

An Historical Example of Kingdom Extension – The Life of William Carey

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I heard Sukesh Pabari deliver this lecture in July, 2004, and was delighted to hear someone with a Hindu background provide perspective on William Carey. We are pleased to include this popular lecture in this year's Journal. I draw your attention to three things as you read it. First, in his lecture he has extensively sprinkled quotations from Carey's letters, which are very insightful. Second, he gives us a fuller picture into Carey's view of kingdom work. Many have a very superficial acquaintance with Carey. This may appear a popular lecture, but I believe you will see that it probes deeply into some critical matters of Carey's theology. And finally, Pabari's third section of this lecture focuses on Carey the evangelist, preacher, and translator. It is easy in Carey studies to lose sight of this unified chain. Carey was a "big man"; for example, he was a noted botanist, but first he was an evangelist and preacher. Sukesh Pabari brings a good perspective here.

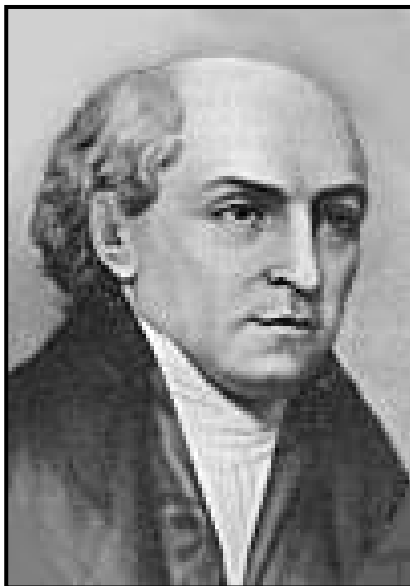
Editor

The theme of our conference is the extension of God's kingdom. We do not want to look just in the Bible, although that is very valuable, but we want also to look in history to see how men of God in the past have worked in extending God's kingdom. Let me begin by asking you

a question: how many of you have heard of William Carey? I want to look at this man, William Carey, not because I want to exalt him, but because he stands out as a great example of a man who believed in kingdom extension and who laboured in kingdom extension. His example is worthy of study and worthy of our following.

I. Who Was William Carey?

I am going to look first of all at the question, who was William Carey and what lessons we can learn from him? We are looking into the eighteenth century. August 17, 1761, William Carey was born in England in a tiny little village called Paulerspury in the middle of England in the county of Northamptonshire. At the age of fourteen, after he finished school, he began training as a shoemaker, working alongside another apprentice. So there were two of them, and this young man, John Warr, had recently been saved. He was full of zeal and was witnessing to William Carey. Carey began to listen to him, and God began to



William Carey

work in his heart. You know how some little sins become very big sins when God is at work. One day William Carey was walking along in the village – this was before he got saved – and he found a fake shilling coin and it was quite a good fake. Somehow he was able to go into a shop and pass it and buy things with it. That created an enormous prick of conscience within him; his conscience raged, because he had passed a bad shilling. God used that to show him his sinfulness and his need of Christ. Finally at the age of fourteen, William Carey was soundly converted to Christ.

Carey had only very basic education, but he had a truly remarkable mind, a mind that thirsted after knowledge. He surrounded himself with books as much as he could. He read, and that is the first example of William Carey that I would commend to you. He was a great reader, and I say to you that we, as servants of God, need to be great readers, not just of the Bible, but of books that will teach us the Bible. In the

village there was a man called Thomas Jones who had a college education, but who had made a mess of his life. He was an alcoholic. But this man taught him Latin and New Testament Greek, and William Carey actually became an expert in both of these languages. A passionate reader of books, in 1783 he read a book called *The Voyages of Captain Cook*. Cook was a British explorer who had gone to the South Sea Islands and had ended up in Australia. Thus he discovered many of the Pacific Islands that we know of today. We are told that from that time, whenever Carey stood up in a church to pray in public, he never failed to mention the South Sea Islands, the Pacific Islands, in his prayer. It really gripped him that there were people there who were unsaved.

As well as working as a shoemaker, Carey was a school teacher because he had such good knowledge, and he made a globe of the world. He would put it before his pupils and he would show where America was and where the South Sea Islands were and so on. Frequently his pupils would see tears running down his cheeks as he would show them these heathen countries, and he would say, "They are pagans, pagans." You see, he was moved to tears by the plight that they were not saved.

In 1785, William Carey was appointed a pastor of Moulton Baptist Church in a village near where he was born. He was also working as a teacher. At this time he found another Bible scholar in the village who taught him Old Testament Hebrew. As a pastor, Carey began to attend the local pastors' fraternal. At that time in England, they used to have association meetings more frequently than once a year. They did not cover the whole country. It was not that every Baptist pastor in the country came to the association meetings, but in the district all the pastors would come together for the meetings. So as a pastor, Carey now began to attend these meetings.

There is quite a humorous account of the first association meeting he attended. There were all these senior, experienced pastors, yet it was the first time of attendance for William Carey and one other man, who had also recently been appointed a pastor. They were young men. Now, there was a tradition in this association that the newcomers chose the subject for discussion. So you imagine going to an association meeting with these wise, experienced men and you are in awe of them, and they say, "Okay, young man, what would you like us to discuss?" Now the other young man who was there was chosen first to choose the subject. He chose some controversial text. I think it was I Peter chapter 3 about Noah and so on. He said, "I'd like us to discuss this." He thought he was on safe ground. This was a controversial Bible passage, and he

expected they might spend the whole of the association meeting discussing this. However, one of the older men stood up and said, "John Gill has just written a commentary on it, and he has dealt with the subject perfectly. We don't need to talk any more about it. Who's next?" And that was the end of that one. Then all eyes turned on William Carey, the next novice. Carey stood up and said, "Is the Great Commission still valid for the churches of today? Do we still have a command from Christ to go into all the nations and preach His gospel and baptize men and women and children in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them everything that He has taught us?" That question began a series of discussions in the association meetings on the subject of foreign missions.

The reason William Carey is famous is because he is the very first missionary from Protestant England. You see, up to that point, Protestant Churches in England had never sent a missionary abroad. So William Carey began this discussion in the association of Baptist pastors, "Do we have a command from God? Are we under an obligation from God to go to these heathen lands and preach the gospel to them?" Now the other pastors in this small district association said, "Well, of course we have an obligation. But, hey, we're only a small association. We're a tiny little group of churches. We don't have much money. We don't have any resources. I mean, you're looking at a mighty work here." So they delayed and delayed. And Carey just went on hammering this point meeting after meeting after meeting. "We have an obligation to the lost world to take the gospel to them."

There were two events which were important. First of all in May, 1792, at an association meeting, Carey preached a powerful sermon from Isaiah 54 verses 2-3. Urging his fellow ministers to join hands with him to enlarge the tent, he summed up with those words which we hear so often: "Expect great things from God. Attempt great things for God." He was saying, "We have nothing because we're a small association, just a few churches, in each church a few members, not much money, but we have God, and we are to expect great things from God and attempt great things for God."

Then there was a meeting that took place on October 2, 1792, that key date in the history of British missions. In that meeting this same association consisting of twelve pastors, one deacon, and one student, gathered and said, "Okay, we are officially going to begin a missionary society." They called it "The Particular Baptist Missionary Society for the Propagation of the Gospel to the Heathen." We live in the day of sound bites. We would never give a society that long a name. We might give it a little name that people can easily remember. They lived in a

different era, and they wanted the title to convey what they were about. They were Particular Baptists, and they were out to propagate the gospel to the heathen, and so they said so. At that meeting, they said, "Right, what do we pledge towards this endeavour?" And the total of just over £13 was pledged. It was not given, it was pledged, promised. It actually was not given for some years. You know, one church would say, "Well, we think we can give £1 or £2" and another church would say, "We think we can give £3." And just about £13 was pledged.

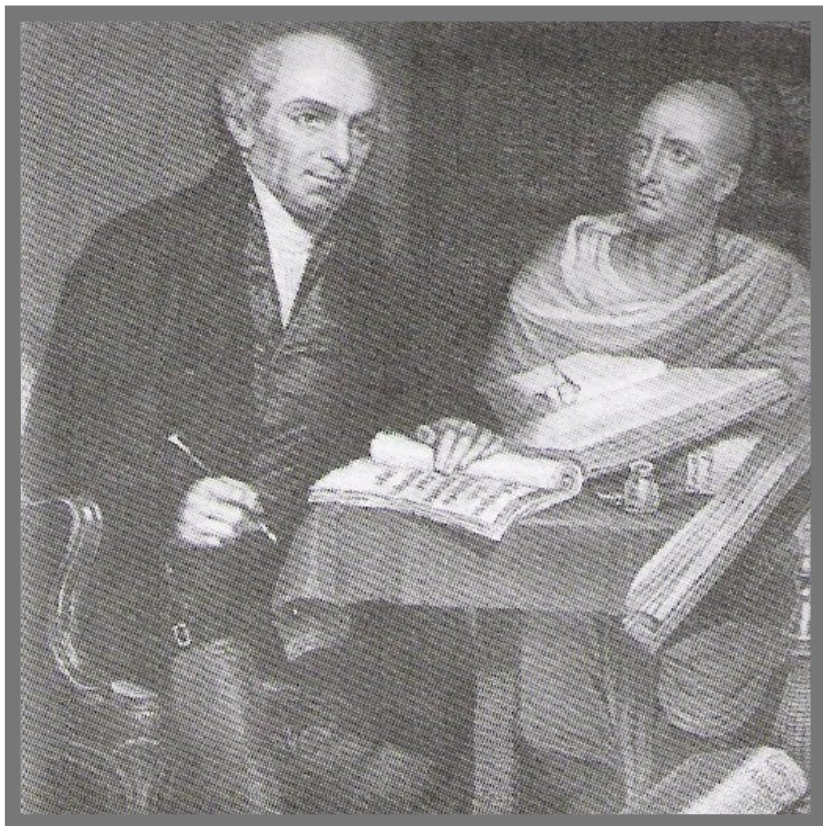
There is a lovely book by Iain Murray called *The Puritan Hope* in which he gives an account of this meeting. Murray says, they did not have much money. If you look at it in terms of worldly goods, they did not have very much. But he says, the one thing they had was faith. That is what moved them – faith. And with that little amount of money, they decided, "We are now a missionary society. We are going to send a missionary." And of course the moment they resolved that, William Carey shot up from his chair and said, "I am going. I am the one. You want a missionary, I am going." So he went back to his local church, Harvey Lane Baptist Church in Leicester, where they called a church meeting, and he announced that he was going abroad as a missionary. At this Baptist Church all the minutes of members meetings still exist. Apparently there is just one line written of a meeting that took place; it says, "Our pastor announced that he was going to the Far East as a missionary." It hardly seems to be a momentous event in the life of the church. I just do not know what the members thought of it. But the secretary saw fit at least to put it down.

So, William Carey gathered his wife and his children and on June 13, 1793, they boarded a Danish ship called the *Kron Princessa Maria* and went to India. A British newspaper at the time said, "We see not the slightest prospect of success. We see much danger in making the attempt." William Carey never saw England again. He lived in India forty-two years, died in India, is buried in India. You can visit his grave in India today. He never came back.

India, of course, is a massive country, and the Danish people had an area under their protection. It was not a colony. This area, which today we call Bengal, was a Danish protectorate. The Danish people said that they were happy to have him and would protect him. The British would not give him that guarantee, interestingly. The British had a large part of western and eastern India, but would not guarantee him protection. They actually said they really did not want a fanatic missionary going and spreading the gospel in the country. They were trying to engender trade. But the Danes agreed, and that is why William Carey ended up in one of our most famous cities, Calcutta.

II. William Carey's Theology

Let me take a break from his life story and ask this question: Why did William Carey go to India as a missionary? I say to you, if you can understand Carey's reasons, it will revolutionize your life. Carey saw something about the kingdom of God. And if we see that, it will really revolutionize our lives and our thinking.



William Carey and Krishna Pal

What I want to do is quote from his many letters, and then I want to explain Carey's understanding of the kingdom. So let us just read through some excerpts. (Please do not see this as a tedious exercise. At the end of this section, you will understand the significance of what I am doing.) He had laboured in India many years. He was in India seven years before he saw his first convert, seven years before he saw a single Indian become a Christian. During those seven years, he wrote to a very close friend of his, Samuel Pierce, one of the original twelve in

that room in Kettering when they set up the missionary society. Carey said to Pierce, "I would not abandon the work here for the finest church in England. God's cause will triumph. The work, to which God has set His hands, will infallibly prosper. Christ has begun to besiege this ancient and strong fortress, and will assuredly carry it."

In 1800, an Indian man called Krishna Pal was converted. I was hoping we would sing his hymn in your hymn books. The words I find very telling, very powerful.

¹NOW, O MY SOUL, forget no
more
The Friend who all your misery
bore;
Let every idol be forgot,
But, O my soul, forget Him not.

²Jesus for you a body takes,
Your guilt He bears, your fetters
breaks,
Discharging all your dreadful
debt;
And can you now such love
forget?

³Renounce your works and ways
with grief,
And run to this most sure relief;
Forget not Him who left His
throne,
And for your life laid down His
own.

⁴Infinite truth and mercy shine
In Him, Whose word is, 'You are
Mine':
And can you, then, with sin beset,
Such grace, such matchless grace,
forget?

⁵Ah no! till life itself depart,
His Name shall cheer and warm
my heart;
And singing this, from earth I'll
rise,
And join the chorus of the skies.

⁶And when at last all things
expire,
And perish in the general fire,
This name all others shall survive,
And through eternity shall live.

Krishna Pal (1764-1822)
tr. Joshua Marshman (1768-1837)

Who wrote that hymn? Krishna Pal. The first Indian convert on Indian soil in Carey's ministry. It is a wonderful hymn about devotion to Christ. Now, you must remember Krishna Pal faced enormous persecution. He was baptized on December 28, 1800. His wife and her sister had believed, but the night before the baptism they had received a visit from relatives saying, "If you go for baptism, you will die." Krishna Pal went. He would not let anything stop him from going to that river for baptism. His wife and his sister failed in their courage,

but three weeks later they went and were baptized. In the biography of William Carey you read about how people would come in the night, drag Krishna Pal into the jungle, and beat him up for being a Christian. So he faced enormous persecution. In the face of such persecution, he expressed his love for Christ in a hymn, "My soul, you must not forget Him Who bore your misery on the cross." Whatever comes, I will never let go of Him. It is a lovely hymn of devotion.

In 1800 Krishna Pal was converted, and William Carey wrote the following in a letter to England: "He's only one, but a continent is coming behind him. The divine grace which changed one Indian's heart can change a hundred thousand." A few months later, in 1801, the Bengali New Testament was translated and printed. He then wrote this to John Ryland, again one of the original twelve: "We want help to fill this country with the knowledge of Christ. We are not working in uncertainty and we are not afraid of the outcome. [In other words, we know the outcome. Christ will conquer. That is what he was saying.] Christ must reign, till Satan has not an inch of territory."

A few years later, Carey moved from Calcutta to Serampore, a town further inland, where he established a mission station. He said this mission station was a "red-hot centre from which the light and influence of Christianity will radiate throughout a gradually widening circle." Within a few years he opened a college to train evangelists in Serampore, and he said, "We know that our labours will succeed. We are certain to take the fortress, we shall reap if we faint not." Please keep in mind that language, "we will take the fortress," because I will come back to it. When they established the mission station in Serampore, other missionaries came. They drew up something called a *Form of Agreement*, which was like a constitution to help with the workings of that mission station. He wrote this in the preamble or preface, "He can raise these slaves of superstition, purify their hearts by faith, and make them worshippers of the one God in spirit and in truth. The promises are sufficient to remove our doubts, and to make us anticipate that not very distant period when He will famish [starve] all the gods of India, and cause these very idolaters to cast their idols to the moles and to the bats, and renounce forever the work of their own hands."

Now those are just a few quotes. But we look at his letters, and we try to construct William Carey's theology of the kingdom. I want to take you to a passage in Matthew chapter 12 that he referred to fairly frequently in his letters. We will read from verse 22, although I want to concentrate on verse 29.

²²Then they brought him a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute, and Jesus healed him, so that he could both talk and see. ²³All the people were astonished and said, “Could this be the Son of David?”

²⁴But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, “It is only by Beelzebub, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons.”

²⁵Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand. ²⁶If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand? ²⁷And if I drive out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your people drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. ²⁸But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

²⁹“Or again, how can anyone enter a strong man’s house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can rob his house.”

(NIV)

Carey was much influenced by that text, particularly the little parable in verse 29. He made reference to it in his sermons; he made reference to it in his letters. Carey saw two things primarily in this little parable in verse 29. (And Carey was right. There is no question about it, his understanding of this parable is correct.) He saw a house, a big house, with loads of great things in it, and a strong man guarding this house. Carey saw in this that in the Old Testament age, God allowed the devil to have rule over the nations of the world, in the sense that he bound the nations in darkness. The house, you see, is the nations of the world, the peoples of the world. The strong man is the devil who is there, guarding this house. God has allowed him the authority over those nations to keep them in darkness, because God is working towards a glorious plan. And part of God’s plan is to allow the nations of the world to remain in darkness.

Let us turn to Acts 14 and you will see something of this in Paul’s preaching in Lystra. Acts chapter 14. Paul was in Lystra, and a controversy began about who they were. Starting at verse 15, he said, “Men, why are you doing this? [You see, they wanted to sacrifice animals to them, thinking they were gods.] We too are only men, human like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things [from your idolatry] to the living God, who made heaven and earth and sea and everything in them. In the past, he

let all nations go their own way.” Do you see what Paul was saying to the pagans of Lystra? He was saying, in a bygone age God, in His sovereignty and in His wisdom, allowed you, the Gentiles, the nations of the world, to remain in darkness. But now we have come with the message of the gospel. Things are different now – His message is now going into the world.

There is a very similar idea in Acts chapter 17, when Paul preached to the philosophers of the Areopagus. The wording is different, but the idea is very similar. Chapter 17 at verse 30: “In the past God overlooked such ignorance....” Now you see, that is a similar idea. The two discourses of Paul have parallels, one in Lystra and one in Athens, both speaking to outright pagans. And speaking to the philosophers at Athens he said, “At one time you worshiped all these idols that I’ve seen in your city. I’ve been walking around your city. I’ve seen all these idols. You worship those idols. In times past, God allowed you to do that. But now He commands all men everywhere to repent.”

So, when we go back to the parable of Matthew 12:29, the strong man at one time had rule over the house and the goods of that house. But then, as the parable develops, another stronger than he comes, overpowers him, binds him so that he is impotent, and then begins to plunder the goods of the house. Now, when we read about the work of Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary, we read about how He died for our sins and how He propitiated the wrath of God that was due upon us, and so on. There is much that pertains to us personally in the work of Christ on the cross. But we must never forget that Christ also died to defeat Satan. There is that other aspect of His work that He died to defeat the devil and to bind Satan. A stronger one came, overpowered the strong man, and tied him up.

Now, look at some of these descriptions of the cross of Christ. In John 12:31 it is recorded that Jesus Himself said: “Now is the judgment of the world, now the ruler of this world will be cast out.” It is a passage where He was speaking about His atoning death. Just a few verses earlier He had talked about the grain of wheat which falls to the ground and dies, and unless it does that it remains alone, but if it dies it produces much grain. So, He was speaking about His death. Paul in Colossians 2:15 used similar language. The strong man was guarding the house, but Christ “disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them.” You know that passage in Hebrews chapter 2 toward the end of the chapter. The verses are very powerful. He said that Christ partook of flesh and blood, “that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their

lifetime subject to bondage.” Very similar language, is it not, to Matthew 12:29? The imagery is slightly differently, but you surely have the same idea being carried. Here is the one who has the power of death holding people subject to bondage until Another comes, and by His death destroys him who had the power of death, and releases those who were all their life subject to bondage.

Also, in 1 John 3:8 we read, “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.” Consider Revelation chapter 20, verses 2 and 3. There John talks about his vision, and he says, “He laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years...that he should deceive the nations no longer.” I know some of you may have been taught that this refers to the Second Coming of Christ. I tell you, it is not. It is the first. This is the cross. Revelation chapter 20, verses 2 and 3, brethren, is not speaking about the Second Coming of Christ. If it did, the cross of Christ did nothing, achieved no purpose. It did not do anything. But surely when you look at the language of Colossians 2, you look at the language of Hebrews, you look at the language that John uses in I John 3, surely you come to the conclusion that Revelation 20 is speaking about the cross of Christ. It is at the cross of Christ that He took hold of Satan and He bound Satan, that he should deceive the nations no longer.

So, you see what the parable of Matthew 12:29 is teaching us? It is saying, this man guarded the house. Another stronger than he came, overpowered him, disarmed him, bound him. So he is now sitting on a chair, firmly bound, unable to stop the Stronger One from going in and plundering his goods. And William Carey said, “Christ has bound Satan so that he should hold the Indians in their darkness of Hinduism no more. I have come because the strong one is bound. I now have authority in the name of Christ to enter this house and to plunder the goods that are in this house. It is in Christ’s authority and through Christ’s work on the cross that I do this.” Now, of course, he is very firmly on Bible ground there.

Let me draw to your attention a couple of texts. Read Matthew chapter 16. Here you have Peter’s confession, from verse 16, “Peter answered, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ Jesus replied, ‘Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.’” I wonder how you see that text. Do you see in that text that here is the Church and Hades is attacking, attacking, attacking, but unable to win, unable to overcome? I say to you, no, it is

the other way, because He talks about building His Church. He talks about the gates of Hades. You do not use gates on the offensive; you use gates when you are on the defensive. So it is the territory of Satan that is under attack. It is Christ's people attacking that territory, and the gates of Hades will not be able to withstand the attacks that are being made by the cross of Christ through the preaching of His servants. The gates will give way and the people will come out of that into freedom and life in the kingdom of God. That, surely, is the meaning of Matthew 16:18. It is the Church militant that is pictured here.

In one of those quotes Carey refers to that, doesn't he? For example, in 1801 when the New Testament was translated into Bengali, he wrote to Ryland, "Christ must reign until Satan has not an inch of territory." When the training of evangelists began, Carey said, "We know that our labours will succeed. We are certain to take the fortress." You see, that is the picture he had in mind. It is Satan who is on the defensive. We are attacking his fortresses, and the gates of his fortresses will give way. So Carey was able to say, "We are certain to take the fortress if we reap and faint not." One of Carey's colleagues, Joshua Marshman, a man who joined him in 1800, said, "One that is stronger than the strong man armed will assuredly bind him and spoil his goods." That is Matthew 12:29. He had triumphed over the gods of Greece and Rome and Britain. He would not suffer Satan to defeat him in India. See, that is the idea they had. Christ had already triumphed when His forces had attacked other fortresses. Greece and Rome and Britain had idols, strong fortresses, large doors. They fell. India would not succeed in standing against the gospel of Christ.

Do you understand the view of the kingdom of God that Carey had? It is this kingdom that must expand, because the strong man has been bound and the goods are there to be plundered. Let me refer you to the Great Commission, Matthew 28. It is the text for a sermon that Carey preached at the first graduation at his college. They began this college to train evangelists to penetrate Bengal, and when the first lot were ready to be sent out, he preached on the Great Commission. He said, beginning at verse 16:

Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations."

Carey went on to explain that the actual command has a context. “Go, therefore....” The “therefore” tells us that some teaching has come before that, and the command comes out as a logical conclusion of the previous teaching. Now, what is the previous teaching? All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Christ. At one time the strong man ruled, but Christ has defeated him. Christ has bound him. Satan no longer has authority over the nations; Christ does. All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Christ. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit and teaching them everything Christ has taught you. It is lovely, isn't it? And Carey drew his students attention to that and he said, “Brethren, when you go out you will face many trials. You will face persecution; your own countrymen will stone you, beat you. But to Christ belongs all authority.”

There is in the Hindustani language a biography of William Carey. In that biography there is a story which I have never seen in any of the English biographies. There was a man who was a Hindu high-caste Brahmin, and he and Carey became very, very close friends. In fact, Carey learned a lot of his Bengali through this man. When the New Testament was translated into Bengali, William Carey took it and knocked on this man's door. He wanted to present him with a New Testament. The man came out. For years he had been telling Carey, “You'll never do it. You will never translate your scriptures into my language.” So Carey took this New Testament. When the man saw it, he knew what it was, and he said, “Will you wait a minute?” And he went back into his house and he brought a booklet. And he said to Carey, “I will take your book if you take mine.” It was a Bhagavad Gita, the most famous of the Hindu scriptures. And Carey, who had read it many times, said to the man, “Tell me, does your book tell you anywhere that Krishna will conquer the world?” And the man said, “Well, no, of course it doesn't. You know it doesn't.” And Carey said, “This Book tells me that Christ will conquer the world.” Now that man actually became a Christian. I do not know if it was as a direct result of that conversation, but he did become a believer later on.

So, that was Carey's view of the kingdom. The strong man is bound and Christ will reign!

III. William Carey's Missionary Methods

Let us move on then to the third point in our examination of Carey. Carey went to India in 1793. In November he landed in India. What did he do in India? William Carey's methods of bringing the gospel into India are worthy of our study because they lay down a mighty example

for us today. We are looking at something from over two hundred years ago. But I say to you, take hold of the lessons he has laid down for us, brethren. Take hold of them. They are good, tested through history, and found to be to the glory of God.

Carey's labours can be summarized under two headings. **First of all, he translated and preached the Scriptures and trained others to do likewise.** He translated the Scriptures and he preached the Scriptures. I do not want to unduly attack modern missionary methods, but it is a historical fact that Carey never established a school or a medical clinic. In 1818, when he was giving an annual speech at the English college there, he said this: "I have been in the habit of preaching to multitudes daily. And I'm in the habit of discoursing with the Brahmins [the high-caste Hindus]." Now, the reason some of us know so little about Carey is that Carey was such a humble man. Carey was not the kind of man to blow his own trumpet. If he said something, if he made a great claim about himself, you can be pretty sure he was not exaggerating. I would think it pained him to say such a thing because he was by nature such a self-effacing person. But he did make this claim; he said, "Daily I have preached to multitudes." So, he was a preacher of the Scriptures. He was there in India, faced with all these Hindus. But he was not confused. He was not saying, "I don't know what I'm going to do now." He knew exactly what he was going to do. He was going to make the Scriptures available. So, he was a preacher.

Now, Carey was self-supporting. He first worked in a British plantation in Calcutta; and then later on when the British established a university in Serampore, he became a professor there. So he worked for his living, but every spare hour he had, he would get into a boat. This is the area of India where the Ganges flows into the Bay of Bengal. It is full of deltas. I think it is the world's largest delta. So it is full of rivers and streams, and if Carey wanted to travel up-country, it was the easiest thing to do – he just jumped on a boat and was rowed up. Every hour he had to spare, every weekend, every Saturday he would be on a boat going upstream, going to a village. He may never have been there; it was almost random. He was completely dependent on the providences of God. So they would be rowing along and he would say, "Oh, we haven't been there. Stop, let's go there." They would go there, and he would gather the villagers, open the Scriptures, and preach to them. He would talk with them, chat with them. Then after a couple of hours there, time to move on, next village. They would row up, spot another village, and go in...same thing. And he kept that up for forty years. Carey was primarily a preacher.

Carey was also a Bible translator. In my opinion he is the most remarkable Bible translator in history. I do not know anyone else who has done so much Bible translation. He translated the Bible into six Indian languages, the New Testament into twenty-three Indian languages, and some more books of the Bible into five other Indian languages. That is some effort! It was not just a matter of going and speaking to the Indians. It was a matter of making this Book accessible to the Indians. He translated the Bible into Bengali as well as into Hindi. As I read the list of translations of the New Testament, my mother tongue is there. I find that fantastic – that William Carey, an Englishman, should give me the New Testament in my language. It was a tremendous effort.

Because of his desire to make the Scriptures available, Carey was a trainer. In 1818, Carey and his fellow labourers opened a college for the training of evangelists. Here Indian converts were trained for the task of taking the gospel into the interior, making the Scriptures available by preaching, translating, and sending others. That was his work.

So the first thing that Carey did was to make the Scriptures available. **The second thing** that Carey emphasized, and I again commend his example to you, **he planted local churches**, he emphasized local churches. During his own lifetime he saw something like six hundred Indians baptized and twenty-six churches planted in the Serampore area. You see, Carey knew that we have been sent out to make disciples, not converts. If you conduct evangelistic meetings, God will give you converts. But Christ said to us, “Make disciples.” You have got to do something with those converts. You do not just say, “Praise God, there are now converts in this village. We now move on to the next one. Let’s leave them.” You have got to disciple them. They have got to live godly lives. They have got to break from their Indian culture and live Bible lives. Carey knew the importance of the local church. The local church is God’s family. The local church that we belong to is where we get our strength and our encouragement and our teaching. If you leave an Indian convert alone with no support from a local church, how can you expect him to live a godly life? Yes, he has the Spirit, but God has provided local churches for this purpose, and Carey saw that. Therefore, he made great efforts in planting local churches, training pastors, and visiting those churches to make sure that God’s Word was being preached there.

As an Indian Hindu convert, I must tell you a story that I find absolutely astonishing. In January, 1803, a Brahmin, a high-caste Hindu, named Krishna Persaud, learned of Christ and believed. The

first high caste convert was baptized in 1803. Now, you remember the first convert was a man called Krishna Pal. In Hinduism, we have a caste system – you have the high caste and you have the low caste. The high caste never has any dealings with the low caste. You dare not enter the home of a low caste person. It is forbidden in Hinduism to enter the house. It is forbidden to shake his hand. That is why greeting in Indian culture is not the shaking of hands. You dare not shake a person's hand in case you might shake the hand of a low caste person. That is the demarcation between high and low caste – no shaking of hands, hardly any social interaction, certainly no entering of their house, eating together, nothing of the sort.

Now Krishna Persaud, this high caste Brahmin, was saved. A few months later he married Krishna Pal's daughter. One was from the highest caste, one was from the lowest caste. This man broke every tradition known in India and married the daughter of a low caste Hindu. William Ward wrote the account in his diary, "In my opinion, this has never happened in thousands of years of Indian history." And he was right. It could not happen that there was a wedding feast where high caste converts, low caste converts, middle caste converts were there celebrating the wedding of a high caste Hindu convert to a low caste Hindu convert girl. But they did not allow their traditions to hold them. They broke with their traditions and lived Bible lives. Friends, I put it to you as a challenge. They did not hold their traditions. There was no dowry. He's says that very clearly. In Indian culture there is not even the sight of a wedding without a dowry. In Indian culture dowry is so strong. No dowry. You are not having it. No caste system. We are not having it. We are not Hindus. We are Christians. And we live by the Bible. Why? Because strong local churches had been established. And those strong local churches taught the Scriptures and encouraged the converts to live Bible lives. They drew their strength and encouragement from the local church.

On the morning of his wedding, William Ward recorded in his diary that Krishna Persaud left his home and the streets were lined with Hindus who spat at him. They spat at him as he walked from his house to the church to get married. And he smiled and he said, "I will bear all for Christ." He did not give up. Of course, Hindus would not come into the church for the wedding. They jeered at him from outside, screamed at him, would not believe he would do it. When he did it and he and his bride walked out of the church, they jeered and screamed. Those men and women drew their strength from the local church. They did not say, "Our traditions have always taught this. We can't break with it." They did not say that. They broke. They broke because they had the support

and encouragement of a local church. Local churches are so important in the plans and purposes of God in the extension of His kingdom. Let us keep that in mind.

So the two main things that Carey did were as follows: he translated and preached the Scriptures and training others to do likewise; and he planted local churches.

IV. What Lessons Do We Learn from William Carey?

In closing then, three lessons from the life of William Carey. **First, we see how important it is to understand what the Bible teaches about the kingdom of God.** You see, Carey grasped it, that Christ has bound the strong man and the doors are open. The plunder is there to be taken. We need to get that understanding, that the kingdom is now Christ's. All authority in heaven and earth is with Him now. So even when Carey was discouraged, in 1794 when he had been in India for two years without a single convert, he wrote in a letter, "When I left England, my hope of India's conversion was very strong; but, among so many obstacles it would have died unless God had upheld it. Well, I have God and His word is true. Even if the superstitions of the heathen were a thousand times stronger than they are, and the example of the Europeans a thousand times worse than it is, even if I was deserted by all and persecuted by all, yet my faith, fixed on that sure word of God, would rise above all obstructions and overcome every trial. God's cause will triumph."

The second lesson from Carey is that we see the importance of preaching. What is mission? What is evangelism? What did Paul do in Thessalonica, in Lystra, Philippi, Berea, Corinth, Athens, Ephesus? He preached. You read Acts chapter 20, his account of his time in Ephesus. He preached in public; he preached house to house – repentance towards God, faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul preached. Carey preached. The history of missions is so full of examples of men who simply went to the darkest of places, the strangest of places, and preached. Livingston preached in southern Africa. As he traveled from place to place, every Sunday he held meetings where he preached. Hudson Taylor in China preached. And Carey in India preached. I say to you, it is so important for us to take hold of God's Word, not imposing our ideas into what the passage is saying, but taking out of the passage what it is saying, and making it known to the people. We read what happened in Thessalonica when Paul did that. The power of the Spirit accompanied the Word of God, and they left their idols and turned to Christ. Preaching.

And then **thirdly, we see the importance of the local church for the sanctification of Christians and the furtherance of God's kingdom.** You know the challenges of the Christian life in the face of temptations from Satan, the draw of the world, the culture from which we come, the demands of those in our villages. You know the problems. You know you need help, support, encouragement, prayer. Where is it going to come from? The local church. Why did Paul plant local churches in every place he visited? On his first missionary journey, when he went back to Darby, Lystra, Iconium, what did he do? He planted local churches. We read about that in Acts 14. On his second missionary journey, we see Philippi, a local church; Thessalonica, a local church; Berea, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus – local churches. They are not just a little after-thought – “Oh, by the way, perhaps we should plant a local church.” They are central in God's purposes if we are to live godly lives and further His kingdom.

And so we have the life and example of William Carey. Christian biography is instructive and inspiring. I encourage all of you to take up a biography on William Carey. My recommendation would be S. Pearce Carey's biography on his grandfather, William Carey.¹ I believe this will inflame you for Christian ministry in extending the kingdom.

¹ This is one of the finest biographies that I have read and I highly recommend it to you – *William Carey*, by S. Pearce Carey, published by Wakeman Trust (ISBN: 1-870855-140) and available at www.wakemantrust.org/booklist.html. Please get hold of this book and read it. I think you will be encouraged for your labours.