## SUNSET OR SUNRISE?

A collection of contemporary lectures on world mission strategy by eight outstanding scholars from the Faculty of The School of World Mission, FULLER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Edited by Hugh Steven

Words AF

## SUNSET OR SUNRISE IN WORLD MISSION?

by

Dr. Donald A. McGavran

## Introduction

The sign of each successful mission enterprise is indisputably a strong vigorous church. But do we really know how churches grow. Do churches produce fruit and multiply the same way in every country? Will evangelistic methods that are successful in the U.S. produce the same results in the Philippines? What about Congo, Vietnam, Taiwan or some India? In each of these countries/churches grow and multiply. But others have stopped growing , some are stillborn, others become weak and ineffective.

XithinxtheIn these lectures my colleagues and I will talk from different points of view on why and how churches grow vigorously or die silently. Just as our personalities are different, so our ideas will be different. Some of my colleagues will discuss the historical and sociological aspects of world mission. Others the anthropological and ecclesiastical angle.

But all of us emphatically emphasize the central thrust of all Christian mission. That God's mission to the world must be carried out. Christian churches around the world are centers of light, peace, goodness and justice. No church 111 or group of believers has the right to rest or look contentedly at the vast communities of the world who are still without a knowledge of the Saviour. To help you get a bigger picture of world missions, I recommend four books. Those mentioned a biblio for Student Power and World Evangelization Ι. by David M. Howard, InterWarsity felt this book to be so important they gave it to over 12,000 students and missionaries during Urbana 70. Twenty-five Unbelievable Years by Dr. 2. Ralph Winter. The past 25 years of mission history has been unusually exciting and important. My book, How Churches Grow. In 1937 3. Southern the Baptists (What Baptists?) had 12 churches in Southern California. They currently have 992. How did they do it?

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Do Churches Grow? also by myself. Talks about the institutional form. We really don't need classrooms, florescent lights, a P.A. system or comfortable chairs to have church. But it is convenient and a necessity on a cold rainy morning! In some places the church is a prayer meeting, Christian cell groups or a large elegant building. In whatever form the institution, God has a plan for its growth: \*\*\*\*\*

4.

Now to the matter of our theme. What do we face in Christian mission? Before I answer this we must ask ourselves, what is Christian mission?

Dr. Arthur Glasser will discuss a different aspect of this same question in the following lecture.

There are two general opinions on what is Christian mission. One is that Christian mission of the church is <u>doing</u> everything God <u>told</u> it to do.

The other is doing everything God <u>wants</u> it to do. This is a broad definition but I believe it takes in God's complete mission for His church.

Most of us kerextoxxy believe there needs to be more justice and much more brotherhood in the world. That racial antipathies, injustices, grinding poverty, ill health, illiteracy and the terrible pre-

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ventable diseases that riddle mankind are not pleasing to God. We know that pert of the church's task is to work in our own personal lives, in the lives of our families, neighborhood, P.T.A., civic organizations, businesses, farms, in the entire country and across the seas. This is God's plan and He wants it done. But in addition we must understand that each of us have been, specifically dask commended to do!

Man is not just reconciled vertically with God. There must also be a horizontal reconciliation of man with man. At the School of World Mission we believe the vertical reconciliation must come first. Because, without a deep personal reconciliation there can never be a lasting fruitful reconciliation between one's neighbor.

When our Lord gave the Great Commission, He gave it in a certain order. "All authority," he said, "has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make the nations disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit."

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After bringing them into a right relationship with God, the source of all supply, He goes on to say, "teach them all things." What are these things? They are kindness, goodness, justice, brotherhood, and the many other things this world so desperately needs.

That's what mission is! And that's what we're going to talk about. Now we must ask the question, what kind of program does the church have today? The church has a magnificent program! The Christian mission of the church around the world reaches into almost every compartment of life. Every sending church with missionaries knows something about what it means to be involved with missions.

Reports from Ethiopia, Brazil, Iran and many other countries indicate that God is doing a tremendous work. It's also exciting to observe service organizations like Missionary Aviation  $F_e$ llowship as they bring churches together with their program of aviation. And consider Wycliffe Bible Translators. They are doing a superb job of translating the Scriptures and makehithe Word of God available to people whose languages have never been reduced to writing.

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Are you aware of these programs? Most are not. People in Southern California think they know their State. But most haven't seen a tenth of it. And out beyond this tenth part of their world is a vast unclaimed world that God wants us to claim for Christ.

West Cameroons is one of these places. It is a country in West Africa about the size of California. The difference is that it has thirty-seven different mutually exclusive languages--little pockets of people, 5,000, 50,000 and 75,000. Some live in forests; others in the high, grassy, mountain country. And all must be evangelized.

From the Cameroons let us move to India, a country larger than France, Germany and England and with more people than the three countries combined. Fifteen And then we think of the church in India. If million Christians scattered throughout a population of over 500,000,000.

In Africa, south of the Sahara there are 50,000,000 Christians. When you consider what this means in terms of workers, Sunday School classes, churches, ministers, ministerial training centers and Christian organizations, you will catch a glimpse of the complexity and enormity of the missionary enterprise.

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But then someone says, "Yes, but we've heard that the missionary enterprise is not getting along very well." We've heard it's difficult to get into India. And that visas are denied and churches are cutting down on the number of missionaries. And that people are writing books called, 'Missionaries Go Home.' Missionaries are no longer popular."

There is strong pessimism running through the Christian world today about the future of missions. How about this? What is the real situation? If our Lord commanded us to go and disciple the nations, to reconcile man to God in Christ, how do we get on with the job? What should we be doing about it? Should you plan for your sons and your daughters to be missionaries? It is not that you should push them into mission service but you could pray for it. Are you, for instance, praying that your best son, that brightest boy of yours, become a missionary of the Gospel? Would you regard it as God's greatest gift to you if he were to say to you someday, "Mother, Dad .... you know, I've decided to Would you say, "Oh, son! Oh be a missionary." no. no! Not that!" What would you do? What does God want you to do in regard to the evangelization of the world and the Christian mission to the world?

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Obeying God usually depends both on God's will and our understanding and assessment of the situation. Consequently, it's of very great importance for us to stop at the beginning of this series of lectures and form some judgement as to the situation that faces each of us. Is it sunrise or is it sunset? Where do we really stand in the Christian mission enterprise.

Let me give you an example of this right out of Christian history. Between the years 660 A.D. and 1000 A.D., Islam came boiling up out of Arabia wiping out Christianity in the very lands where it originated. In <u>&</u>\_\_\_\_ (date), Palestine was one of the first to fall to the mounted invadors. Then came Syria in the East and Egypt in the West. Between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ (dates) North Africa, Mesopotamia, Spanish and Persia fell. By \_\_\_\_\_ a gigantic Moslem empire stretched from India to the Atlantic.

Christian stronghold after Christian stronghold capitulated--Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, Carthage, Damascus. All became centers of Islamic lore, each with its minaret and madrasah.

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Then what later proved to be one of the most decisive battles in history, Charles the Hammer in  $\frac{\gamma}{2}$  (date) stopped the Moslem's western advance at the battle of Tours.

The Christian community was happy with the victory at Tours but had no concept of its far reaching effects. Most thought only a little breathing space had been gained. The pessimists of the day could very well believe they were standing in the sunset of the Christian missions to the world. For them the mission enterprise was as black as any time in history.

The remaining sections of Christendom in Italy and Greece argued strongly against carrying out missions in "those cold, northern, barbarian climates." They referred, of course, to England, Germany, Scandanavia, Scotland and Ireland. "Islami is defeating us at every turn," they said, "It is useless to throw away our resources to carry on missions in those northern barbaric lands when our own house needs to be put in order first."

Pessimists, you see, thought they estimated the situation correctly. They thought their first task was to tend to the work at home. But in just 350 years, other leaders of the church (what, who and where were they--Ed.) estimated the situation dif-

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ferently. They knew they were led by Someone who had written upon His robes and His thigh the words, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. They believed that, all evidence to the contrary notwithstanding, they were standing in the sunrise of the enterprise.

And they won the North to the Christian faith! (What turned the tide?-Ed.) Ireland, England, Scotland, and the low countries. Germany, Denmark and what is now Sweden, Norway, and Iceland. With incalculable, beneficient consequences, they won the North to the Christian faith. Not only for ourselves, but for all mankind for all time.

Today we too stand at one of these great hinges of history... When it is necessary for us to formx a correct opinioh. But before we can understand what is happening today in Christian mission, we must go back to 1953 to an estimate that wes being made in the early 1950's and which found classical expressions at the great Willing to conference of the International Missionary Council. It's well worth our time to look for a few minutes at the story.

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The privi-

ld war I in 1946 Missions came out of the Millington Conference most optimistic. Protestant missions were with the victor nations! It was Protestant missions who had won the war. And they thought they were going to pick up exactly where they left off at the beginning Bot then - beginning on (946 - most of the grad on here of as in of Worker and an But it was different. Almost became indefining overnight over 700,000,0000 people became self governing. Before the war they had been ruled as colonies of the European mahans. Prior to World War II, missionaries presedas cusily in these countries as they did had in their own. Almost noone bothered with visas But then nations like the or entrance permits. PhilippEnes, India, Burma and Indonesia became independent, they became sovereign. And if they didn't want to grant visas to foreigners, they didn't! And

there was nothing one could do about it. ledged status of all Europeans, Americans and missionaries evaporated overnight.

Persecution became a possibility and in many cases, an actuality. Churches were burned, mission stations looted, pastors killed, national Christians were martyred, and In some cases missionaries slain, and some mission hospitals and social service centers were sematimes burned.

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Then in 1948 the Communists conquered China, then North Vietnam, and then North Korea. It looked as if all of Asia and Africa was falling to the Communists. People feared the church would be liquidated and missions drived out. That's the  $\frac{1}{1252} \frac{1}{1252} \frac{$ 

Max Warren, a great Englishman and secretary of the church Mission Society of the Anglican Church, gave the keynote speech. Ke didn't terl us anything. Mc Voiced Mc Voiced Mc Voiced Max mathemethy believed, should be done. Max reminded us that in 1947 the future of missions looked bright, but now at Willington clouds of thick darkness lay around us and we know with complete certainty that the most, destined days of the Christian mission were just ahead. We have to be ready to see the days of missions as we have known them as already having come to an end," McTazid.

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The report of the conference published under the title, "Missions Under the Cross," pointed out that missions was in a time of retreat. That we must be prepared for some time to not the prepared for some time to not the of the mission enterprise. "Because," said the report, "the fruit of missions is flushed down the drain."

And Since 1953, up to the present time, a great deal of high level mission policy in the Prebyterian Church, the Methodist Church, the Lutheran Church, and the Roman Catholic Church; at home and abroad,

has been decided on the assumption that<sup>1</sup> our times missions for the mission mission of the cross and in are doomed and mission are under the cross and in retreat. Missions, therefore, had better not aim too high or attempt too much because we are nolonger in that kind of a day.

Now one of the most important things Churches, the leaders of churches and for you as individuals to face is, what does God want us to do today in the field of Christian missions? What do you think of the mission situation now? How greatly have you been influenced in past days by vast pessimism with regard to missions?

They did not say these

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During the last few years, imxSxix and abroad, you may not have seen much church growth. Perhaps you feel you are living in a time when the church is pretty well closed off. Was the judgement made by Christian leaders at the Willington Conference right? Are missions under the cross? Do we face de decades of defeat and retreat?

That's the key question! Noxxxx I don't know what you think but, my friends, I want to be quite clear that you understand what I think! Let me speak plainly at this point. In my judgement, leaders at the Willington Conference were wrong! They misread the situation. Oh, it was easy to do. If I'd been there I'd have misread it in the same way. But the events of history simply didn't bear them out. History went the other way. Mis was their forecast

of God, the things that have happened look very different.

(FOR property) The XMXENIARE years since Willington have been years of glorious advance in missions. They have been years of successful transfer of authority to younger churches. (WMMENIAREXX) In 1953, many younger churches in Africa, Latin America India and other places were MAIL dominated by missions. But today the younger churches stand on their bases, own basis. They are rulers in their own homes!

Western missionaries now come and go with the consent of the younger churches. Their assignments are determined not by a mission board in England, Canada or America but by leadership from the national indigenous church.

When I talk of younger churches, I mean denominations and it is a constant joy for me to see thousands of churches grow up all over the world. It is true some are small and weak but others like the \_\_\_\_\_(name) church in Chile kaux has over 300,000 members. Many of the churches in Latin America and Southeast Asia are large and independent of Western missionary tutorship.

A quick superficial look at the current missionary scene leads you to believe that missions are on the decrease. But if you look closely, you discover there are more missionaries now than ever before in history. There are 33,000 Protestant missionaries from North America alone. If you add to these the missionaries that go from England, France, Germany, Scandinavia, India, Japan and the Ehilippines you begin to get the enormous thrust of world missions today.

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For many years missionaries were all white faces. But now, thank God, missionaries are beginning to be polyglot. Black missionaries from Ghana, yellow missionaries from Japan and brown missionaries from India. They come with their many different tongues. It is true that up to the present time white missionaries are the dominant block and because of our affluent position probably will be for some years to come. And because of the great things God has given us, He expects great things from us!

The curve in missions is rising. Today, missions are more effective than ever before.

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Tremendous distances separated the world and missionaries were not very effective. But today, they get there quickly. They learn the language relatively well and relatively quickly. In many cases they find the Bible translated and can begin work almost immediately. In addition they find allies in the younger churches and numbers of established Christian Often Christian movements and like are in are full operation. I repeat, missions today is more effective and than at any other time in history.

There is more Bible translation than ever before. One hundred and fifty years ago, English was the only available Scripture in Western languages at least one portion of the and in not too manyyof these. But today/therefore Scriptures are available in atxteestromerportion and almost 1500 languages. Now 1500 is a quick, easy number to say but if you have time I would recommend that you take the time and write down the names of all the languages you can think of. Do you know what would happen? You'd name the first half dozen or so fairly rapidly. After that there would be long

pauses. Then somebody would say, oh yes, here's another one and we would pause awhile and someone

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else would pop up, and when yox got to 25, we would have run out of languages. An extraordinary bright group of people would run out of names of languages in ten minutes. But after you got through naming all the languages you could think of, there would be the Bible in more than 1400 other languages that you never heard of. Bible translation is needed more than ever before to instruct the young churches and expose the mind of Christ through the Scriptures. All of us need deeply to capture the mind of Christ as it is revealed in His Word. The things our grandfathers and great-grandfathers put up with as inevitable now seem to us horrible! Not in the light of our own ethical insights but in the light of the mind of Christ.

We don't intend to put up with illiteracy, racg prejudice, poor prison conditions, many of the terrible things the world is full of. Why? Because the church of Christ today has recaptured the mind of Christ! And some people outside of the church have latched onto this light. Thank God they are walking in that light! There seems to be a general level of ethical awareness and sensitiveness

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for which we can thank God. There are, for example, more indigenous denominations out beyond those that mission's plant. Not quite as orthodox as one might hope, but still they call themselves Christians. They read the Bible and follow it as closely as they know how. There's an aggressive, fundamental group in the Philippines called Excessio Christo with at least a half million people. And the exciting thing is they built a million dollar church completely on their own without a dime from the West.

Africa is full of indigenous denominations. Dr. David Barrett, the Anglican, sights over 5,000 Christian denominations that he says are reasonably Christian and have arisen outside the church. It looks to me like there are more <u>go</u> signs in missions that <u>stop</u>! I think we must look at the mission picture as a whole. We've got to ask what's going on in Africa and Latin America as a whole. In 1954 I made an estimate of the number of Christians in Africa south of the Sahara--that is, in animistic Africa, not Moslem Africa. After considerable calculation I came to the conclusion there were 20,000,000 <del>million</del> Christians in Africa south of the Sahara. Now 20,000,000 Christians is a nice figure. It rolls off the tongue easily. People remember it. It goes well in a speech. 'It's impressive. Twenty million Christians in Africa south of the Sahara. And I kept saying that--1954, 1960, 1965, 1968. Then in 1968 I said, "Look, I haven't checked on that for a long time. That's probably not quite accurate. I better go back and look it up again." So I made another calculation and I found I was wrong. There weren't twenty million Christians. There were 50 million Christians! In those 15 or 20 years, Christians had grown from 20 million to 50 million--a 30 million increase! Nothing like it has been seen in the history of the world.

Oh, there were 30 million people in Europe who became Christians. But it took them thousands of years to do it. And This is happening in 17 years!

Then Dr. David Barrett, the Anglican researcher, did a projection like they do in Los Angeles when they figure how many planes will land at International Airport in 1980. It's a scientific projection, caix axiaixid the calculations based on present trends. Dr. Barrett says there are going to be 357 million Christians in Africa in the year 2000! If he's even half right you and I stand in the midst of a tremendous Christward surge, or a series of surges that

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are going on in many countries in Africa.

Oh there's defeats here and there. I could bring  $\frac{1}{2}$  in dozens of missionaries who would say the church in our section of Africa is not growing at all. That's quite true. But then I could take you to plenty of other churches in Southern California who haven't multiplied from 12 to 992 like the Southern Baptists. This doesn't mean that Southern California isn't a place you can plant churches. It just means that some churches are sitting on their west end.

Or take Latin America. You can go to places in Latin America where churches are not gowing. Recently Fuller did a three year survey on the growth of Protestant churches in Latin America. The Lillian Downten Incø. gave us \$54,000 to put three men to work in every country in Latin America. You can now buy the outcome of that research in a book called, "Latin American Church Growth." It's angxxxt, accurate, thoughtful account of the growth of Protestant churches. In essance it says that in wountryxaliexxeeunxry;xxix;xeight;xten;xiiiteen; twentyxeuxee xthexgrapheset church growth is up in country after country and people are winable.

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Steven Neil, the great authority on missions says, "The growth of churches in the last fifty years has been startling. Protestantism is without question the most powerful and transforming spiritual influence in Latin America today."

A great many people believe India is closed off. Well, parts of it are. But there is one province with 53 million people, almost three times as many as there are in California, where today there is a great Christian movement suzzing ahead. And then Indonesia--for the first time in history 100,000 Moslems have become Christians. Since 1967 at least a half million people have been added to the church in Indonesia. And the Chinese of the disperson. The Chinese that flooded out of Red China and now are living in an ark around Taiwan, through the Philippines, Hong Kong, Indonesia, and Burma. ThewChinese of the dispersion are uniquely responsive to the Christian message.

And while Red China has sealed off the mainland church, the church among the Chinese of the dispersion is growing. Nearly a fifth of the Chinese, that is the naturalized Chinese in Indonesia, have become Christians.

Now I've given you a small part of what I call , the sociological evidence to support my belief that

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we are in the <u>sunrise</u> of missions. But I don't want to leave you with just sociological evidence. I think a much greater significance is the the

theological evidence: You see, Godhas appointed xxt you and me and all Christians to be ambassadors. To beseech people to be reconciled to God in Christ. And I believe the God who sent us out as ambassadors will give us the strength to carry out His command

and appointment. Remember, God commands us straightly

to go and make disciples of all nations. And will He who gave us the command, not see to it that His people, when they pray to Him for strength, will receive strength to carry out His command? Did Christ ever send us out on a fruitless mission and to defeat? I think not. The very fact that so much of East Africa and Latin America is as yet undiscipled means that we stand at the beginning of the enterprise. The main job remains yet to be done. If you look at it through the eyes of God He's saying, "Let's rejoice in all of the present evidences of advance. Let's remember that the curtain raiser is over. The ball game is beginning, and here's where the great turnings are going to take place." Until those great turnings do take place, we stand in the sunrise of missions.

Think It I + I trust through these minater lectures that That you will not allow minor defeats and minor disappointments take your mind off the big thing that God is doing in your generation. And that you will pray God to give you the favor of having a decent share in the victory that is now being won and will be Praise God! won.

## March 29, 1971

Dr. Hugh Stevens P.O. Box 1960 Santa Ana, California 92702

Dear Dr. Stevens:

Many thanks for yours of March 24th. I am glad to know that the book project is progressing. The arrangement for royalty seems satisfactory to me.

I have spent a good deal of time with the rather drastic revision of my address. On the one hand, I see the desirability and necessity for fitting it into a unified whole and appreciate the slanting you have done.

On the other hand, some things which will have to stand exactly as i volced them (for example, the quotation for M.A.C. Warren) and in other cases you have popularized a precise shade of opinion in such a way that I would not want it to go out as mine.

You will run across the same sort of reaction in the case of other speakers also. They will want things printed the way they said them.

All told, I think the best way to proceed is to take the manuscript each gives you as it comes from the pen of the author. Let him be responsible for what he says. If his statement is not clear, have him clear it up.

In case of a typed-out script (as in the case of mine) send the typescript as it stands to the author and let <u>him</u> revise it. Then treat it as a manuscript, which the editor will retouch very lightly if at all.

Then, you write an introductory chapter and a conclusion. This, and possibly a rearrangement of the chapters in the interests of movement organization, is what will make the anthology a book.

Could you then please let me have the script from the tape of my first address? I am sure that some of the changes are due to the typist mishearing what the tape said. There are some bad bloopers - which must have grated on your ear and no doubt led to some of the revisions to try and make sense out of them. We simply must go back to the typescript from the lecture itself.

All good wishes,

Cordially yours in His obedience,

DMG/fj

Donald McGavran



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March 24, 1971

Dr. Donald McGavran School of World Mission Fuller Theological Seminary 135 N. Oakland Ave. Pasadena, Calif. 91101

Dear Dr. McGavran:

Please forgive me for taking so long to answer your letter of March 8th but wanted to include the edited manuscript of your first lecture.

I spoke with Richard Baltzell, editor at Fleming Revell, about the proposed book. He was interested and proposes the following:

1. A letter of permission from each of the people taking part in the lectures.

2. Since there are three major parties involved in the book, namely, John Richardson, who is handling promotion and initial financing; myself as editor; and the School of World Missions, Baltzell suggests a 40-40-20 split in royalties.

You will notice in your manuscript on pages 8, 9, 15, and 17 that I have asked for further information. I've done a little bit of rewriting which I believe ties the article together nicely. Also on page two and three where you talk about the four books, I believe this should be included in the bibliography rather than the manuscript at this point. In other words, the last paragraph before naming the books should read, "To help you get a bigger picture of world missions, I recommend the books in the bibliography."

Baltzell feels this volume could be a very exciting missions book. He says there is nothing on the market currently that could be considered a good study on missions. He, therefore, would like each of the men to suggest, as you have done, additional reading to be included in the bibliography.

If you agree to these proposals, I will send my edited copies of each of the lectures to you.

#### Page two

You can then add or substract as you see fit. I have Dr. Glasser's and Wagner's lectures which I will edit and send up to you as soon as I hear from you regarding your agreement to go ahead with the project.

In your letter you mentioned uniform chapters of 4000 words. Your original address was something like 7000 words which I have cut to 5000. It's difficult for me at this moment to determine the actual length of each of the forthcoming chapters. Some of them could conceivably be fairly short which really would be an advantage. The trend today is short books and short chapters. All chapters do not necessarily have to be the same length. Our object should be to make this as readable and as attractive as possible so that the greatest amount of people will get the benefit of these very excellent ideas and concepts.

I should also point out the woman is transcribing the tapes is having a problem getting all of the words transcribed. Therefore, there might be some discrepancies in your original text.

that

With regard to the typing of the final manuscript perhaps your secretary could retype the final manuscripts in the format that I've enclosed. That is 2 inch left hand margin,  $l_2^1$  inch right hand margin and  $l_2^1$  inches from bottom of page.

If you would then return a copy (original) to me, I will submit the entire manuscript to Baltzell.

I leave for Colombia, Panama and Mexico in mid-April and would like to have the details worked out before I leave. I sincerely trust that these things will be satisfactory to you and your staff.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely in Him,

Hugh Steven Communications Consultant

HS:ns Encl.