

# (Christian History) 18. the Modern Missions Movement

by David Guzik

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*The modern missions movement began in the 19th century with the Moravian Advance, led by Nikolaus Zinzendorf, and was later influenced by William Carey and the Baptist Missionary Society.*

**Scripture:** Genesis 1:27, Matthew 28:19

**Topics:** "Missions Movement", "Christian History"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the missionary work of David Livingstone in Africa during a time when the continent was plagued by poverty, abuse, and the slave trade. Livingstone embarked on a journey across Africa to spread the gospel and heal the 'open sore' of the slave trade. The speaker highlights the voluntary aspect of the gospel and the lack of state support or control in the missionary efforts. Additionally, the speaker emphasizes the use of everyday Christians and their talents in the mission field, showcasing inspiring stories of individuals who were initially rejected but became successful missionaries. The sermon also mentions the initial disbelief and resistance towards the abolition of the slave trade, as people struggled to imagine a world without slavery.

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## Transcript

At the beginning of the 19th century, Protestant Christianity barely existed outside of Europe and America. Asia was almost untouched, except for a few traces in India and Indonesia. Africa was called famously the Dark Continent, and had no Christians except for a few Coptic believers in Egypt and Ethiopia.

Now what's amazing, that was at the beginning of the 19th century. By the end of the 19th century, there had been an amazing missionary movement that extended the gospel incredibly over so much of the world. Kenneth Scott Lattimer, the great historian, says, of so many millions of individuals.

That's the story in a nutshell of the modern missions movement, especially in what's termed as the Great Century, the 19th century. But let's go back a little bit further and talk about the beginnings of the modern missions movement. Some people say that the first missions movement was the Reformation itself, and that the mission field was Central and Western Europe.

However, it's clear that many groups had some kind of evangelistic zeal before that. The Valdenses, the Lollards are examples, and even Francis of Assisi, as we mentioned before, went to Egypt to preach to

the Muslim king. Roman Catholics were busy spreading their faith around the world, while Protestants had virtually no missions work.

One big reason was this, was that the more successful seafaring nations at that time, such as Spain and Portugal, were strongly Roman Catholic. And so it was the Roman Catholics that sent missionaries to the Americas, North and South, long before Protestants did. It also helped that there were monastic orders within the Roman Catholic Church that were sort of a ready-made missionary force, right? I mean, the Pope or some archbishop could just say, hey you, this monastic order, go do this, and they're already sort of under this vow of obedience.

It's not like after you go recruit volunteers, you have them ready at hand. Now, Luther was not much of a missionary. Luther felt that Jesus was coming so soon that there wasn't much sense in putting forth a long-term strategy of missions.

He also felt that the Great Commission was given only to the original Twelve Apostles and not to the Church in general. This was a common thinking in Christendom before the modern missions movement. And many Calvinists tended to be fatalistic about missions and evangelism, mostly because of their doctrine of election.

Their thinking was that if God had chosen some among the heathen to salvation, then they would find their way to salvation. If God had not chosen them, then there was nothing anybody could do about it anyway. Yet, it's unfair to characterize Calvinists, and Calvin especially, as being completely uninterested in missions.

Calvin himself seemed to have a strong missionary interest. From Geneva, he sent dozens of missionaries back to his native France, but he also commissioned four missionaries to go with a group of French colonists and to establish a colony in Brazil to evangelize the natives. The venture began in the year 1555, but it ended tragically when one in the group defected to the Portuguese and who robbed and killed the French colonists.

But as early as the year 1550, King Gustav Vasa, the King of Sweden, sent a missionary to Lapland. His successor, Gustavus Adolphus, who died in the Thirty Years' War, he also planned missionary work from the Kingdom of Sweden, and again Calvin promoted some missionary work in Brazil. The Quakers had an interest in mission.

1661, we haven't really discussed the Quakers, they're just sort of an interesting, almost fringe group. But George Fox, a Quaker leader, commissioned three missionaries to go to China, but they actually never made it to their destination. The Roman Catholic missions were sort of very interesting as they began before Protestant missions, but let's consider here the general setting of Protestant missions in the modern world.

The Peace of Vesfalia marked an end of an ugly era. This was the end of the Thirty Years' War. This basically returned things, at least religiously, to the status quo that it had been before the Thirty Years' War, to the Peace of Augsburg, which was, again, many decades before the Peace of Vesfalia.

By the way, the Peace of Vesfalia was signed, in all places, in Münster, the city that we talked about so much before. Of course, a good number of decades after Münster had been devastated so much by the crazy Anabaptists that took it over. Anyway, the Peace of Vesfalia marked the end of the ugly wars that

had crippled Europe from so long, and Europeans began to prosper and colonize many other parts of the world.

The Evangelical revivals up to the 18th and 19th century combined with European imperialist expansion to open up vast new areas to the Christian message. The dawn of Protestant missions can really be traced back to the Moravian advance. We're going to talk about the Moravians much more in our next lecture, but the Moravians were the first church to undertake foreign missions seriously, or at least one in the modern world that we have record of.

The first real breakthrough came through with the German Pietist, the Moravians, but it sort of started in Denmark. King Ferdinand IV of Denmark was a Pietist himself, and he appealed to Augustus Franke, a Pietistic leader who as a university professor had turned the University of Halle into a major center of training and education for the Pietistic movement. Now at that time, almost nobody thought of foreign missions at all, and the German Pietists following Franke were commonly ridiculed.

They were called enthusiasts, they were called priests of Baal, they were called heretics, they were called false Lutherans, they were considered to be dangerous people. And these were the people the king of Denmark sent to for help in evangelizing people in his overseas lands. You see, two men volunteered to go to a Danish colony on the southeast coast of India.

And so these two men, Bartholomew Ziegenbalg and Henry Plutschau, this was the beginning of what was known as the Danish Halle Mission. And in the following decade, this missionary college sent out many missionaries, including Hans Egede, who established a missionary colony in Greenland in 1722. And so the Danish king sort of underwrote the support of sending out these missionaries to the different Danish territories across the world as colonization by the Western European powers started to happen more and more in Africa, in Asia, in South America.

These colonies, oftentimes the rulers of the European countries had an interest in seeing religion promoted in these colonies. When Hans Egede and his wife came to Greenland, they came to convert these descendants of the Vikings to Christianity. However, they got there and they found that those Viking settlements were gone.

And so they turned their missionary attention to the native population and they established a Scandinavian colony on Greenland. Egede was an educator, an author, a natural historian, a mapmaker, in addition to his work for the Lord. Soon after he returned to Copenhagen, he drew a map of Greenland.

It's the oldest surviving map of an inhabitant of that land. Now, this was the earliest sort of hint of missions in the modern world, I should say, but it really started getting going with the Moravian missionary movement and this great statesman of the Moravian missionary movement, Niklaus Wudwig, Count von Zinzendorf. Zinzendorf was the son of a high government official in Saxony, but his father died when Zinzendorf was only six weeks old.

So he was brought up by his grandmother, who was a friend of Jakob Spenner and a follower of Pietism. When he was 10 years old, Zinzendorf was sent to Augustus Franka's grammar school at Halle, and he and five other Christian boys founded a club that they called the Order of the Grain of Mustard Seed. They pledged themselves to love the whole human family and to spread the gospel.

And then he went on to study law at the universities of Wittenberg and Utrecht. In 1719, on a grand tour of Europe, he saw a painting in an art gallery in Dusseldorf. It was Domenico Fetti's painting titled Eche Homo, meaning Behold the Man.

It showed Christ wearing a crown of thorns, and at the bottom it had an inscription, All this I did for you. What are you doing for me? Right then, Zinzendorf was absolutely convicted to the heart while looking at this painting, and he decided to leave his job as a government official for Saxony and give himself to full-time Christian service. In 1722, he arranged the settlement of a group of Moravian refugees on his land at Bettelsdorf.

In 1727, there was a unique outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon this group. We'll talk more about that in our next lecture. But Zinzendorf emerged as the leader of this spirit-filled group of Moravians, and he ended up traveling extensively throughout the world, including Europe, England, and North America, promoting their work and supporting their missionaries.

On a visit to Copenhagen in 1731, Zinzendorf met two Eskimo converts of a Danish work. They pleaded with him, Send missionaries to the Eskimos. When Zinzendorf returned home to Herrnhut, he inspired the Moravians to respond to the appeal.

Within 30 years, the Moravians had missions works in more than 10 countries. They had an amazing sense of self-sacrifice, of love, and total commitment to evangelization. It's said to be unparalleled in the history of missions.

One historian has estimated that the Moravian missionaries achieved more in this period than all the Protestant missionaries had achieved in the 200 years previous. And so some of the places where the Moravians went, they went to the Virgin Islands, they went to Greenland, they went to North America, to Lapland, to South America, and to Labrador. Interestingly, Moravian missionaries were expected to be self-supporting.

They were expected to make a living for themselves in the places where they went. For example, in South America, the Moravians established a variety of businesses, including tailoring, watchmaking, and baking. Their economic and spiritual influence grew, and a thriving Moravian church emerged in Suriname, off the northeast coast of South America.

Now, Zinzendorf was definitely a nobleman and an aristocrat. He mightily used his prestige and his connections to advance the cause of the gospel. But people say he was also somewhat arrogant and conceited.

He had a hard time living the life of a normal missionary, as his Moravian brethren did. Now, there's another dynamic that is sort of connected with the missionary spread, and that's with the pilgrims who came to America. You sort of know that story, don't you? The pilgrims were actually separatists from the Church of England who found refuge in the more tolerant Netherlands.

And they lived in the Netherlands to escape the religious persecution that they would face in England. And they liked living in the Netherlands well enough. But when they saw their children growing up speaking Dutch and adopting Dutch customs and Dutch culture, they said, you know, we don't want this for our kids.

We want our children to be Englishmen. I mean, nothing against the Dutch, I suppose, they thought, but they wanted their children to be Englishmen. Therefore, they made the very dangerous journey over to the

colonies of Great Britain on the American continent, and they colonized the areas that the pilgrims lived in.

But what you need to understand by that is that the pilgrims who came to America saw themselves as deliberate missionaries. They even brought one man with their group, Robert Cushman, whose specific job was to evangelize and to promote the conversion of the Indians. When the pilgrims were followed by many other groups who for the Massachusetts Bay Company in 1629, the company seal showed the figure of an Indian saying to England, come over and help us.

That was the attitude. They felt, look, go over and help the Indians, not only to colonize the new world, but to evangelize it as well. And by the way, this whole phenomenon of how America was colonized from people of different groups from different areas who lived in geographically separate places really helps to explain why there was never a single established state church in America, and why America developed politically and ecclesiastically, if you want to say, in church reference differently than Europe did.

Well, another great phenomenon along these lines was the founding of various missionary societies. You see, the formation of the voluntary missionary society had a big impact on Christianity. It began to take power and money and interest away from the institutional churches and denominations, and give it to these groups that at their best had a great zeal for missions.

And it also promoted an interdenominational cooperation, and it also gave much more leadership to laymen than before. Now think about what it before when all missions were just done through the agency of a church. Now there's many things to commend that, right? When missions is just done through the local church or through a collection of churches which might be known as a denomination.

There are many benefits to that. There are many good things about that. But imagine how different it is when you start forming an independent missionary group, an independent missionary agency, that people just join voluntarily, sort of like a missions club, if you want to say, or a missions society that's going to try to reach different places around the world with the gospel.

Well, the first thing that it does is you ask for contributions among your members. That's money that otherwise they would have given to their local church, but they don't give it to their local church now, they give it to you. Secondly, it really promotes interdenominational cooperation, right? Because in your particular mission society or club, you'll take whoever's interested, right? You don't care if they're Methodist or Presbyterian or Lutheran.

If they're interested, if they have the same heart, the same vision, you'll take them. And then thirdly, the other aspect of this is that it also promoted very much so the leadership of laymen, right? Because there weren't necessarily professional clerics in your missionary club or society, they just rose to the top of leadership, that is, the layman did. Well, anyway, by the end of the 19th century, almost every Christian body from the Orthodox Church of Russia to the Salvation Army and almost every country from the Lutheran Church of Finland to the Waldensian Church of Italy to the newest denomination of the United States had some kind of role or participation in missionary enterprise oversee.

You got to say that's a remarkable change, right? At the beginning of the 19th century, almost nobody is involved in missions. At the end of the 19th century, virtually every church has some kind of missionary outreach. The Baptist Missionary Society founded in 1792, it was first called the Particular Baptist Society for the Propagation of the Gospel Among Heathen, so that's one early group.

Then the London Missionary Society was founded in 1795, the Netherlands Missionary Society in 1797, the Basel Mission in 1815. It's sort of interesting if you take a look at the seal of the Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts. It shows a ship under sail making towards a point of land, and upon the prow of the ship stands a minister with an open Bible in his hand.

The people standing on the shore are in a posture of expectation, reaching out to the ship, and basically what they say here in Latin is, come over and help us. That's what they're saying. This whole idea, yes, the natives, the aboriginal peoples, the peoples in untouched parts of the world, they're hungering for the gospel.

It's our responsibility to come bring it to them. Another interesting thing, sort of to get out of chronological order here though, is that the China Inland Mission, which was founded by Hudson Taylor, was also a new development. It repudiated connection with any one church.

It was absolutely interdenominational, and it was the forerunner of many faith missions that would follow. But that's sort of getting out of order. Let's backtrack a little bit more and go back to William Carey and the Baptist Missionary Society.

William Carey was another revolutionary in the thinking of missions, because he thought of evangelizing a whole country. He wanted to see whole populations become Christian. He held that foreign missionaries can only begin the work, and the greater work has to be done by nationals within their own country.

He put an emphasis on developing local ministry. He also saw that Christianity could and should in some ways adapt to the local culture and customs. William Carey had an interesting background.

He was an English cobbler. Now you know what a cobbler is? A cobbler isn't someone who makes shoes. He's lower on the totem pole than somebody who makes shoes.

A cobbler is someone who repairs shoes. He was married to a mentally ill woman, and he barely made enough money to keep them both fed. But he was a ravenous learner, and he would go without food in order to buy a book.

He also had a thirst for adventure. His two greatest heroes in the books that they wrote were Columbus and Captain James Cook. He was converted by the witness of a fellow shoemaker in 1779, and he was baptized in 1783.

A few years later, after gaining a little bit of preaching experience, he became the pastor of Moulton Baptist Church in England. Now William Carey was an example of a missionary teacher who sought to bring the gospel and learning and civilization to heathen lands. And so he basically did everything he could to advance not just the gospel, but sort of a widespread effort.

Now for sure he faced a lot of discouragement. It is said that at a gathering of ministers, what they would call a minister's fraternal meeting, you know, sort of a pastor's fellowship kind of thing, Carey got up and expressed his zeal for missions. And a man, actually a godly man named John Ryland, rebuked him by saying, young man, sit down.

You are an enthusiast. When God pleases to convert the heathen, he will do it without your help or mine. When somebody put him down as just a simple shoemaker, William Carey said, no, sir, I protest.

I'm not a shoemaker. I'm only a cobbler who repairs shoes. But Carey was a great man.

His motto was expect great things from God, attempt great things for God. He arrived in Calcutta in 1793 and he died there in 1834. He spent his entire time in India without a break, without a furlough.

The British East India Company would not allow Carey and his associates to work in Calcutta. So they moved 14 miles inland to Serampore, which was under Danish protection. Now, again, he had a passion to change things in society.

In India at that time, if an infant was sick, the parents simply left the child out in the wild to die and rot or to be eaten by wild animals. Near Malda, Carey found the remains of a baby that had been offered as a sacrifice to be eaten alive by white ants. Another place Carey saw how Indian mothers threw their babies into the sea or to drown or to be eaten by crocodiles.

The Indians regarded this as a holy sacrifice to the mother goddess of the Ganges. He also worked against the Hindu practice of sati. Sati is where the wife of a deceased man, her widow, the widow actually, was expected to throw herself on his burning funeral pyre and kill herself.

Combined with polygamy, this was a special horror. Carey documented one time when a man died and all 33 of his wives burned themselves to death on his funeral pyre. So he worked against these practices, but he was a skilled man, an educated man.

He had learned Latin, Hebrew, and Greek before he left England. In India, he circulated about 200,000 Bibles or Bible portions in about 40 different languages or dialects, besides many tracts and Christian books. Another notable missionary to India was Henry Martin.

He was a man who did an amazing work there, following up, succeeding William Carey's work. A great quote from his, he says, the spirit of Christ is the spirit of missions. The nearer we get to him, the more intensely missionary we become.

Another great worker was a man named Adoniram Judson. He and his wife were the first American missionaries. They started out for India, but they ended up in Burma.

He worked in Burma for six years before he had a single convert. He lost his wife, and he lost several children to sickness and disease. Yet by the time Adoniram Judson died, there were over 100,000 baptized Christians among the Karan tribe of Burma.

Well, again, through the 19th century, this missionary work just continued to spread and spread. You have the great example not only of Adoniram and Ann Judson, but of course you have the great example of David Livingstone as well. David Livingstone went to what was known as the Dark Continent, Africa, in the middle of the 19th century.

It began to open up, and David Livingstone of Scotland was one of the pioneers who did it. He was a medical missionary who gave completely to bringing the gospel and civilization to Africa. Livingstone came to Africa in 1841, and he served for about ten years as a typical missionary.

But then he was driven to leave his mission station and follow the smoke of a thousand villages that had never seen a missionary. And so instead of doing the typical thing of staying at your mission station and doing whatever work you could around there, he just launched off on the trail and said--again, it's a

beautiful statement--there's a smoke of a thousand villages that says, we need the gospel. His famous journey led him from Angola in the middle of Africa to the west coast of the continent, and then across the whole continent to the east coast of Africa.

On that journey, he showed all the great qualities of a great explorer. One of the great motivations he had was to heal what he called the open sore of the world, the devastating slave trade of Central Africa. You know, at this time, there was still a very profitable slave trade going on.

Even though slaves in the middle of this time were not being exported to America still, they still were to other parts of the world. David Livingstone died an amazing death and was so beloved of the Africans that he ministered to. He's a tremendous example.

Then you have the example of Robert Morrison in China. He was one of the first missionaries to China, and he became the chief European expert on Chinese languages, and he had translated the entire Bible into Chinese by 1819. After him was a man named William Chalmers Burns, who was another British missionary to China.

These men and these women had a tremendous devotion to God, and they faced great sacrifices on the mission field. Take Hudson Taylor. Hudson Taylor's wife died on childbirth on the mission field at the age of 33 years old.

William Carey, he buried two wives on the mission field. Adoniram Judson lost two wives to disease. David Livingstone buried his wife, Mary, in Africa.

Johann Krapf, a German missionary, pioneer missionary to Kenya, he lost his wife and both his children within months of arriving in Africa. Many of these radical missionaries, when they would go and transport themselves, for example, to Africa, it came to the point where they would actually not take a packing crate, not take suitcases. As they transported their goods on the ship, they would actually transport them in a coffin, because they said, I'm going to be using this when I'm here.

That's how dedicated they were. When they went on the mission field, they knew there was a very good chance that they or their families would never come back alive. It is said that in the 19th century, the average life expectancy of a missionary to Africa was eight years.

Now, there's some very important characteristics generally of the modern missions movement. First of all, it was voluntary, not compulsory. And this is really wonderful.

I mean, nobody was making these people, nobody was forcing them. It was really a tremendous work of the great voluntary aspect of the gospel. Secondly, it was done almost completely without state support and state control, right? When they sent these missionaries out, they didn't ask for state support, nor did they want state control as well.

Thirdly, they used the wealth and the talents of everyday Christians. You know, the feeling was, you didn't have to be a Superman to be a great missionary. And the wonderful stories of so many people who were refused by a missions board, who were refused in some manner of Christian service, yet turned out to be wonderful missionaries on the field for Jesus Christ.

It's a very inspiring example. And then finally, we can say that there was also a very strong humanitarian impulse. Hospitals, schools, languages, agriculture, over and over again, we see the tremendous

examples of these people.

They had a real heart, not only to preach the gospel, but to help and to better these people with Christian love the very best they could. There are some people who criticize the missions movement of the 19th century as being just another tool of Western imperialism and colonialism, meant to subjugate and to hurt the abused people or the further abused people there of these native lands and these aboriginal peoples. I don't think that's accurate estimation at all, not one bit.

I think instead that it shows in a remarkable way how these people brought the love and the grace of Jesus Christ to these cultures. Now, we're going to move from the modern missions movement just a little bit here and talk somewhat in the last part of this lecture about Christianity and social reform. The beginnings of modern social reform as a part of evangelical Christianity began with what might be known as the Clapham sect.

You see, England was the cradle of the Industrial Revolution, and London became the world's largest city and the financial center of the world. British commerce circled the globe and the British Navy dominated the seas, but there was a tremendous strain on the social institutions of England. At the beginning of the great century, at the beginning of the 1900s, the evangelical movement started by Wesley and Whitefield had an influence.

It was marked by an intense personal godly, usually springing from a conversion experience and then an aggressive concern for Christian service in the world. And as they looked around, they saw a world that needed help. It's very, very difficult to describe what an impact the Industrial Revolution had on Europe.

Now, we don't want to over-idealize the farm life and everything about the farm life was great. No, listen, many European farmers lived in poverty and filth and hunger. Nevertheless, it didn't seem to get better for a lot of the people who moved to the cities to work in factories that came up.

The slums of Europe, in particular many places over England, which was sort of the cradle of the Industrial Revolution, the slums of Europe were almost unspeakably filthy, dangerous, dark, sordid places that one can only imagine about. I mean, I could tell you stories, and maybe I will later, but it's just this was a world where life was cheap, where people were abused endlessly, where children worked as soon as they were able to, to go work in a factory in the most deplorable conditions one can imagine. And I'll tell you what changed it.

What changed it was Christians. Notably, this Clapham sect. Clapham was a villager community three miles from London, and there, there lived a group of wealthy and influential Christians.

The unquestioned leader of the Clapham sect was a man named William Wilberforce. He was a member of Parliament. Wilberforce was an influential statement with an amazing gift of eloquence and public speech.

And out of the Clapham movement came many different things. There came the Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor, there came the Church Missionary Society, and there came the British and Foreign Bible Society. But the greatest campaign of William Wilberforce was against slavery in the British Empire.

Wilberforce made his first anti-slavery speech in the House of Commons in 1789. Two years later, he introduced a bill against importing any more slaves into the British West Indies. This is what Wilberforce said.

He said, Never, never, till we desist, till we, will we desist, till we have wiped away this scandal from the Christian name, released ourselves from the load of guilt, and extinguished every trace of this bloody traffic. Now listen, what's absolutely interesting about this was at the time Wilberforce started saying, we need to abolish the slave trade in the British Empire, people thought he was nuts. Now look, people didn't like slavery.

People recognized that slavery was an evil. They weren't stupid, but they believed that it was a necessary evil. And they honestly could not conceive of a world without slavery.

They could not conceive of how the economy would work without slavery. They thought it was absolutely necessary, though it was evil, for the functioning of the economy. Well, that's why at first, Wilberforce's effort to abolish slavery, which I want to stress, was motivated almost purely out of his Christian concern.

You know, every once in a while you'll get people who say that Christianity is to blame for slavery. That's one of the stupidest things I've ever heard in my life. Number one, slavery existed well before Christianity.

How can you say it caused it? Number two, slavery has existed outside of Christianity and of Christendom. How can you say that it caused it? And while it is true that slavery was excused by the misunderstanding and misquoting of many Bible passages by people in the United States and in Europe, they would quote a verse, you know, servants submit to your masters and all things. See, the Bible approves of slavery.

They would do things like that. Even though the Bible was misquoted and misused to falsely support slavery, you need to understand that Christianity was responsible for the abolition of slavery. This impulse to abolish slavery, it did not come from the Enlightenment thinkers, right? As wonderful as all those Enlightenment thinkers were, with all of their reason, with all of their rationality, they didn't abolish slavery.

No, it was a Christian movement that abolished slavery, first in the British Empire and then in the United States of America. Well, again, Wilberforce was absolutely devoted to his cause. He had an energetic and effective campaign to shape public opinion against the slave trade.

Finally, in February of 1807, the House of Commons abolished the slave trade in the British Empire, but the institution of slavery remained. You see the difference? You can't sell slaves anymore, but the slaves that are there still remain. And then finally, it wasn't until 1833 that Wilberforce was able to get that law changed, four days before he died.

The Clatham sect remains the shining example of how a society can be influenced by a few men of great devotion. And so the abolitionist movement had its impact not only with Wilberforce and the British Empire, but all over the place. They would appeal to such things as this.

You know, a popular image of the British abolitionist movement was a slave in chains with the signature underneath them, Am I not a man and a brother? Just appealing to the basic humanity of the situation. But then again, these feelings were mocked greatly. They said, well, you say this man is a man and a brother, this Negro, but look at the way you treat him.

Or they would say, listen, when they go out and rampage and kill, are you still saying that he is a man and a brother? You see, these feelings had to, this abolitionist movement had to combat tremendous prejudice. This is supposedly Wilberforce, you know, committing immoral acts with the people trying to persuade them to the anti-slavery bill. You can see how vicious the attacks against the abolitionist movement was.

Yet nevertheless, things changed. The opposition to slavery, not only in the British Empire, but also in the Americas, was fundamentally a Christian movement, and the abolitionists were dedicated and unstoppable. They tried to influence public opinion and lawmakers through newspapers, through speeches, and through books in America, such as Harriet Beecher Stowe's famous Uncle Tom's Cabin, and they opposed slavery on firm Christian principles.

Now, one other movement that I want to speak to you about, Christian social reform, we could talk about so many things. We could talk about orphanages. We could talk about hospitals.

We could talk about, again, the abolition of the slave trade. We can talk about the temperance movement, which we're going to talk about here. We can talk about the missionary movement.

But this is what you need to understand. Whenever people, you know, it's amazing, all these of these generous philanthropic efforts sprung forth from Christianity, not from the secular world, not from the Enlightenment philosophers. These were the ones who really wanted to change the world for the better and did it under a Christian impulse.

But when we talk about the temperance movement, we're talking about these 19th century reform movements that were meant to encourage individuals to either limit or to abstain from the use of alcohol. They did this out of tremendous social concern. For example, by 1835, there were 8,000 temperance groups in the United States, with 1.5 million people belonging to these 8,000 groups.

The temperance movement was the longest-lasting and most broad-based social reform movement in the United States. It was also in many ways successful because by the end of the 19th century, in the decades before Prohibition, the drinking habits of Americans had radically changed. Activism in the movement crossed gender, race, class, religion, and age barriers, but it was mostly a Christian influence.

And so they noticed the absolute devastation that drink was causing all over America and all over Europe. And it was, especially gin in Great Britain. There's terrible stories.

You just hear how it was so cheap, so bad, and how much of the population was just terribly, terribly drunk and disordered much of the time. And so there were people like Carrie A. Nation, a temperance activist, who literally used to go in with a hatchet and chop up saloons. But again, notice what's in her other hand.

There's a hatchet in one hand and a Bible in the other. It points to the fundamentally Christian impulse that started a lot of these things. They would try to mock people who were drunks, but then again, they even developed things like root beer as alternatives to alcoholic beverages.

Again, all as an effort of the modern Christianity and of this idea of Christianity and social reform or social improvement. Now, there's just one more thing I need to say before we conclude this lecture. When we take a look at the radical good that has been done by Christians in helping the poor, the sick, the orphans, those who need the gospel, when we think of all these different people that have been helped radically through Christian influence--slaves, prisoners, women--over and over again, what we must always remember is while true Christianity will result in this impulse to better society and to help people, it must never degenerate into being only social action.

Because look, the bottom line is that there are other people, especially in our modern world, there are other people who will feed the poor and minister to the sick and minister to the prisoner and help the persecuted. There are other people in this world who will do that, but no one but the Christian will preach

the gospel. Therefore, we do not neglect social work.

We think it's good. We think it's powerful. We think it's in line with who we are and what we're called to be as Christians.

Nevertheless, we just have to be careful that we don't allow Christianity to become merely social action without a strong, clear, and consistent presentation of the gospel.

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Audio: [http://archive.org/download/SERMONINDEX\\_SID18573/SID18573.mp3](http://archive.org/download/SERMONINDEX_SID18573/SID18573.mp3)

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