

# An Inspirational History of the Mission

by Denny Kenaston

---

*Denny Kenaston shares the inspirational history of charity African missions, emphasizing the importance of vision and perseverance in spreading the Gospel in challenging environments.*

**Duration:** 1:25:55

**Scripture:** Proverbs 29:18, Matthew 28:19

**Topics:** "History"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the history of the missions work done by Charity Ministries in Africa over the past 19 years. They express their overwhelming gratitude for the growth and impact of the missionary family, which has grown to 56 people. The speaker acknowledges the challenges and hardships faced in the work of spreading the Gospel in heathen lands, emphasizing the importance of having a vision for God's work in these areas. They also highlight the missionary song sung during the service as a powerful reminder of the call to spread the message of salvation.

---

## Transcript

Hello, this is Brother Denny. Welcome to Charity Ministries. Our desire is that your life would be blessed and changed by this message.

This message is not copyrighted and is not to be bought or sold. You are welcome to make copies for your friends and neighbors. If you would like additional messages, please go to our website for a complete listing at [www.charityministries.org](http://www.charityministries.org). If you would like a catalog of other sermons, please call 1-800-227-7902 or write to Charity Ministries, 400 West Main Street, Suite 1, EFRA PA 17522.

These messages are offered to all without charge by the free will offerings of God's people. A special thank you to all who support this ministry. Did you see that missionary song that we just sang? Did you know that was a missionary song? That is a missionary song if ever I saw one.

Inter incarnate God, no feet but Thine have trod the serpent down. Blow the full trumpets, blow wider yon portals throw. Savior triumphant, go and take Thy crown.

That's a missionary song, isn't it? Lion of Judah, hail! Let Thy name prevail from age to age. Lord of the rolling years, claim for Thine own the spheres bought with Thy blood and tears, Thy heritage. And we get a part in that, brothers and sisters.

We get a part in that. What a privilege! Couldn't help myself. Well, greetings this morning in Jesus Christ's holy name Welcome to this first day session of the missions conference.

I get the wonderful privilege of giving an inspirational history of charity African missions. I didn't know what a privilege it was when the assignment was given to me. You know how life is.

It just kind of runs by and you take it as it comes. But the last two or three days, I've spent hours looking at pictures and meditating my way over the last 19 years of charity African missions. Oh my! I thank God for the privilege that I have this morning.

Alright, so we're doing a lot of experimenting in this missions conference. And this is sort of one also trying to show slides and preach and teach at the same time. So you bear with me as we get into this.

We do want to show a few slides, but this is not a slide presentation. This is a presentation of the history of the missions with a few slides here and there. Just so that your expectations are clear on that.

So, can we have the lights, I guess? Okay, good. Good. That worked.

An inspirational history of charity African missions. The book of Proverbs reminds us, brothers and sisters, which we know the verses very well, that without a vision, the people perish. This is true in many applications, but it is most true with the lost in heathen lands, where there is more hardships, there are more obstacles, and there are more disappointments than in any other work of God upon the earth.

And therefore, because of that, we can all say, yeah, it is true. Without a vision, the people perish. And without a vision for God's work in heathen lands, those people will perish.

And that is one of the burdens for even sharing this work here, this history of the work this morning. That our hearts might be renewed and inflamed with a vision for God's heart, and a vision of what God can do upon the earth with human beings who put their trust in Him. My heart was overwhelmed last evening as I sat here in the midst of this crowd that was gathered together, and with all the reflecting of the day, and then to see the group in the evening, I thought, oh my, all this has happened over the last nineteen years.

The last time that I was over in Africa, which was just in January, I counted fifty-six people in the missionary family over there. We gathered for the retreat, and there were fifty-six souls sitting there in the missionary family. I thought about it as I was there.

We have a whole church full of missionaries that are over in Africa, but it all traces back to a time when there was none. I thought about it as I was reflecting, and I don't know if you realize it, but I believe I'm right in making this statement that since the beginning of the mission nineteen years ago, over three hundred people have gone over to Africa. That's a lot of our people.

I'm telling you this morning, Africa has put its stamp upon us. We will never be the same because of it. The history of the mission.

The mission began with a vision. With a vision. Whenever God wants to do something, He always begins that way.

He puts a vision in the hearts of men. And nineteen years ago, the vision was simply this. The command of Christ, Jesus said, If you will follow Me, I will make you fishers of men.

This was the burden on our hearts nineteen years ago. Early in 1986, I believe, is when we first sat down in a brother's meeting, in the regular old way that we always do in all of our brother's meetings. And there was a burden on my heart that we as a church, if we're going to be a New Testament church, we should be involved in world missions.

Now, we were very grateful for the opportunities to win souls in the area where we lived. But we felt like that is not enough. A healthy New Testament church should be involved in world missions.

So, I remember that evening. We presented the burden just like we do many, many times over all these years. Sitting down in a brother's meeting and the elder leads out and says, Here's something that I want to put before the brotherhood.

And we did that nineteen years ago. We discussed it. We saw that it's in the Bible.

We all agreed. There were nine of us, I believe. Nine of us in that meeting who sat there and discussed this whole subject.

What about us? What about all the lost souls? What about all the fish who haven't been caught yet? Where are we going to cast our nets? These discussions took place nineteen years ago. And with an earnest prayer, nine men fell on their knees nineteen years ago and said, Okay, God. We don't know how all this gets worked out.

But we feel like You are leading us to do something, but we don't know what it is. Maybe it's Africa. We talked a little bit about Africa in that meeting, but we were not specific about any place.

We just said, Lord, maybe it's Africa. And we dropped on our knees there and we committed to God and said, God, if this is of You, then make it plain to us. And we laid it at the Lord's feet.

I'm not sure if it was the next day or if it was two or three days after, but it wasn't but a couple of days in such quick response that it caused all of us to take note. Brother Luke Zimmerman received a letter in the mail. It was a Macedonian call from a group of people in Ghana, West Africa, saying, Come over unto us and help us.

There was a certain group of people. You may know them. They print the tracts, Bible Helps, a little bit south of Harrisburg.

They received this letter in the mail and they deliberated, What should we do with it? Should we go ourselves? We don't feel like we can go. We don't feel the leading to go. And there, unknown to us, days before, somebody said, You know, there's a church over there in Lancaster County.

You know, charity Christian fellowship. They're not very old. Maybe they would be interested in it.

And they stuck it in the mail and sent it to Brother Luke Zimmerman, who has been and still is in charge of keeping tracts available for the church and all kinds of other places. So, this letter came in the mail and arrived at Brother Luke Zimmerman's house. We were in awe.

We were in awe. We felt it was the Lord. We felt it was God saying, Come.

We felt it was God saying, I want you to go to Africa. See if I can make this thing work here. And specifically to Ghana, West Africa, which is right there, that yellow, that long country that's in the yellow.

Doesn't have a name on it, but there's Ivory Coast next to it. Ghana, West Africa. We didn't know a thing about Africa.

We didn't know a thing about Ghana. But we felt like it was God confirming our way. And so, we sent a letter to the man who wrote us the letter and notified him that we were coming, and when we were coming, and what our flight schedule was, and what time we would arrive.

And after that, sometime, Brother Luke Zimmerman and I, we left and went to Ghana on a ten day trip. Now, our first visit in Ghana was unusual. It was full of uncertainties.

It was full of unknowns. Those of you that have been to Africa, you know what it's like the first time you get there. There are so many things that are different.

But, when we arrived in Ghana 19 years ago, the country of Ghana was about half communist. You see communist posters on the wall there. They weren't very kind to us.

The customs treated us very unkindly. In those days, you had to record how much money you had on you because of the black markets. And the customs people took us into an office and went through our things and looked into our billfolds to see if we had as much money as what we had said on the thing.

And I believe, probably sometime in there, they took some of our money out of our pocket. They were mean to us. They were unkind to us.

They were gruff to us. And we were a bit afraid because we had never been to a place like that. After we went through and got our bags, we walked through the doors out into the open air in Ghana.

And those of you that have been there, you know what was waiting for us. But no one warned us of what we were going to face. And we faced a wall of black people.

And someone grabbed our bags right out of our hand as soon as we came out into the open and put them up on their head and took off. We didn't know what they were doing. Hey, where are you going? We took out after them and got the bags back, you know.

We thought they were stealing them. Nobody told us that's how they do it. Well, we stood there and we waited to see if the man who wrote us the letter was going to arrive and pick us up.

And no one came. We found out later that communications were so bad there that he probably didn't even know that we were coming. So we waited and we waited and then pretty well everybody was gone.

It was an hour later. And finally a taxi cab driver convinced us to get into a taxi that he would take us to a hotel. We put our bags in the back.

We got in the taxi and he started driving. He drove a little ways and turned down a dark alley and turned off the car. And both men got out of the car and got into the trunk of the car.

And we sat there in that dark alley and I thought, Uh-oh, something is not right here. We sensed. You know how you can sense things? We sensed something is not right.

We're sitting in a dark alley. These guys just got out of the car. We didn't know what they were going to get back into the car with.

But they got back into the car and as soon as they got in, I sensed it right away. Something was wrong. The spirit was wrong.

There was deceit. There was evil in the car. And finally they turned around and looked at us and they said, We're going to change your money.

Give us your American money. We're going to change your money for CDs. Well, they had instructed us on the plane, You do not change your money out on the streets because of the black market.

And we told them, We are not changing money. And they argued with us. And we said, We are not changing money.

And they got angry at us. But finally we convinced them that we are not going to budge on this. And in their frustration, They took us to the hotel room.

That was our arrival. We finally got a room and laid down upon our bed about two o'clock in the morning. I couldn't sleep.

I laid there in that bed and expected anything to happen any time. I was very insecure. Finally the next morning, We went down to the hotel manager and we told him, We had a telephone number.

This is a joke, But we had a telephone number that was on the letter. And we said, We want to call this number. So he dialed.

You know, there were phones in Accra. And he dialed and nothing. And dialed and nothing.

Finally he told us, He said, They had a storm, A real bad storm about three months ago. And all the telephone wires have been down ever since. Three months ago.

So now what are we going to do? How do we get to this place? Where is this place? We don't know this country at all. But we convinced a taxi driver to take us there. He said, I know where it is and I'll take you there.

And so we loaded our things up in a taxi and headed down the Cape Coast road out of Accra. And just outside of Cape Coast there's a little village called Yamaransa. And that's where this man lived.

And this taxi driver took us there. And we got out of the car and he started asking questions. And people pointed up to the top of a hill and said, The man lives up there on the top of that hill.

Was he one surprised man when he saw two white men walking up the hill up to his house? And we showed him the letter. And I mean, he probably thought, My day has arrived. What did we find there? In our first visit, we found all kinds of things.

We found idolatrous shrines like this one that you see up here. This picture was taken 19 years ago. Idolatrous shrines.

We didn't understand what was going on in Africa. We know very well now what goes on in Africa. We know how much demon worship and how much juju and all those things there are in the country of Ghana.

But this was our first sight. And when we saw it, it was a bit frightful. We found out that communications was not very good there.

But we thought now we need to let our families know that we arrived here safely. So we sent them a telegraph. Just a simple little telegraph.

Let's see if I can read it here. Dear loved ones, we are fine. No phones, no mail.

All is well. Pray for us. Luke and Denny.

That telegram got home two weeks after we got back home. Our wives and families were very glad to see us when we did get home, because they didn't hear from us for two weeks. What did we find there on that first trip? We found lots of people burdened down with sin.

Everywhere. Just like this picture of this dear lady portrays to us. Loaded down like pilgrim in pilgrim's progress.

Loaded down with sin. And no one to guide them and show them the right way. That's what we found there.

Our first contact. I think his name was John. I don't remember his last name.

We had a few disappointments with this man, but he nevertheless, he took us on our first missionary journey. His church, if you want to call it that, was a mixture of Christianity and animism. As you can see, it's got a bit of Catholicism in it.

And over there on the left is an altar with holy water in it. And things were a bit confusing there. We didn't understand all of this the first time we went there.

He presented himself to be a dedicated Christian and was willing to lead us wherever we wanted to go. And he took us to villages all along the coast, there around the Cape Coast area. And we found lots of hungry people.

I remember the first time we were there is we started passing out tracks. Of course, we'd never been there before. We realized right away, if we're not careful, we'll have a mob of people mobbing us for a track.

Now, this was a totally new experience. We'd been out on the streets many times. We'd been to New York City.

We were on the streets of Lancaster. We'd been to Green Dragon many times, passing out tracks. We were never mobbed with people who wanted to get one of our tracks.

But we realized once we started out on the streets, we better be careful or they will mob us and knock us over to get the tracks. And I think I'm telling the little children there, you're too small for a track. You've got to be bigger in order to get a track.

But that's what we found. We found hungry people. We had open air meetings almost every evening.

He took us to different places along the coast there in villages. And people gathered. I mean, we preached sometimes to five and six hundred people.

And they sat in rapt attention and listened as we preached. And it was a joy and a thrill to our hearts. That was our first trip there.

That was a homecoming. The family was very happy to see us. And safe, at home, at last.

That was the first of 23 homecomings that I've had in the last 19 years. I figured it on my last trip, I've been to Africa 23 times. And I started calculating it up.

Brother Wes, I think I've been to Africa, I think I've spent almost a year and a half in Africa. So, it's interesting how three weeks add up. Three weeks and three weeks and three weeks over the last 19 years.

We found, from that first trip that we made there and the contacts that we made, we found many open doors of opportunity. And we saw potential everywhere. And we began to make trips to Africa, bringing brothers and sisters along with us.

We had a few heavy setbacks. The man, the picture you saw there, the first contact that we had on our second trip there, much to our disappointment. We were sitting on the front porch of his house and a question came to my mind to ask him.

And I, on my own, walked around to the back of the house to ask the question. And caught him there with a bottle of Johnny Walker Red in his hand. He had it up like this, drinking it.

That's whiskey, by the way. Johnny Walker Red whiskey. He had bought it with the money that we gave him to prepare food for us.

Needless to say, that was the last contact that we had with him. We left there that day and we did not spend any more time with him. Even though we were warned by other people, Be careful! They will only be looking for money.

They will trick you. They will only be using you to get money. We were warned those things.

And though we were warned and though we were careful, we found it to be exactly that way. Some very hard, disappointing setbacks. But the Lord was teaching us all the way.

You know, as I thought about it, meditating upon it now, these last couple of days, you know, we could have easily quit. Because of some of the setbacks, we could have easily quit. We could have easily said, this is not for us.

They are right. These Africans are the way they are. Let's go home.

Let's go somewhere else. But somehow, God kept us moving forward. And with the spirit of an inventor, we took our mistakes and we looked at them squarely and kept on going.

The Lord led us. I believe it was in 1989. The Lord led us to Brother Francis.

We had known him before that, but he was just one pastor among many that we had met. The Lord led us to Brother Francis and we began working with him and helping him establish his churches and spending time training and discipling leaders. We started the first youth teams back then, 1988, 1989, somewhere around there.

I have all these dates just exactly right, but we saw the potential from the beginning for our youth and realized that what God did in our hearts, Brother Luke's heart and my heart, in our trip there, God would

also do in the hearts of everyone else that we would take over there. So we began to bring our people over to Africa and the youth went along. Do you notice some of these faces up here? That's Brother Mel and that's Christina Lange.

She's Christina Whitmer now. She's married. I think her husband is a deacon.

That's Esther Swartzentruper and Carl Swartzentruper and there's Brother Ross and Brother Jake Troyer. It was interesting to me as I looked at these pictures, realizing how many of these pictures, the people that are in these pictures are now servants of God in all kinds of other places. We saw that potential.

So, these were the first youth teams and I led the first youth teams and please don't count my youth team example. It's not a very good one. When the young men took it over, they showed us how to do it.

But anyway, we had the right vision. We knew if we bring our young people over here and they see the hunger and they see the openness, their hearts will be stirred to do God's work. So there were souls to save and we wanted as many of our brothers and sisters to experience the joy of leading souls to Christ.

We wanted as many of them to experience the joys of preaching, of ministering to people who were so hungry and so open and so longing to hear. We had open air crusades. I think that's Brother Aaron Martin there and I think Ben Stolzhus has him all tied up.

There's a sermon going on there. We had open air crusades, village crusades. I wonder if you can tell me who this is.

Can anybody tell me? From all back there where you are? Nobody knows. That's Brother David Mast. He's an elder in the Church and Faith Christian Fellowship in Ohio.

That's Brother David Mast. Look at him. Isn't that a blessing? Got his hand up there preaching to those people.

Just a young man. Just a young man. Maybe 18, 19 years old in that picture.

But God was using those trips over there to put a fire in the hearts of many a young man and many a young woman even back in those days. Village crusades and open air preaching. We found ourselves many times having baptisms in the ocean and if you've never baptized in the ocean, you should try it sometime, you ministers.

It's quite a bit different. You have to wait for the waves and if you don't get them under the water at the right time, the wave disappears on you. But that's where we started having baptisms in the ocean.

We lived in the motel rooms back in those days. We went out passing out tracks every day. We went out in the morning for a couple of hours.

We went out in the afternoon for a couple of hours. Just out in the streets passing out tracks. We went to villages in the early evenings and canvassed the whole village and then had open air preaching in those villages in the evening.

Those were the ministry trips, the team trips in the beginning days. We ministered in churches. We ate food that we didn't like.

We got sick. We got malaria. I remember brother Aaron Martin got malaria so bad one time we didn't know if we were going to be able to bring him back home.

He was so sick. But God was leading. And though we made many mistakes, and I'll quickly say that, this is no great success story.

This is a story of a bunch of people who sensed their responsibility to do something that God was calling them to do. And though in our ignorance, though we didn't know very much, we went ahead anyway and God had helped us. Ebenezer! Ebenezer! Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.

So those were the beginning days. In 1993, after just kind of being short-term missionaries up until that point, we felt it was time for us to put a missionary family over there in Ghana. And brother Ross Ulrich and his family moved over there.

We built a mission house which they lived in and which we also planned to use for the teams that went over there because we were spending a lot of money on motel rooms. But the vision began to grow. We sent brother Ross over there.

Brother Ross would be the coordinator of the work. There were funds being transferred over there. We felt like there needed to be some accountability on those funds.

And brother Ross began helping in the establishing of the churches. And the teams kept coming and they stayed at the mission house in those days. This is one of the first churches that we had responsibilities with.

This is brother Francis and his church at Elmina. We helped them build this extravagant church building. And found ourselves gathering in that place many times with sweet, sweet times.

For the next four years, they were learning years. Before this, we were kind of like short-term missionaries, you know. You drop in for a couple of weeks.

You walk through a few experiences. You learn a few things. You get excited about the opportunities that were at your hands.

And then you go back home. Short-term missionaries. But the next four years when brother Ross was there, were learning years.

Now some of us were there all the time. Relationships were built with local churches. And they began to grow.

We began to learn more about these people. We began to realize there is a difference between our culture and their culture. And I guess we knew that all along, but we didn't realize how much our culture was overstepping their culture and how much their culture hindered them from understanding our culture and all these things were learning experiences that we never touched when we were short-term missionaries.

They just put up with us for two weeks or three weeks at a time and we just put up with them. But now, we began to learn. Ross continued to work with the churches over there.

We had our first ordination. Brother Francis was ordained. I don't know the exact date of this, but this is one precious picture to me.

Dear Brother Francis and his wife, Rebecca. What a joy it was to ordain this brother. We found the churches over there very responsive.

In those days, they simply told us, you tell us what to do. You give us direction. You give us input.

You teach us what the Bible says. We want a holy church. And I must say, they responded very well.

At the time that we started over there, they played drums in their services. We encouraged them to put that away. They were dancing in their worship services.

We encouraged them to put those things away. And many of the sisters were not very modestly dressed, but as you notice... Let's see if I can get back there. As you notice from this picture, the sisters in the church took our example and followed and adorned themselves in modest apparel.

We thank God for their openness back in those days. Four churches were planted during this time. And all of our people who traveled over there during this time experienced church life in that African style.

What do I mean by that? They had the beautiful experience of entering into an African church service. It's very different than ours. They pray different than we do.

When they say, let us pray, the whole place starts praying all at once. When they say, let us rise up and sing, they stand to their feet and start clapping their hands and sing the songs. And all of our visitors that we brought over there, they had the opportunity of experiencing church life in this way.

It was a joy. They stood and spoke through interpreters. They sensed the openness.

They found out how easy it was to preach to this open, innocent, hungry group of people. I sat and watched many a young man and many an older man turn into a preacher over there in Africa as they stood before a hungry crowd of people. And that crowd just drew the things right out of their hearts.

Brothers got to know brothers from both sides of the ocean. We spent much time together talking and sharing and discussing the Scriptures. Some of the fruit of the local church in one of the outreaches.

I believe we had this baptism after a three-week mission outreach and these were the converts that were led to the Lord and discipled. And therefore, we took them to the ocean and had a baptism. All these were in the early days of the mission.

We had a few weddings over there. I don't think this is the first one. This is the second one.

Brother Akins and Sister Mary. We had a wedding over there. And that was a sweet time.

And it was different than anything that they'd ever had before. Their wedding was sweet. Their wedding was holy.

We made them smile like that. If you know the African people, when you put them before a camera, they don't smile. They are sober.

They are scared. They look like, you know, something bad is going to happen in a moment. And we told them, come on! Loosen up! Hold her hand! Smile at her! And finally they loosened up and smiled and we got a picture of them.

Praise the Lord. As I said, these were learning years. We made mistakes.

Yes, we did. We made mistakes. And some of these brothers and sisters that you've seen here on the slides, they bore the burden of some of our mistakes.

But every time we made them, we just kept evaluating. There were temptations to say, what have we got ourselves into? Let's just go home. It's too much for us.

But instead, we took the spirit of an inventor, like a Thomas Edison, who at every failure of a light bulb, instead of being discouraged, he looked at it and said, well, that's one more way that I know it won't work. And he kept on going until he had a light bulb. That's the way we approached the mission in those days.

We were becoming missionaries. Little by little we were learning. You know, at first we just kind of went there and we gave some teaching to those men, but as far as moving around the country and knowing how to get around in the country, we depended mostly upon Brother Francis and the others that were there.

But as time went on, we were becoming missionaries with dreams of other places. And we began to believe God that He could help us to do it, to start churches in other places. At that time, Brother Ross moved to Owassee.

He moved his family, I think it was in 1995, inland one hour to a village called Owassee. There was no electricity there. This picture that you see is not the beginning picture of that church, but I believe this is like a Christmas retreat or an Easter retreat, the people that are gathered together there.

But Brother Ross felt it was time for him to branch out on his own and start a church. Before that, we had been working with them, helping them with their churches, teaching their leaders. But now, Brother Ross went into this village and started a church.

But even while Brother Ross was there, our thoughts kept going to the regions beyond. It was a growing experience. This is just a picture of one of the baptisms that they had at Owassee.

This is down the road just a little ways from where that church building was that you saw. A baptism. These are probably two years after the church was started there at Owassee.

As you can see, a nice group of people were gathering together there in the name of the Lord Jesus. Here's a picture of Cynthia having a ladies' meeting. There are several sisters there from the Owassee church.

And they're having a ladies' meeting there at the mission house in Owassee. And here we have a picture. I've titled this one, The Church Plants a Church.

This is a church that was started in the village of Atravanda, which is, oh, maybe a couple of miles away from where Owassee was. For the most part, the local brothers there started this congregation. And this is their church building.

I'm not sure if it has walls on it yet, but this is how they began. God was beginning to teach us, don't do everything for them. Don't build them a building.

You let them do it. And this is the building that they came up with at Atravanda. In 1996, God was preparing to expand the mission.

Several of us were receiving a growing vision from the Lord for the unreached people groups of the world. We saw, the more we were over there in Ghana, we saw that there were many paths that led to thousands of villages who had never heard the Gospel. Now, up until that time, we were starting churches with church people.

Probably not so in that village that we just saw, but for the most part, we were starting churches with church people. And there's a big difference between starting a church with church people and starting a church where there was no church, where no one has ever heard before. But God began to move upon our hearts in this way.

There are many, many paths just like that. They lead to many, many villages, thousands of villages who have never heard one time. We became aware that there were unreached tribes in the north of Ghana.

I remember the Sunday that I presented to the congregation the whole subject of adopting a people group as our own. We talked about these unreached people groups. We talked about them.

They're there. Nobody has told them. They're waiting for a missionary to come.

Nobody is praying for them. And we laid it out before the congregation. Would God have us adopt a people and say, these are our people.

And we're going to pray for them and see what God will do through us to put a church in their area. We started to pray. We started to own a people as our own responsibility.

A people where Christ was never named. During that time, Brother Emmanuel led a team into the north. It was an exploring, a surveying trip.

It was a 14-hour drive from where we were at down there in the Wawasi, in the Elmina area. Brother Darrell was on that survey team. My son Daniel, I think, was also on that survey team.

And they went up into the north, I think, for about ten days and just moved around and visited. They went to Wycliffe. They had an organization up there in the Tomley area.

And they asked questions. And where are the lost people groups? And which way shall we go? And they got a bunch of counsel. And they went and traveled all around.

And they found two tribes up in the north who had not heard the Gospel. That was the Dogombas and the Konkomba tribes. They discovered that the Bible translations for these two tribes was almost finished.

They discovered that there had been recently a war between these two tribes. The Konkombas fighting against the Dogombas. And the Dogombas protecting themselves, but fighting back.

And they discovered that the Dogombas won the war. And many, many hundreds and hundreds of people died in those wars. We took up the burden and began to pray and prepare.

We felt like God was saying, that's where I want you to go. Now remember, there's no floodgates opening up on us. It's not like God put a writing on the wall.

We were just moving forward one step at a time and saying, God, is this what You want us to do? We took up that burden and we began to pray and we began to prepare. During that time, I believe about 1997, I asked Brother Emmanuel to take the responsibility of leading the mission here at home. After his trip up to the north, he was wanting to go.

He was wanting to go there. He was saying, I think I need to go. The work is there.

We need to go. And I pled with him to stay home and lead the work here at home. And he agreed to stay and send instead of to go.

He felt like in his heart, he could satisfy his heart if he would stay and send. From this point, things started happening much faster. The vision for planting churches among the unreached villages was growing all the time.

Now we had a man who could focus his time and attention on the mission. Before that, it was my responsibility and I didn't have time. My time was stretched in every direction.

And as I meditated upon this history, I realized that this is really when the vision to be a sending church became a reality. Before that, it was only a dream. We knew God wants a New Testament church to be a sending church, to be a church that's reaching out to a lost world and to be a church that's involved in world missions.

It was a dream. It was a vision. But at this point, when we got a man who was willing to take up the burden and put in his time here at home, we became a sending church.

My son Daniel picked up the burden for the youth teams at that time. And he took it way beyond our expectations, way beyond what we were doing. And we thank God for that.

We encouraged Daniel to take the youth on a six-week missionary journey that would change their life forever. He started taking two teams a year. As you know, there have been many team leaders since then.

But these mission teams, they were part of our mobilization and preparation and training for the work that we saw up in the future. We saw these mission teams as an opportunity to train, to develop and to evaluate those who are going over there and see if they would possibly be material to go and plant churches in the north in the future. So the mission teams started the way they are today.

Daniel designed Bush Week. I think that's what they call it where the team would spend a whole week out in the bush living in tents, washing their own clothes, sleeping where the mosquitoes are. Absolutely out in the bush near a village somewhere and then evangelizing the village during the daytime and in the evenings.

That was part of their missionary training. They had many opportunities as you can see. Sometimes when I hear these stories that these young people come home talking about, I get a little bit jealous.

I think, come on! I never had such opportunities in all my trips to Africa to stand before a crowd of young people like that and pour your heart out to them and preach the gospel to them. I never had such an opportunity. But yet our young men and our young ladies are having opportunities like this over and over and over again.

These youth teams were designed the way they were supposed to be with preaching and praying and full-time intense ministry for six weeks. Bush week. Hard circumstances.

Difficult foods to eat. All kinds of experiences that they would live through in those six weeks. I mean, think about it.

Have you ever eaten a rat? Did you ever eat a mouse? Did you ever dip your spoon into a bowl of food and come out with a mouse? And then pick it up and put it in your mouth and eat it? They have done it. They have done it. Many times.

Missionary trips. A missionary journey. This is what the youth teams were doing.

And I think I can safely say, because I have asked it to so many of them, every one of them, they are never the same. It changes their life forever. Africa makes its imprint upon them.

The work of God, the third world country experience, the poverty, the hunger, the openness, the opportunities to win souls, it makes its stamp upon them and they are never the same. And we thank God for that. God continued to move upon our hearts during this time.

We were still dreaming, but we were planning and we were preparing. We felt like God was saying, we should make a major move to the north. And I put this picture up there because if you've been in Ghana, you will know right away that is a northern village.

The way the huts are set and the way they are designed, that's a northern village. We felt like God was saying, take the light of the world to the unreached villages in the north. And during that time, four families were sent about the same time.

Four families. Brother Willie Halteman, his family, they went to Tamale. They were sent there.

All these things working together to reach the tribes, the unreached tribes. And we felt that we need to have a family in Tamale so that there is a place where the other missionaries can go. And that family should also start a church while they're there.

So, Brother Willie's moved to Tamale. And there they were in Tamale. Started a church.

They supported the village work. They were up there. They were a home to come to.

Brother Willie did lots of logistical work. You know, that the village families were able to lean upon him. And, I mean, brothers and sisters, if you don't have supporters, you can't have the village work.

You just simply can't. If you were over there, you would understand what I mean. Sometimes it takes you two hours just to go and get one little signature and come back.

How can the missionary do that? If the missionary out there on the front lines, out there in the village somewhere, if he has to stop and do that, if he has to stop and fix his vehicle, if he has to stop and fill out all the papers, soon he will just be filling out papers and fixing vehicles. So, bless God for men and women who were willing to support the work. This is the house where they stayed at the same time, or pretty well the same time that Brother Willie's move to Tamale.

Brother Mel and Sister Barbie and Daryl and Rebecca, they moved to the north also to reach the Dogonba people. I'm not sure if these are Dogonbas or Konkonbas because it kind of overflows there and mixes together, but just to show you a picture, Mel and Barbie and Daryl and Rebecca started a church in Gusugu town, which is a larger town. In those days, we thought this, if you want to reach all of the villages, you go to the major town, you start a church in the major town, then that church will reach out to the major villages.

We've learned a few things since then. Like I said, always learning, always evaluating what is the right approach. And as time went on, we began to realize that it is out in the distant villages where, especially with the Dogonbas, where the Muslims have not influenced them, where the people are wide open and hungry.

But nevertheless, they started in Gusugu town. There was language learning. Brother Daryl translated creation to Christ into the Dogonba language.

They planted a church there. And as the church began to grow and it began to reach out, there they began to discover the hunger in the villages, both the Dogonba hunger and also the Konkonba hunger. Both of them were there.

It's very interesting to watch how this whole thing happened. These people found out that there was a church in Gusugu town. And they started traveling.

Some of them would get on their bicycles and they would travel for an hour and a half or so just to be at the church service. Some of them were Konkonbas who could hear the Dogonba language. And in their hearts, it was like as if, hey, if God is coming to this place, we want in on it and we're not going to be turned away.

Even though these are Dogonbas, and Dogonbas and Konkonbas, they don't get along very well together, but somehow God bridged the gap through the Gospel and the Konkonbas and the Dogonbas were in the same church building together listening to the good news of Jesus Christ. Both of these tribes were surveyed as time was going on. These are just a couple of pictures.

I think these were just recently taken when Mel and Barbie were there. But you get a little idea. Is that Dogonba or Konkonba? It's Konkonba? Okay, good.

Here we have a picture of a baptism. I think this is a baptism that comes out of the Kariga work, but I may be wrong on this picture, but nevertheless, this picture has a thousand words in it. We don't need to say a whole lot.

After the work of establishing the church in Gush Egu, Brother Darrell and Sister Rebecca moved to Kariga with a vision for what we now call village evangelism. As I said, as time went on, they began to realize the hunger is out there in those villages. It's out there where there's no electricity.

It's out there where there is nothing. It's out there where it is even harder to live. But the hunger is out there in those villages.

So, Brother Darrell had the vision and the burden to go to Kariga, which is another larger town, and there live in a house, but not start a church in Kariga, start reaching out to the villages that are around there. During this time, we began to face some of the issues of what money, our money, being given to the

church people does to them. We faced our dependency issues.

We realized that the more we give money to these people, the more dependent they are upon us. The more we show them with slide presentations how to give the gospel or showing a movie or whatever, the more they will think this is the only way the gospel can be preached. God was dealing with us that we must simplify our methods of evangelism down to where the village people can also do it.

Because what was happening was this, they were thinking, well, when the missionary buys me a slide projector, I'll go out to my village and preach. Why did they think that? Because the missionary had a slide projector. So we had to re-evaluate again.

Uh-oh, we did it wrong. But we learned. We just keep learning.

Facing it, looking at it, evaluating it, getting up and going on. We learned. We also began to see that the most valuable kind of church that we could plant over there would be an indigenous church.

One that was being run by the natives. A self-supporting national church. And with these visions in mind, village evangelism began.

Young men going over for six months, living in the villages all week long and preaching to the people, and then coming home on the weekend, washing their clothes, recouping, resting, eating a bit of different food, because all you get is TZ out in the villages, which is corn. And if you live on that very long, you won't be healthy. These are some of the things that are happening in the north.

Are these Dagombas, Brother Mel? Yes. The Dagombas are Muslim-based. You'll notice there's much more concern for modesty among the Dagombas than the Konkombas.

During this time, I mentioned that we sent four families. I've only mentioned three of them. The fourth family that we sent, I believe that is the next picture, that's the Steve Clark family.

We sent him over there to be the business coordinator. As we were learning what it was like to live in Ghana, we realized that we need somebody who can make this whole thing happen, who can keep the vehicles running, who can keep all the visas up to date, who can pay all the taxes, who can make all the trips to Accra and deal with all the authorities there. And Brother Ross was not able to do that and still be a missionary.

So, we asked the Steve Clark family to also go, and they moved into the mission house at Itri, became the business coordinator, kept the logistics running, and also started a church in Itri. But as time went on, we soon discovered that we had more than a business coordinator, we had a whole missionary family. Or, may I say, a whole family whose heart beats for missions.

That's a missionary family. I don't want to toot anybody's horn here above any others, but I do want to say this, without this brother's labors over there, behind the scenes, there wouldn't be the mission in Africa today. Guaranteed.

All the behind the scenes work. We thank God for this family. Sometime around this time, again, I don't have the dates just exactly right, Victory Christian School was started.

There was a burden and a vision in the heart of Rosella Whitmer and Sister Joy Clark, and I believe also Brother Ross would have also, his heart would have joined in with that, a vision to start a Christian school

in Wawasi. One with a phonics based reading program, and one where the national teachers could be trained to teach in a different way. I'm sure that you'll hear much more about that, but I wanted to just put it in here in the history of the mission.

That church has grown into a beautiful Christian school. And it is known far and wide for its scholastics, for the character in its children, and for the character in the teachers. Through Brother Steve's oversight and also Eric Cherry's and now Andy Zielinski, basically this school supports itself.

It pays its own teachers. It takes care of its own expenses. The only thing that we're doing is we build a new room every year as the next classroom begins.

That's the only thing we're doing. It's a self-supporting school, and we thank God for that. In the year 2000, Daniel and Christy moved over to Konkomba land.

We, through the work there in Gusha Gu, we began to realize these Konkomba people are very, very hungry. And we cannot just leave them sit there. We must send someone to the Konkomba people.

We were beginning to realize, oh, I guess back in those days we just sensed and wondered, is God moving in a special way upon this people group? They had just gotten their Bible. Remember, they were the tribe that lost the war. And I'm of an opinion that somehow through the humiliation of the loss of that war, God humbled their hearts and opened their hearts to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Konkomba people are so hungry and so open. I was at a few Konkomba villages this last time in a different area, which I'll say something about a little bit later, and I found them just exactly the same way. After the sermon was preached, they sat for 30 minutes and asked questions, one after another after another.

We didn't tell them, now it's time to ask questions. We were ready to dismiss the service, and they said, please, we want to ask questions first. And for 30 minutes, they just threw one question after another after another.

Hungry people. Open. Wanting to learn.

This is where Daniel and Christi went. I think it was in the year 2000. These are a few more pictures of village evangelism.

I call this picture Christian Soldiers. I'm not sure how many miles they have on the bikes today, but this is how village evangelism takes place on bicycles. There are 31 villages in the Konkomba area where Daniel is working, and 50 leaders.

And lots of evangelism taking place. During those days, as I said, God was teaching us about the principles of dependency, and how that the people had expectations about what we would do for them, and they had them because they saw what we had, and they saw what we do. And Daniel and others over there, Daryl also, they began to evaluate.

You know, we have Land Rovers, and they are on bicycles, and we're showing them how to do evangelism, but we go in a Land Rover and tell them to go on a bicycle. And all these things are going through their minds, and finally they came to the place where they just said, we want to try it their way. We'll get on the bike and go like they go.

We'll go through the things that they go through. We'll wade through the river with the bicycle, and up the other side of the bank, and on our way. And so, the methods of evangelism were changing and being simplified in those days.

And God has clearly led the missionaries to simplify in this way, and come down more on the level of where the people live. And sometimes, those Africans, they scratch their head, because they know that Daniel has a Land Rover that he could use whenever he wants to, but they scratch their head, why don't you use the Land Rover? But while they scratch their head, they also look with respect, because they know this man is doing what we're doing. He's showing us that he can do it with all the hardships that we also face.

Village evangelism. I love this picture. It's one of my favorite pictures.

If you've never slept on the hard ground on a Zanamath, you should try it one time. It is an unforgettable night's sleep. You won't get much sleep the first night.

Maybe not even the second night. I would recommend you put a little space in between there, because you won't get much sleep on the first night. You will lay there, you will toss, you will turn.

But there they are! Zonked out! Except for Jeremy, I think he's awake. If you look real close, he's got his eyes open there. This is village evangelism.

You ride your bike for ten miles in the heat of the day. You arrive at the village about four o'clock in the afternoon. And you sit there in the shade, reading your Bible, waiting for them to prepare you a meal.

You eat the meal. After the meal is finished, you go and you have a service. The service finishes about 10.30 at night.

And you roll out your Zanamath. By the way, this is outside. And sleep under the stars.

And then in the morning, when the rooster and the goats get up, you get up. Get on your bike and go to the next place. It is a rigorous life.

But the doors are open in so many places. The villages are begging everywhere. Give us a church, they say.

They come bringing gifts. Give us a church, they beg. There are many extra hardships with doing evangelism this way.

But it is the right way and we keep on learning. This is the Bible school at Katiga. As the village evangelism unfolds, this produces villages with churches in them.

These village churches need discipleship. Slowly, leaders emerge out of those disciples. And then the need to train those leaders in Bible doctrine and methods of evangelism.

So, here we have the Bible school at Katiga. Where the leaders from the village evangelism are being trained to be leaders in their respective villages. I believe this is worship time.

They are clapping and singing in the beginning of the Bible school day. We have here a picture of Western Charity. The work keeps on expanding.

One of the things that we learn since Brother Emmanuel was willing to take up the work here at home, we learn this. You don't sit and wait and look and find an opportunity and then go train somebody and fill that slot two years later. But instead, you just keep preparing.

You keep motivating people to prepare, to be ready, to train, to get involved, to brighten the corner where they are. And then, as the doors open up, you will have people that are ready to go. And this is just one of those examples.

For the Western Charity. They have been in the village of Ventity. I believe that's how you say it.

For a year and a half, learning the language. They are home now. You'll get to hear some of their descriptions of how they were learning the language.

But they are there. And we felt like they should also go into the area where the Konkomas are. I talked to Daniel when I was there the last time to confirm these words.

And he said, I'm right. There are at least a thousand villages in Konkoma land that do not have a church. Imagine that.

A thousand villages. And you may say, then send a thousand evangelists. But I say, no, we don't want to send a thousand evangelists.

We want to send a few evangelists who can go there and train and raise up a few churches which will be indigenous churches which will then go out and plant churches in other villages and they will reach all of those villages. But you have to send a few evangelists. And Brother West and Sister Charity are examples of that.

Transportation, Ghana style. By the way, that looks like a nice, clean transportation experience in this picture. But if you would have seen them over there, it doesn't quite look that way.

This might be at the beginning of the trip, not at the end. If you see them at the end of the trip, they have red dust all over them. That's kind of how it is on the bikes over there.

But Brother West and Sister Charity are going to another area of the Konkomas and hoping to reproduce all over again that which Daniel is doing in the Boon Boon area. Starting, reaching out, responding to the pleas for a church here and the pleas for a church there. Taking those responses, working with leaders, raising up leaders who will establish churches and the whole thing happens all over again.

The work continues to expand. Opportunities, though rigorous, are endless. The opportunities, though very rigorous, are endless.

Brothers and sisters, they are endless. Brother Ernie and Sister Anna Cheddar are going to take up the work in Katiga. Let's see, yeah, I'll wait on that picture.

It looks like in the next, oh, few months we'll be sending three more families. Ernie and Anna Cheddar, they will go to take up the work in Katiga. Overseeing the evangelism, the discipleship and the leadership training there.

And there's about 30 villages that are represented around that Katiga area. Sam and Kate Kenniston, they've consented to go to the Saliga area, which is south and east of Tamale, about two and a half hours.

I was in that area on the last trip.

Again, there's about 30 Konkomba villages down there in that area. They have consented to go there and begin to do the same thing that is happening in the other areas where the Konkombas are. And then also Tanner and Rebecca Leiby, they have also consented to go and possibly pioneer a new work among the Gunja tribe.

I'm sure that you'll hear more about these things, but I'm just trying to give a little history here. The Gunja tribe is another tribe. It is another unreached people group.

It is south of Tamale. And, well, Tanner plans to go over there and do a survey, probably a two-month survey going around through those villages and seeing and sensing what the Lord is saying to do there. That'll be another people group.

That's another language. That's a whole other culture to learn. And they are planning to go sometime in the future, near future.

But through the years, we've learned that God's work done in God's way will not lack God's supply. And we found it to be that way through the years. We've learned at the mission, we've learned how to live on the edge financially.

It doesn't seem like God ever fills the bank account so full that we're sitting back and saying, OK, what are we going to do with all this money that we have? But somehow, God keeps providing the needs. And we've learned through the years, you don't wait until you have a whole bunch of money in the coffers and then send another worker. You see the opportunity, you see the field, you have a worker, a laborer that the Lord is thrusting out into the work, you send the worker, you trust God to meet the needs, and somehow, in God's miraculous ways, the needs are met again and again and again.

We are trusting God for that, for these families, these new families that are going over there. We move forward by faith, preparing more laborers. We are planning to continue to do that, preparing laborers.

We don't know where we're going. We've never had a plan. We've never sat down and said, wouldn't this be a good idea? Wouldn't it be neat to do this? Let's plan a big mission and send a bunch of missionaries.

We've never had any of those thoughts. God has just simply led one step of the way, and somehow, in spite of our many failures, God's work goes on. This is Mike and Tammy and a few of the workers there at Cotiga.

They are overseeing the work there. I think for about a year is what their commitment is there in Cotiga. This is the church in Tomalee.

Remember we told you that Brother Willie's family was to go to Tomalee and one of their responsibilities was to start a church? This is the church in Tomalee. When we think about the work, when we think about what is over there, this is what I think. It's about Jesus Christ.

It's not about us. It is about the souls of men. And it is about churches.

That's what it's all about. It's not enough to go and preach. It's not enough to lead a soul to Christ.

It's not enough to just disciple that soul. But there must be a church there. If there is no church there, we really haven't finished our task.

I've said many times, the greatest gift that you can give to any people, at home or abroad, is a self-supporting, self-governing, self-propagating New Testament church. If you give them that, you have given them eternity. A self-supporting, self-governing, self-propagating New Testament church.

That if, perchance, and it happens all the time, the missionaries are chased out of the country, and the people are left there by themselves, the church will keep on marching on. This is another picture of the Ross Ulrich family. They are senior missionaries, a soldier indeed.

He's been given the oversight of all of the work over there. He oversees, counsels, and gives fatherly encouragement to the whole missionary family. We see him as a very important person.

He needs your prayers desperately. All of the missionaries need your prayers. But this man carries a heavy load.

We need to pray for Brother Ross. He is the father. He guides the others.

He needs our prayers. So you remember that family as they labor over there. There are many more villages that sit in darkness and fear, searching for the light.

The light of the world is Jesus. The light of the world is Jesus. He is the light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

There is no light but His light. Looking back over the years, spending these two days just looking at pictures and thinking and remembering, my heart was both humbled and blessed so much from such a small beginning. Nine simple men with no big ideas at all, just a sense of responsibility, fall on their knees and say, God, we believe you want us to be involved in world missions.

Would you lead us? So much from such a small beginning. So much, even though we've made many mistakes. But each time, we got up, we evaluated, we learned, and we kept on trusting God and His Word.

I wonder how many times in a mission board meeting we prayed this prayer, Lord, we don't know what we're doing, but we believe that you have led us to do what we're doing. We believe that what we're doing is what you would have us do. Now, please give us wisdom and guide us and help us to know what to do in this situation, in this one, in this one, and this one.

We got up, we learned, and we kept on trusting God. And all we can say is what the Africans often say, How did it get done? Except God. Except God.

Jesus said, Go and make disciples among all nations. That responsibility has not passed away, but rather, it is passed on to us. We are, we represent here this morning, New Testament churches.

Churches who have been bought with His own blood. God's heritage here upon this earth. We represent those New Testament churches.

May God inflame our hearts. Every church that is represented here. Inflame us with the responsibility to do what is right.

And let us trust God for all the results. Let's bow our heads in prayer. Thank you God our Father.

What can we say? Except God. Oh Lord, there is much work to be done yet. You have ordained this missionary conference, Lord.

And You have brought us all here. Oh, right upon the tables of our hearts, Lord, today, tomorrow, and Sunday. The dreams, the visions, the burdens, the responsibilities that You would give us.

God, add Your blessing to all this sharing, Lord. Add Your blessing. Father, what can we say except all glory be to God.

Not unto us. Not unto us, oh Lord. Give glory, but unto Thy name, God.

We know it is only because of You that there is anything over there that can be a blessing to anyone. And God, we worship You. And we thank You for how You've led.

We pray this all in Jesus' name. Amen.

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/12/SID12681.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/denny-kenaston/an-inspirational-history-of-the-mission/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**