

Chapter 1

Preliminary - The Work of Missions

1. Our Work

The cause of worldwide missions is not something in addition to the regular work of the church. The work of God is one work, the wide world over. The gospel message can never have accomplished its purpose in the homelands until it has reached all lands. "The field is the world." Matt. 13: 38. It is the world that "God so loved." Our work is, to carry the one message of salvation to all peoples. That is the aim of every conference, every church, every believer.

2. A WorldWide Movement

By every principle of the gospel and by every reason for our existence as Seventh-day Adventists, we are committed, heart and soul, life, money, and all, to the cause of worldwide missions.

(1) The original great commission is still ours: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Mark 16: 15. (2) Christ's prophecy says of our time, "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." Matt. 24:14. (3) The prophecy of the special advent message and movement (of Revelation 14) represents it: "I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." Rev. 14: 6.

Every thought, prayer, plan, and effort for the cause of God must reach out from the home base to the ends of the earth. Every tribe and tongue is our aim. Nothing else can answer to that symbol of the angel flying toward every tongue and people.

3. The Personal Appeal

The study of missions must bring closer home to our hearts the appeal of the fields today. In the study, we shall be giving heed to Christ's exhortation, "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest." John 4: 35. From regions where the workers are few and the tongues and peoples many, we shall hear again and again that old-time cry, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us." The voice of Jesus speaks to us in present world conditions with ever-increasing urgency: "The laborers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest." Matt.

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9: 37, 38. It is in the spirit of the prayer meeting and the consecration service that the study of missions should be taken up.

There is a real conflict on. Over every sea, comrades of ours are fighting the battle against sin and error to win souls to . Christ. Somewhere, always, the line is weakened by lack of workers; and always, everywhere, the situation calls for an advance into new territory. We dare not shut our eyes to the needs of the fields, or count as the business of others this carrying of the burden for the work in dark lands where millions are unwarned and unhelped.

“If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; if thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not He that pondereth the heart consider it? and He that keepeth thy soul, doth not He know it? and shall not He render to every man according to his works?” Prov. 24: 11, 12.

Every unentered field, every area of population untouched, every language silent or but feebly represented in the chorus of voices proclaiming the message of God for this generation, is a challenge to us. Not that everyone is called to go to far lands. The work of some will be at the home base. The Lord of the harvest must direct. But as the great fields are spread before us in our study, in the reading of missionary reports, and the gathering of general information concerning other lands and peoples, we shall surely hear the voice of the Lord asking again, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Then may every heart that knows the forgiving grace of Jesus be ready to say with Isaiah, “Here am I; send me.” Isa. 6: 8. It was in his youth that this experience came to Isaiah. While many of mature years and long experience are called to the mission fields, there is need of a growing army of youth of good experience, to go out to the ends of the earth, to endure hardness as good soldiers of the cross of Christ, to learn languages, and to win souls.

“With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Saviour might be carried to the whole world!” - “Education,” p. 271.

4. The Aim of Missions

The work of missions differs in no wise from gospel work at home. It is a work of soul-winning, preaching by voice and by the printed page the Word which alone can convert the heart and change the life; teaching and training the believers in service; and ministering to the physical needs of the peoples. There is no “romance” about missionary work. The story of missions bears witness that the results have been

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gained by steady plodding methods. The motive power that has kept the missionaries at the task is that which mightily moved the apostolic workers. "The love of Christ constraineth us." 2 Cor. 5: 14. Without this love - not alone the worker's love for Christ, but Christ's love for souls, beating in the worker's heart - the work of missions would be a wearing work indeed. But it is a wonderful experience to see the grace, of Christ transforming lost men and women, and changing whole communities, as the creative word of God has its effect. This is the joy of mission service abroad even as it is of gospel work at home. It is a privilege to be the first bearer of the good news to those in dark regions who never before so much as heard of a way of salvation for sinners. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation." Isa. 52:7. "I am so glad you came!" said a dying young Indian woman, Marie, to our missionary in the wilds of the Lake Titicaca region. "Before you came to us, I should have been afraid to die; but now I know that when Jesus comes, He will raise me to life and take me to be. with Him. I am so glad you came!" It is the work of missions to carry to the uttermost ends of the earth the gospel that opens the gate of eternal life to every lost sinner who believes.