

# The Missionary Church

According to John 4:35, 36

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The Gospel Programme is primarily a missionary enterprise. The Gospel Message is pregnant with a missionary spirit. John 3:16 contains the essence of the Story. With swift, deft strokes the picture is drawn, the message declared.

A world lost and doomed . . .

A God loving and disturbed . . .

A sacrifice lavish and demanding . . .

This is the background and body of Redemption's story. This is the spirit that gave the plan life and movement. And the propagation of the Gospel springs from the same spirit and motive.

The message and methods designed to bring men to God come alive when the Church is moved by the same spirit which stirred in the heart of the Almighty.

The missionary spirit in the bosom of God found expression through the service and sacrifice of His Son. And Jesus sought to communicate this same spirit to the hearts of His disciples. "As the Father hath sent me into the world, so send I you . . .", was the word of the Master to His followers. "Say not ye there are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? but I say unto you . . ." John 4:35, and then our Lord gives what may be regarded as a lesson on the Missionary Church. First He speaks of . . .

## The Vision of the Missionary Church

"Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white, already to harvest . . .".

Many churches are afflicted with partial and limited vision. They see only their own small area with its needs and responsibilities. Christ challenges his followers to a world vision. The Church must see before it will act. "A vision appeared to Paul in the night . . . and immediately we endeavoured to go . . ." Acts 16:9, 10. And when we "see" we will endeavour to "go". Lack of effort bespeaks lack of vision.

God saw a world in need and said "I must give". Jesus, sharing the Father's view and concern said "I must go". And the "give" and "go" spirit are always found in the church that has come to see and feel as God does toward the unenlightened and unredeemed.

Jesus further speaks of . . .

## The Task of the Missionary Church

The task is to reap the fields, to gather in the over-ripe harvest.

To accomplish this mission we must:

Pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth labourers. With this responsibility Christ has charged us, Matt. 9:38. Reapers are needed. So few there are to do so much. 90% of the world's Christian workers minister to 9% of the world's population. 10% have undertaken the stupendous task of ministering to the remaining 91%! It is an unfair distribution of the Church's manpower. "Pray the Lord . . . to send them forth", said Jesus.

We must also provide the workmen for the Field. The consecrated volunteer must be yielded by the father, the mother, the pastor and people of the local church. We must let them go! Too many are being held at home when they should be sent forth.

The willing worker must be trained for his task. He or she must be prepared for the vital service to be rendered. This may involve the local church in financial responsibility.

Then the one who has answered the call to service, and prepared, by training, for the assignment, must be

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supported. This will call for the pouring forth of finances that the missionary advance on the Field may be continued and expanded.

To pray for workers; to provide the volunteers; to pay out of our resources that needed finances may be supplied. This is the task of the missionary church. Finally, Jesus speaks of . . .

## The Reward of the Missionary Church

"He that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together".

The blessing of God upon the missionary is shared by the missionary church.

Numerically, financially, and spiritually, the missionary church is blessed of God. It happens without fail. The missionary and the missionary church gather fruit "unto life eternal."

The greatest investment of any church is its missionary investment. No dollar goes further than the missionary dollar; none brings greater returns.

Check the records if you will, and you will find that the pattern runs very consistently.

The missionary church is usually the church with a growing Sunday School, an advancing spiritual programme, a high financial income.

A few years ago I checked a few churches on missionary giving with the following discovery: In eight years the missionary giving had increased as follows: from \$508.00 to \$4,067; from \$553.00 to \$2,492; from \$1,917.00 to \$5,735; from \$738.00 to \$1,630. And in every case, these churches were foremost in giving to other denominational projects, as well as promoting building and parsonage purchasing enterprises at the local level. And there was spiritual advance of above-average level in each case.

God has promised to bless the missionary church, and He does. If your church is weak or sick, put it on a "missionary diet!"

Our Easter offering for foreign missions not only provides opportunity to give in support of a worthy enterprise, it also affords opportunity for an effort toward progress and victory at the local level. When we aim at making our church a missionary church, we aim at making it a growing, going, glowing spiritual body. Try it!

As a pastor, I pray, "Lord, make my church a Missionary Church!"

## EXPECTATION

A tourist traveling in the northern part of Italy came to the castle, Villa Asconati. The grounds looked so inviting that the tourist asked the gardener at the gate if he might walk through them. Nothing could have pleased the gardener more.

Before he left, the tourist asked: "How long since the owner of the castle was here?"

"About twelve years."

"Does he ever write?"

"No."

"Then who gives you your instructions?"

"The master has an agent in Milan."

"Does he ever come here?"

"Never has."

The tourist smiled kindly. "You certainly keep these grounds in excellent condition. They look as if you expected your master to come tomorrow."

The gardener almost interrupted his visitor: "Today, sir, today!"

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