

## Chapter 1

### The Making of a Missionary

Myrtle Henry felt very new and shy as she walked across from the girls' dormitory to the administration building. Could she be the only new girl on the campus? Just then she heard hurried footsteps behind her, and turned her head to see a girl following her.

The girl called, "Wait for me. Are you going to register now?"

Myrtle nodded. "Do you know what we're supposed to do? Where we're supposed to go?" she asked.

"No. I thought you did; that's why I tried to catch up to you."

"Well, we're both ignorant, so let's go together. My name's Myrtle Henry. What's yours?"

"I'm Betty Smith. What are you planning to take?"

"I want to be a teacher," Myrtle replied. "And you?"

"It's secretarial for me. It's a shorter course. Say, did you notice that the school offers an elective called survey of missions? I feel like signing up for it."

"So do I," Myrtle Henry said to her new friend. "Ever since I was a tiny tot in Sabbath School I've been thrilled by mission stories. Who knows, I might be able to go as a teacher to Africa someday." Myrtle paused, and then with a laugh added, "First I guess we'd better get signed up. There's a man coming down the steps of that building." She pointed.

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“Let’s ask him if he knows where we are supposed to go to register.”

The man, the girls soon learned, was on the faculty. He courteously showed them to which building they should go. Once directed it didn’t take them long to get into the registration line and complete their registration.

“I got the elective class survey of missions,” Myrtle confided to her new friend when they met outside the administration building. “I have a really full program, that’s for sure. How did you make out?”

“Fine. I’ve got a full program too. Unfortunately I couldn’t take survey of missions. Come on, let’s spend the day exploring the campus and finding some other new students around here.”

The first day of classes, Myrtle found the survey of missions the smallest of her classes. There were only ten students - nine girls and one boy. Myrtle noticed that eight of the girls tried in every way to get the attention of the young man. Myrtle herself felt drawn to the young fellow whose name was James Rossier Campbell. Everyone called him Rossier. “An intelligent, handsome, quick-witted, and friendly person,” Myrtle thought, but being a very proper lass she kept her feelings to herself. However, with all the attention given him by the other girls, she couldn’t help feeling flattered when he seemed always to sit beside her or just behind her.

One day Rossier walked out of class beside her and asked, “What made you join the mission survey class, Miss Henry?”

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“Years ago I read a thrilling book on missions, and right then I made up my mind that I was going into mission service,” Myrtle responded.

“Any preference as to where you’d like to work?” Rossier asked.

“To tell the truth, my eye has been on Africa, the land of David Livingstone.” Myrtle warmed to her subject and went on to tell Rossier about her dream of a life work.

When she paused for a moment, Rossier smiled and said, “When you talk about the country of your preference, you have a delightful sparkle to your eyes.”

“Don’t flatter me, Mr. Campbell,” she retorted.

“No flattery. It’s true. And my name’s Rossier. Please don’t be so formal and call me mister. Has anyone told you your hairstyle is most becoming?”

“Ah, now that I won’t call flattery; it’s the nicest compliment you could have paid me, Mr. Rossier. Thank you. You see, I was very ill several months ago and was on the verge of losing all my hair as a result. My uncle is a barber, and he took it upon himself to practically shave my head. I was horrified when I saw the result. You’ve no idea how dreadful I looked with an ‘egghead.’ I think I’d have died with embarrassment if I’d had to come to school looking like that. Fortunately my hair grows very rapidly. I’m thankful you think it looks decent now!”

“It’s beautiful - such lustrous, dark ringlets.” He reached over and touched a curl lightly. “Would you mind if I called you Myrtle?”

What could she say to such a request from such a charming young man as Rossier? And so their friendship

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began. They spent many hours during the school year discussing their ambitions. After a while both of them wrote their parents about their friendship and of their hopes to enter mission service in Africa, for strangely enough, Africa was Rossier's first love as well as Myrtle's.

Myrtle worked in the kitchen at the school preparing the evening meal. Many of the students skipped this meal, but there was one young man who never missed a supper. Of course it was Rossier Campbell. He took full advantage of the chance to visit with Myrtle after he'd eaten.

One evening he asked her to sell him a pound of dates to take to his room.

"Since you've asked so nicely I most certainly will," she replied with a smile and a mock curtsy. She measured out the fruit, and then, because it was for Rossier, she dipped into the container and took the fattest, juiciest date and added it to his packet for good measure.

As she tidied up after the students had all left, the supervisor stepped up to her. "I know you didn't mean to do wrong, but you took what belongs to the kitchen and gave it to your boyfriend," she said.

Myrtle was stunned. "How? When?" she stuttered.

"When you added that extra date to Rossier's package. Think it over, my dear. You can't afford to be lax even in little things."

Impulsively the girl threw her arm around the woman. "I'm sorry," she whispered. "I just never thought of that as - as stealing!"

"I know you didn't, but I love you too well to let something like that slip by."

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The next time Rossier asked to buy dates, she measured them out carefully, then took out the biggest one and put it back in the can.

“Hey, what’s up? Are you trying to tell me something?” he asked somewhat mystified.

“I later realized I did wrong when I gave you the extra date the last time you bought dates, so now I’m correcting my mistake. I’ve felt terrible ever since. Now I’m much happier. Will you forgive me?” she asked with a tremulous smile.

“You could take half the packet if that would make you happy,” he replied, and by the look that accompanied his words the girl knew he meant it.

One day as Myrtle sat studying in the chapel, the principal, Professor Lucas, came in and looked around. Myrtle saw him look her way and then make his way over to her.

“Myrtle, I understand you and Rossier Campbell are contemplating marriage and then service in Africa,” he said after a few words of greeting.

“Yes, sir,” she answered, blushing furiously.

He seemed not to notice her embarrassment. “What if the General Conference gives you a call to China while they send Rossier to India?”

Her heart skipped a beat. Did the man know something she did not? She hesitated a moment as she weighed her answer. Finally with the hint of a sigh she answered, “I guess I’d go to China if that was where God wanted me. You see, Professor, my first allegiance is to my Saviour.”

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He smiled kindly. "You've truly dedicated yourself to Him, haven't you?" He got up and left without another word.

Myrtle couldn't study with her mind in such a turmoil. Didn't God want her to marry Rossier? She went to her room and threw herself on her bed. After a while a knock sounded and, upon opening the door, Myrtle found a student with a message for her. The principal wanted to see her at his home immediately.

"Oh dear," she said. "Am I in some sort of trouble?" She racked her brain in vain for the solution as she washed her face and combed her hair before hurrying to answer the summons.