

Lessons from Church History (Part 2)

WEEK 8: Lessons from the Modern Missions Movement

George Müller (1805-1898)

- George Müller was an evangelist and missionary in England who cared for over 10,000 orphans in his lifetime. He established over 100 Christian schools to educate more than 120,000 children.
- Müller was born in Germany where his father was a tax collector. His life was marked by “wicked behaviour and unrepentant sin”, which somehow did not keep him from attending seminary at the University of Halle in Germany. His father had plans for him....
- At the age of 15 George attended a prayer meeting whereby God began a work of grace in his life. His father was outraged to lose his lucrative ‘retirement plan’ when George expressed his desire to become a missionary. His father said, “Get out of my life” and never spoke to him again.
- Müller moved to London in 1829 to evangelize Jews. There he served as the pastor at Ebenezer Chapel for an annual salary of 55 pounds, he met his wife Mary and they were married in 1830.
- George renounced his salary and renting church pews (a common practice). So began a lifetime of relying entirely on God for his provision and sustenance.
- Over the next 65 years he would keep immaculate records of the \$141 million he received and disbursed. The funds supported orphans, distributed 285,407 Bibles, 1,459,506 New Testaments, and supported other missionaries worldwide including Hudson Taylor.
- A cholera outbreak nearly took his life, but he survived and began to care for the plague’s orphans.
- George and Mary cared for orphans in their home in Bristol in 1836. Soon the 30 girls outgrew the home, so George rented another house on the street...and another. In 1845, as the numbers grew to over 130 and the neighbors’ complaints were intolerable, Müller looked to build a facility to house 300 yet never made requests for financial support. So, how did God make it happen?
- Ashley Down in Bristol, England was opened in 1849. By 1870 the Müllers and their staff of 100 would house, care for, and educate 2,000 orphans in five massive houses.
- God’s provision in Müller’s life was endless and are a testimony to the goodness and faithfulness of God poured out to answer the prayers of a man who trusted on God daily. Some examples...

Hudson Taylor (1832-1905)

- Hudson Taylor was a British missionary who served 54 years in China, founding the China Inland Mission which brought 800 missionaries, founded schools, mission stations, and lead to at least 20,000 conversions. He is one of the most influential Europeans on China in the 19th century.
- He was converted in 1848 at age 16, after reading a tract entitled “Poor Richard”. By the end of 1849 he committed to be a missionary to China.
- Taylor spent the next 3 years studying Mandarin, Greek, Latin, and Hebrew - and medicine.
- Taylor arrived in Shanghai China in March of 1854, during the civil war. His preaching tours saw little success, until he adopted the local dress. Taylor had other struggles in these early years.
- In 1857 he relocated to Ningbo where he met his wife Maria Jane Dyer. They were married in 1858.
- He wrote in 1860 to his sister - “If I had a thousand pounds China should have it—if I had a thousand lives, China should have them. No! Not China, but Christ. Can we do too much for Him? Can we do enough for such a precious Saviour?”
- Hudson and Maria returned to England in 1860 due to his poor health. He spent 5 years furthering his work, translating the New Testament into Ningbo dialect, completing his medical studies, and writing *China’s Spiritual Need and Claims* which helped generate support for Chinese missions.
- He also befriended Charles Spurgeon. During this time Maria had four children.

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- In 1865 Taylor founded CIM and dedicated himself to reaching the inland provinces of China. He raised sufficient funds and gathered 21 missionaries, who all boarded a ship with the Taylor family and arrived in Shanghai in 1866. It was the largest party of missionaries ever sent to China.
- In 1868-69 the Taylor missionaries did evangelism in Yangzhou, narrowly surviving a riot. Taylor was also deeply influenced by a passage he read on personal holiness. It was life-changing for him.
- In 1870 Maria fell ill with cholera. They lost their newborn child due to her inability to nurse him. She died several days later. Hudson was deeply shaken. Due to deteriorating health, he returned to England. He remarried and in the next 18 years made several trips from England to China and America adding missionaries and building the Church in China.
- The Boxer Rebellion in 1900 presented a major disruption to the China Inland Mission, as 58 missionaries were killed in the uprising, but it led to deeper interest and more growth for CIM.
- In 1905 Hudson Taylor returned to China for the 11th and final time. He was buried next to Maria in Zhenjiang in a small English cemetery along the Yangtze River.

John G. Paton (1824-1907)

- Born near Dumfries, Scotland in 1824. Early on he wanted to be a missionary. In 1773, Captain James Cook explored a group of islands that he named New Hebrides (today Vanuatu).
- For 10 years, Paton successfully worked in an inner-city mission in Glasgow.
- Early on when Paton was considered New Hebrides, a Mr. Dickson said to him, "The cannibals! You will be eaten by cannibals!"
- In 1839, two missionaries were killed and eaten by cannibals on the island Eromanga. Up thru 1856, 50 missionaries were killed in the New Hebrides islands.
- Thru the 1850's, great evangelistic progress was made by John Geddie. By 1854, 3500 natives trusted Christ on the island of Aneityum. By 1872, the entire island professed faith in Christ.
- Paton sailed to New Hebrides with his wife Mary in 1858. They arrived on the island of Tanna 7 months later. Within 6 months, both his wife and his newborn son died of fever. He served alone on the island for the next 4 years until he was driven off in 1862.
- For the next 4 years, he mobilized support in Australia and Great Britain. He remarried his wife Margaret in 1864, and in 1866 they returned and arrived on the island of Aniwa. They labored together for 41 years until Margaret died in 1905.
- Paton secured believing natives from Aneityum to help with evangelism efforts, but they were met with resistance at every turn. Paton was blamed for the natives' adversities.
- Paton often wondered whether the islanders would ever turn from their pagan ways, but he held fast to the power of the gospel. He learned their language and put it into written form. By 1897, he published a New Testament, a dictionary and other books.
- The Paton's were in constant danger, sleeping with their clothes on in case they needed to make a quick escape. They had a good dog that saved their lives on several occasions. The tribal chieftains often threatened or tried to kill Paton.
- In one episode, 6 tribal people were shot by tribal chiefs and were to be later eaten as sacrifices. The came to John's house to kill him as well. 3 of the Sacred Men tried to use witchcraft to kill John.
- In another episode, warriors came to kill Paton and his wife. They prayed all night long and by morning the warriors left. The chief became a believer a year later & explained why they left.
- After 15 years they saw the whole island come to Christ. The new believers traveled to other islands to evangelize other tribes.
- In Paton's later years he traveled widely to promote the mission work being done on the islands. As he got older, he worked harder.
- Today over 93% of the 335,000 people on the islands identify as Christian. 14% are evangelical.