



MISSIONS IN A CHANGING SOUTH AFRICA

Rev. William Morgan

Usually three departments of mission effort are considered of primary importance, namely, evangelistic, educational, medical; these, of course having one ultimate aim, the building of a strong Christian Church. Often spiritual desires are awakened through restoration of physical health, hence the value of medical missions. The ability to read both enables the unsaved to come into direct contact with the leaven of the gospel and puts the written Bread of Life within easy reach of the converted, hence the value of educational missions.

These three departments are often regarded as foundational to all mission work in any field and under all circumstances. But perhaps if we should give careful attention to the conditions existing in any particular field at any given time we should discover that, though all three may be in a sense basic, some one or ones may far exceed the others in order of importance.

A brief study of conditions in South Africa would undoubtedly reveal some valuable information along this line. Let us take these three phases of mission work individually and note a few points concerning each. We will begin with number three and work back.

Medical Missions

Opportunity for any kind of mission work hinges somewhat heavily on two points: the attitude of the State and the attitude of the people. Of the two the first is probably the more important. People's attitudes often change corresponding to influences brought upon them.

Looking at medical missions in the Union of South Africa we need not consider any difficulty from popular attitude. Speaking at large there is a general cry for the white man's medicines. The day of the witch doctor's rule is virtually over but superstition is still strong and there is a great need for enlightenment in hygiene. Contacts made on the physical level can be drawn to the spiritual level and a soul saving work done. Thus there is still an open door and a needy field looking at medical missions from that angle.

Taking our prospective from another angle and viewing the State attitude with regard to the physical care of the peoples to which it feels responsible we find a somewhat different picture. Official statements such as this, "eventually the State must assume control of all hospitals" and its counterpart, "the Churches must be brought to accept the fact that it is the duty of the State to attend to the physical care of its subjects," clearly suggests that the road ahead for medical missions from the State point of view is narrowing down to a slender path. But for the present we can still do a good deal of work in the medical line. The State is definitely not hostile to medical missions and is co-operating with the Mission societies by means of certain equipment and salary grants.

Educational Missions

We cannot examine this phase of mission effort without dividing education into at least two departments, secular and religious. From a mission point of view the value of education must hinge on its proportionate value to establishing a strong Christian Church. Though it is a

fine thing to see a nation become educated in the higher arts it is not the job of the missionary except that education can produce something vital to soul saving.

In secular education as in medical work the State often makes a large contribution. In South Africa at the present it is not the aim of the State to aid missions in the education of the nation's children, but to take over, root and branch the whole program of education. This will have both a good and a bad effect. On the one hand it will, at least, relieve the Missions of a great financial burden.

The one outstanding fact regarding secular education is that it is being taken out of the hand of the Missions whether it is liked or not.

In religious education we find quite a different matter. There is a religious curriculum in the State schools, but even though it were the desire of the State to provide all religious education it would be a very unsatisfactory arrangement and one which would ultimately bring the nation to spiritual chaos. Religious education must always be the responsibility of the Missions and Churches. We can be truly grateful that in South Africa, for the present at least, there is complete religious freedom, and that for the most part religious education is left in the hands of the Church. How long this state of affairs will continue no one can dare guess. More and more State control is continually being placed on many phases of living. The one very apparent conclusion is that while the door is still open we must do our utmost.

Here then we may safely say is a field of mission effort which can only be spoken of in superlative degrees. We must emphasize the importance of the Sunday School, Vacation Bible Schools, Bible Classes and Bible Schools.

(To be continued)

ANSWERS TO PRAYER

By Grace Sanders

"Ask and receive that your JOY may be full."

Truly my heart has been full of joy the last two or three days to see God so wonderfully solve some knotty problems for me.

One room was offered to me for the use of those women wanting to come into the Location for their confinements but had no friends or relatives to accommodate them. After some months two women were expected this week who wanted to rent that room for this special purpose. I went to investigate it and to my great dismay the owner told me he was renting it along with some other rooms to a family who were moving in. What was I to do! I had no girl to send around so I took a young, expectant mother along with me for company, and went from one house to another, where I knew the people, hoping I would get a room, only to be again disappointed. At last I was directed to a large house where lived a widow. She received me very graciously, listened to my tale of woe, and said that she had two rooms available, one of which I could have at once. And then said she would gladly assist me, waiting on me even if at night, she would build a fire and heat water for me!" I will do all I can to help you build up the Clinic here! We are so glad you have come to help us!" Taking her by the hand we knelt together as I asked God to bless her and make her a blessing.

That night I phoned the doctor about it and he said how very pleased he was about it and would come today to see the house. About 1 o'clock he arrived, called in at the Clinic, asked how I was getting on, saw the many women sitting about on the grass, and expressed pleasure

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The King's Highway