

# Who Sends the Missionary?

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Centreal Baptist Church, Anthony, KS

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## Introduction:

Corinth, Greece

Dear Mr. Rev. Saul (Apostle) Paul  
Independent Missionary

Paul:

We recently received an application from you for service under our Board. It is our policy to be as frank and open-minded as possible with all of our applicants. We have made an exhaustive survey of your case. To be plain, we are surprised that you have been able to "pass" as a bonafide missionary. We are told that you are afflicted with a severe eye trouble. This is certain to be an insuperable handicap to an effective ministry. We require 20-20 vision.

Do you think it seemly for a missionary to do part-time secular work? We heard that you are making tents on the side. In a letter to the Church at Philippi you admitted that they were the only church supporting you. We wonder why?

Is it true that you have a jail record? Certain brethren report that you did two years' time at Caesarea, and was imprisoned at Rome.

You made so much trouble for the businessmen at Ephesus that they refer to you as "the man who turned the world upside down." Sensationalism has no place in missions. We also deplore the lurid over-the-wall episode at Damascus. We are appalled at your obvious lack of conciliatory behavior. Diplomatic men are not stoned and dragged out of the city gate, or assaulted by furious mobs. Have you ever suspected that gentler words might gain you more friends? I enclose a copy of Dalius Carnagus' book, "How to Win Jews and Influence Greeks."

In one of your letters you refer to yourself as Paul the Aged. Our new mission policies do not anticipate a surplus of elderly recipients. We understand, too, that you are given to fantasies and dreams. At Troas, you saw, "A man of Macedonia" and at another time you were "caught up into the third heaven" and even claimed that "the Lord stood by" you. We reckon that more realistic and practical minds are needed in the task of world evangelism.

You have written many letters to churches where you have formerly been pastor. In one of these letters, you accused a church member of living with his father's wife, and you caused the whole church to feel badly and the poor fellow was expelled.

Your ministry has been far too flighty to be successful. First Asia Minor, then Macedonia, then Greece, then Italy, and now you are talking about a wild-goose chase to Spain. Concentration is more important than dissipation of one's powers. You cannot win the whole world by yourself! You are just one little Paul. In a recent sermon you said, "God forbid that I should glory in anything save the Cross of Christ." It seems to us that you also ought to glory in our heritage, our denominational program, the unified budget.

Your sermons are much too long for our time. At one place you talked until midnight and a young man was so sleepy that he fell out of the window and broke his neck. Nobody is saved after the first 20 minutes. "Stand up, speak up, and shut up," is our advice.

Dr. Luke reports that you are a thin little man, bald, frequently sick, and always so agitated over your churches that you sleep very poorly. He reports that you pad round the house, praying half the night. A healthy mind in a robust body is our requirement for all our applicants. A good night's will give you zest and zip so that wake up full of zing!

You wrote recently to Timothy that had "fought a good fight." Fighting is hardly a recommendation for a missionary. No fight is a good fight. Jesus came not to bring a sword, but peace. You boast "I fought with wild beasts of Ephesus." What on earth do you mean?

It hurts me to tell you this, brother but in all of the 25 years of my experience, I have never met a man so opposite to the requirements of our foreign Missions board. If we accepted you we would break every rule of modern missionary practice.

Most Sincerely yours,

J. Flavius Fluffyhead, Sec.  
Foreign Missions Board 811

Now that sounds like a pretty silly idea, doesn't it? Well, this would be funny for sure if it wasn't so close to the truth. Some of the Missions Boards we have today have so many rules and criteria that they keep good people from doing what God would have them to do. I realize that some rules are necessary to screen out the undesirable candidate, but we must

be careful not to hinder God's leading. I'm not saying that there shouldn't be rules and such but we should be sure of what we are doing. I believe where some of these boards run into trouble is that they forget who it is that sends the missionary. They seem to think they are the ones sending them out when all they should be is a clearing-house for their funds and an agency to help get them on the field. Since there are groups who have confused the issue I believe this is something we need to have straight for ourselves. With that in mind what I want to do tonight is look at who it is that actually does send out the missionary. Who's responsibility is it to see that missionaries are going out into the world to win the lost?

## **I. GOD THE FATHER SENDS OUT THE MISSIONARY**

The Father is involved in sending the missionary and His responsibility in the sending is that He provides the place where the missionary will be sent. It is He who:

### **A. He Prepares The Harvest Field**

Matthew 9:37-38, "Then saith He to His disciples, 'The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest.'"

1. It is the Father's harvest. It is He who prepares it and decides where the harvest will be. He is the owner of the vineyard and we are His husbandmen. God decides which field will be harvested and when and it is up to us to go where He has prepared the harvest. Have you ever wondered why some places are so open to the Gospel while others are closed up tight? It's not for us to know.

2. Since it is His harvest it is He who sends forth laborers to work the harvest. He hires the workers so to speak.

### **B. He Opens And Shut Doors**

We tend to blame Satan when the door of opportunity is closed on a place where we want to take the Gospel. Even missionaries sometimes forget that it isn't Satan who opens and shuts doors of utterance, but God the Father.

1. Colossians 4:3, "...that God would open unto us a door of utterance,..."

We must depend on God to open doors to us so that we can go in.

2. Revelation 3: 7-8, "...He that is true, He that hath the key of David, He that openeth, and no man shutteth, and shutteth, and no man openeth." When God opens the door for the Gospel to be

preached in a place the door will remain open until He decides to close it. Six or seven years ago we would never have dreamed that we could get the Gospel into Russia and other countries, but just look how God opened this door in such a dramatic and unexpected way. These countries will remain open until God closes them and we have no idea when that might be.

3. The Father sends the Holy Spirit to keep us from going through doors that aren't open to us. Sometimes we have the tendency to try to bust down a closed door instead of waiting on God and following His leading. In Acts 16:6 Paul and Silas were forbidden to preach the Gospel in

Asia by the Holy Spirit. Why? Because God chose Paul to go to Europe and had prepared the people of Europe for the Gospel. If Paul had gone to Asia instead, we might be receiving missionaries from Taiwan instead of sending them there. So God the Father sends the missionary and He does so by providing the place where the missionary will work.

## **II. GOD THE SON SENDS THE MISSIONARY**

Jesus Christ is also involved in sending the missionary by providing us with the plan or the program for missions.

### **A. As The Father Hath Sent Me, Even So Send I You**

1. John 17:18, "As thou has sent Me into the world, even so have I sent them into the world."

2. If Christ has sent us as He was sent, how was He sent?

a. He was sent to do the will of the Father. That's what we must do. He was sent to seek and to save that which was lost. The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

b. Luke 4:18, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor, He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives,..."

c. He came as a servant.

d. He gave His life for those to whom He was sent. We

need to be willing to give our lives for the sake of getting the Gospel to the lost world. That doesn't mean we should all be missionaries in a faraway land but it means that more of us should and it means that we should be willing to sacrifice to see others saved.

e. Jesus preached everywhere He went. First Christ gives us a general plan of going the same way that He went and then He gives us the more specific plan.

## **B. The Great Commission**

1. Matt. 28:19, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:"

2. Mark 16:15, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature."

3. Luke 24: 47, "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

4. Acts 1:8, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

This is the plan we are to follow. We should reach out to our neighborhood, our community, our city, our state, our country, and our world all at the same time. The only way we can do this is by having programs in our community (which we do), supporting church-planting and other missions in our state and other states, and by supporting foreign missionaries and having some of us go ourselves.

## **III. God The Holy Ghost Sends The Missionary**

The Holy Ghost is also involved in sending missionaries out and His area of responsibility is in providing the power for evangelizing.

**A. Acts 13:4, "So they, being sent by the Holy Ghost, departed..." We can see from this verse that the Holy Ghost is indeed volved in sending out the missionary.**

**B. Acts 1:8, "But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come**

**upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." I want to point out a few things about this verse and how it applies to us.**

1. The first thing I want you to notice is that we don't have power until the Holy Ghost is come upon us. In other words, if we don't have the power of the Holy Ghost on our lives we don't have any power. If we go out in our own strength we are powerless.

2. I also want you to notice the result of having the power of the Holy Ghost resting on you: ye shall be witnesses. It's not that you'll speak in tongues or heal someone, it's that you shall be witnesses. In a every case in the Book of Acts when someone was filled with Holy Ghost and had His power on them they received boldness to witness, not tongues.

3. The last thing is that the natural thing to do when you receive Holy Ghost power is to reach out, to reach out to our friends and neighbors, to reach out to the world. There is no possible way we could win the lost world for Jesus Christ if it were not for the power of the Holy Ghost. We are fighting a losing battle right now, the natural increase in population is far outstripping the numbers of people being won to Christ, but because of the Holy Ghost and His power there is hope that we can win our generation. But only if we allow Him to fill us and work through us.

#### **IV. THE LOCAL CHURCH SENDS THE MISSIONARY**

The local church is also involved in sending out the missionary and is responsible for providing the personnel of missions. This is the provision on which all the others rest because if there are none willing to go then the work of Missions is halted.

**A. Turn to Acts 13:1-3. Now there are several things I want to point out to you from these verses.**

1. There is a specific call to be a missionary. Notice in the verse it gives a list of men who were in the church and all of them are listed as being equals. They all were working in the church together. But look at verse 2, the Holy Ghost separated Saul and Barnabas to be missionaries and He called them. All Christians are commanded to be missionaries in the general sense that we are commanded to witness everywhere we go, but we see here that there is a specific

calling for missionaries.

2. God calls those into full-time service who are already busy doing His work. They were already preaching and teaching. If you are not involved in the work of the church now, which you've been commanded to do, don't expect God to call you to even more responsibility. God just doesn't work that way. Remember the parable of the talents? The master said, "You've been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things."

3. In verse 3 I want you to notice that before the church sent them out there was a time of prayer and fasting. I think this was a very solemn and serious time for the church at Antioch. They knew these men well, they worked alongside them, and they loved them. But after praying they sent them away. The point is that they probably did not want to see these men leave, but they didn't stand in the way of the purpose of God. We need to be willing to let God work in our people's lives and our children's lives. If the church is going to provide the people to win the world we must be willing to let go.

**CONCLUSION:** Now that we know who is responsible for sending out missionaries let's take a look at how they are doing. First, let me give you a few facts. Here is a list of countries that have opened up to the Gospel in the last five years:

1. Albania, which used to be considered Europe's most closed country and yet today it is wide open.
2. Bulgaria, where persecution of Christians was government policy now has a growing church.
3. Czechoslovakia
4. Ethiopia, where the government asked our missionaries to return.
5. East Germany
6. Hungary, where the people are now hungry for the Gospel.
7. Mozambique
8. Madagascar
9. Nepal, where Hinduism is the official religion.
10. Nicaragua

11. Poland
12. Romania
13. Russia and all the former U.S.S.R.
14. Yugoslavia

All of these have opened in the last six or seven years and this is not an exhaustive list, there are many Muslim countries that have shown a new openness to the Gospel. These 14 countries represent 500 Million people. That is 10 % of the population of the earth.

Most of these people are hungry for God and are willing to listen to the Gospel. We have the greatest opportunity any generation has ever had to win the world, but we're not doing it. There are some 6 billion people in the world and only about 2% are born-again Christians. In the same seven years these countries were opening to the Gospel the number of missionaries on foreign fields has fallen from 57,000 to 41,000 and that number is dropping every year. Why?

Do you think that God has stopped calling missionaries just when the opportunity is the greatest? I don't think so. Why are missionaries not being sent? Who is not taking care of their responsibility? It's not God the Father - He's obviously provided many places. It's not God the Son - the plan is still the same. And it's not God the Holy Spirit - His power is still available to us. If we don't lack the place, the plan, or the power what do we lack? We lack the personnel, the people. It is the local church that has neglected its responsibility. Why aren't we sending out missionaries? Why aren't the people of our churches paying attention to the call of God on their lives?

1. Fear - Some people are just plain scared. They're scared of the unknown, they're scared of failure, scared to be alone, scared to exercise faith.
2. Apathy - If we really do believe that the lost are going to Hell, we sure don't show it. We are so concerned about what happens in our own little worlds we can't even see the rest of the world.
3. Lack of commitment - Why would our kids want to give their lives to God as a missionary if their parents won't even be consistent in their faith. As parents it is up to us to show our kids that God is the most important thing in our lives and if He isn't we've got a problem that we should deal with.
4. Materialism - Many people won't heed the call because they don't want to give up the good life here in America. It seems that the only thing that is important to our young people today is how much money they can make. But it's not just them. What about us? Would you be supportive if your son or daughter told you they felt as God wanted them to



be a missionary? Or would you quietly discourage them and lead them into something else?

5. Family - Materialism is not the only reason parents don't want their kids to be missionaries. Sometimes they just don't want to send them that far away where they will never see them or their grandkids. Jesus said we must be willing to leave our families to follow Him, this also goes for serving Him on the mission field.

6. Lack of self-confidence - Many people do not give in to the call of God on their life because they don't think they could do the job. Look around, if one of us were to pick those God would call it probably wouldn't be Brother Franklin or Brother Stolp or me. If God calls you He will also equip you to do the job.

There probably are many other reasons why people won't heed the call to missions but all they really are, are excuses. When we stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ God is not going to care why we did not answer, He will merely take the talent He has given us and will give it to someone who went.

I want you to understand that God doesn't expect everyone to be missionaries in a foreign land, He doesn't call everyone, but He expects everyone to be willing to go. That is all He really wants. He wants you to sincerely say in your heart that you will go if He calls you. And if He does indeed call you, then go. I want to warn you though, if you do this He is apt to call you because so many He has called will not go.

I'm going to close with this poem.

Why Must I Go?

By Allen S. Owens

BBFI Missionary to Mexico

Why are you going? I've been asked over and over again,  
and the answer is hard to lay down in pen.  
How can I stay with what I know?  
How can I be satisfied and hope someone else will go?

I've heard the message that they've brought,  
I've been moved as the missionary taught.  
But still I would Sit and I would wonder why,  
God, why is it them and not I?

I admire those heroes, oh so bold,  
Who carry the Good News to those untold.  
I admire the sacrifices made by all,

So that some may hear God's salvation call.

A call to salvation was not my need,  
A call to go for Him, for that I plead.  
I can't stay with peace in my life,  
I've surrendered my all, my children, my wife.

There are too many dying and going to hell,  
Because so many are unwilling to tell.  
I've heard His call and my vision is clear,  
I must take the Gospel to those who must hear.

To the teenage girl walking the street,  
And the Mexican boy with no shoes on his feet.  
To the mom and dad who've been sold the lie,  
That happiness will come with the very next high.

They need to know the truth and the way,  
That God can save their soul today.  
How can I stay with what I know?  
That God desires us to surrender and go.

I no longer wonder what my reply would be,  
If the question-Why are you going? is asked of me.  
But now another question troubles my mind,  
And the answer to it only you can find.

With peace from above I know why I must go,  
But with the same peace, do you know you are to stay?  
Why am I going? The answer is clear,  
I must go so that others might hear.

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