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**THE CALL AND QUALIFICATIONS OF A MISSIONARY**

# **who should go?**

*The call and qualifications of a foreign missionary*

## **THE CALL OF THE MISSIONARY**

The question "Who should go as a foreign missionary?" raises the matter of the missionary call. This is sometimes presented as an elusive or mysterious thing. The call to missionary service, however, should not be considered unique, unusual or spectacular. The Great Commission was given to the whole Church and applies equally to each true member of the Church. The call to the whole body includes a call to each member of the body.

It is tragic to find men and women who have been included in the command "Go ye into all the world and make disciples of all nations" waiting for some further mysterious "call". It is very true that all are not equipped for *foreign* service, for the Lord of the harvest needs workers in *all* parts of His vineyard. But surely His heart is grieved to see so many of His people reluctant or unconcerned about obeying in a positive way the call He has plainly given.

### **RESPONSE TO THE CALL**

The call is given to all, and all are expected to respond — *then* the Master will direct the individual to his field of service, whether at home or abroad. Isaiah is an example. When the call came to him it was in general terms — "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Isaiah recognized the One who called and he answered personally — "Here am I. Send me." (Isaiah 6:8,9). Some may say, "But I do not feel called to be a missionary." So be it, but God can give no clearer call than a written command, and that He

has done in His Word. One day He will say to many, "I called you, but you did not answer." The important thing seems to be not the call, but the response. Any young man or woman who has missionary qualifications, and yet ignores the call of God to one of the needy mission fields of the world, reveals either an appalling ignorance, a wilful disobedience, or an unwholesome relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ. Every child of God should give prayerful, careful consideration to his place in God's great plan of world evangelization.

#### THE MOTIVE FOR SERVICE

A proper understanding of true missionary service recognizes that natural man is in rebellion against God. He "loves darkness rather than light" (John 3:19, 20) and, contrary to the opinion of many, does not call for the missionary to aid him in his "search for God". He does not, naturally, even seek the things of God, and is not necessarily eager to receive God's message or His messenger. The basic task of the missionary is reconciliation — restoring the enemies of God to peace with Him. This is not a popular message anywhere in the world and the missionary must realize that he goes to the lost solely because God wants him to go, not because the lost want him to come. The work of missions is not man's outreach to God, but God's downreach to man.

The motive for true missionary service, therefore, must be deep. Sympathy for the neglected, compassion for the downcast, or service on a social or cultural level is not enough, admirable as these motives are. In its fullest sense, the true motive for service goes even beyond simple obedience to Christ's command. It is the love of God for His lost creation, worked out through His child. "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you *in Christ's stead*, be ye reconciled to God." (II Cor. 5:20).

*We may say, therefore, that the impelling power of the love of Christ is the one supreme, unquenchable motive for missionary service.*

## RESPONSE TO THE CALL

The true missionary call rests upon three foundation stones:

### 1. THE COMMAND OF CHRIST

"The command of Christ is not a request, nor a suggestion. It leaves nothing to our choice. It is an order, comprehensive and unequivocal, a clear peremptory, categorical, imperative 'Go'." (Arthur J. Brown — *Why and How of Foreign Missions*).

This command "Go" has its authority in the Word of God. Missions originated in the mind of God (John 20:21). Our Lord reiterated this plan and gave it to His disciples (Matthew 28:18, 19). In the plan of God "Go" is His means of reaching all people (Matthew 28:19).

God's children cannot ignore the unerring, unchanging Word of God without resultant tragedy. He said "The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48). On that day, before the judgment seat of Christ, each of us as believers will receive reward for obedience or suffer loss for disobedience. Read carefully I Cor. 3:12-15. God said "Go" to Moses, Paul, Carey, Bingham, Taylor and others. Although they argued, it was only when they yielded in complete obedience that they received peace of heart and real victory. Do not disobey the Word that Christ has spoken.

### GOD'S PLAN

It was in the "determinate counsel" of God that His Son was slain (Acts 2:23). Furthermore, this plan was for a divine message to be carried by divinely appointed messengers to every creature (Acts 1:8). In the natural this could never be carried out, but we are reminded that "it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13). In the same breath in which our Lord commanded us to "Go" He also said, "Lo, I am with you alway". Every true missionary can testify to this enabling grace, and say "God's commands are always His enablings". We cannot escape the truth that the same Christ who said "Come" also said "Go". If we accept His "Come" we must also accept His "Go".



## WILLINGNESS ESSENTIAL

Willingness to serve at Christ's command is essential. God *may* direct you early in your experience to some specific field of service. But, again, He may not. Many missionaries, among them some of the world's greatest, were inclined to service in some particular country, but God later led them elsewhere. William Carey had his eyes set on the South Pacific. God eventually sent him to India. David Livingstone was inclined to China, but the way did not open and he became Africa's greatest missionary pioneer. Robert Morrison first looked to Africa, but God sent him to China instead.

As a true missionary candidate you should not "shop around" Mission Boards as you would employment agencies, seeing who can offer the best position, or looking for a "missionary job" that suits your fancy, but rather you should be willing to serve wherever God directs you, even if such a place is contrary to your personal inclinations.

## 2. THE CONDITION OF THE LOST

The condition of lost men and women is in itself a call to missionary work.

*Spiritually*, the unregenerate man is lost and without hope in this world and the next. He is dead in his sins and hence alienated from God (Eph. 2:1, 2). He is capable only of evil (Col. 1:21). He is subject to eternal condemnation (Romans 1:20, 2:12-16; Rev. 21:8). Across the world frontiers millions and millions of people are lost, and without the knowledge of salvation through Christ. Recent statistics inform us that fully half the people in the world today do not yet know the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The fields of the S.I.M. cover vast areas of Africa, embracing animists; Muslims; and followers of dead, false, or formal forms of Christianity. There are raw pagans, primitive bushmen, new literates and educated Africans. But regardless of their cultural level or religious connection, without Christ they are spiritually lost, and this is the overriding concern of God.

*Morally*, there are those who live on the lowest plane of life, contacting degrading, filthy habits; slavery; adultery; cannibalism; polygamy; demonism;

child marriage and witchcraft. The Scriptures tell us concerning them, "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts" (Romans 1:24). The power of Christ, liberated through the preaching of the gospel, is the power to transform these people and their conditions and lift them to a higher plane of life.

*Physically*, there are those whose lives are filled with unremitting suffering and toil. The law controlling their lives is the survival of the fittest. It is too true that the "dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty" (Psalm 74:20). It is the duty and the privilege of the true followers of Christ to relieve the physical sufferings of such.

## 3. THE COMMON SENSE OF REASON

While the call of God demands unqualified obedience, it is also reasonable. "I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice . . . which is your reasonable service . . . that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (Romans 12:1, 2.)

James Gilmour, that intrepid missionary who suffered unbelievable hardships and privation among the Mongols, wrote: "Even on the low ground of common sense, I seem called to be a missionary. Is the kingdom a harvest field? Then I thought it reasonable that I should seek the work where it was most abundant and the workers fewest."

The Hon. Ion Keith Falconer, the Scots nobleman who pioneered the cause of missions in Arabia, once said: "While vast continents are shrouded in almost utter darkness and hundreds of millions suffer the horrors of heathenism and Islam, the burden of proof lies upon you to show that the circumstances in which God has placed you are meant by Him to keep you out of the foreign mission field."

In the fields of the S.I.M. there are many millions who do not yet know the gospel. In the homeland the preacher might have a parish of a few hundred. On the mission field he can have a parish of scores of thousands. Is it right that so many should hear the gospel week after week while millions have not heard it once?

## QUALIFICATIONS OF A MISSIONARY

Writing home from a hard field, a missionary said: "Send us a despoiser of difficulties who will not be discouraged under the most adverse circumstances. One who will unite unflinching courage with consummate tact. One who knows how to do impossible things and maintain a pertinacity that borders on stubbornness, with a suavity of manner that softens austerity."

Mission Boards with fields in different parts of the world may set up slightly different standards for their missionaries, and every candidate must be considered on his or her own merits. There are, however, some qualifications which the S.I.M. has in common with most "faith" missions:

### SPIRITUAL

Obviously, to be a true missionary you must be born again of the Spirit of God and thus spiritually alive. Not only so, but because the mission field is basically a spiritual battlefield, it demands that you be spiritually mature, and a consecrated channel for the power of the Holy Spirit, apart from which all missionary work is fruitless.

You should be in vital fellowship with God and know how to depend daily on God Himself for the supply of needs (material and otherwise); for guidance and wisdom; and be able to maintain your own spiritual life by private prayer and Bible study. Temptations and discouragements can be many. You must know how to encourage yourself in the Lord and find strength and sustenance in His presence.

### PHYSICAL

You need a strong, healthy body to bring to the strenuous work of foreign missionary service. With hardships to endure, the climate and food to contend with, service in alien lands calls for the best in young men and women. (Read II Tim. 1:8; 2:1,9; 4:5). Note some of the experiences of the great missionary Paul. (II Cor. 11:23 - 27.)

### EDUCATIONAL

Missionary work calls for a well-developed mind. Training as wide and varied as possible is highly de-

sirable. Generally speaking you should have high school plus Bible School or Seminary training. It is true that some effective missionaries have had limited academic training, but without exception, to our knowledge, these same workers would recommend thorough training whenever possible.

There is no substitute for a well-trained mind, proficient enough to grasp a strange language and meet difficult situations without confusion or panic. Generally speaking, we recommend that you get all the training you possibly can as long as you get it *only* for the glory of God, and not to further your personal interests or enhance your own reputation. Everything considered, the S.I.M. has generally found that a missionary who reaches the field between 24 to 28 years of age works in to the best advantage. We often recommend that young people under this age spend the difference in years taking further training.

### 1. INTELLECTUAL TRAINING

You should have a thorough knowledge of the English language. You will also find it highly desirable to have training in New Testament Greek if you find yourself called upon to undertake translation work. A thorough acquaintance with one language is a distinct advantage in acquiring another. A complete course in phonetics and phonemics is highly desirable and will make the acquisition of a new language much more simple. The S.I.M. has language schools on the field to assist in learning the required language.

Desirable missionary preparation also includes a careful reading of missionary biographies. Every missionary should have a thorough knowledge of such stalwarts as David Livingstone and Mary Slessor of Africa, Hudson Taylor of China, James Gilmour of Mongolia, John G. Paton of the New Hebrides, James Chalmers of New Guinea. There is a good supply of S.I.M. literature that will be supplied on request. We highly recommend *A Flame of Fire*, the story of Dr. Rowland V. Bingham, founder of the S.I.M. (see page 15).



These excellent books should be read repeatedly. Time and again you will find encouragement in the lives of these great missionaries.

## 2. BIBLE TRAINING

The training obtainable in Bible Schools or Seminaries recognized for thoroughness in the preparation of missionaries, is invaluable. You should have training in conservative doctrinal views and also such practical training as will enable you to deal with both the unsaved and with young believers who need instruction in God's Word. You should be familiar with the teachings of the prominent cults and be able to clearly and authoritatively deal with them from the Scriptures. Islam is Africa's major religion, and the more you can learn about the beliefs and practices of the Muslims, the better. Much of our work is among animists, and an understanding of pagan thought will be of tremendous value.

You should know something of church organization and discipline, in order to effectively guide the establishment and strengthening of the indigenous church. However, above all other training towers the need for a thorough acquaintance with the Word of God, that you may teach it and also find it a source of encouragement, strength and wisdom. Unless you have a thorough understanding and a real delight in the Word of God you will find yourself succumbing to the many attacks of the evil one.

"This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein; for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success." (Joshua 1:8)

## 3. SPECIALIZED TRAINING

There is an increasing demand for missionaries who have training in medicine, education, journalism, radio, and other technical and professional areas. Improved means of communications; the surging demand for literacy and education; and changing social and cultural standards on many of our fields provide an ever-widening scope of missionary service.

The ministry of the S.I.M. is wide and varied, providing opportunity for dedicated service in almost countless fields. However, you should realize that the need on the mission fields is primarily spiritual. The true missionary is not one who is seeking a place of professional service in a foreign land, but is an ambassador of Christ whose first concern is for the spiritual need of the people, to which end he has dedicated his talents. Spiritual interests must ever be first. Specialized training is only a means of accomplishing spiritual ends.

Members of the S.I.M. are first, last and always missionaries. These missionaries have varied training as doctors, nurses, teachers, pilots, bookkeepers, stenographers, printers, and so on, but each and every member of the S.I.M. family goes to the field as a missionary. All of his work and life is ordered after this simple fact.

Medical training is highly desirable, not only for the assistance of the African people, but also that you may know how to care for your own body.

In the S.I.M. we believe that one of our greatest responsibilities is the establishment and strengthening of the national church and the development of leaders. Cultivate those abilities that will enable you to fulfill Paul's word to Timothy. "And the things that thou has heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." (II Tim. 2:2)

If you are able to work with your hands you have a definite advantage. Almost any ability in mechanical lines is valuable. There are short courses which afford excellent training in many areas, including basic and practical medicine.

However, willingness to serve in any capacity is a prime essential. If you earnestly seek the will of God all along the line, the training you take will definitely be of God — but it is not for the servant to dictate to the Master in what capacity he must serve. *You* are more important than your training. Willingness to serve in a capacity other than that in which you have trained, is the most valuable training of all. God cannot use your training apart

from your submission to Him as an individual. The question should be faced by every missionary candidate: "Am I willing to go as a missionary anywhere in the world, trusting God to find a place for my abilities?"

Unregenerate, and oftimes ungodly people also go to foreign lands as doctors, nurses, teachers, scientists, and so on, but they go under secular auspices, not as missionaries. Even so, wearing a sun helmet does not make *you* a missionary. It is only as your training is subjugated to the dominant purpose of fulfilling the Great Commission that it will be effectively used of the Lord.

God knows the best place for you and your training. He possesses the sovereign right to use you and your training where He wishes.

#### 4. PRACTICAL TRAINING

Human nature is essentially the same the world over, and practical experience in home mission work, a pastorate or assistant pastorate, and other such personal work will contribute to more effective ministry on the foreign field.

### SHOULD YOU GO?

We have asked the question "Who should go?" Now it becomes personal — should *you* go? Perhaps you have felt some response to the call of God as you have read these pages. Perhaps you are wondering if God is leading you to serve Him as a foreign missionary. Maybe you are not sure — you want more guidance.

If this is the case, we of the S.I.M. would like to help you. We encourage you above all to continue in a willing, humble spirit of prayer. If foreign service is God's will for you, you will want to find both your field of service and the Mission Society with which to link your life. This can best be done by following the words of Abraham's servant, "I, being in the way, the Lord led me." He found specific guidance *as* he journeyed, not *before*. Even so, put yourself in the way of God's leading. Get started. A ship cannot be steered

until it is in motion, and God can best guide you when you are actively seeking His will.

If you are inclined to Africa we would like you to write us. Perhaps God would have you serve with the S.I.M. Perhaps not. You may rest assured that you can write to us without committing yourself in any way. We are as concerned about having God's choice of missionaries as you are of having God's choice of a Mission. We will not encourage you to consider formal application for service until you are ready to do so.

Although every individual is considered with respect to his personal qualifications, there is certain basic information that is needful. When you write, we would like to know the following:

Age

Marital status

General education

Specialized training, if any

Bible School or Seminary training, if any

Further contemplated education, if any

General experience

(If married, give information for both partners, plus names and ages of children.)

When we receive your letter we will correspond and pray with you further. If the Lord confirms these initial steps and it is mutually agreed that God is leading you to the S.I.M., we will then — and not before then — send you application papers. If and when you make formal application, your papers, personal references, medical report and doctrinal statements, will be carefully and prayerfully examined by our candidate committee. If all appears favorable we will invite you to one of our Mission Homes for a time of mutual acquaintance. There you will have opportunity to become familiar with the details of S.I.M. administration, principles and practices. You will have regular classes to give you full insight into the fields and work, and have opportunity to meet missionaries and Mission



leaders. We, in turn, will have opportunity to learn something about you, your temperament and your abilities.

After this period in the Mission Home, the next step is to appear before the Home Council for a final personal interview.

If on the advice of the Council you are accepted, the Mission Secretary will help in every possible way to prepare you for sailing. The needs for outfit, passage, and support are supplied by the Lord. He Who calls has always supplied.

Probably the most realistic evidence of the call that is of God is the sweet inner peace and rest imparted by the Holy Spirit. This in itself is sufficient to carry you through any difficult place, both in preparation for the field and after sailing.

The difficult task of reaching the lost challenges the very best in Christian youth. An implicit confidence in Christ Who has called to the field, and a willingness to move forward in unwavering faith is essential in overcoming the opposition of Satan. The missionary must know the God of Ephesians 3:20 and Philippians 2:13. In His strength, one shall chase a thousand and two put to flight ten thousand. The work is God's, and it is He Who does the work. But the channel is a vessel unto honor, sanctified and meet for the Master's use. (II Tim. 2:21.)

If you have any questions concerning fields of service, the type of training required, where training may be obtained, or if you feel a need for friendly spiritual counsel, your Mission Secretary will be pleased to help you.

Address your letter to: The Secretary, Sudan Interior Mission, using the address of your national office as given on the back page of this booklet.



## SHORT TERM SERVICE

As pointed out on page 1 of this booklet, God has called *all* of His children to serve Him. Every true child of God is a witness — every day, all day.

God calls some to forsake the ordinary occupations of life to make the propagation of the gospel their full-time concern. He calls some to serve in various "part-time" ministries in the church, in local evangelism, in children's work, students' work, and so on. Still others are called to devote part of their lives to full-time service — a given period of time spent exclusively in the work of the gospel.

In recognition of this varied pattern, the S.I.M. has made provision for short-term missionary service in Africa — a program now possible because of speedy world-wide transportation and communication.

Short-term service is primarily geared to help the S.I.M. meet specific needs in Africa, frequently on short notice and often requiring specially-trained personnel. Qualified short-term workers can relieve during the furlough periods of similarly-trained life-time workers. They can meet government requirements for technical and professional staff members. They can lend flexibility to the missions program, enabling Missions to buy up opportunities that otherwise would be lost by default. A doctor, for example, spending two years in Africa could relieve during the furlough periods of two missionary doctors, making possible the continued operation of two medical units. Likewise, teachers, and others in many fields.

Short-term service is not a substitute for full-time service — it is a complement to it. It is not a trial-and-error method of determining God's will for one's life — it is provision for those whom God has specifically called to serve in this way. It is designed for consecrated servants of Christ who recognize their responsibility for the evangelization of the world, but who are not able to make a life-time commitment. It opens the door of foreign missionary service to a greater number of God's children, by providing opportunity for those who are already engaged in their life's work to enrich their lives by direct service.



Mature individuals from many walks of life may be led of God to contribute their abilities for a set period of time, after which they must return to their permanent obligations. It provides opportunity for those who have missed or disobeyed the call of God in earlier days to redeem a part of what otherwise may be entirely lost. It enables those who have been won to Christ at an age when life-time service could not be considered, to serve Him abroad for some time at least.

Persons in good health — single or married, with or without children — and able to meet the basic qualifications may apply. Requirements generally are the same as for life-time service: knowledge of and ability to use the Scriptures; recognized training in a particular field of service; financial needs met by faith. (See pages 6-10.)

The basic term of service is 30 months but may vary from one to three years according to circumstances. All major areas of missionary service are open, including the following:

EDUCATION	EVANGELISM
teacher training	Bible conferences
secondary schools	campaigns
Bible college & seminary	
MEDICINE	RADIO
doctors	engineering
nurses	programming
technicians	counselling
LITERATURE	GENERAL
journalism	accountants
distribution	stenographers
printing	sales personnel
	mechanics

If God has not called you to life-time missionary service, but you feel He would have you help in the evangelization of the world in this manner, we invite you to write us. We will be happy to give you further information, to pray and counsel with you. Write to your National Secretary. (Addresses on back cover.)

## RECOMMENDED READING

**\*Swords in the Desert** by R.J. Davis. *Sudan Interior Mission*. An insight into the needs of Muslims.

**\*Splinters from an African Log** by Martha Wall. *Moody Press*. What a Missionary Nurse may expect.

**\*Run While the Sun is Hot** by W. Harold Fuller. *Sudan Interior Mission*. The account of an "incredible safari" across Africa.

**Preparing To Be a Missionary**, by A. T. Houghton. *Inter-Varsity Fellowship*. The why, how and wherefore of missionary service.

**God Wills It — The Bible Background of Missions Overseas**, by A. T. Houghton. *Inter-Varsity Fellowship*. God's reasons for missions.

**Therefore Go**. *Inter-Varsity Press*. 11 study lessons on the Bible basis of missions.

**The Bible Basis of Missions**, by Robert Hall Glover. A classic presentation of the missionary enterprise.

**The Progress of World Wide Missions**, by Robert Hall Glover. A survey of global missionary effort and achievement.

**Hudson Taylor in Early Years — The Growth of a Soul**, by Dr. and Mrs. Howard Taylor. *China Inland Mission*. The biography of the founder of the C.I.M.

**Hudson Taylor and the China Inland Mission — The Growth of a Work of God**, by Dr. and Mrs. Howard Taylor. *China Inland Mission*. Second volume of Dr. Taylor's biography.

\*Available through S.I.M. Offices.

We suggest that you contact your Christian bookstore for a complete selection of missionary biographies and current missionary books.

I have read *Who Should Go?* and am interested in the work of the Sudan Interior Mission. Please put me on your mailing list to receive your regular publications giving news of your work in Africa.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
(please print plainly)

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
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**WEST AUSTRALIA:**

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Peppermint Grove. 6011  
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