

UNTO THE UTTERMOST PART OF THE EARTH

Part 1 - by Elder Bob Dickerson - The Gospel Appeal - February 1997

"And ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" Acts 1: 8. These were the last words spoken by our Lord here upon this earth, as he completed His purpose here and ascended into Heaven before the eyes of the Apostles (vs. 9). The context (vs. 1-13) clearly declares that this instruction was given to the Apostles; and it was an instruction which they fulfilled. "And they (the Apostles - see the preceding verses) went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following" (Mk. 16:20).

But in these last words there is a principle that reaches forth unto the gospel church of the Lord Jesus Christ today; that the gospel is to be preached wherever the Spirit of God may lead and direct. Even the Apostles, having received the instruction to "go ye into all the world" and to "preach the gospel to every creature" (Mk. 16:15) were not allowed to choose, on their own, where they would go or how they would organize their work. Jesus, who had commanded them to go, also commanded them to "tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). Even the Apostle Paul was not allowed to choose where he would labor. Paul and Timothy had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia preaching the gospel, but they "were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia" (Acts 16:6). It seemed to Paul and Timothy that the next likely place to go with the gospel would have been to Bithynia, but we are told that "the Spirit suffered them not" (Acts 16:7).

So the instruction to go to the "uttermost part of the earth" obviously does not carry with it the right of the minister to determine his own field of labor, but he is to go only when and as directed by the Spirit of God. There is also a pattern given by our Lord to be followed before we reach "the uttermost part of the earth". That pattern as stated in our text is to begin at home - "in Jerusalem" (for this is where the Apostles were and where the early church was gathered in the "upper room" - Acts 1:12,13). Then it moves out "to all Judea" - this is the province (similar to our states) in which Jerusalem was located; then "in Samaria" (this was the next province or the next state to Judea), and then "unto the uttermost part of the earth". Men have never cared for the patterns of God's word but rather have hurried to place themselves where they can accumulate the most converts and the most glory for themselves. But God told Moses with great emphasis - "See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount" (Heb. 8:5).

That pattern is one of faith, love, humility, truth and a sincere desire to closely follow the teachings of God's word and to ascribe all the glory unto God. That is the way in which the Apostle Paul and others (as recorded in the Book of Acts) went forth - trusting in God to supply their needs, not counting converts, but glorying in the truths of God. Rather than to sin as David did in counting the number of Israel (I Chron. 21:1, 7), the Apostle Paul even said "I thank God that I baptized none of you..." (I Cor. 1:16) for "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel" (I Cor. 1:17). "What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge..." (I Cor. 9:18). Nowhere does the Apostle list all of his converts, or tell us of his greatness. Rather he describes himself as the "chief of sinners" (I Tim. 1:15), and declares again and again that though he or others may have planted or watered, that it is "God that giveth the increase" (I Cor. 3:7). Where this pattern has been followed over the years, it has been pleasing in the sight of God and has brought forth growth within the church. Where this pattern has been ignored, the result has ever been a lessening of spirituality and a growing dependence upon the efforts and wisdom of man.

Our Baptist forefathers in the faith never had any objection to the preaching of the gospel, wherever God might direct His ministers to go, but rather delighted in it. In 1832 when the division occurred over the mission movement, their objection was not against the gospel being preached in other lands, but to the purpose of that preaching (to make sheep) and to man-made mission systems.

For over 150 years the Primitive Baptists have stood steadfast on these principles. In March 1994 a foreign mission program was introduced among our people under the auspices of Eureka Primitive Baptist church near Tifton, Ga., and their pastor, Elder Jeff Harris. Elder Harris and another elder made a trip to the Philippines, flying over and back and staying roughly one week, during which time they baptized 44 people (as members of Eureka Church) and ordained 7 ministers. (The 7 ministers were baptized and ordained the same day.) In July 1994 Elder Jeff Harris returned for another week accompanied by a different minister and they baptized 41 people and ordained 9 ministers. Since then at least two additional trips of short duration have been made by 4 or more ministers, much money has been raised, books have been written and sold (along with video tapes), and for the first time in 150 years the Old Baptists have a modern mission movement in existence among them.

Many of our people have opposed the manner in which this work was carried forth; and many others among our people gave strong support to it. Those of us who opposed the manner in which it was carried forth were promptly judged to be

"opposed to the preaching of the gospel" or "opposed to evangelism". I deny such a charge. Over the past year I have had the privilege of visiting with and hearing from Old Baptist brethren from all sections of the country, and I do not know of a one who is opposed to the preaching of the gospel anywhere, even "to the uttermost part of the earth". I do not know of a one who would not willingly support such a work were it done in accordance with the pattern laid forth in the Scriptures.

After all, the church of my membership would not be here today (nor would the church of your membership), unless some servant of God in time past had been led to enter into new territory and preach to the sheep of God that were there. Many of our ministers today (as God in His providence has led us) have labored in the establishment of the cause either in places where it had not existed previously or in places where it once flourished and the church had closed. Whatever your understanding of evangelism, I hardly think you could justly charge us with being opposed to the spread of the gospel. But where the pattern of the Scriptures has been ignored, and the ways of man and the praise of man have replaced the ways of God and the glory of God, we would be poor watchmen on the wall not to oppose that which conflicts with God's word.

I have recently received several letters concerning this movement: one from a good sister who is genuinely concerned that any criticism has been made of this work. Another letter from Eureka Church came with a note attached asking me to make copies and to distribute them to the other ministers in my area; thus I presume that this is a public letter and contains a public request for information on unscriptural doctrines and practices connected with this mission movement. (The cover letter accompanying this is addressed to "all elders, deacons and members of the old line Primitive Baptist faith and order").

I feel that for far too long many of us have remained silent on this issue; and that the time has come to stand for the truth of God's word and to condemn that which is contrary to the pattern He has set. "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest" (Isa. 61:1). Brethren, the time has come for those who love the "old paths" of God's Holy word to take a stand for those principles and against those methods, customs and institutions which are contrary to His Holy word.

I have asked Elder Robert Webb of Carthage, Illinois, to give us the benefit of his observations on this movement. Elder Webb was the initial contact made by the Philippine brethren who requested information and assistance concerning the doctrine of the Primitive Baptists, in that this request was sent to the Primitive Baptist Library at Carthage, Ill., which Elder Webb founded and conducts. Elder Webb responded to their request for literature and has kept in touch with these brethren

in the Philippines. He knows more of what has occurred over there than any one else. The article he has written appears elsewhere in this issue. I might add that Elder Jeff Harris in two of the books he published, has this to say about Brother Webb: "We are particularly indebted to Elder Robert Webb, curator of the Primitive Baptist Library in Carthage, Illinois, who has sent needed books and pamphlets by us and through the mail in order to assist us in our discipleship of these dear brethren. He has been very generous with his time, materials and money". (Under the Filipino Sun, page 24.) Also in Under the Shadow of the Almighty, page 9, Elder Gus Harter refers to Elder Webb's support of "this evangelistic work with both literature and his personal finances". Perhaps these statements will help our readers understand the extent of Elder Webb's knowledge of this situation, and you can see in his article in his own words what grave errors have been committed in the name of "evangelism".

I can understand the good sister who is upset that any criticism should be offered towards this movement; she is impressed with the idea that the gospel is being carried to other climates and other peoples. I can share her feelings in that, but whatever is to be done NEEDS to be done according to the pattern shown us in the word of God. Next month we shall consider this present work and the manner in which it deviates from that pattern.

In the meantime, may I suggest that our readers order the October 1996 issue and the January- February 1997 issue of The Cords of Truth published by Elder Bob Allgood, 757 Ivory Rd., Rio Rancho, NM 87124. Send him a few dollars to cover mailing and printing costs, although there is no charge for the paper. Both issues are totally devoted to the subject of the modern mission movement recently introduced among us, and since Elder Allgood came from the Landmark faction of the Missionary Baptist, he is quite familiar with mission systems. You will find his comments accurate and enlightening. (To be continued)..... Bob Dickerson 2/97

Part Two - by Elder Bob Dickerson - (Continued from The Gospel Appeal) - March 1997

Last month we observed that our Lord told His Apostles that they would carry His gospel to the "uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8), and they did just that (Mk. 16:20). But we also noted that the Apostles were not left to choose on their own where they would go and preach, but were limited by the leadership and direction of the Holy Spirit (Acts 16:6-10). As they went forth in fulfilling this instruction, they left a pattern for the spread of the gospel - a pattern that has been followed by the true servants of Christ over the ages of time. It is a pattern of faith, dedication, and love for the little children of God and the gospel - the good news of a finished salvation.

The Book of Acts records instance after instance where the Apostle Paul (and others) went forth to new territories with the gospel. They went by faith in God and in the promises of God, as Abraham of old, who "went out, not knowing whither he went" (Heb.11:8). I do not find where the Apostle Paul raised large sums of money to finance his travels, but he went as led by the Spirit of God, trusting in the God of Heaven to open the way and to supply his needs (Acts 13:1-4). When he entered a community and found those who rejoiced in the gospel he preached, he stayed with them and taught them through the preaching of the gospel until they were established in the faith; then when the Spirit led him to go elsewhere, he would journey to that place and repeat the process. He lived as the people of that country lived, ate what they ate (Acts 16:34; 27:34-36; I Cor. 8:4-8; 10:25), and identified with them and their needs (I Cor. 9:19-23). He did not seek to gain from them financially (II Cor. 12:14; Acts 20:33), but labored with his own hands to make a living (Acts 18:3; I Cor. 4:12), that the gospel might be proclaimed without charge (I Cor. 9:18). Read it, brethren, in the pages of your Bible, for that is the pattern God has set. And that pattern has been repeated again and again by the true servants of God over the centuries. Men did not send them - men did not finance them - but God opened the way and provided their needs.

God's hand is not short that He cannot save (Isa. 50:2). When He gets ready to send a preacher to a foreign land, do you really think He will have to wait upon men to collect funds in order to accomplish His purpose? When it pleased God to send the message of His truth to the great city of Nineveh, God used a whale to provide the transportation for Jonah. (In fact, as you read the Book of Jonah, you might notice that the only money mentioned in the whole book is what Jonah spent in his foolish effort to run away from God and from God's work.) When it pleased God to send the Apostle Paul to the city of Rome, God, in His marvelous providence, so arranged it that the Roman government provided his transportation! (Acts 27th and 28th chapters). Paul remained in Ephesus for three years (Acts 20:31), in Corinth for a year and a half (Acts 19:11), in Rome for two years (Acts 28:30), etc.; and this gave him opportunity to properly judge those who responded to the gospel call before trying to constitute them as a church, and to properly judge the gifts among them before ordaining them. He did not boast of the number of converts he had made or of the numbers he baptized (I Cor. 1:14-17), but rather declared that it was his job to preach the gospel (I Cor. 9:16) and that God must give the increase (I Cor. 3:6).

It is our purpose now to examine the modern mission system introduced among us by Eureka Church of Tifton, Ga., and their pastor, Elder L. Jeff Harris. If it meets the standards of the pattern God has set, then it would be worthy of support by all Old Baptists everywhere. If it fails to meet that standard, then

it should be condemned. None of us have any right to add to or take from the scriptures (Rev. 22:18).

When I received the letter from Eureka Church addressed to "all Elders, Deacons and members of the old line Primitive Baptist Faith and order" asking for any documented evidence of error in their mission program, my first thought was "don't they have a Bible?". Brethren, I do not mean to be flippant by relaying such a thought, for this is a serious matter, and many innocent children of God have already been hurt by it both in the Philippines and in the United States. My heart goes out to those who have lost their church home both here and abroad. But seriously, all they need is the Bible - simply to compare what has been done in this mission program with the pattern God has set in His word. As far as the "documented departures" they requested, I have a file of such over an inch thick, and others have much more. But it is not necessary to list all of these infractions, as the evidence is already there from those who engaged in this work. Those gathered around the fire in Jerusalem the night our Lord was betrayed (Luke. 22:55) told the Apostle Peter that "thy speech bewrayeth thee" (Mt. 26:73), and it seems to me the speech (and writings) of those connected with this movement are sufficient (when compared with the Bible) to betray them. Most of what I shall mention comes from the very books published by Elder Harris telling (boasting) of his mission work: Under the Mango Tree, Under the Filipino Sun, and Under the Shadow of the Almighty.

This modern mission system begins with a flawed concept, and continues with a blatant disregard for the word of God, thus culminating in a myriad of errors. I do not suppose that one could go to a foreign country, even under the best of conditions, led and blessed by the Spirit of God, and not encounter great differences and perplexing problems. Even here in America, where the gospel church has been blessed to prosper for hundreds of years, there are problems and differences that arise from time to time. However, had the scriptural pattern been followed, I would estimate that over 90% of the problems that have arisen with the Philippine mission movement would not have occurred. I ask one simple question as we consider what has been done in this movement; where in the Bible do you find these things?

The movement begins with a flawed concept, a false claim. We are told again and again that these preachers were answering "a Macedonian call" (Under the Shadow of the Almighty, page 8). But the Macedonian call of the Bible (Acts 16:9-12) came in a vision from God; not in a letter addressed to someone else. The Macedonian call specified a particular place to go, and the Apostle Paul immediately responded by going to that place (Philippi in Macedonia) and remaining there (Acts 16:10-40). The Elder who has accompanied Elder Harris on all except his initial journey has stated publicly that as soon as he

heard Elder Jeff Harris had gone to the Philippines, that he called Elder Harris' house to tell him that the next trip he made there or "anywhere else" that he wanted to go with him. So much for the direction of the Holy Spirit! So much for the "Macedonian call"! If this letter addressed to someone else was truly a "Macedonian call" to the Philippines, then I ask a simple question of the preachers who claim such, why are you still here in the United States? If this were a true Macedonian call directed to you, then you should be over there. Hear the Apostle Paul: "I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision" (Acts 26:19).

Where in the Bible do you find a pattern for hasty baptisms, ordinations and constitution of churches? I have used strong language when I said that this effort was characterized by a blatant disregard for the Word of God, but that is the only way I know to describe what took place. On the first trip Elder Harris (and another elder) made to the Philippines, in less than a week's time they had baptized 44 people and ordained 7 preachers. Brother preacher, would you go into a part of the USA to a people that you knew nothing of their moral standards or doctrinal beliefs, and in a week's time feel free to ordain men as Primitive Baptist preachers? Much less to a foreign land and a foreign language where you had to preach through an interpreter! God's Word is a thorough furnisher "unto all good works" (II Tim. 3:17), and is quite specific that those who are ordained must not be a "novice" (I Tim. 3:6), and that we are to lay hands suddenly on no man" (II Tim. 5:22).

As soon as they returned from this trip and began to tell of what they had done, there was a great outcry from all sections of the country over this disregard of God's holy word. Rather than to be admonished by the Word, the participants and supporters of this work claimed that all was justified because the cause was so important. Then articles began to appear in various publications and some men began to preach that the instruction to "lay hands suddenly on no man" did not refer to ordaining preachers, but had some other kind of meaning! In other words, if the Bible doesn't fit what we want to do, then we will interpret it to suit ourselves; and it's all right to do whatever we deem necessary, as the end justifies the means. Sadly, time has proven that the seven men ordained on that day should not have been ordained - but if the instructions in the scriptures had been followed to begin with, this costly mistake could have been avoided.

..... (Continued in Part 3) Bob
Dickerson 3/97

Part 3 - by Elder Bob Dickerson - Editor, The Gospel Appeal,
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What a comparison between the manner in which the Apostles and other preachers in the Bible went forth with the gospel, and those of the modern mission movement which has been lately introduced among our people. The preachers of the Bible went forth by faith; those today have gone only when sufficient funds were raised that they were given a prepaid round-trip ticket. The preachers of the Bible went to serve and to stay as long as that service was required to establish the new little flock(s) in the faith. Those associated with this movement have visited the Philippines for a week, ten days or two weeks at a time. The preachers of the Bible lived among the people where they were sent to preach, ate their food and shared their hospitality, whether small or great (Mt. 10:11). These modern preachers have stayed in hotels during their brief visits to the Philippines and have taken their own food with them.

The preachers in the Bible contended for the truth and "knew nothing" among those they served "save Jesus Christ and him crucified" (I Cor 2:2). The modern elders have been dissatisfied with God's word and have sought to add methods of teaching not founded in the word of God. In Under the Shadow of the Almighty we are told (proudly) of the Bible Conference organized by Elder Harris in the Philippines (see pages 77-81); and on pages 73-76 of this same book we find the lesson schedule for the preacher-training school; a list of the ministers who attended; those who taught the classes and the subject of the classes. Of course, it is not called a preacher training school, but a "Minister's Conference". ("A rose by any other name ...".) How about it, Old Baptists? Has God Changed? Has His word changed? What is the difference in a seminary and a "Minister's Conference", other than the time period involved? Well, isn't it all right to do it for just a few days? Since when is wrong made right because it comes in small quantities? And since when do God's called ministers need to go to some man's school (Gal 1:17, 18)? When I was ordained (and a thousand other Primitive Baptist preachers can recount this same experience), I was handed the Bible and was told that it was to be "the man of my counsel". We have always believed that God calls and qualifies His servants. Sure, they are to study (II Tim 2:15), but not in man's school. Man made and/or taught preachers will preach man's doctrine.

The Preachers of the Bible went forth preaching the truth and telling the truth - their failings and disappointments are listed as quickly in the Bible as their triumphs and joys. Yet, for several years we only heard glowing reports of what great numbers and been baptized and ordained in the Philippines, and we were never told of the more than 100 members who had left the churches there after being baptized, or of the moral problems that existed among the membership and among the ministry. Nor that of the 7 so hastily ordained on the initial trip, that only 3 remained.

Eureka Church, in their letter to the Primitive Baptists, admit that they were silent about these problems, but state "our motives were simply to protect the peace and harmony of the churches in America". Brethren, how does the truth harm "the peace and harmony of the churches"? No, the truth won't harm the church, but instead will make it free (Jn 8:32).

The preachers of the Bible did not glory in numbers, but gloried in that the gospel was preached and that God was praised (I Cor. 1:17; 9:17, 18). What a contrast with those of this modern movement whose glory seems to be found in the number of converts they have obtained. The hurry to baptize and ordain people they knew absolutely nothing about on their initial trip is proof in itself of this statement. But a quick look at the books they have published will reveal even more. In Under the Filipino Sun we have a listing of the 206 members who had been baptized in the Philippines as of that time. The writer (Elder Harris) did not have the names of the last 29 of these members, but carefully listed the numbers (178, 179, 180, on up to 206). Every trip brought forth a new book and new videos for sale, all stressing the numbers involved. And if you doubt this was an ego trip for the preachers involved, then please take a look at Under the Shadow of the Almighty. In this book are more than 85 pictures of the preachers (one or more of them all) who made this particular journey, and 12 pictures of banners or signs welcoming them to the Philippines with their names written on them in large letters. You might compare this with the Lord Jesus who "made himself of no reputation" (Phil 2:7) and the Apostle Paul who said he was "less than the least of all saints" (Eph 3:8). (And somehow I have a lot of trouble picturing the Apostle Paul selling books and videos of each of his preaching trips!).

The preachers of the Bible sought carefully to teach the truth as it was given them by the Holy Spirit. The modern movement has come up with all manner of false teachings intended to further their work. Take a look at the literature used in the preacher-training schools in the Philippines. Under the heading of "The Church: Finances" we find this: "1. The principle of tithing was given before the law and is the guide for the New Testament Church" and "3. The greatest financial need of the church is the financial support of her pastor" (read "salary"). Consider with this small example all that has been allowed to take place in the church services there, including the dedication of infants and the use of Ace courses as teaching tools, and you may well wonder how "primitive" these so-called Primitive Baptist Churches are.

We could go on and on with more examples - ad infinitum and ad nauseam - but this should be sufficient to make our point. God's pattern was ignored and man's methods were substituted, and it is no wonder that immoral men were hurriedly ordained and great confusion has resulted.

I would now like to examine some of the claims made by the leaders of this movement. In Under the Shadow of the Almighty (page 9) we are told that they have a scriptural precedent for their quick journeys and brief stays - that it is in the establishment of the church at Thessalonica (Acts 17:2), and this "was a close parallel" to their experience, since Paul only stayed "approximately two weeks". If you read this claim you would think Paul was able to go into Thessalonica, establish a church, baptize hundreds, ordain ministers and accomplish all of this in two weeks time. But if you take the time to read the Scripture you will find that because of great persecution "the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea" (Acts 17:10). Now, if Paul's entire time at Thessalonica was only a total of two weeks, then please explain how the Filipino brethren could have had time to send "once and again" "even in Thessalonica" to help his needs in his ministry (Phil 4:16). Considering the slow means of communication in that day, it is obvious that to have done so more than once ("and again"), he must have been there for a long period of time.

Another claim the authors of this movement have made is that it is scriptural because it was operated by an individual church. (Have you ever seen individual churches do things that weren't scriptural?). They have claimed that since there was no mission board, then everything was all right. But in essence there was a mission board. The deacons of Eureka Church constituted that board as all funds were sent to them and were disbursed by them (except those which Elder Harter collected with which to build buildings.)

Since none of the deacons of Eureka Church have ever made a trip to the Philippines, they actually had no idea what was going on over there, except by taking the word of their pastor. Thus Elder Harris was in the position of determining all things concerning this work - who would be paid and who would be cut off; who would be retained in membership and who would be excluded! A dictatorship is just as foreign to the Scriptures as a mission board.

One strange consequence of all this is that there were at one time 161 people in the Philippines who were listed as members of Eureka Church in Chula, Ga. The Pulaski Association minutes, 1994, lists 96 members for Eureka Church, and then on the next line lists another 161 members in the Philippines. (NOTE: Eureka church has recently withdrawn from the Pulaski Association.) None of these 161 members had ever attended (still haven't) a single service at Eureka Church; or have ever been seen by any member of Eureka except the pastor. Some of these members were excluded from time to time. How does the church judge a situation 12,000 miles away from them with members they have never seen or known? How can you rise in conference and vote to exclude a member you have never seen

and know nothing about him or the charges against him except by hearsay?

Incidentally, Elders Ricardo Tabanyag, Sr., Ricardo Tabanyag, Jr., who were ordained on the initial trip to the Philippines in January 1994, and who are pastors of the "Primitive Baptist" Church in Davao City, have now declared themselves to be "the Philippine Mission of Bethel Missionary Baptist Church". How can they be Primitive Baptists and Missionary Baptists at the same time? It seems there is some valuable church property in the name of "The Philippine Mission of Bethel Missionary Baptist Church" which was purchased by contributions from the Missionary Baptists of America and Japan, and by adopting this name the Tabanyags are trying to claim this property for themselves. I don't know what they call this in the Philippines, but in America we call it stealing. The true owners of this property are planning to file suit against these "Primitive Baptist" preachers concerning this.

Next month we hope to look further at the true pattern of the spread of the church from the Bible and from History.

(Incidentally, in June 1996, Elder Harvey Fulmer of Atlanta, Ga., spent one month in the Philippines preaching among the churches. He ate with the people there and sought to identify with them in their lives and needs. He did not even take a video camera with him, and has not published any books boasting of his journey. This is a breath of fresh air compared with the trips that preceded his journey; certainly a small step in the right direction.)

(Continued in Part Four)Elder Bob Dickerson, April 1997

Part 4 - by Elder Bob Dickerson - Editor, The Gospel Appeal, May 1997

Before we leave this subject, I would like to take another look at the text from which I have taken the title of this series of articles. "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). This scripture is usually lumped in with Mt. 28:19-20 by those who call it "The Great Commission" and try to lay it upon the church today as a duty to be fulfilled. But both scriptures were spoken by Jesus only to His Apostles (Mt 28:16, 18; Acts 1:1-9). (The "eleven disciples" [Mt 28:16] and "the apostles whom he had chosen" [Acts 1:2] are the same; Judas Iscariot having already hung himself - Mt 27:5; thus having reduced the twelve Apostles to eleven.) I am amused by the preachers (some of whom bear the name Primitive Baptist) who are so anxious to put our people under the burden of the Great Commission (could it be

because it is a proven money raiser?) that they say "well, there could have been other brothers there - even the 500 brethren that Christ appeared to at once after His resurrection (I Cor 15:6) could have been there". Yes, and every character mentioned in the pages of the Bible could have been there if we are going to speculate about what took place, but if we take God's Holy Word we will find that only the eleven were there and that what was said was specifically to them, and not to the church which then met in the upper room in Jerusalem (Acts 1:15).

There are two things about this scripture that I want us to closely notice. First is the word "shall". Usually this scripture is read as if it said "should" - that we "should" go to the "uttermost part of the earth". But that isn't what the text says, is it? Jesus said to His Apostles that ye "shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you" and that "ye shall be witnesses unto me ... unto the uttermost part of the earth". These shalls are just as positive as the shalls of Matthew 1:21 where the angel told Joseph that Mary "shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins." How about those shalls, Old Baptists? How many sermons have you heard preached over the years on the certainty of what God promised there? Did she bear a son? Did they name Him Jesus? Did He save His people from their sins? Yes to all three - God said it shall be, and it was so. Now these "shalls" in our text are just as sure as those "shalls" in Mt 1:21 (or anywhere else in the Bible where you read of the "shalls" and "wills" of Jehovah God).

How about the two "shalls" in our text? Were they fulfilled? Did these Apostles "receive power after that the Holy Ghost" came upon them? The answer appears immediately in the next chapter (Acts, chapter two) where we read of the marvelous events that took place upon the day of Pentecost. Then why would you doubt that the other "shall" was fulfilled also, and that the Apostles did indeed witness through the preaching of the gospel in Jerusalem, Judaea, Samaria "and unto the uttermost part of the earth"? Mark 16:20 says "they went forth, and preached every where "; Col. 1:23 says that "the gospel ... was preached to every creature which is under heaven" and Col. 1:5, 6 says that "the gospel ... is come unto you, as it is in all the world". As plain as these scriptures are., our text is just as plain. Jesus, the God of Heaven and earth, says that " ye shall" go to "the uttermost part of the earth", and they did!

Now, one other thought before we leave this text. Where is the "uttermost part of the earth"? Is it in the darkest jungles of Africa, maybe in outer Mongolia or in frozen Siberia? These places all seem remote to you and me. But consider the day in which our text was given, and those Jews to whom it was given. The "civilized world" of that day was primarily concentrated around the Mediterranean Sea. There were large

populations in present-day Africa, China, India, Russia and the British Isles which were known to the great empires of that day - but the true "uttermost part of the earth" was a portion of the world that even the Roman empire did not know existed - America. That's right. You and I live today in what was then "the uttermost part of the earth". And here, in what was then "the uttermost part of the earth", God has blessed His gospel to abound and His church to prosper.

Did you notice a pattern in our text? To begin at home ("in Jerusalem", where the Apostles then dwelt); then to go to the province (county or state) in which that place is located (" in all Judaea"), then in the next province (county or state) to the one in which we live ("in Samaria") - and then by continuing that pattern to go forth even "unto the uttermost part of the earth". And historically this is the way that the church of the Lord Jesus Christ has spread over the centuries - not by leapfrogging from one part of the world to another, but by slowly reaching forth to those areas adjacent to us. The authors of the modern mission movement among us conveniently ignored this pattern. Why this great effort to join the worldly religious orders in their labors to evangelize the whole world, when we have not yet gone into "all Judaea", much less to "Samaria"? Did you know that there are 18 states in our own country where there is not a single Primitive Baptist church within the borders of that state? Did you know there are another 13 states with 10 or less Primitive Baptist churches within their borders? It seems to me that we have yet to cover "all Judaea". Oh, but to try to establish churches in those states would be a long and difficult process. It is much easier to go to a people who live in poverty and who will quickly follow any religious teaching that will give them a promise of financial support. It is much easier to come up with great numbers of converts and to show more supposed success in such a situation.

May I tell, once again, an example from our own country and our own history of how God works in the spread of the gospel. In 1864 the vast majority of the state of Florida was still an unsettled wilderness, populated mostly by Indians. The extreme northern part of the state was well settled, and there were some Primitive Baptist Churches in the area along the Georgia line. However, central and south Florida had only a few scattered homesteads; and what later became the city of Tampa was then but a couple of stores. For twenty years isolated families had moved into this wilderness and carved out a homestead; but these were few and far between; and there were few villages. Many of these early settlers were Primitive Baptists, moving down mainly from Georgia, Alabama and South Carolina. There were no Primitive Baptist Churches in south or in central Florida at that time. They prayed that God would bless their labors and in His time bless them with a place

to worship, and, as always, God heard the cries of His People (Ex. 3:7).

Here is a true situation - a need for the church to be established among a people who already are believers. ("For I have much people in this city" - Acts 18:10.) What system or method would you use to reach these people with the gospel in the middle Florida wilderness in the year 1864? How much money would it take? How many preachers would be needed? Would it be necessary to organize Bible Conferences and preacher-training schools? For man to do it would no doubt take a lot of money and a lot of people. What did God send? God sent one old preacher from Alabama by the name of James Moseley. This good brother was an old bachelor, 76 years of age; a poor, uneducated farmer. No mission board would ever have utilized this man - he was too old, too uneducated. But God used him - an impression formed in his mind and a voice said "go south". He did not know just how far "south" to go - nor did he know exactly where to go - but the impression grew stronger and the voice grew louder until he knew he must travel south in order to relieve his mind. He built a top for his buggy and covered it with raw deer skins with the hairy side turned inside; gathered together what few clothes he had, hitched his pony to the buggy, and (like Abraham of old) set out to go wherever the Spirit would lead. As he headed south, he stopped along the way to rest and attend services with the Primitive Baptists in South Georgia and North Florida, and yet the voice continued to say "go south". Only when he had reached middle Florida and had crossed the Hillsboro River did the voice cease to speak, and when he inquired if there were any Primitive Baptists in that area, he was directed to the home of John Thomas, one of those who had been praying for years that God would bless them with a church in that area. Services were quickly set at Brother Thomas's house and in many other homes in the area; by the next year a log meeting house was constructed. This was the origin of Mt. Enon Primitive Baptist Church, which became the mother church of all the Primitive Baptist churches which existed and which yet exist in that part of Florida. Every church today in central Florida came forth either directly or indirectly from the efforts of this strange evangelist - an old brother without funds and without education, who trusted in God to provide his needs and guide his steps.

How different indeed are God's ways from man's ways! And thus I leave it to our readers to judge whether the modern mission system being introduced among us is God's way or if it is man's way.

May I say in conclusion that I derive no joy from reporting these conditions, but rather am greatly saddened. I am sad for the members of Eureka Church, who, I sincerely believe, have been misled, and for the many members who have left Eureka

(which had been their home for many years) in the past few months because they felt they could no longer live in the situation that existed there. I am sad for some there and some in the Philippines who were driven out because they objected to the teaching of tithing and the other errors introduced there; and I am sad for the cause of evangelism among our people as a whole. You see, somewhere down the line God may well call one of our ministers to go to the Philippines or to Timbuktu or wherever, and this brother may go by faith as Abraham, the Apostles and old Elder Moseley did; and our people, having had such a bad experience with this man-made system, may be hesitant to support such an effort.

Conclusion of series. Elder Bob Dickerson, May 1997