

The King's Highway

Rev. L. K. Mullen, No. 61

AN ADVOCATE OF SCRIPTURAL HOLINESS

VOL. XXXVIII

MONCTON, N. B., OCTOBER 14, 1961

No. 520

Missions, the Task of the Church

A. D. Cann*

Stated Dr. Bob Pierce in his annual message to the Oriental Missionary Society Convention, Winona Lake, Indiana, "I am not discouraged. I am optimistic, realistic. But my optimism is based upon the sovereignty of God. His program is going on."

Yes, God's program is going on. This is true of the past and we believe it to be true for the future. Tides move so slowly that sometimes we can scarcely discern whether they are coming in or going out. Sometimes we have become weary waiting for them to come in, but they always come in, and they always come on time. So it is with the sovereignty of God. He never fails. In spite of obstacles, both seen and unseen, Dr. Pierce and those working with him in Japan forged ahead because his Lord told him to go to Tokyo. Hundreds responded to the invitation to exchange their ancient gods for the Lord Jesus Christ. Some said it would never happen, but in the providence of God it did happen. Thus it has always been. It is our responsibility to tell the Gospel Message and it is God's responsibility to give the increase. If we do our part, God will do His.

We have made reference to Japan, but in this brief article we are concerned primarily with Africa. In 1901, Dr. and Mrs. H. C. Sanders became the pioneer missionaries of the Reformed Baptist Church when they sailed to South Africa and settled at Paulpietersburg Natal, among the Zulu people. Through the years God has blessed and prospered the work. Latest achievements consist of a Bible School in South Africa and hospital in Northern Rhodesia. The Bible School aims to train national evangelists. This, we feel is the answer to the commission to teach all nations. The natives must first be won to Christ. This calls for a strong program of evangelism at all levels, beginning with the Sunday Schools, day schools and up. Secondly, the natives must be instructed in the Word of God. Thirdly, they must be sent out to win others to Christ. The African people are best suited to win Africans. With such a program the threat of Communism or Nationalism will have little effect.

The medical program aims to condition the African people for the acceptance of the gospel of the saving and sanctifying grace of God. People, regardless of race, must be "won" to Christ. Thank God for our hospital, our many schools and our consecrated, capable workers. Our whole work is faced with the challenge of expansion. We are breaking at the seams. We are challenged to preach, teach and heal.

This brings us to God's argument for missions as found in Romans 10. "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?"

There is no answer to this argument, except supporting the missionary program. The economic squeeze is on in every area of life. Our standard of living is jumping higher and higher. The problem of supporting the miss-

ionary enterprise is not new. Our fathers sacrificed to get this work started. Our missionaries are sacrificing to keep it going. Can we do any less in the light of the supreme sacrifice of Christ?

In Philippians we have an interpretation of that sacrifice. In chapter two, it reads something like this—Christ counted His Heavenly Glory something not to be held on to at any cost. If the giving up of that glory meant the salvation of sinners, then He hesitated not to dedicate Himself a servant. He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

What does it mean to have the mind of Christ? It simply means we give everything, if need be, even life itself. This is what missionaries are required to do every day of their lives. I am convinced that God does not have a double standard, one for missionaries and another for preachers, farmers, fishermen, teachers, business men etc. The widow whom Jesus commended gave her all. May God help us to do likewise. Supporting the Lord's work is more important than security.

Yes, this is the challenge. We are partners with the missionaries in giving the gospel to every creature. How can we meet this challenge? Pastors, preach missions. Let us acquaint ourselves with the current missionary challenge. Let us become acquainted with the fields and the individual missionaries. By means of maps, slides, reading, prayer calendar, correspondence with our missionaries we can gain a vision of the fields.

We can teach missions in our Sunday Schools. We can educate our children and young people to be interested in missions and to share their support. It is helpful to have "integrated" lessons on missions once a quarter and a missionary offering in Sunday School at least once a month. In the language of a young missionary martyr—"He is no fool who gives what he cannot hold, in order to gain what he cannot lose." Also—"There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty" (Proverbs 11:24).

Jesus said—"Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest."

It is easy to say four months and then we will pray or four months and then we will pay. Listen! Four months may be too late, we may lose our opportunity. It is urgent that we pray now, it is urgent that we pay now. Yes, pray for our white missionaries, but pray especially for our native preachers, evangelists, Bible Women, young people and children. It is with the African people that we rest the future of our missionary enterprise. We need thousands of dollars to maintain the work and meet the challenge of expansion. If we will all give, as we shall one day wish we had, the work will go on.

*President, Foreign Mission Board