

WHY MISSIONS TODAY?

By Rev. W. G. Worboys

God has plans. He sees the end from the beginning. He scheduled all things according to infinite wisdom and knowledge. He is on time. What may seem to hinder will serve in the end to carry out a great purpose. Each part of His program will come at just the right time. For any part to arrive too soon might frustrate the entire plan; for it to arrive too late would mean incalculable disaster. To arrive at just the right time fits into the plan for all things. Thus, God operates.

The redemptive scheme of God was of infinite cost. How was it to be publicized? Would not God outline the best course? Man would give an elaborate technique of gospel propagation. It was not so with Christ. Note His simple directions: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:19, 20). "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 15:16). What qualification did He require for this work? "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:47). Power is the central requirement. Purity is essential to possess power. Educational equipment is very desirable. Let it be well-sanctified so that it can be used as your servant, and not your master. We are captivated with the conciseness of the arrangement. There were no details. The board of seven deacons was chosen when a need for it arose. Paul was well-saved, sanctified and indoctrinated before he undertook his missionary pournes. So it has been and must be. The endued church has its sequel in gospel propagation.

Has the church outgrown missions? This question may seem absurd. In the maze of modern conditions at home and abroad, when so much hazy thinking is evidenced, ought the church to major on domestic and international problems primarily? Or will she serve best in molding the hearts of men, directing them in a spiritual course? Without doubt this is the pertinent service to be rendered. A spiritual background is most essential to logical thinking. We consider missions to be an arm of the church, reaching out to the entire world. Is there a need for that extended arm today? Missions are needed now:

1. To fulfill the Great Commission. As He is to be with them unto the end of the age, so they must co-operate with Him during the entire period. The "working together with him" must continue. As a person can be at his best only as exercises his talents and powers, so the church can be at her best only by the pursuit of her God-given appointments. The church was born to be missionary in spirit and activity. Vision of the plan of God must be in evidence always. As we see the need of others, we will see the necessity of being our best so as more capably to fulfill His will. "Where there is no vision, the people perish" (Prov. 29:18). God's financial plan, carried out, will mean funds for the home and foreign work. It works retroactively: the more we give to others, the more we will have for the home

church. Stagnation, financially and spiritually, comes when all is localized. Extinction may follow. The same is true of the talents and gifts of the home church. Ought there not to be a distribution of these everywhere? Will not the church be better as a whole if she shares with others? Has any race an exclusive right to the best? All people have rights. All should have equal opportunity to seek salvation. Hence, to fulfill the desire of Christ for the evangelization of the world, there must be a going forth into the world of evangels from the home base. This will enhance the spirituality of those going forth to the battle, and those who "stand by the stuff."

2. To check modern ideologies. We are in an era of experimentation. Atheistic socialism is running wild. This has no regard for God or the rights of man. It is a drift toward the Dark Ages. The sponsors of these ideas are placing a mortgage on humanity, far beyond their ability to discharge. Communism is getting a strong hold on America. It is going into the far countries of the earth. Millions are being blighted. It is a far more perplexing problem for the Christian missionaries to lead such devotees to Christ—if perchance they are permitted to teach and preach at all.

Christianity must be able to answer their arguments, and demonstrate by the consistent lives of its religious leaders the superiority of the Christian faith to Communism. A "community of goods" was resorted to for a short time, as depicted in Acts 4:34-37. It did not become an established church polity. It met a temporary need. Paul taught "that if any would not work, neither should he eat" (2 Thess. 3:10). Also, to the same church, he said: "And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you" (1 Thess. 4:11). If this Scripture does not teach personal attitude, private business, and individual labor, what is its import? The great apostle set the example. While he believed that "the Lord ordained that those who preach the gospel should live of the gospel" (1 Cor. 9:14), evidently not all who heard him preach conformed to the ordinance thus prescribed. So Paul followed tent-making "on the side." Tithing will take care of this so that the preacher may give full time to his ministry. The Corinthians were taught systematic and proportionate giving on the first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:2). Solomon was against a group having "one purse" (Prov. 1:14). Individual enterprise, personal choice and responsibility, exercise of free will in all relations to God and man, are basic. If these factors are curbed, you have slavery. Communism is the modern thief, "Which cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy" (John 10:10). Christianity's torch must be kept burning throughout the world. Otherwise, gross darkness will envelop the earth. Never in the history of man was there a greater responsibility placed on any group of people than is placed on the church now. Will we fail God in this dark hour of the world's history? You and I may answer that question in part by discharging our responsibility in praying, fasting, and tithing.

3. To preach the gospel to the nations without Christ. While we have covered this in part in the paragraphs above, we call attention to preaching as an outstanding factor of New Testament polity. The outstanding work of the apostles was preaching and prayer. God has ordained that by preaching men are to be

saved. The printed page is needed; but the person endued with the Spirit is paramount. It is the personal touch that counts. "How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent?" (Rom. 10:10). Evangelists, baptized with the Holy Ghost and fire, are to proclaim with authority the demands of God. There is that in man which responds to such an appeal. He may come from an African kraal, or a king's palace. All souls are made for God. He desires all to be saved.

The preaching of the gospel is for the world's safety. Islands once cursed by cannibalism were safe for our soldiers during the recent war. Why? The missionary had gone there before the soldier. Had more missionaries gone forth, the present situation would have been far different. John R. Mott gave the warning years ago of the necessity of foreign countries having missions then or bayonets later. We know the weak response at that time, and the aftermath.

How shall the world be made safe for democracy? What is democracy? It is a thing of the spirit. It is a blending of Christian teaching and piety with learning and a broad conception of human rights. It is not a political accident. It is not acquired in a day, or a month, or a year. It cannot be forced upon a people as a substitute for a decadent form of government. It must function in the air of freedom. It requires a group intelligence which is able to perceive the elements of freedom. It must have a Christian conscience and consciousness which will regulate the body politic according to the Golden Rule—regarding sacredly the sovereign rights of others. What crass nonsense to attempt to democratize nations without a background in knowledge and the Christian faith! If our form of government is the best for the present, where rests the responsibility of the Christian church and the democratic nations? The best way to make the world safe against the atomic bomb, paganism, and social ideologies is to "teach and preach Jesus Christ." He is all that is needed for the spirit, soul and body of man.

Christianity has not kept pace with science. Will it catch up? Upon the answer to this question rests the fate of the world until Jesus comes.

4. To hasten the return of Christ. "And 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). Space forbids a detailed exposition of this text. Suffice it to say that this is the "witnessing" era. "Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth" (Acts 1:8). The witness tells what he knows or has experienced. He declares the message of Christ. Here is a world program. How long it will take to complete the witness is known to God only, though we are given signs of the end of the age. Speed is the order of the day. Modern facilities make the work of witnessing easier and more challenging. The printed page is reaching millions with the message of salvation. The radio is being heard in the far corners of the earth. It is God's way. Every sermon preached here and elsewhere, every dollar invested, every son and daughter placed on the altar of missions, every medical missionary working sacrificially, every teacher instructing