

IF ANYONE WOULD COME AFTER ME,...

Luke 9:23

“Then he said to them all: ‘If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.’

I. Life Testimony Gregory S. Lewis
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Hello, my name is Greg Lewis from Toledo, Ohio, USA. In this short report I would like to share the grace of God in my life and God’s vision for college students in North and South America.

First, my life apart from Jesus. Like many Americans I grew up in the church. But in high school, my curiosity led me into drugs and alcohol. This party lifestyle only intensified in college. I ignored God’s salvation in Jesus and looked for other ways to satisfy the deep yearnings in my soul. With no real sense of purpose or meaning for my life, I drifted further into trouble. Eventually I hit rock bottom - broken and exhausted.

By the grace of God, I came to see my older brother Jeff who was a born-again Christian. He prayed for me night and day for 3 years. I studied the Bible in UBF with my mentor Peter Park and received pastoral care from Dr. Paul Hong. I accepted John 15:5, “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.” This beautiful verse brought me to my knees in tears of repentance. I had wasted 10 years of my life apart from Jesus. I found life direction to remain in Jesus and bear much fruit.

Second, my life in the grace of Jesus. After accepting the truth about Jesus, I needed concrete steps in spiritual discipline to become a man of faith. Through Bible study, meditation on God’s word, regular worship, daily devotion, and Christian fellowship, I slowly rebuilt my life in the grace of Jesus. With the prayer and support of my spiritual mentors and other young Christians, I became a godly, healthy, and productive person.

Then I began to think more seriously about the life of a disciple of Jesus based on Luke 9:23, “Then he said to them all: ‘If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.’” This was Jesus’ personal invitation for me to live as his disciple. I decided to deny my desires and plans in order to live for Jesus and for the gospel. I attended Bible conferences including one in Germany and had a short-term mission experience in Korea. In time, God helped me to accept his calling to live as a spiritual mentor for college students.

In 2003, I married a beautiful woman, Susan, with the blessings of God's people. We now open our home to college students for fellowship, prayer, and common life. We have 12 regular 1-to-1 Bible studies each week. I also work full-time as math teacher, and my wife is studying to become a pharmacist. Our first priority is to be godly, healthy and influential based on Luke 9:23—following Jesus daily through self-denial and taking up our cross of mission.

II. Mission Report on North- and South America

This mission history of North America and South America owes much to that of Europe. The very foundations of North America (USA and Canada) have both spiritual and secular aspects of Europe - Northern Europe - particularly England and Germany. Two streams (both religious and secular elements of Europe) have been passed on to the almost all fabrics of people's lives in USA and Canada. On the other hand, the mission history of Latin America has been deeply affected by the Catholic influences of Southern Europe - particularly Spain and Portugal. Many of my friends, relatives and neighbors in Toledo trace their ancestry to countries in Europe and of course Germany. As an American I recognize the deeply-held shared values between Europe and Americas (North and Latin) and express my gratitude for the spiritual influences of Europe on shaping the nations of these two great continents. Here, I would like to share the contribution of North and Latin America for mission history and the needs for mission work and the particular role of UBF mission.

First, the contribution of USA and Canada for world mission work.

Since William Carey went to India in 1793, many missionaries from Europe and North America went out many parts of the world. Many early American pioneers displayed their diverse Christian traditions from Europe including Puritans, Lutherans, Presbyterians, and Baptists. One noticeable mission movement occurred before and after Civil war.

More than half millions of American young people and their family members died in this war. This war (by seeing so many deaths and broken lives) had deep impact on many young people in reflecting the ultimate meaning of their lives. Many took God's call seriously and accepted their missionary calling for the world. Interestingly enough, God raised up many missionaries from college campuses around North America. Many young people received their calls during their college years and went out to China, Korea, Africa and many parts of the third world. North America, USA in particular, has major Christian colleges and universities. Annual Christian publications are enormous in terms of volumes and impact. So many American people offer their money and time for the work of mission. Still North America makes great deal of contribution for Christian world mission. In Latin America, with a common language of Spanish (except Brazil), Catholic influences are very obvious. The patterns of their mission history are somewhat different from that of their northern neighbors. People from Latin America have basic fear God and deep sense of belongings to their families and communities. Increasingly, the growing visibility of Charismatic Christians is clear in Latin America. Annually, more

people from Latin America come to North America and they maintain their unique cultures. In brief, North America and Latin America are different in terms of cultural values, styles and religious convictions; yet they are deeply connected to each other as neighbors.

Second, needs for mission work in North and Latin America.

More than 70% of the world's top universities are in North America. Many of Christian student movements such as YMCA, YWCA, Navigators, and CCC are originated from America. God has used America for the world mission purpose. From European perspective, North America is still youthful, vibrant and energetic. At the same time it shows that evidences of strains, conflicts and troubles in many parts of their society. Many Americans are not happy. Many are unsure of their life direction. What has been tried and experienced in Europe is also common in North America. Great contradictions are everywhere in America.

Widespread emptiness in the midst of material abundance, joyless life styles in spite of greatly available media and movie entertainments, broken relationships among so autonomous freedomseeking lives and great deal of anxiety for life with all the good social programs. Like Europe North America is no longer a missionary sending country. It also requires missionaries from every nation. This is true with Latin America. Beyond the surface of cultural believes many people from Latin America do not know Christ Jesus very personally. Their lives are not deeply affected by the truths of the good news. The needs for mission work in Latin America are also very great.

Third, UBF mission in North and Latin America.

The UBF ministry in USA and Canada started with prayers and vision for world mission. At one student meeting in Korea, the late Dr. Samuel Lee gave a prayer topic to have an International Bible Conference in Niagara Falls. At that time it was not very feasible for Korean people to be missionaries in America. However, many young students in Korean UBF started praying for this based on Jesus' command, "Therefore, go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation"(Mk 16:15). After experiencing very fruitful work in Korea, the two UBF co-founders (the late Dr. Samuel Lee and Sarah Barry) did not settle in Korea.

Rather, they were willing to go to the very frontline of world mission. They moved to Chicago, IL and started their new ministry in America in the late 1970s. They struggled together as pioneers for North American Campus Mission in their late 50s. By that time, just as God used many Korean nurse missionaries in Germany, so did in USA. In the late 1970s, a few handful of Korean nurse missionaries in Toledo invited students from University of Toledo for Bible studies. In 1977 UBF has the first student conference in Toledo, OH. The next year, other Korean nurse missionaries in Chicago invited college students from North Western University. Among many bright Northwestern students, Mark Vucekovich accepted an invitation for one to one Bible study. Other American students, such as Joseph

Schafer, who later completed his education in MIT and Harvard, also came to know Christ Jesus personally and received the calling as a disciple of Jesus. Since then, many young American young college students accepted God's call to pray for America and the world. In this way, besides Chicago, strong mission base camps were established in Toledo, Cincinnati, Washington, New York, and LA. Many Korean missionaries that came to USA and Canada became professionals - college professors, medical doctors, other health care and IT professionals. Young American students have formed Christian families of mission. Both husbands and wives love each other deeply, committed to raise their children in the Lord, do their hard work in the world as professionals and faithfully carry on the work of mission in the cities where they live. They now assume leadership in their respective chapters.

In 1980s, many Korean women became sewing machine operators in manufacturing facilities in Canada. They started in Winnipeg, Canada. Misunderstanding is common in cross-cultural mission. Initially, Canadian people did not accept them well. Even so, young Canadian people accepted the invitations of one to one Bible studies. In this way, John Giesbrecht and Andrew Christopher became two native Canadians who became the very first Canadian leaders. UBF mission in USA slowly grew. In 1981 Niagara bible conference was held with 230 attendants. In 1988 total 922 attendants attended the MSU Bible conference, including 706 native North Americans. In 1991, 1,200 people, in 1997, 2004 people, and in 2004 even 2800 people attended the MSU Bible conference. This year North American UBF chose Purdue University as the site of the International Bible Conference because it can accommodate up to 6,000 participants. The patterns of Latin America are somewhat different. UBF Latin America Mission started with José Ahn who was sent to Guatemala and later to Mexico as a Korean diplomat.

While his wife was serving in Korea for the college ministry, for years he was alone - working fulltime in Korean embassy. Yet, he was not lonely. In the lunch time or in the evening after his work he studied the Bible with Guatemalan and later Mexican students. His apartment was quite lively with many one to one studies and Christian fellowships. That's the way the foundation of UBF mission was laid in Latin America.

Later, other missionaries followed his sacrificial footsteps. At first they became street vendors selling clothes and household goods in a very small scale. They worked hard as merchants in the daytime; at night they had Bible studies with students. That's the way UBF chapters in Mexico City, Guadalajara, and other countries of Latin America were pioneered. God blessed their sacrificial and humble efforts. God blessed them in every way as they first seek God's kingdom. In 2007 Latin American Conference in Mexico City more than 700 Latin American young people participated.

Finally, our prayer Topics for North and Latin America.

In view of the growing spiritual hunger, the needs for world mission are quite clear. Both North and Latin America recognize their unique cultural and religious backgrounds. They are different and yet together for the mission of our Lord Jesus Christ. Dr. John Jun reminds North and Latin America UBF

to hold these prayer topics: (1) May God raise up sacrificial and faithful disciples of Jesus who follow Christ daily; (2) North and Latin America may grow up as a kingdom of priests and a holy nation; (3) reach out all campuses in North and Latin America through one to one and house church ministries; (4) send 100,000 missionaries by 2041 for all nations including North Korea, China and Moslem world; (5) each of us may raise up 12 prominent disciples of Jesus in lifetime.