciliation.

1975 is the year of evangelistic saturation and discipling. 1976 is directed toward a total development of the church.

J. Myers: Brother Alberto, can you explain to me something of this which is called "reflection group"?

A. Mottesi: We believe that Christians can experience a new evangelistic challenge, a new dimension for a new style of evangelizing life in this day according to the evangelistic demands of the Word of God. To that end, we are organizing hundreds of small groups where believers unite to study the Word of God.

Renewal of the church

Narration (live): On the continent of Latin America, there is another exciting dimension of the Holy Spirit's work. It is the renewing of the inner life of the church and nowhere is it better illustrated than in the life of one church and one man. The church is Faith Tabernacle in Buenos Aires, one of the largest churches in Argentina, and the man is pastor of that church, the Rev. Juan Carlos Ortiz.

S. Mooneyham (live interview): Brother Juan, I would like to ask you some questions about the renewal experience through which your church has been going. Now obviously, renewal is not just an accidental happening to a church, but I also doubt that we can say that renewal can be programmed or structured to begin at a given time or moment, since it is obviously a work of the Holy Spirit. From your own experience at Faith Tabernacle, how did renewal begin in your church?

J. Ortiz: We were a very successful church, speaking in terms of numbers, but even when we continued to increase numerically, something was lacking and I noticed it. I was not satisfied with the work we had been doing. We worked hard sixteen hours a day and the church attendance was up, but when we relaxed a bit the church went down, so I seemed to be depending upon my effort. We decided to stop all the activities and I went out of town to pray and fast and ask the Lord about the problem. We had numbers, but we did not have satisfaction.

The Spirit told me three things. First, he told me that our church was not growing, it was just getting fatter. He said that we only had more people of the same quality. While we used to have 200 members without love, the number had grown to 600 without love. That is not growing; just getting fatter.

The second thing the Lord told me was that we had a business company, not his church. He reminded me of our sophisticated follow-up system in which we were faithfully applying to our church all the knowledge we had gained at various congresses. We had a telephone follow-up system, letters for every age group, and so forth, but the Lord told me I was applying human promotion to his church and asked me where his involvement entered into these activities.

The third thing he told me was that ours was not a church — his family — but an orphanage and I was the director. He said that the people came to church, sat down, and we fed them all milk. In order to have a family church, he said, we should have everyone personally cared for, with each individual being fed for his own needs. Those three things completely changed our point of view on renewal in the church.

S. Mooneyham: So renewal started with you and your own experience with God?

J. Ortiz: Yes, and when I got back I found there were other pastors who had the same problems and questions and confusions. We met together and there were more pastors praying and fasting until the Lord started to give us some answers. This was not an experience for just our church, but there were churches of many different denominations that became involved in this renewal of the life of the church.

S. Mooneyham: What is the basis of the fellowship that you have with these other churches and pastors?

J. Ortiz: In the beginning we were wrong, for we felt that our common experience of the baptism of the Holy Spirit would be the basis for unity, but as we saw in the Pentecostal churches a sense of disunity even though they had experienced this baptism, we realized this was not the proper basis of fellowship. The basis of fellowship, we believe, is the Lordship of Jesus Christ and love. We should not feel that the charismatic group is the body of Christ. We should live together — the charismatic and the noncharismatic — in the same Body.

S. Mooneyham: I know that sometimes the talk of renewal can be very threatening to the people of a congregation because it seems that you are questioning their previous spirituality. How did you handle this with your congregation?

J. Ortiz: The first step was to call together the elders of my church and we went out to the country for two or three days. I posed to them my problems and my burdens and they accepted the challenge — we were pastor and deacons together. Before I had been like the employee of the church, but after our meetings together I became like a biblical teacher and they became like biblical disciples. The authority changed from the board to the pastor.

I was at the same time relating to other pastors in the city, because when you are alone or by yourself you can lead the people into mistakes.

After six months, each one of the board members did the same thing with two or three other persons — going out to the country, spending time in fellowship, and making disciples of them. It took two years to change the whole church into disciples. We were 600 when we started. After the renewal began, we were 400 — so we lost 200 for the demands of the Gospel. As soon as we had the whole church under discipleship, we multiplied so that we are now 1,200.

S. Mooneyham: You did a very interesting thing in that you dropped the word "member," substituted something else for it, then went back to "member." Tell us about that.

J. Ortiz: Yes, in order to get things done, you have to take complete steps. If you do not take specific steps, it is the same as sewing without making a knot at the end of the thread — you make holes in the cloth, but you do not sew anything.

When we started this program, we told the people we would not use the word "member" any more because it brought to our minds a society or club-type membership — you go to class, pay your dues, and so forth and you can be a member of the club. In reading the book of Acts, we did not find the word "member" anywhere, but we did find the word "disciple" so we started using that term. Before, you could have asked my peo-

ple if they were members of the church and they would have said yes, but if you had asked them if they were disciples, they would often have to say, "No, but I want to be one." So we started discipling people and teaching them, not through messages, but through commandments to do concrete things.

Then after one-and-a-half to two years of discipling, we re-discovered the word "member." It was in the Bible, but it was in the epistles with an entirely different meaning. It was not the club-type member, but the body-type member. We saw that membership in the church is a body-type of membership and we discovered four things about a member.

The first is that a member is someone who unites two other members together, as the forearm unites the arm with the hand. So a member of our congregation must have one person whom he is teaching and one from whom he receives teaching.

The second meaning of "member" for us is a person who passes nourishment. The nourishment he receives from the rest of the body, he passes on to his disciple.

The third thing about a member is that he passes orders — the orders he receives from the head.

The fourth meaning is that the member sustains the other members. As the joints sustain each other, so in our congregation we sustain each other. We are like a bunch of grapes. If you take the pastor, you take the whole bunch because we are all related to each other. It is very difficult to lose members — you cannot just lose a member of your body because it is sustained by all the other members. So it is with the church. When a person is baptized, he is a member of the Body in the truest sense of that word.

S. Mooneyham: That is really a marvelous concept. I understand that in anticipation of possible political problems you closed down the church for one month. You thought that sometime perhaps the church would have to go through persecution and you wanted to give the people a chance to test themselves and their renewal experience under a persecution-type situation. For some churches that would be like committing suicide! What happened at Faith Tabernacle during that month and after?

J. Ortiz: The political situation was very uncertain in our country and we wanted to be prepared in the event that a radical group might at some point take over the government and close the churches. So we started cells in the homes. We had more than 200 cells meeting all over the city — in homes, beaches, restaurants, in Catholic churches; and so forth. We closed down the church building completely because in the event of an enemy take-over, that would probably be done. We passed the word about this to the disciples, and those people who were not disciples went to the building and wondered why it was closed. The enemies of the church said that the police had closed it.

By meeting this way we had to change a number of things, including our financial arrangements. Because we met in cells, we decided to have the tithes and offerings come through the leaders of the cells. Each leader knew who was tithing and who was not, and at the same time in such a small group each one knew what the others earned, so the tithes had to be

right. That month we more than doubled the income of the church.

Now we meet every Sunday in the church, but I prefer to have the offerings taken in the cells!

S. Mooneyham: I wish we could talk longer about your experiences at Faith Tabernacle, but we must now move on to other parts of the world.

Culturally-related evangelism

Narration (live): One of the things the Holy Spirit is teaching us today is that there need be no fixed pattern of evangelism. The Holy Spirit will not be locked into any one method, and it is wrong for us to try. He who was sent to lead the Church in evangelism must be allowed his sovereign right to choose the method for each time and each place.

If there were no diversities of people in the world, then we might with some justification insist upon one method of evangelism as being the "best" method. But the very ethnic and individual differences represented in the Palais here tonight point out clearly why Paul felt it necessary to become different things to different people — why he refused to stereotype his witness.

Thank God that in the growing light of cultural realities some of the rigidity and inflexibility which characterized evangelical witness in the past are giving way to new and varied patterns of proclamation and church planting. Hopefully, all of us are learning some new lessons. One thing has become abundantly clear — evangelism that is truly related to a man's culture is far more effective than methods which are imposed without regard for ethnic and cultural considerations.

Much comment and a tremendous volume of literature which speaks to this important issue is now emerging from Christian leadership around the world. We can sum it up with this statement: If we want to reach the world for Christ in our generation, we must become increasingly sensitive to the forms of each culture as channels for the Christian message.

I want you to see three different illustrations of how cultural realities are being made use of in evangelism. First, we are going to India and meet Dr. Subbamma, one of God's great women in the world. She is constantly on the move in her state of Andhra Pradesh where she has set up many study communities called *ashrams*. An *ashram* is a form indigenous to the culture of India which she has adapted for evangelism among Hindus. In her work alone, there are some five to six thousand Hindus involved in *ashrams* — people who are constantly being exposed to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

S. Mooneyham (film interview): Dr. Subbamma, why do you have such an interest in working with Hindus?

Dr. Subbamma: Oh, I am so glad you asked me that question in that way. I was born in a Hindu family myself, and God in a wonderful way sought me, found me, and filled me. From the time I became a Christian, I really felt the burden to disciple the Hindus. This is why I am so interested in the Hindus.

S. Mooneyham: People around here tell me that one way you carry out your ministry is through an ashram. What is an ashram?

Dr. Subbamma: Well, I could give you a hundred definitions. Right now, I would simply say that it's a place of worship, fellowship, and service.

S. Mooneyham: Why is it so effective here in India among the Hindus?

Dr. Subbamma: We do some things in ashram — meditation, study of the Word of God, study of other religions, studying the different cultural aspects, and so forth. We do not have any rigid formula for ashrams because we want to give freedom to people, as this is one thing that appeals to Hindus and Indians in general.

S. Mooneyham: Once a person has been a part of an ashram for a period of time, do you push for a decision for Jesus Christ?

Dr. Subbamma: No, not at all, we won't push them. They come and we just welcome them in any way they want to come — and they go as far as they can go. But it is amazing in such a short time that they are coming to Christ.

S. Mooneyham: Do you see this as a continuing work of God among the Hindus?

Dr. Subbamma: I feel that the Lord is really at work among these caste Hindus, and these people are coming forward to accept him. They never wanted this kind of Christianity because we called it a religion. Now we must present them with Christ, more than with all of our religiosity.

S. Mooneyham (live interview): After having seen her on film in the midst of an ashram in her country of India, I would now like you to meet Dr. Subbamma in person.

Dr. Subbamma: I wanted to ask you a couple more questions about the ashram because I am intrigued by this method of evangelistic outreach which you are using in India. Obviously, most of the people who come to the ashram are unbelievers. In what ways do they get involved with the Word of God so that they may be exposed to the claims of Jesus Christ?

Dr. Subbamma: First of all, I would like to tell you that there are many kinds of ashrams in India, but these ashrams we started in 1968 are Christian ashrams although they are mainly intended to reach non-Christians and Hindus. When these people come to the ashram, they often come with some knowledge of Christianity. We want to make the ashram a worship service in which they can get involved, and above all we give them Christian fellowship. We welcome them as one of us, give them the Gospel message in a manner they understand such as pageants and indigenous ways they are used to.

We also have service projects in which they can be involved. One Hindu family is helping with an agricultural project. We pay them a bit of money and they have become very much a part of the program. One Brahmin woman came to help us with the cooking and she is now a beautiful Christian. We also have an educational program and we welcome non-Christians into each of these programs because we want them to be involved and are happy when that happens. The Holy Spirit is at work and the people are coming to know Christ through this method of evangelism.

S. Mooneyham: I know that many high-caste Hindus from Andhra Pradesh are coming to know Christ, and one of the primary means of these people — who up to now have been very resistant to the Gospel —

making this change is the ashram program. Tell us about one person who has come to know Christ through this means.

Dr. Subbamma: One woman came to an ashram and became a Christian, and through her influence she brought about fifty people to Christ from her village. They are all baptized and even more than that have come to the ashram and heard about Christ. She has been the inspiration for many women — and a number of men — coming to Christ. She goes to all her relatives in different villages and talks to them without giving a lecture or preaching to them. She tells them that for so long she had worshipped lifeless idols and that now she knows and believes in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Everyone can see that she is very happy and has the joy of Jesus in her life. More than twenty of her relatives have become Christians, and among them one of her sisters has accepted the Lord. Her husband, who is still a Hindu, has nonetheless provided the funds to build a church.

S. Mooneyham: We are all very excited about what God is doing through you and this work in India. It is just one more evidence that the Holy Spirit is choosing a variety of methods for the proclamation of the Gospel.

Narration (live): Now we go to a great Asian metropolis where we see another example of the importance of an evangelism that is sensitive to cultural realities. Rapid urbanization is a worldwide phenomenon and one of the challenges facing the church is to design a strategy which will meet the needs of those who live in the great high-rise apartment buildings of our modern cities.

Narration (film): Singapore...City of the Lions...thriving, bustling, prosperous city of two-and-a-half million people. Multi-racial Singapore with its citizens of Chinese, Malay, and Indian stock.

Everywhere the people of the world are gravitating to the large cities, whether Asia, Europe, or the Americas. Because of land limitations in these urban areas, in most places the only way to build is up...whether you live in Hong Kong or New York.

And this is what is happening in Singapore. Here twenty-story homes in the sky are the rule, not the exception, and for Christians in Singapore this new style of living presents tremendous challenges for the church. How will the modern people of affluent Singapore be reached with the Gospel? James Wong, an Anglican minister, shares some thoughts about this issue in his rapidly changing city-state of Singapore.

J. Wong: We are standing on the twentieth floor of a huge high-rise apartment in the satellite town of Toa Payoh in Singapore. In fact, what we see here, all these high-rise apartments coming up rapidly at the rate of nearly one new apartment every thirty minutes, was not imaginable ten years ago. This whole place was a big swamp and this housing estate itself typifies the whole dynamic progress and development of modern Singapore. By 1980 almost 70 per cent of the more than three million people will be living in these high-rise apartments.

I believe the government here in its modern, far-sighted, and long-term planning system has a wonderful lesson to teach the church with respect to our evangelistic efforts and strategy in reaching the world for Christ. This has not come about by accident, but it is the result of much

planning, effort, thinking, coordination, skills, and vision. I believe, too, that if Singapore — like other modern cities in the world — is to be reached for Jesus Christ, then we must think through very, very seriously and creatively new patterns of high-rise or urban evangelism.

At present only five per cent of Singapore is evangelized and I believe if the other 95 per cent are going to hear the Gospel, we have to think through a way of planting a church or a household group in each of these blocks where we have more than a thousand people in huge apartment buildings. I believe that our real strategy will depend not so much on building the traditional western edifice, but rather will concentrate on household evangelism where the Christian family in this apartment block will invite the neighboring non-Christian people to visit and share with them the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Insofar as we can think of a scheme to train our lay leaders and mobilize them and encourage them to be aggressive, open, and attentive to the opportunities, this will be one way of reaching Singapore for Jesus Christ and saturating the whole city with a knowledge of him.

Narration (live): Out in the lobby of the Palais de Beaulieu there is a population clock which is a dramatic reminder of the rapid growth of world population. But there is another statistic connected with that clock that has equally great significance for evangelization. The world is actually becoming more illiterate than literate because of the rapid population increase. How shall we reach these masses of people who can neither read nor write?

Something is happening 200 miles into the interior of the West African country of Liberia that should give encouragement to us all. What is happening there shows that illiteracy is not necessarily a hindrance to belief or proclamation. An evangelistic explosion has taken place among the people of the Gbazon tribe during the past eight years. Immediately after conversion the people begin to memorize Scripture. God has given the Gbazon people the amazing gift of committing entire books of the Bible to memory.

God's messenger to these people has been Augustus Marwieh, whom some of you will remember from the Berlin Congress in 1966.

S. Mooneyham (live interview): Gus, you were the messenger of God that brought the Gospel to the Gbazon people. I note that this happened in 1966 and I remember that the World Congress on Evangelism was held in 1966. I am wondering if there is any kind of relationship between these two events.

A. Marwieh: At the Berlin Congress, Dr. Billy Graham spoke on the topic, "What Is Evangelism?" As he spoke, he wound up my soul like a clock with inspiration to such an extent that ideas, compassion, burdens, and everything just jammed me up until I didn't know what to do with myself. When I returned to my hotel room, I was literally sick. I had never, never in my life had such a burden. I felt that Billy Graham should change his type of evangelism and start preaching to Christians instead of unbelievers. I thought if he could give Christians a burden like the one he gave to me, he could evangelize the whole world.

That burden did something to me and to my people, and the result of that is the work that is being done now in the eastern part of Liberia.

S. Mooneyham: So it was after that experience at the Berlin Congress that you went to the Gbazon people. You know, one of the things I remember most about you from Berlin is the way you play the drums. Let's bring out your drums and let you show us how you praise God in Liberia with your own music.

Now by means of film we are going with Gus Marwieh and Bob Larson of the World Vision staff to visit the Gbazon people. You will meet Nancy Blatty, a delightful woman who, though illiterate, has been gifted by God with the ability to put the stories of the Bible into native song and dance. Thus she communicates the Gospel in this beautifully natural cultural form without benefit of any written words.

But Gus, there is a scene with which this film opens that looks to me like a kind of war dance. Would you explain the significance of that to us?

A. Marwieh: It isn't a war dance, but a victory dance. However, it is not to celebrate a victory over an enemy, but to celebrate the completion of a certain job like harvesting the crops.

S. Mooneyham: A victory dance! Let's go to Liberia and see what victories the Holy Spirit is bringing to pass for Christ.

R. Larson (film interview): Gus, were you born in this jungle?

A. Marwieh: Literally, I was born in this jungle. My mother was digging casaba, and while digging this vegetable she found herself in childbirth and there in the casaba farm by herself she gave birth to me. I grew up in the village, a naked boy, never wearing clothes until I was 14 years old. That was when I started school, beginning with a book borrowed from the wife of one of my cousins.

R. Larson: As I have walked around these last few days, it seems that there is very little literacy here. Is it possible to have a program of evangelism without literacy?

A. Marwieh: God has done such a wonderful thing, Bob. He has given our people a tremendous memory and they can literally memorize whole books of the Bible. So literacy is completely nil. We are starting schools here, but still that doesn't stop the progress of the Gospel. We are translating the Bible in the language of the people on tapes, so the people are hearing the Gospel and many of them are memorizing the Scriptures from the tapes.

Also we have schools in the various villages teaching the people how to read and write. We have about twelve schools in the various villages. But we wanted to use what we had while the people were hungry for the Word of God. We didn't want to wait one minute.

R. Larson: About ten years ago there were no Christians in this village. What has made the difference?

A. Marwieh: God had prepared the hearts of the people. I don't know what means God used, but when we came here God really had the people hungry and prepared for the Word of God so that when they heard the news of our coming, there were thousands ready to meet us. When we preached the Word of God, there was a great movement that swept across the whole tribe.

R. Larson: And what about Nancy?

A. Marwieh: Nancy Blatty? She is a marvelous person. She has created so many songs — she is a creative genius. She has adapted many Bi-

ble stories and verses of Scripture to music. She is doing a marvelous job.

The film shows the women of the village singing in the background while Nancy Blatty dances and quotes passages of Scripture almost from Genesis to Revelation.

R. Larson: Would you call what has happened in this tribe a "people's movement"?

A. Marwieh: That's right — a people's movement in which tribes and villages turned to the Lord.

R. Larson: What do you see for the future?

A. Marwieh: God sometimes chooses one person to do a great work and sometimes he chooses a nation as he chose Israel. I believe God has chosen the Gbazon tribe for a great work in Africa, because there are so many great talents that could be used of God to set a movement going throughout West Africa.

People movements

Narration (live): And so by all means — not one method or two or three, but a variety of ways — the Holy Spirit makes sure that Christ is lifted up so that men will turn to him.

As Gus Marwieh pointed out, what has happened among the Gbazon tribe in Liberia may well be called a "people movement." It is an expression, heard more and more today. It represents church growth, not by addition, but by multiplication as entire villages turn to serve the living God and whole family units or clans are converted to Jesus Christ.

People movements have occurred or are presently happening in such diverse places as Nigeria, Thailand, the New Hebrides Islands, among the Nagas of India, among the Dyaks of Indonesia, the Montagnards of South Vietnam, and the Aymaras of Bolivia, to name only a few. In 1973-74, some 4,000 members of a Dyak tribe in Borneo, which heretofore had been unreached, were converted to Christ in less than two years.

The phenomenon of people movements is not always understood, but it is a valid, increasingly common expression of church growth. For instance, when a village in Nagaland converts from animism to Christ, it does not mean that salvation is any less a personal and individualistic experience. What it does mean is that God is dealing with individuals, but within the communal environment of an entire class, caste or tribe.

In your Congress registration envelope you received a staggering compilation called an "Unreached People Survey." Many believe that if these ethnic and tribal groups are going to be reached in time, it cannot be done on a one-by-one individual basis, but only by a dramatic movement of the Holy Spirit working among them as a group. Let's take a look now at how the Holy Spirit is presently working in some of these people movements.

Narration (slides): Missionaries and national leaders serving the Aymara-speaking peoples of Bolivia report an increasing receptivity to the Gospel. In the past year churches like the Friends, the Methodists, the Seventh Day Adventists, the Assemblies of God, and others have experienced a rapid growth rate ranging from 15 to 100 per cent. In one

year's time, the number of Adventist churches was increased from 90 to 200 congregations. Obviously there are no simple human explanations for this. But as the living conditions of the Aymaras have slowly improved over the past twenty years, the people become more mobile and they are breaking with old traditions and patterns of life. Thus they are becoming receptive to new things, including the evangelical witness.

But their responsiveness to Christ is due to more than just methods of evangelism employed by missionaries and churches. God's Spirit is moving in this community and nearly ten per cent of the one-and-a-half million Aymaras are now believers in Christ.

In nearby Ecuador, missionaries have worked among the Quichua Indians for over 70 years with very discouraging success. Then suddenly in 1967, 131 people were baptized. By the next year the believers totalled 315 in eleven congregations, and in 1973 there were 8,000 baptized believers in over 100 congregations.

The growth of the church among the Quichuas was originally centered in Chimborazo Province. Several Quichua pastors and missionaries have been badly beaten and the Quichua believers themselves, by the hundreds, have been assaulted and had their homes attacked.

But whenever persecution strikes, the establishment and growth of the church seems to follow closely. And Christ's believers among the Quichuas are growing by at least 16 per cent annually.

Narration (film): In April of 1972, the peaceful life of some 11,000 Stieng tribespeople in South Vietnam was interrupted. An enemy attack near their home in An Loc resulted in many deaths and their evacuation to a refugee camp near the capital city of Saigon. A year later they were again evacuated, this time to Bao Loc.

When their troubles began in 1972, the Stieng tribe had about 1,300 Christians — and that was the sum total of ten years of hard missionary witness. But God clearly used their suffering in the war to lead them to Christ. In 1973, there were over 3,600 new converts. And today, more than 55 per cent of the Stieng tribe — some 6,000 people — are baptized believers.

We asked Pastor Dieu Huynh how it all happened.

Dieu Huynh (film interview): When we think the whole thing over, we realize God has blessed our people in an amazing way. Part of it was because of some of the miracles that were performed among the people. Some of them were sick and were then saved, and are still alive. Two of the witches have turned to believe in Christ. There is such a rapid growth because the Stieng people did not have anybody to believe in. They now know about God and they believe in Christ.

Narration (film): Yes, God is indeed building his Church in some amazing ways. One of the most unusual outpourings of his Spirit has been evidenced among soldiers in the Army of the Republic of Korea.

In early 1970 there were only twenty-five chaplains serving fewer than 65,000 Christian soldiers. Then suddenly that year, there was an explosion of spiritual interest and nearly 25,000 soldiers were baptized in 1970. In 1971, 30,000 more men were converted and the following year, 43,000. In April, 1972, and again in October, 1973, mass baptisms took place for more than 3,200 men.

In the past four years, more than 125,000 military men have come to know Jesus Christ as their personal Savior, and the number of chaplains serving them has grown from twenty-five to nearly 300. While Christians in Korea now represent nearly 12 per cent of the population, within the Korean army their numbers account for 30 per cent.

Narration (live): Much of the focus of this Congress has already been on Asia, both as an area of tremendous need and opportunity. We are going to talk with two men who have been involved in places in Asia where the Holy Spirit has done a spectacular thing. The Rev. Longri Ao is head of the Nagaland Missionary Movement in India, and the Rev. Petrus Octavianus is president of the Indonesian Missionary Fellowship.

Gentlemen, let me ask you, first of all, to say a word about the people movements which you have witnessed in your own countries. What do you think, Brother Longri, are some of the factors which have produced this movement in Nagaland?

Longri Ao: The people in Nagaland have been through a series of political turmoils during the last 20 years creating unrest, uncertainty and anxieties in their minds. This has driven them to Jesus Christ. The people in our churches have been very active in witnessing for Jesus, and thousands of people — not less than 10,000 every year — accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. When you were with us in the interior, Dr. Mooneyham, you saw how thousands of people walked for days, carrying their food and their children, to hear you speak. After they had been there a few days, many were different men and women.

S. Mooneyham: It was one of the most moving experiences of my life. I have seen tribes in Nagaland that are 80 per cent Christian — your own Ao tribe, for example — where a century ago there were no Christians.

Longri Ao: That is right. A century ago we were head-hunters! One man was converted two years ago, but before he had taken about forty-five heads. Now he is a great soul winner! Another man had decorated his house with the forty-five heads he had taken, and he is now treasurer of the church and a soul-winner as well.

S. Mooneyham: From head-hunter to soul-hunter, and now he is decorating heaven with souls!

Brother Octavianus, what do you consider to be the contributing factors to the people movement in Indonesia?

P. Octavianus: First, I want to say that revival is going on in Indonesia, but I have never before accepted an interview regarding it because I do not want to sensationalize the news of it. But after our praying about it together, I have decided that I want to make it known here that the world can be reached with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

There are three important factors regarding revival in Indonesia. One, it is God's time. God is ready now to reach nations that have never been reached with the Gospel. Two, I believe there has also been preparation from man's side. In 1957, several prayer groups began to gather together for prayer at five o'clock in the morning at a time when our country was under the power and influence of the Communists. We prayed expecting great things from God, and he is willing to answer those prayers. Three, the country of Indonesia has five principles which the people are encouraged to practice. One of them is to believe in God. The

revival broke out in 1964, a year before the attempted Communist coup. Because the coup failed, most of the people lost their faith in Communism and were looking for something in which to believe. That was an open door for the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

S. Mooneyham: Each of you has described some of the elements that have produced a people movement in your culture. There have been questions as to whether the people are really changed. Do you think the people are genuinely converted to Christ, and is there evidence of this conversion, or is it just mass hysteria?

Longri Ao: Oh, no; they are truly converted. After these revival meetings drunkards are changed and become sober, responsible people; broken homes are united; the head-hunters become soul-winners. So many of these changes are taking place in our country. This ministry is not limited to pastors, but it is a lay movement as well. All the people are involved, going out in groups to the various villages to tell people about the love they have found in Jesus. The people do become changed, and the change is permanent. It is the work of the Spirit of God.

S. Mooneyham: Have you seen the same things happening in Indonesia, Brother Octavianus?

P. Octavianus: Yes, I have. The people who turn to Jesus Christ burn their charms and fetishes. I have seen the repentance and confession of sin, and the joy of repentance in their lives. There is definite evidence that these conversions are real.

S. Mooneyham: For a moment let's take a look at the big continent of Asia which is less than 2 per cent Christian. Humanly speaking, that doesn't leave much room for optimism. Yet, the Anglican Bishop of Singapore, Bishop Chiu Ban-It, says he confidently expects a new movement of the Spirit within Asia which will make Christ the chief cornerstone of the continent. Do you share his optimism and, if so, why?

Longri Ao: Oh, definitely! India as a whole, and particularly the tribesmen living in the high mountains, are emerging to be a missionary people. We are sending out missionaries. I am head of a missionary movement and we believe that in spite of great difficulties we shall very soon be sending out missionaries beyond our borders. Now we have many missionaries to the unreached tribes within our borders.

S. Mooneyham: How do you view this, Brother Octavianus?

P. Octavianus: We cannot say that everyone will be saved before the second coming of Jesus Christ, but when I first went to my village there was not one single Christian. You came to visit us shortly after that, Dr. Mooneyham. Then in 1967 I was speaking at a Christmas meeting attended by a group of non-Christians. I suddenly felt the Holy Spirit moving and changed my message from a Christmas message to an evangelistic sermon. In this meeting thirty-seven people of this village accepted Christ. Now in just this one village there are more than 250 Christians. We also have congregations around my village — some are small and some are large.

S. Mooneyham: You mean that when I visited you seven years ago there were no Christians in your village and now there are congregations? Praise God!

I believe that what you gentlemen have reported gives all of us en-

couragement to pray that the Spirit of God may move on this vast continent in a way that has never been seen before, so that millions may be won to Christ. On that continent, of course, is China with one-fifth of all the world's people. Some who have gone into China recently tell stories of how many of their relatives are hungry for the Gospel. Who can dare say what God is now doing in the People's Republic of China? Might he be creating a spiritual vacuum among one-fifth of the world's people which only Jesus Christ can fill?

We know the Spirit of God blows over all boundaries made by man and he will see that Christ is lifted up. We are encouraged to believe and pray with you that God will continue to do this great work in Asia.

Evangelism and social action

Narration (live): A great deal has already been said in this Congress about the relationship of evangelism and social concern. The Holy Spirit seems to be showing us that the debate which has gone on for nearly a century is really a non-issue. We thank God for that! As Dr. Graham reminded us on the opening night, faith and good works are handmaidens of the Gospel which cannot be divorced.

There are two mandates in the New Testament. One is witness; the other is service. To ignore or deny either of them is to seriously cripple the church. Social action is certainly not Christian evangelism, but to engage in evangelism of souls without recognition that those souls also have bodies is foolish and unreal.

Neither is the changing of social structures to be equated with evangelizing a country, but to ignore political injustice and economic abuse while we talk about the transforming power of Jesus Christ is to weaken and discredit our message.

In preparing for this presentation tonight, we surveyed some 150 evangelical leaders around the world and asked them to point out significant trends in their areas. From every part of the world came reports that evangelicals are ministering to human needs, as well as spiritual needs, in the name of Christ. Concern about medical care, sub-standard housing, food shortages, illiteracy, political injustice and economic inequality is being translated into Christian action.

It is my deep conviction that love which is just talked about can be easily turned aside, but love which is demonstrated in tangible acts of Christian caring is irresistible. I believe this is what our next film segment is trying to say.

Narration (film): In any country of the world, poverty knows no boundaries not even in the beautiful city of San José, Costa Rica. On the outskirts of San José, there is a squatter village called Pueblo Nuevo, or "new community." It is a not a very nice place in which to live, but for the moment it's about all the people have.

Ernesto Rodriguez cares about these people, and his concern is not just temporary relief — or, as he says, a "band-aid" operation — because there are some real changes taking place. Ernesto is a follower of Jesus Christ, and his work here in Pueblo Nuevo is a demonstration of God's love in action. He knows where the people hurt. As a new Christian three-and-a-half years ago, Ernesto didn't know much about theology.

He just knew that as a follower of Jesus, he had to respond in love to those in need.

Orlando Costas from Evangelism-in-Depth talks with Ernesto about evangelism and social action.

O. Costas (film interview): What really struck me, Ernesto, is how you have been able to engage in evangelism which was relevant to the context of the situation in which these people were living, as well as being inter-related with their problems — the lack of housing, the lack of land, the lack of know-how.

E. Rodriguez: It began with the principle from which I started, for the Lord moved me with compassion to go to Quantifilo and serve. I went there and I loved these people. To me, all these people are still my family. When I saw their condition, I wanted to help them in all the ways I could. Out of that love, I not only gave them the Good News, but I tried to identify myself with them. The principle we use to teach these people is our love for them, and not to bring them to be part of a certain religion. They are human beings...I love them because the Lord loved me first. The next step is to teach them to help each other because of love, and slowly the whole community begins to talk with each other and help each other.

O. Costas: I understand the whole community was transformed because you got new land and housing. In other words, there were some structural changes that took place in the life of that community.

E. Rodriguez: Primarily, I organized the resources that were available in the country. I did not get any help from the outside, but tried to help the people learn to do things for themselves.

O. Costas: You know, Ernesto, I think this is the message. Evangelism and social action are not two separate things. The social service that we do with evangelism doesn't have to be mere "band-aids," but it is possible for the church to be involved in bringing about deep, profound structural changes in a given community.

E. Rodriguez: This is definitely true. If you have a child, you love him and get him the things he needs. So it is with the people to whom you take the Word of God. You must help them along as you can. It's love in action.

Conclusion

Narration (live): And so the Acts of the Holy Spirit go on. His work will not stop until our Lord returns. Jesus said, "When he, the Spirit of truth is come...he shall not speak of himself...he shall glorify me." The task of the Holy Spirit is to lift Christ up to the world by all means. Jesus said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." Wicked hands lifted him up on a cross to die the death for sinners. Now loving hands, strengthened by the Holy Spirit, lift him again as the crucified, risen, triumphant and coming Lord!

"It is not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord."

One of the most dramatic moments in the Old Testament occurred shortly after Elijah was taken to heaven in a chariot of fire. Elisha watched the chariot disappear, then turned around and picked up the cloak of Elijah. On that very same day he had seen the great prophet strike the Jordan River with it and they had walked across on dry ground. Now

Elijah is gone. Elisha, who has asked for a double portion of the spirit of the prophet, walks back to the Jordan. He takes the cloak and smites the water with the cry, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" Again the water parts and Elisha walks back on dry ground. In response to faith, God showed his power!

The cry arises today from barren and fruitless harvest fields — "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" It comes from sterile and lifeless churches — "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" It ascends from the depths of a persecuted and suffering church, from the inner souls of weary and struggling servants, from the agonized spirits of those who yearn for revival and renewal — "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?"

Without appearing flippant, I would like to answer that question. Elijah's God is where he has always been. He is where Elisha found him. He is here...now...present...powerful. He has never been away.

I want to ask a question that to me is more relevant for our time. *Where are the Elijahs of the Lord God?* Where are the men and women of faith for whom God will open and close heaven? Where are the prophets who with boldness will challenge the tyranny and injustice of rulers who govern without God? Where are the confident and courageous witnesses who will stand — alone, if necessary — before the twentieth century prophets of Baal and discredit their false claims with fire from heaven?

When we have more Elijahs, we will have more of Elijah's God. Oh, that God may give such men to the Church of our time! Men like John Knox who, pressed in his spirit with a burden for his land, cried out to God, "Give me Scotland or I die!" Men like Francis Xavier who stood knocking at the door of China, groaning out his plea, "O rock, rock, when wilt thou open to my Lord?" Men like John Sung of China who was willing to count everything but loss that the masses of Asia might hear the name of Jesus. Men like Sadhu Sundar Singh who renounced all to be one of God's true holy men of India. Men like Dwight L. Moody who heard someone say, "The world is waiting to see what can be done through one life fully surrendered to God" — and determined to be that man.

Men like General William Booth, who undaunted by persecution and ridicule, helped shape the course of church history as founder of the Salvation Army. Among the many wonderful stories told about him, there is one which always stirs me deeply. It is said that as he would read the Book of Acts — reliving the victories of the early church, sensing again the power that transformed the apostles from timid men into bold witnesses, feeling once more the impact of the Gospel upon pagan cultures — as he read of the Acts of the Holy Spirit in the early church, he would drop his head onto the pages of his Bible and wet them with his tears as he sobbed out this prayer over and over and over: "Do it again, Lord, do it again!"

May this be the prayer of Lausanne: "Do it again, Lord, do it again!" As you revealed your power through Elijah and turned the hearts of the people back to you, "Do it again, Lord, do it again!" As your power exploded through the first-century church to turn the world upside down, "Do it again, Lord, do it again!"

We live in a time of tremendous need. It is a time of political upheaval, of military posturing with weapons which could destroy

mankind, of economic uncertainty which could bring social collapse — “Do it again, Lord, do it again!” We confess that our churches are lukewarm and many of your people are absorbed in materialism and pleasure, but in spite of our sin and faithlessness — “Do it again, Lord, do it again!”

It is a time when it seems that the four horsemen of the Apocalypse — famine, disease, war and death — are ready to ride and ravage the earth. Let your church be ready for apocalyptic days — “Do it again, Lord, do it again!”

With nearly three thousand million yet to believe in the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world, “Do it again, Lord, do it again!” Before the last trumpet sounds and Jesus Christ returns in power and glory, “Do it again, Lord, do it again!”

In a few days we will leave Lausanne, Lord, and go back to our people and our work as your men and women. We will be writing another chapter in the Acts of the Holy Spirit. As you have helped your people in every age write chapters of victory, of conquests, of praise to your Son — “Do it again, Lord, do it again!”

Amen.

LIVING THROUGH AN APOCALYPSE

Malcolm Muggeridge

Mr. Muggeridge, Sussex, England, is an internationally-known journalist and commentator.

Whenever I come to the town of Lausanne I always think of a corpulent Englishman named Edward Gibbon, who some two centuries ago was settled here to complete his majestic *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, a great masterpiece written with elegance and detachment which characterized the eighteenth-century mind. It is only fair to add that his detachment, if not his elegance, deserted him when he was confronted, not with the breakdown of an ancient civilization, but with actual disorders near at hand consequent upon the revolutionary situation which had arisen in France — what might, perhaps, be regarded as the first shots in a process fated to submerge the civilization Gibbon so rejoiced in and regarded as the acme of all human achievement. We are all, I think, a little like this, and easily endure the troubles of the past while beating our breasts lustily upon those of our own time.

Even so, let me boldly and plainly say that it has long seemed to me clear beyond any shadow of doubt that what is still called Western Civilization is in an advanced stage of decomposition, and that another Dark Age will soon be upon us, if, indeed, it has not already begun. With the Media, especially television, governing all our lives, as they indubitably do, it is easily imaginable that this might happen without our noticing. I was reading the other day about a distasteful but significant experiment conducted in some laboratory or other. A number of frogs were put into a bowl of water, and the water very gradually raised to the boiling point, with the result that they all expired without making any serious effort to jump out of the bowl. The frogs are us, the water is our habitat, and the media, by accustoming us to the gradual deterioration of our values and our circumstances, ensure that the boiling point comes upon us unawares. It is my own emphatic opinion that the boiling point is upon us *now*, and that as a matter of urgency Christians must decide how they should conduct themselves in the face of so apocalyptic a situation.

To talk in this strain, to draw attention to the fact that the temperature of the water is rising alarmingly, is, as I well know, to invite accusations of pessimism. In my opinion, the boot is on the other foot. If I ridicule a prospectus for a housing estate to be built on the slopes of Mount Etna, I am not being a pessimist. On the contrary, it is the advocates of so ruinous and ridiculous a project who are the true pessimists. To warn against it and denounce it is optimistic in the sense that it presupposes the possibility of building a house on secure foundations — as it is put in the New Testament, on a rock, so that when floods arise and streams beat violently against it, it stands firm.

In other words, the most pessimistic attitude anyone could possibly take today would be to suggest that a way of life based on materialist values, on laying up treasure on earth in the shape of an ever-expanding