

# Missions is for Missionaries

## In The Beginning...

The book of Acts represents the grassroots of Christianity. It portrays the church in its infancy, from birth to taking it's first steps in a hostile environment. When I think of the Book of Acts I think of two things; simple faith and missions.

## Where Do We Go From Here...

Many of us think of missions as us going to give something. In North America especially, we do not even consider it real missions unless you are going to another country or somewhere where the people seem to have less.

- ...less materialistically.
- ...less financially.
- ...less freedom.

## What Do I Get Out of It...

Could it be that part of the reasons people are attracted to missions is not only to give but also to find and experience a more real relationship with God? Perhaps not consciously, but I believe there is a yearning in our spirit that longs for more of God and the Lord capitalises on this inner cry of our hearts. I believe God is searching the face of the earth looking for those who are like hearted with Himself; those with a passion for the lost and a passion to "fellowship" with Him. My belief is that He actually fosters this longing which can manifest itself through:

- \* a dissatisfaction with everyday life.
- \* a sense of inner incompleteness.
- \* a cry for greater purpose.
- \* a compassion and ache for the hurt of the world.
- \* a realisation of the captivity of people to a destructive unmerciful agent.

## Don't Get Your Plane Ticket Yet...

Though these stirrings do not necessarily reveal a specific call to missions, they do reflect a cry for more of God. A cry that resounds with;

- \* the world is not meeting my needs.
- \* What I have is not enough.
- \* Even what I have experienced in Jesus so far, is not enough.

The drawing to missions can be a manifestation of this inner cry but this does not mean the legitimacy of this drawing as being of God is invalid, nor it's purposes to save the lost diminished. It simply serves two purposes.

## Seeing Things More Clearly...

The Lord is poising us for a deeper work and greater manifestation of Himself. To develop us into greater Christlikeness. Some would say that this cry in our heart is His "calling" on our lives to set ourselves apart for some ministry, and a "calling" it is indeed. But is it a calling only to some? Perhaps yes as a full time vocation, not all are to give themselves this way, however I still believe we have looked at missions wrongly. We have classified it as a ministry rather than a response to the heart of our Lord. We have even classified its' location; 3rd world, 10 / 40 window, abroad. I believe we have blurred the lines between evangelism and the work of an apostle. Sort of blending them together and calling it "missions", and yet I know of no recognised ministry called "missions" in what has been titled; the five fold ministries set out in Eph 4:11; " And he gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers..." However I full heartedly, enthusiastically and confidently support a calling to a "mission". To go out into all the world and evangelise, serve the needy, feed the hungry, heal the sick, minister hope to the poor. Even plant a church if that is Gods' anointing on you. Being on a mission is living purposely every day of our lives.

## What Do I Get Out of It...

'How then is "missions" for us as well' you might still be asking. It has to do with salvation as referred to by God in Psalm 91 to a obedient believer; "...With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation". Salvation is not a one-time experience, rather a life long one. It starts with accepting Jesus as your Saviour and ends with the receiving of our glorified body upon His return to rule and reign here on earth. God is into salvation; to those who don't know Him, and ours. I'm not sure about you but when I minister His life I am ministered to, edified, built up and brought closer to Him. I become more like Jesus as I encounter Jesus and I encounter Him as I follow in His footsteps. Being mission minded kills loneliness.

## A Lot of Lonely People Have Everything...

In North America the influence of possessions, wealth and status can draw us away from the "pure faith". They can diminish our desire for more of God. Didn't Jesus warn us about the cares of this life? Mark 4:19; " And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful." What becomes unfruitful? ...We become unfruitful. What fruit? ...Our Christlikeness.

## Is Anybody Hungry...

Our hunger for God is being kept at bay by eating the junk food of wealth, popularity and materialism. But just like junk food that momentarily satisfies yet nutritionally it produces no true life to the body. Junk food robs the body of the life it needs. Just think of this in the context of individuals and their responsibility to the Body of Christ. Our appetites for God are curbed while our hunger for the world increases. Focus changes to the cares of this life. In North America we experience little sacrifice and almost no persecution for our faith therefore our lack of real need never pushes us beyond our carnal satisfactions. Is it any wonder that Jesus said in Mat 21:31; " ... Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you." Who was He speaking to? It was the prominent, man-centred religious authorities whom had forgotten their calling and lost touch with the heart of God. Our faith is under threat of becoming stunted unless we do

something. Heb 11:6. Are too many things drowning out the voice of God and quenching the cry in our heart for more of God? But what does this have to do with missions you ask?

## **Two Birds, One Stone...**

I believe those who embark on the classical missionary experience are on a mission too but not just to save souls. I should qualify this. I believe those who respond to the call to "go ye into all the world...", go to serve the Lords' interests out of love and obedience. They purpose to be the Lords' hand extended to those who do not know Him. Theirs is a noble cause and of the Lord without question. But what if Gods' purposes were two fold? What if God was using missions to minister to us? What if we couldn't be all that we could be in Christ without a mission to be on. Could missions be a tool in the Lords' hand to connect us on a deeper, more meaningful level with Himself? This brings some interesting perspectives to the scripture, "And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life. "; Mt 19:29. For those who have experienced missions, does not God illuminate our hearts with a greater revelation of Himself? Are we not transformed and a greater expression of Jesus emerges out of our spirits to impact a world of darkness? When we return to our former familiar lives do we not see differently? I have heard many testimonies from those who have 'gone out', so to speak, all saying basically the same thing; 'I'm different now, I've discovered a big God and that big God is in me'.

## **KISS: Keep It Simple... Smith**

It could be that missions is not only a tool in the Lords hand to bring salvation to the lost, it is also a tool to bring salvation to us. Not to be born again, again but to free us from the chaff of life and refocus us on what really is important; knowing God. God can use missions to reconnect us with Himself where we find ourselves again in Him. To get in touch with the grass roots of life in Jesus. Missions in its' purest form could just as easily be going next door to share the love of Jesus, and in the process of doing this we grow and are blessed. Mt 19:29. Truth is we need to all see our mission and be about its business.

## **Bottom Line...**

If missions simply put is you going out of your world into the world of another for the purpose of bringing His world, than we are all called to this and so we are all missionaries under this definition. Everytime we do this we align ourselves with His will, and grace is released into our lives. Grace for the other thing that we are all called to; Christlikeness. Salvation is the descriptor word used to define this process. In its' complete definition, salvation is the transforming of everything that is us into His perfect image, blessing and service. As said earlier, accepting Christ is only the first step of this path.

## **Missions Is For The Missionary...**

Missions is reaching out to the less fortunate, less prosperous, less free and that is why it is a doorway to us to live in a greater reality of God. It is where we can connect again with the 'pure faith', where we can return to our 'first love'. Where we can find our purpose like the book of Acts and walk it out. It is not primarily a location or a vocation. It is living purposefully. Missions is an exchange of Gods' life. It is a mutual and complimentary opportunity to grow in Christ. It is a symbiotic relationship, as the hand needs the foot. Who then is indebted to

whom? Both are awakened to their spiritual roots and both are brought in touch with their spiritual identity and life purpose. Missions can be experienced 10,000 miles away and it can be brought home. The mission field is where ever you go. "Missions" as a tool is building the Kingdom in me and in you and in all the world, so as Gods' tool it is our primary mission. So my contention is that we are all called to a mission and therefore by definition, this missionary needs the mission field at least as much as the mission field needs this missionary.

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