

LEGACY WORD #4: End Bible Poverty – 1967

The fourth Legacy Word was passionately embraced in the early years of Youth With A Mission as young people went about sharing the Good News of Jesus. In 1967 Loren was leading one group of young people on an outreach. He tells us,

“I was with a YWAM convoy traveling through Mexico to Central America. We had stopped in a dusty Mexican town to repair a flat tire. While some worked on that, the rest of us delivered a Gospel of John to every home, then held an open-air preaching service.

After our meeting a woman in a faded red dress came up to me. My Spanish wasn't very good, but I understood her to say, 'There's no place in my town to get a Bible, and there aren't any in the towns around here. Do you have a Bible in my language?'

I managed to find a Spanish Bible for her. She grasped it to her chest. '¡Muchísimas gracias, señor!'

As we drove away, the woman's question continued to haunt me. 'Do you have a Bible in my language?' Then, a picture suddenly came before my eyes – I believe it was what the Bible calls a 'vision.' I saw a big truck – not a semi, but more like a large moving van. Painted on the side was, 'Sólo los deshonestos temen la verdad. Santa Biblia, gratis.'

I didn't know Spanish well enough to think in the language, so seeing these sentences was a complete surprise. I translated them slowly in my mind. They meant, 'Only the dishonest fear the truth. Free Bibles.' What an exciting thought! The phrase 'Only the dishonest fear the truth' was completely new to me, and it rang in my mind. It was especially pertinent at the time, as communists were spreading their cause across Latin America.

As the vision continued, I saw young people standing in the back of the truck handing Bibles into eager hands as fast as they could.” (Excerpt from *The Book That Transforms Nations*, Loren Cunningham, (2007, YWAM Publishing) pp 184-185.

The vision starting to become reality as those young people distributed 50,000 New Testaments to university students in Mexico that summer.

That encounter with the woman in the faded red dress eventually led to the launching of “Bibles for Mexico,” which in turn birthed many Bible distribution projects in dozens of countries all around the world.

Then at the UofN Workshop in Singapore in 2003, Loren issued a compelling challenge to the mission which he had received from the Lord. This was a time when YWAM recognized that there had been mission drift in our midst and we were intentionally realigning with our Godgiven DNA in order to see a new wave of apostolic initiatives around the world. Loren said, “I urge you to put a Bible in every home in the world by 2020. The Bible needs to be in their heart language and available in a means which they can easily understand.” As Loren turned 85 years old in 2020, this cry of Loren’s heart is like that of Caleb when he too was 85, “Give me this mountain” (Jos 14:12). This challenge to end Bible poverty gripped the hearts of many.

In late 2014 Loren, together with Darlene and several other YWAM leaders, visited key Orthodox, Catholic, Anglican and Evangelical leaders around the world, urging them to do all they could to help end Bible poverty. There was great unity of purpose around this theme among these influential leaders. As a result, “The Covenant to End Bible Poverty” was written, calling on Christians everywhere to pray, translate, publish, distribute, educate and motivate people for Bible engagement.

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