

Three Eras, Four Men

Theme Lesson

PREPARATION

Objective

Students will understand how God continues to make his name known in modern times.

Outcomes

1. Students will understand how mission work moved from coastlands, to inlands, and then to the remaining unreached people groups.
2. Students will realize that pioneer missionaries paved the way for other Christians to take the gospel to the ends of the earth.

Directions

1. Review the Theme Lesson, scripture references, and response. Consider how this lesson will apply to your unique group of students.
2. Review the “Key Word Wheel,” definitions, and verses. Consider which words relate to this lesson. Suggested: “Purpose,” “People,” “Proclamation,” and “Passport to the World.”
3. Copy the “Three Eras, Four Men” chart onto an overhead transparency.
4. Inflate balloons ahead of time and bring to class.

**PREPARATION: 15 min.****TEACHING: 33 min.**

Materials

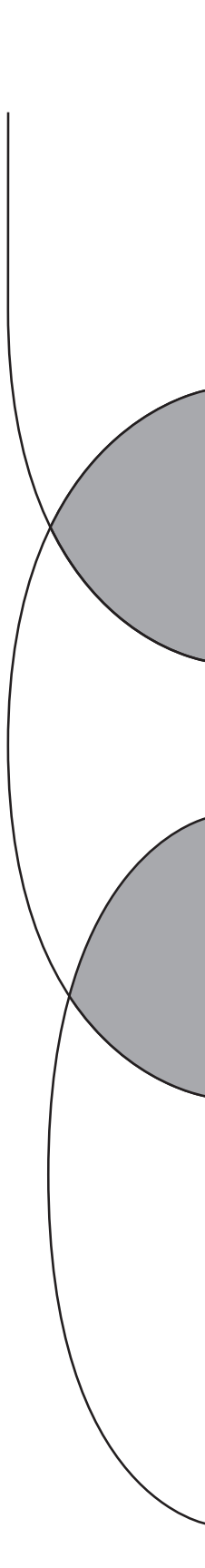
- Bibles
- “Key Word Wheel” poster (Introduction p. 6)
- “Key Word Cards” (Introduction pp. 7-8)
- 24 large balloons
- air pump for balloons (optional)
- “Three Eras, Four Men” chart (p. 2)
- “William Carey” video (VF)
- TV/DVD player
- overhead transparency
- overhead projector
- globe or world map

Three Eras, Four Men

3rd Era
1934–?
Unreached Peoples
Cameron Townsend
Donald McGavran

2nd Era
1865–1980
Inland Areas
Hudson Taylor

1st Era
1792–1910
Coastlands
William Carey



TEACHING (CORE)

PRE-LESSON ACTIVITY: HOLDING TOO MUCH

Directions

1. Welcome students to your time of discovering more about God's purpose together.
2. Invite students to help you with a balloon demonstration.
3. Ask for a volunteer to come forward. Say, *"I need you to help me with a little project."*
4. Instruct the volunteer to hold out his arms as you give him balloons to hold. Tell him that the object is to hold as many balloons as possible. Keep adding balloons until the student can hold no more. Then count the balloons he is holding.
5. Now say, *"Here's the little project I invited you to do for me."* Ask the student to do a task that requires both arms – putting up a poster, moving a chair, hanging up a jacket, etc.
6. Allow student responses or reactions. Then ask, *"Why is this a problem?"* (Because the volunteer is loaded up with balloons, he or she is not free to help you with other tasks.)
7. Say, *"This demonstration is related to our 'Key Word,' 'Possessions.' God has blessed us with many possessions to enjoy – music, sports, hobbies, friends, movies, and computer games."* Hold up a balloon. *"However, when we strive to gather more and more of these things and try to hold on to them all, we become loaded down."* Point to the volunteer holding the balloons. *"Just like these balloons kept our volunteer from helping with a small job, hoarding blessings can hinder us from being of service to God."*
8. *"Things that load us down can become distractions. Distractions take our focus away from God and his purpose."* Take the balloons from the volunteer and allow him to sit down.
9. Ask, *"To what are you holding tightly? Can you think of one thing in your life that you need to let go of so you are more available to partner with God to accomplish his purpose in the world?"* Allow students to share ideas. Then spend time praying for God to show students those things that distract them or keep them from serving God.

THEME LESSON: GOD IS STILL WORKING TODAY

Directions

1. We have learned how God has worked from the beginning of time to make himself known to the people of earth. Ask, *"Can you give me examples from Old Testament times?"* Allow several responses. *"From New Testament times?"* Allow several responses.
2. *"After the beginning of the church in Acts, God continued to work, using strategies such as expansion, martyrdom, invasion, and Bible translation. Can you give a specific example of one of these strategies?"* Listen for several student responses.

Materials

- 24 large, inflated balloons

Materials

- globe or world map
- "Three Eras, Four Men" chart overhead transparency (p. 2)
- overhead projector

3. Explain that God is still working in the world during modern times, nearly 2,000 years after Christ. Say, *“We’re going to learn about missionary pioneers from the 1700s to the present whose work advanced God’s purpose to make his name known. The work these men began expanded the gospel into new regions and allowed millions of people to know and worship the true God.”*
4. *“In the late 1700s, William Carey started a mission agency movement that sent Christian workers to coastal areas around the world. Airplanes had not yet been invented and coastal areas were the easiest places to reach by ship. People who served as missionaries along the coasts often had access to good supplies of food, transportation, and trade opportunities. William Carey worked in the coastal areas of India, telling the people about Jesus, planting churches, and translating the Bible into local languages.”* Have a student find the country of India on the world map or globe. Then say, *“William Carey understood God’s heart for all peoples and his purpose of advancing his name. Many other Christians followed his lead. One example of this is a group of college students, who after a famous Haystack Prayer Meeting in 1806, obeyed God’s call on their lives and committed themselves to missions.”*
5. *“In the 1800s, Hudson Taylor was a pioneer in moving missions from the coast to the unexplored lands beyond. He founded the China Inland Mission which sent missionaries into areas of China where the gospel had not reached.”* Have a student locate the country of China on the world map or globe. Then say, *“Hudson Taylor moved his family from England to China to teach people about Jesus. Instead of continuing to wear his English style clothing, Hudson Taylor learned to dress like the Chinese people. This gave him greater trust with the Chinese people he was trying to reach. Other mission groups followed Hudson’s lead and focused on new, inland regions where there was no Christian work.”*
6. *“By the 1900s, most countries had mission work on the coastal and inland areas. In each country, some people had believed the gospel message and become followers of Jesus. There were even Christian churches in most countries. Was the Great Commission work of going into all the world and preaching the gospel almost finished? Cameron Townsend and Donald McGavran began a movement that challenged people to think hard about unreached peoples, groups of people within each country who had never heard about Jesus. Cameron Townsend, founder of Wycliffe Bible Translators, saw the need to translate the Bible into every language. Donald McGavran brought attention to people groups, clusters of people with their own unique culture. He saw the need to plant churches among every people group, not just in each country.”*
7. *“Although Cameron Townsend, Donald McGavran, and their followers focused their missions work on unreached peoples, today there are still millions of people needing to hear about Christ.”* On the world map or globe, show the students the 10/40 Window. First find the equator. Then locate the latitude lines that are 10 degrees north and 40 degrees north of the equator. Say, *“The 10/40 Window stretches from North Africa west, across the Middle East, over to India, and across many parts of Asia. Most of the people groups who have never heard about Jesus live within this region.”*

8. Show the “Three Eras, Four Men” overhead to review. Say, “*The three eras, or time periods, of modern missions were the coastland work, the inland work, and the work among unreached peoples.*” Summarize by saying, “*William Carey, Hudson Taylor, Cameron Townsend, and Donald McGavran are called pioneer missionaries. Why is that a good name for the kind of work they did?*” Allow responses. (went to new places, new strategies and ideas, reached new peoples, founded new mission agencies, etc.) Ask, “*If you lived in the days of pioneer missions, what kind of work do you think God might have called you to do?*” Enjoy listening to several student responses.

VIDEO: WILLIAM CAREY

Directions

1. Assemble students where they will watch the video. Say, “*This video shows the story of William Carey, called the ‘Father of Modern Missions.’ As you watch, look for the coastal strategy and Carey’s own work in India. Also note how his ideas were received by other Christians in England.*”
2. Show the video. Allow students to share their thoughts. Then ask, “*What did Carey understand about the Great Commission that other Christians in his day did not?*” Lead students to realize that Carey’s thinking about going to the ends of the earth was a foreign concept to other Christian leaders and that he met with opposition when he began his mission work.

IN CLOSING ...

Remind students that today, many people still live in cultures with no opportunity to hear the gospel. Pioneer missionaries are still needed.

Materials

- “William Carey” video (VF)
- TV/DVD player



HEROES OF HISTORY: HUDSON TAYLOR

Directions

1. Set the stage for this story. Say, *“Hudson Taylor was a missionary in the 1800s. In that time period, it was customary for missionaries to live together in a compound instead of living among the people they served. Their homes often resembled houses in their native country. Missionaries usually wore the same type of clothing that they wore in their home country. Hudson Taylor’s practice of adapting to the new culture was considered radical in his day.”*
2. Introduce this term:
Missionary society: a Christian organization who sent out missionaries to countries around the world, decided where missionaries would go, developed rules for how they would minister, and challenged people back home to pray for and give to the missionaries.
3. Read the story to your group.
4. Discuss the questions together or in small groups.
5. Together, discover the important role this person had in making God’s name known in all the earth.



PREPARATION: 15 min.

TEACHING: 25 min.

Materials

- “Hudson Taylor” illustration (p. 7)
- “Hudson Taylor Story” (pp. 8-9)
- “Hudson Taylor Discussion Questions” (p. 10)

Hudson Taylor



Englishman with a Pigtail

YORKSHIRE, ENGLAND

James Hudson Taylor was born in 1832 in Yorkshire, England. While preparing in college to be a medical missionary, he also studied the Mandarin Chinese language. On September 19, 1853, he set sail for China on the clipper ship *Dumfries*, a missionary for the Chinese Evangelization Society.

Unlike many other Englishmen, Taylor respected Chinese ways and customs, except when they went against the teaching of the Bible. To show his respect for the Chinese, he wore Chinese clothes and even grew his hair into a long pigtail. Other missionaries disapproved. But one English woman who admired Hudson's courage in dressing like the Chinese was Maria Dyer. She and Hudson Taylor were happily married on January 20, 1858.

Hudson Taylor was unusual in another way. He thought that Christians should not get into debt. He also believed Christian workers should pray to God about their needs rather than asking people for money.

Because of these differences, Taylor left the Chinese Evangelization Society and continued mission work on his own. God not only provided for all his physical needs, but his ministry among the Chinese people helped many to become Christians.

However, in 1860, while director of the London Mission Hospital in Ningpo, China, Taylor became so ill that he and Maria had to return to England. Here he translated the New Testament into the Ningpo Chinese dialect. He also founded the China Inland Mission and found new missionaries to go inland instead of just to the cities on the coast. He and his team returned to China in 1866.

Under Hudson Taylor's leadership, the mission grew and spread throughout all of China. When he retired in 1901, eight hundred missionaries served with the China Inland Mission. Also, for the first time, these missionaries from several church denominations were working together to spread the gospel.

Hudson Taylor died in Changsha in 1905.

Note: Introduce this next section by saying, “*Here is an experience that Hudson Taylor had while serving in China. It demonstrates the importance of sending Christian workers into new areas.*”

Obedience: “Why Didn’t You Come Sooner?”

Hudson Taylor was discouraged. He had been preaching in the city of Ningpo for a year. The Chinese were polite and enjoyed gathering to hear Taylor speak. Discussing new ideas was fun to them. But no one seemed to take the gospel message seriously. No one believed it.

And then, after one message, when Taylor felt most like giving up, a respected man stood up and turned to his Chinese countrymen.

“I have been searching for the truth a long time,” he said earnestly. “My father and my grandfathers before me searched for the truth, but they never found it. I have traveled far and wide looking for it. I have tried Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism, but have found no rest.”

Taylor looked at the man with new interest. He knew that this man was a leading officer among the Ningpo Buddhists. What was he saying? Was he saying that his religion gave him no peace?

“But tonight,” said the man honestly, “tonight I have found rest. I have heard the truth, and from now on I am a believer in Jesus.”

Hudson Taylor could hardly believe his ears. Could it be true?

A short time later, the man proved his sincerity by taking Hudson with him to the Buddhist meeting and

giving his testimony. Soon one of the man’s friends also became a Christian and was baptized.

However, a few nights after the man had accepted Jesus as his Savior, he asked Hudson Taylor a very hard question. “How long have the people in your land known about Jesus?”

“Oh, hundreds of years,” answered Hudson Taylor.

“What?” said the man in amazement. You knew the truth for hundreds of years and didn’t come to tell us? My father searched for the truth all his life and died without finding it. Why didn’t you come sooner?”

It was a hard question. Jesus had told his followers to go into all the world and preach the gospel to everyone, but too often Christians don’t obey him. This man knew the result. He knew people who wanted to know the truth and were just waiting for someone to come and tell them.

Wanting to obey his newfound Savior, the former Buddhist leader spent the rest of his life telling others about Jesus.

Obedience is doing what God has asked you to do.

FROM GOD’S WORD

He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation” (Mark 16:15).

Hudson Taylor Discussion Questions

HUDSON TAYLOR, PART 1 & 2

Let's Talk About It

1. Why was Hudson Taylor discouraged?
2. What had the Buddhist man been looking for all his life?
3. Think of someone you know who does not know about Jesus. Pray that God will help you tell that person the good news about Jesus.