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A Study of the Missionary Call as Found in the Acts of the Apostles and in Modern Missionary Biography

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A STUDY OF THE MISSIONARY CALL AS FOUND IN THE ACTS OF THE
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION	1
The problem	1
Statement of the problem	1
Importance of the work	1
Definition of terms used	6
Factual - need approach	6
Professional - aptitude approach	6
B1 - world approach	6
Organization of thesis	7
Related subjects	7
II. MODERN APPROACHES TO THE MISSIONARY CALL	10
The factual - need approach	10
The professional - aptitude approach	15
The b1 - world approach	20
III. THE MISSIONARY CALL IN THE <u>ACTS OF THE APOSTLES</u>	26
The predicables	27
The ministry of the Holy Spirit	28
The message of the Holy Spirit	28
The personalities	29
Peter	30
Philip	32
Paul and Barnabas	35

CHAPTER	PAGE
IV. BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES CONCERNING THE MISSIONARY CALL	38
David Brainerd	38
J. Hudson Taylor	42
Jonathan Goforth	44
Cecil Troxel	46
Charles E. Cowman	48
William Carey	50
V. CONCLUSION	54
Observations.	54
Factors	55
Personal evaluation	56
BIBLIOGRAPHY	58

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

To the sincere and enquiring mind a very fundamental question has been asked many times. Why do missionaries leave their homes, people, comforts, and security for the uncongenial people of a far off country? This has posed as a problem since the early life of the Apostle Paul.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. It was the purpose of this study (1) to present the missionary call as found in the three major emphases today; (2) to develop the missionary call as found in the Acts of The Apostles; ¹ and (3) to relate these two previous studies to the lives of some representative modern period missionaries. By this means some principles, factors, and conclusions concerning the nature of the missionary call were to be discovered.

Importance of the work. The missionary call becomes increasingly important when certain assumptions are held by the individual who is to consider the call. In this work the following assumptions are used without any critical

¹ Bible. English. 1901. American Standard Edition The Holy Bible (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1901).

evaluation: (1) that The Bible is the divinely inspired Word of God; (2) that in historical matters The Bible is accurate in that which it covers; (3) that without an experiential knowledge of Jesus Christ man is lost; and (4) that the Holy Spirit is a personal and active force in the lives of truly Christian people.

The importance of the subject takes on the form of a spiritual obligation when it is realized that every Christian comes under the direct responsibility of the words of Jesus, when He said to the disciples in particular and to all in general:²

And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.³

A little later He reiterated the commission: "But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all

² W. A. Smart, "The Universal Gospel of Jesus," William K. Anderson, editor, Christian World Mission (Nashville, Tennessee: Commission on Ministerial Training the Methodist Church, 1946), pp. 11-19. (An interesting section is given here to the destructive criticism of the post-resurrection utterances of Jesus.)

³ Matthew 28: 18-20.

Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."⁴

" . . . and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them."⁵

" . . . and a cloud received him out of their sight."⁶ There can be no denying, by the Bible believing Christian, that the missionary call has the highest of priorities upon the Christian life.

A certain portion is given to definitions later, but at this point the problem under consideration is somewhat determined by what is considered actual missionary activity. Missionary work may not "always express itself in geographical extensions of the faith, for it has intensive as well as an extensive aspect."⁷ Therefore the importance of the missionary call takes on a geographical as well as a spiritual connotation.

From a vocational point of view the missionary call is a valid problem. The writer, in his counseling studies and work, has observed that some sincere Christians are unhappy due to their being misfits.

Such a practical problem is this that many small

⁴ Acts 1:8.

⁵ Luke 24:50.

⁶ Acts 1:9.

⁷ Hugh V. White, A Theology for Christian Missions (New York: Willette, Clark and Company, 1937), p. 2.

booklets, such as, William W. Orr's, How To Know The Will of God For Your Life,⁸ have been written.

It is known that applied psychology places happiness as a prime pre-requisite for success. In fact, with happiness it is affirmed that any given task can be in a sense successful. "A man could be happy while he was in the act of sacrificing his life. . . ." ⁹ No matter what an individual is called upon to do, if it is in correspondence with his great desires, he will be happy. Such works on success as by Benge, You - Triumphant!;¹⁰ Brooks, Youth: Adrift or Alert?;¹¹ Brockman, Humanity and Happiness;¹² and Gould, The Way To Be Happy;¹³ all show that happiness within the individuals and with their vocations is necessary for truly successful living.

⁸ William W. Orr, How To Know The Will of God For Your Life (Wheaton, Illinois: Van Kampden Press, [n. d.]), 32 pp.

⁹ John C. Powys, The Art of Happiness (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1935), p. 4.

¹⁰ Eugene J. Benge, You - Triumphant! (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1946), 294 pp.

¹¹ Wendell S. Brooks, Youth: Adrift or Alert? (Boston: Meador Publishing Company, 1937), 92 pp.

¹² George Brockman, Humanity and Happiness (New York: Viking Press, 1950), 244 pp.

¹³ Lawrence Gould, The Way To Be Happy (New York: Doubleday, 1948), 308 pp.

The all too evident confusion among the young people in the churches and schools emphasizes the importance of this problem. As they are confronted, with more or less pressure, by various approaches to the missionary call there is reason for their confusion. Many respond to an appeal who are really not mature enough to make a competent decision. Some are compelled by a sense of duty or responsibility which may pass in a comparatively short time. Altruism may urge them to take their place on a missionary compound and when under pressure come to realize that this motive in and of itself is not enough. To say the least, if the individual himself is not confused, the on-looking people of church or school may have some serious questions to raise concerning the missionary call.

Robert E. Speer justifies the problem when he states:

I think almost all of us are familiar with the issue that is involved in this question; some of us because we have tried to work our way through to an answer; and some of us because we have met it in the lives of other men, some of whom were honestly endeavoring to find an answer to it, and others of whom were making it a cover for all sorts of immoral subterfuges and evasions and untruths of character.¹⁴

The justification of the missionary call as a problem for a thesis has been pointed out from the spiritual, geographical, vocational, and psychological categories.

¹⁴ Robert E. Speer, What Constitutes a Missionary Call? (New York: Student Volunteer Movement, [n. d.]), p. 3.

II. DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

In the second chapter are the only technical terms that were used which will need definition. They are coined terms to express as clearly as possible a general and often somewhat vague idea. They are as follows:

Factual - need approach. The factual - need approach is a term that was used to designate the group who by the use of stirring facts claims a call upon all. In other words, a realization of the needs of the spiritually poverty stricken world constitutes a missionary call. This approach is completely objective to the individual and general in its outreach.

Professional - aptitude approach. The professional - aptitude approach was used to designate the group who would make the missionaries work the same as any other profession. The selection of the candidate and all of the deciding factors were determined by the means of aptitude or personality tests.

Bi - world approach. The bi - world approach is a term that was used to designate that idea of the missionary call which takes in God's leadership through the Holy Spirit, man's realization of the world's needs, and a taking into consideration the ability and personality of the individual

applicant. In a sense bi - world was used, for lack of a better term, to show that the missionary call must be seen from the perspective of God and man.

III. ORGANIZATION OF THESIS

The inductive method has been chosen by the investigator as the basis of approach to the study. Chapter two deals with the "Modern Approaches to The Missionary Call." Under this chapter are explained in detail the three groups that were found, which were titled: (1) "the factual - need approach"; (2) "the professional - aptitude approach"; and (3) "the bi - world approach." In chapter three, a study was made of the most outstanding missionary treatise ever written, The Acts of The Apostles. It was divided into two parts: (1) "the predictables"; and (2) "the personalities". Chapter four takes the missionary call as it came to the souls and worked itself out in the lives of six of the world's outstanding missionaries. The missionaries studied were David Brainerd, J. Hudson Taylor, Jonathan Goforth, Cecil Troxel, Charles E. Cowman, and William Carey. In chapter five was placed both the analysis and the conclusion.

IV. RELATED SUBJECTS

One cannot deal with the subject of this thesis, the

missionary call, without realizing that there are many related fields. The philosophy of missions is closely related and in a sense may even be considered as the foundation for the work. However, in examining the various standard works on the subject of the philosophy of missions it was noted that there was nothing said about the missionary call.

There are many volumes written in biographical and autobiographical form that approach the missionary call from that one individual's experience. The investigator found, within his research, no over-all analysis of the missionary call as such. Outlines or histories of missions give nothing outside of a hint or suggestion here and there. Some do give a formula through which the missionary call can be observed. A few important inter-related facts on some missionary lives are often given but usually no attempt was made to analyze the missionary call itself.

The only source of information that was found to actually exist concerning the missionary call was in a few pamphlets published by different mission boards. These have been referred to in chapter two. So very little has actually been written about the missionary call that it was impossible to compile a working bibliography, or even a section of one, that dealt specifically with the call. Several well known works, and others not so familiar, have

been mentioned in chapter three that include the office and work of the Holy Spirit as they relate to the subject at hand. All of these, however, are but brief treatments of a chapter or less.

This enquiry includes references to the following fields: philosophy of missions; theory of missions, methods of missions; missionary biography and autobiography; history of missions; theology; exegesis; devotionals; applied psychology; vocational guidance; and personal conversations and interviews.

With these brief words the subject of this thesis has been introduced; "A Study of the Missionary Call as Found in The Acts of The Apostles and in Modern Missionary Biography."

CHAPTER II

MODERN APPROACHES TO THE MISSIONARY CALL

In the survey made of the literature on the missionary call the material was grouped into three divisions. By and large they were found to be (1) "the factual - need approach"; (2) "the professional - aptitude approach"; and (3) "the bi - world approach." The various individuals quoted came from different theological positions. Due to certain overlapping in content some of the grouping has of necessity been arbitrary.

I. THE FACTUAL - NEED APPROACH

The factual - need approach to the missionary call is emphasized by many missionary speakers. Young people and others more mature out of duty, a sense of responsibility, because of a need presented have been urged to go into missionary work.

Most of the literature examined in this area that presents this particular emphasis is in pamphlet form. It is the so-called "popular" type of material which many are reading.

The whole task of the missionary program is presented as itself sufficient for a call. There is so much to be done! The need is so great! The workers are so few! In one booklet

the following questions are asked under the heading of the missionary call:

Face your world: Its people are hungry; who will feed them? Its people are sick; who will heal them? Its people are naked; who will clothe them? Its people are sorrowful; who will comfort them? Its people are pagan; who will redeem them? Only the gospel of Christ is adequate.¹

Throughout this beautiful booklet the gripping needs of the pagan world are put forth. Every phase of life is appealed to for a response to the apparent needs: social, physical, emotional, religious, intellectual, and spiritual. These various appeals are presented as the only basis for the missionary call.

The Board of National Missions and the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. has a pamphlet in which the following question is posed: "Is this the call of God for my life?"² Following this question the qualifications are listed in this order:

Spiritual qualifications. Vital faith in Jesus Christ and in God is the first requisite, plus an experience of Christ which makes real the life He offers to all. Are you developing an understanding that will enable you to lead others through doubts and uncertainties to a positive faith and commitment? Do you have devotional

¹ A Real Job (New York: Student Volunteer Movement, [n. d.]).

² Answering the Call To Missionary Service (New York: Board of National Missions and the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., [n. d.]), p. 3.

habits which are a dependable source of strength for Christian life and testimony? Are you willing to give yourself freely and joyously to God for his service, confident that he will guide and empower you? Are you actively serving as a member of an evangelical church which is seeking to present His gospel in all its implications?³

The reason for this long quotation was to show that there was nothing stated as to the call itself. Related subjects follow, such as, "educational qualifications . . . physical qualifications . . . other qualifications."⁴ The only requirement that was necessary for one to become a missionary were the above stated qualifications. The idea or thought of a call was not even inferred.

In quest for material on the missionary call a letter was sent to the home office of the Oriental Missionary Society. In return was sent a pamphlet entitled, What Constitutes a Call to the Foreign Mission Field?⁵ This material as sent out from the home office would undoubtedly represent the position taken by this large, independent board.

It is necessary because of the importance and value of this next quotation to give it in full length:

³ Ibid., p. 3.

⁴ Ibid., p. 4.

⁵ Charles E. Scott, What Constitutes A Call To The Foreign Mission Field? (Chicago: World Wide Prayer and Missionary Union, [n. d.]), 15 pp.

Naturally, in this enterprise, a man (if not lazy or cowardly, or ignorant or willful) should, in the plan of God for his life, seek to go to the neediest place that he can fill; and naturally the most obvious field in which to do God's work is where there are the fewest workers, and which other folks are dodging because it is hardest - fraught with unusual difficulties and probable danger.

Thus, in theory, every man should be a foreign missionary, should be willing to go to the most neglected place he can fill; and unless a man has so decided, and is in spirit a "martyr" (which word, in the original Greek, means a "marker of the road," or a "witness to the way" and, in later usage, "to the truth of God at any cost"), he can hope to have in his life no Holy Ghost power; for the all-wise God will accept no pitiful subterfuge, no miserable excuses, no contemptible blushing. Not to go, one must give a reasonable reason that the reasonable God will accept.⁶

This quotation fairly presents the position of this pamphlet with its emphasis upon the need. There follows the various needs as previously presented in the other works. Then a series of startling facts are grouped to show the terrific need of the foreign field.

These words are found under a new topic in the pamphlet:

Allegiance to Christ . . . God himself might well recoil at the contemptuous cowardice and base ingratitude of taking Him as Saviour of our souls from the guilt and penalty and punishment of our sins, and not as the rightful Lord of our lives to be commanded of Him.

We have seen that the Need is the call.⁷

Following this the need is further substantiated as being the call by the use of illustrations and statistics.

⁶ Ibid., p. 5.

⁷ Ibid., p. 11.

One more quotation from this booklet is worthy in the development of the point under consideration. It concerns the last phase which is brought out:

A sixth element in a Call is Christ's positive command, "Go!" A categorical imperative - no option but to obey. In any worthy and patriotic cause we have only contempt for a lazy or obstreperous or disobedient or traitorous soldier; and the Lord of all the earth orders us. Christian honor and loyalty means a specially and definitely right attitude toward the main drive of God's holy will, in what He most wants done.⁸

Writing for the Student Volunteer Movement, Robert E. Speer asks the questions, What Constitutes A Missionary Call?⁹ The ideas that follow show that he wonders about the asking of such a question. To him it has only two good points in that it suggests a serious frame of mind as men think about missions; and secondly, it hints that sincere Christian people who ask it believe that their lives are owned by God. After enlarging upon the previous thoughts he states:

When that has been said, however, I think everything has been said that can be allowed in favor of the question, and I want to go on at once and say that it is a question which can easily become thoroughly heathen and un-Christian.¹⁰

Proceeding with the argument against departmentalizing the life of the Christian, geographically or otherwise,

⁸ Ibid., p. 12.

⁹ Robert E. Speer, What Constitutes A Missionary Call? (New York: Student Volunteer Movement, [n. d.]), p. 3.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 3.

Speer gave the idea that if one desires to do the will of God it will be just as important to have a divine sanction for the practice of law as for the mission field.

If men are to have special calls for anything, they ought to have special calls to go about their own business, to have a nice time all their lives, to choose the soft places, and to make money, and to gratify their own ambitions.¹¹

From these four agencies, boards, and societies the emphasis which makes the need constitute a call has been presented. It transcends boards, denominational groupings, and theological differences. This has been but a brief survey of the view point which has been called, for lack of a better term, the factual - need approach.

II. THE PROFESSIONAL - APTITUDE APPROACH

The professional - aptitude approach is the next step in the survey made of the various emphases upon the missionary call. Any type of call whether to the ministry or to the mission field is largely dependent upon the type of theological position assumed. Nathaniel J. Burton, lecturer at Yale in 1884, was asked a question from the floor as to what constituted a call. His reply was; "Obviously, the answer which a given individual makes to this question is

¹¹ Ibid., p. 5.

determined in large measure by his particular theology."¹²

An interesting observation was made in the survey of the literature associated with this position. It was noted that in most cases the idea of a specific call was never broken down any further than to the ministry as a whole. Because of this, it has been necessary to extend the missionary call to that of the call to the ministry in general. There are but scant references to the missionary branch of Christian service in this type of literature.

Accompanying the preceeding observation it was also noted that there is a great shortage of ministers among the protestant churches.

The proportion of ministers to the total population has been shrinking steadily for fifty years. In 1900 there were 137 protestant preachers for every 100,000 population, compared with 104 today. The Methodist Church, largest United Protestant denomination, in a survey last year (1948) discovered that by 1952 it will have 2,917 more churches than pastors.¹³

The professional aspect of the call is not new in the ecclesiastical world. In fact, Henry in his Yale Lectures made the following statement in 1892:

¹² Nathaniel J. Burton, In Pulpit and Parish (New York: The McMillian Company, 1925), p. 6.

¹³ Hartzell Spence, "They're Training a New Kind of Parson," The Saturday Evening Post, 222:102, November 26, 1949.

Someone asked me yesterday, "What was to be regarded as a proper call to the ministry?" I reply, the possession of those qualities which make a good minister, good sense, good nature, good health, and downright moral earnestness.¹⁴

From the above statement it may be observed that the idea of anything supernatural is completely left out. Dr. Beecher made no distinction between the requirements for the ministry and any other benevolent profession.

Baxter has analyzed the Yale Lecturers,¹⁵ and found them wanting as far as any consistency is concerned about the call to the ministry.

Since the second world war the vocational attitude toward the ministry has greatly increased. This has been shown in the change of policy and the increased enrollment of certain schools. The Iliff School of Theology has changed their already liberal policies to that of inducing students to come to the school by giving considerable assistance. Three specific things have been included in the program. They are; (1) assuring financial aid and pleasant surroundings; (2) assurance of a good job upon graduation; and (3) a non-dogmatic faith.¹⁶ The applicants

¹⁴ Henry Ward Beecher, Yale Lectures On Preaching (New York: Fords, Howard, and Hulbert, 1892), p. 39-40.

¹⁵ Batsell Barrett Baxter, The Heart of the Yale Lectures (New York: The McMillian Company, 1947), 308 pp.

¹⁶ Spence, op. cit.

are prompted by various reasons to enter the ministry, such as cultural, social, and economic security, and then are encouraged by the above stated advantages while in preparation.

In conjunction with this trend there has been published a pamphlet and placed at free public disposal by the National Roster of the War Man Power Commission For Use in the Educational Programs of the Armed Services.¹⁷ In this program, which is designed as a guide for those who are looking toward a career in the Protestant ministry, there is no reference to any type of supernatural leading in the selecting of such a calling. Various qualifications are listed and important interests that would be helpful to the minister. No ethical or moral standard is suggested and the only basic requirement is a fascination in human nature. Aptitude tests are suggested to be taken by the prospective ministerial student.

There are at least two significant works that have been published and are presented in pictorial form to induce men into the ministry.^{18, 19} They show the whole plan of the

¹⁷ The Protestant Ministry ([n. p.] : National Roster of Scientific and Specialized Personnel of the War Manpower Commission for use in the Educational Program of the Armed Services, [n. d.]), 6 pp.

¹⁸ Hampton Adam, Calling Men For The Ministry (St. Louis, Missouri: The Bethany Press, 1945).

¹⁹ John Oliver Nelson, editor, We Have This Ministry (New York: Association Press, 1946).

ministers life from the student days to retirement. Of course, the best of everything is shown. Heavy emphasis is laid upon the practical and non-dogmatic aspects of the profession. One of these pictorial works points out that "the call is not a leap, but more like a balance."²⁰ This statement is underneath a picture which shows a young man with a balancing staff walking a route encompassing all the phases of the protestant ministry.

Glenn Clark in his book, Fishers of Men,²¹ uses one chapter to enunciate the qualifications of a fisher of men. There are two general qualifications and they are humility and courage. The idea of humility was enhanced with the thought of it being transparent. The man who was to represent God was to be clear of bias, sin, prejudices, or local color.

The professional - aptitude approach to the missionary call can clearly be seen as a movement which would tend towards secularizing the missionary work as well as the ministry. It can expect little more from those who follow it than a benevolent ministry. It lacks purpose, goals, and a sense of God consciousness.

²⁰ Adams, op. cit.

²¹ Glen Clark, Fishers of Men (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1928), pp. 81-96.

III. THE BI - WORLD APPROACH

The bi - world approach has been previously defined in this study. It should be reiterated that the missionary's vocation is to be observed, as much as is humanly possible, from a two-fold perspective; from God and man. This type of call is both objective - from the world without, and subjective - from the inner impulses of the spiritual nature of the individual.

Burton,²² in his lecture series at Yale University in 1884 showed that there were four basic emphases for the missionary call and then an over-all qualification. The four emphases which he developed were of the mind, physical health, providential circumstances toward the work, and the united advice of friends. Over all of this was a qualifying statement, which he claimed was needed for the prospective missionary: "Lo! God is here with - in me - pressing me - making me seven times willing, expectant, and self-consecrated."²³

Zwemer, of Princeton Theological Seminary, raises the question of the missionary call in one of his books.²⁴ He

²² Nathaniel J. Burton, "In Pulpit and Parish," The Heart of the Yale Lectures (Batsell Barrett Baxter, editor; New York: The McMillian Company, 1947), pp. 36-39.

²³ Ibid., p. 39.

²⁴ Samuel M. Zwemer, Into All The World (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1943), pp. 197-199.

shows that the Prophets and Apostles were deeply conscious of a call from God. At one time in his teaching he sent out questionnaires and received fifty replies. The results tabulated from those prospective ministers and missionaries was significant. Not one in their replies doubted the necessity for a special call for the missionary, and none implied that service abroad required special qualifications.

There are specifically three elements to the missionary call, according to Zwemer.²⁵ First is the need as represented by the facts and various appeals. Second is a "sense of inadequacy, of inability, or of an obstacle or difficulty that prevents acquiescence to God's call." Third is "a removal of hindrances by divine assistance or illumination." The second step is what makes the difference between this view and the factual - need approach. Here the special, specific part of the call manifests itself. Zwemer believes that no man as he faces the needs of the foreign field can help but sense the inadequacy and inability that presents itself. To him it requires this something specific to overcome the sense of inability.

One of the most profound missionary appeals is given in the book, So Send I You, by Oswald Chambers.²⁶ He likewise

²⁵ Ibid., p. 201.

²⁶ Oswald Chambers, So Send I You (London: Simpkin Marshall, 1941), 124 pp.

believes the missionary call may be divided into three parts.²⁷ First is the call of the nature of God. The very nature of God, his love and mercy, are but parts of the call. Second is the vision of the new life from God. When one considers the from whence, then the to what of human destiny, and the act of the new life which can only be given from God, it is a great call. Third, that the Christian's vocation ought to be the natural life for one serving God. "The call of God is the call according to the nature of God; where we go in obedience to that call depends entirely on the providential circumstances which God engineers."²⁸ To the Christian his vocation is so natural that there is no need for a particular service. After a complete submission to the will of God the call is based upon a sense of oughtness. Mr. Chambers writes;

My contact with the nature of God has made me realize what I can do for God. . . . Profoundly speaking, there is no call to service for God; it is my own actual "bit," the overflow of the superabounding devotion to God.

.
When people say they have had a call to foreign service, or to any particular sphere of work, they mean that their relationship to God has enabled them to realize what they can do for God.²⁹

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 11-14.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 12.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 12.

If the previous statement was the end of his consideration of the missionary call there would have been little that is different or distinct. However, he goes on to the next idea which is a development of his view concerning the "providential circumstances."

There are pre-natal forces of God at work in a man's life which he may be unconscious of for long enough; but at any moment there may break upon him the sudden consciousness of this incalculable, supernatural surprising power that has got hold of his life before he has got hold of it himself.³⁰

Another outstanding author takes his place with this group, and that is, Robert Hall Glover. In his book, The Progress of World-Wide Missions,³¹ that which has motivated the missionary movement is broken down into two divisions. The first group of motives are based upon external facts, which are; the temporal, moral, and spiritual condition of the people.³² Another set of motives are those of internal experience, which are based upon; loyalty of servants to the Master, gratitude for the grace received, and the love which Christian people have for Christ.³³

³⁰ Ibid., p. 14.

³¹ Robert Hall Glover, The Progress of World-Wide Missions (New York: Harper Brothers, 1939), 371 pp.

³² Ibid., p. 23.

³³ Ibid., pp. 25-26.

One of the most concise presentations of the missionary call was found in the little book entitled, The Perfect Will of God, by Weiss.³⁴ There are two general heads under which he treated the call to missions; the general and the specific calls.³⁵ The general is divided into three parts: (1) the call from above; (2) the call from beyond; and (3) the call from below. Weiss demonstrates the significance of these parts by using the need to emphasize the call from beyond, the great commission for the call from above,³⁶ and the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus.³⁷ Next was the specific call, or the call from within. Everyone could come under the general call who had professed an acceptance of Christ. All are under the responsibility of the great commission, but specific calls come for specially designated service.

The bi - world approach to the missionary call brings together parts of the other two and adds the dynamic of the Holy Spirit's leadership.

In this chapter there was brought under observation three of the modern approaches to the missionary call. There has of necessity been some overlapping and some over-

³⁴ G. Christian Weiss, The Perfect Will of God (Lincoln, Nebraska: Back to the Bible Publishers, 1950), 126 pp.

³⁵ Ibid., pp. 107-120.

³⁶ Matthew 28:19,20.

³⁷ Luke 16:19-31.

simplifications. The analysis of these various ideas has been handled in chapter five.

CHAPTER III

THE MISSIONARY CALL IN THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES¹

The accepted title of the New Testament book which was under consideration for this investigation is, the Acts of The Apostles. Although this is the accepted title, it might justly be called, the Acts of The Missionaries. The apostles as a group are very seldom named in the book. When they are mentioned it is usually in some general way, such as, "the twelve"² and "the apostles."³ From the very beginning of the book where the great missionary text is given⁴ until Paul is in Rome the whole tenor of the book's theme is missionary.⁵ In sequence of time it follows directly after the commission which was given by Jesus Christ in Matthew 28:19. The book picks up the history and carries on this missionary theme by first of all presenting the key verse; "But ye shall receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem,

¹ Bible. English. 1901. American Standard Edition, The Holy Bible (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1901).

² Acts 6:2.

³ Acts 1:2.

⁴ Acts 1:8.

⁵ Acts 28:16.

and in all Judea, and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."⁶ The confirmation of the promise is found in the next chapter, "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."⁷

If the proportion of space given to any subject in scripture has any significance, then the missionary character of the book is even better seen. From the thirteenth chapter on through the theme is of the Apostle Paul and his companions. Even previous to the thirteenth chapter the book gives a powerful presentation for missionary preparation.

I. THE PREDICABLES

Tracing through the book it was found that there are two definite predicables to the theme of the missionary call. As has been noted the program of the apostolic church was missions, but the power was of the Holy Spirit. These two are unseparable for all practical purposes. The Holy Spirit motivates a "Holy Go." Two predicables need mentioning for the sake of clarity in the latter part of the chapter. They are as follows: (1) the ministry of the Holy

⁶ Acts 1:8.

⁷ Acts 2:4.

Spirit; and (2) the message of the Holy Spirit.

The ministry of the Holy Spirit. Luke draws from his previous sources to quote the words of Jesus in saying that the Holy Spirit was to come and that the disciples were to be baptized with the Holy Spirit.⁸

Throughout the book the ministry of the Holy Spirit is given prominence in many ways. The Spirit is promised,⁹ given,¹⁰ used for power,¹¹ applicable for purity,¹² witnesses the forgiveness of sins,¹³ is discerning,¹⁴ and gives joy to the saints.¹⁵ The book of the Acts of The Apostles is not only a book of action but of practical theology.

The message of the Holy Spirit. By this is meant that the Holy Spirit is mentioned in sermon, testimony, and prayer. The Holy Spirit who was of such real power to them could not help but take a very important place in their Christian discourses. In that first sermon after the

⁸ Acts 1:16.

⁹ Acts 1:8.

¹⁰ Acts 2:4.

¹¹ Acts 2:41.

¹² Acts 5:9.

¹³ Acts 5:32.

¹⁴ Acts 5:9.

¹⁵ Acts 13:52.

initial baptism of the Holy Spirit, Peter gives a well developed invitation, "Repent, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."¹⁶ From chapter eight through nineteen may be found the importance that the Apostles laid upon the message of the Holy Spirit. The greatest feat of boldness that the Apostles could muster after the death of Christ and before Pentecost was to crowd together in an upper room. What a change after Pentecost!

According to the book of the Acts of The Apostles, these are the two predicables necessary to missionary work. One must of necessity be born of the Spirit and subsequently filled with the Spirit. Then the reality of these experiences must so burn in the soul that it finds its just emphasis and importance in the message of the gospeller.

II. THE PERSONALITIES

After having made the above study it was then possible to relate it to the lives of the outstanding missionary personalities in the Acts of The Apostles. As has already been noted this book is person centered. The Divine Person is the Holy Spirit. The human persons are outstanding.

¹⁶ Acts 2:38.

missionaries: Peter, Philip, Paul and Barnabas. This section of the study will take these personalities and present how they answered the missionary call.

I. PETER

In the tenth chapter of the Acts of The Apostles is the account of the calling of Peter to missionary work among the Gentiles. It must be remembered that he was already commissioned. Peter was called by Christ into discipleship and sent by Christ as an apostle. Pentecost had been the great turning point in his life.

There are several steps of importance which were noted as a study of the tenth chapter of the Acts of The Apostles was made. One of the main qualifications which Peter had that fitted him for his calling was his devotional attitude. After coming to Joppa, "Peter went up upon the housetop to pray."¹⁷ In no way does this seem to be out of the ordinary for Peter. There was no particular call to prayer save his devotional attitude.

From this setting came the trance or vision that changed the course of Christian work. His vision came from heaven and was not immediately discernable as to meaning. He saw the nature and character of the vision.¹⁸ What was

¹⁷ Acts 10:9.

¹⁸ Acts 10:11,12.

seen was not nearly as important as its meaning. It should be remembered that this vision was something completely out of the customary. It was not the Jew's custom to break the bonds and go over to the common and unclean. To Peter it meant a complete right about face. In fact it was so revolutionary to his own thinking that three times he and "a voice" exchanged comments.¹⁹ No one had ever thought of doing what he was expected to do with Jewish sanction.

Peter was commanded to do something different and revolutionary to his own way of life. His response was one of indecision. Though a vision had come to him yet its meaning was not completely clear. "Now while Peter was much perplexed in himself what the vision which he had seen might mean, . . ."²⁰ Peter, who was noted for his quick decisions now was undecided. He waited in expectation and was rewarded with these words from the Spirit, "Behold, three men seek thee, but arise, and get thee down, and go with them, nothing doubting, for I have sent them."²¹ Peter then obeyed the Spirit and the need was placed before him.

God had shown Peter a vision of what was before him. By his obedience the need was placed before him. A door

¹⁹ Acts 10:13, 15, 16.

²⁰ Acts 10:17.

²¹ Acts 10:19,20.

was opened to the apostles through a gentile who was a centurion, Cornelius by name. The only staggering part about the need which was presented to Peter was that a centurion could be "a righteous man and one that feareth God, and well reported of by all the nations of the Jews."²² No terrifying facts were needed by this one who was willing to let the Spirit control his life.

From the account of Peter five steps were noted as qualifications for the missionary call: (1) Christian experience and the baptism with the Holy Spirit; (2) a life of devotion through prayer even when not under stress; (3) a vision and a voice from heaven; (4) a need given to him of the world through a gentile centurion; and (5) an open door to the field of special interest at that time.

II. PHILIP

Outside of the apostolic circle in the book of the Acts of The Apostles there were two laymen, Philip and Stephen, who became prominent. Philip is first mentioned in the early beginnings of the church at Jerusalem.²³ God put His call upon this man in a very distinct manner. The study of his background, capabilities, personality, and

²² Acts 10:22.

²³ Acts 6.

spiritual qualifications were rewarding in regard to the missionary call.

The church at Jerusalem was having a great influx of new converts and it was necessary to divide the work at hand. There were six marks that qualified Philip for the new position that was to be his. Obviously, he was a disciple.²⁴ It can be inferred that he was no stranger to the multitude of the disciples for he was known as a man of high standing. The things which they knew about him were: he was one of good report; he was full of the Spirit; he was a man of wisdom; he was worthy of responsibility;²⁵ and, later it is mentioned that he had a godly household.²⁶

Because of these qualifications for spiritual leadership, Philip, along with the six other men of similar ability, was ready for the next step.²⁷ The seven Deacons were selected by the twelve Apostles, who in turn prayed for them and "laid their hands upon them."²⁸ The Apostles, who were the leaders in the early church, chose them and placed upon them the blessings of that church. This, in part at least,

²⁴ Acts 6:3.

²⁵ Acts 6:3.

²⁶ Acts 21:8.

²⁷ Acts 6:3.

²⁸ Acts 6:6.

was a contributing factor to the revival which followed:

And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.²⁹

The next time that Philip was mentioned was of interest.³⁰ Saul of Tarsus had been leading a great persecution in Jerusalem and because of this Philip went to Samaria. In the city of Samaria Philip "proclaimed unto them the Christ."³¹ Because of his preaching and the signs and great miracles which he wrought many people were helped.

God in His providential undertakings with man had led this servant into a fruitful field. There was no hint of any special guidance or leading. The only thing recorded was that Philip had to leave Jerusalem and thus he went to the city of Samaria.

There is still one more incident in the life of Philip that is scripturally recorded and that was his ministry to the Ethiopian. Whereas the preceding incident seems only a matter of providential coincidence this one manifests great supernatural leadership.³²

²⁹ Acts 6:7.

³⁰ Acts 8:5.

³¹ Acts 8:5.

³² Acts 8:26-40.

After the great Samaritan campaign "an angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem to Gaza: the same is desert."³³ There were definite instructions and directions in this command. The Spirit led him to the proper chariot in that desert land.³⁴ God had prepared the scene for the personal contact and had opened the door of opportunity for Philip by having the Ethiopian reading a passage of scripture which he needed interpreted.³⁵

It has been shown by the study of the life of Philip that God may even use various means to lead one individual at various times in his life. Philip was chosen by the Apostles, partly because of his excellent spiritual characteristics and partly because of their being led by the Spirit. Beyond this, Philip was recognized by the church, providential happenings led him into service; and, he was directly led by the Spirit. Philip experienced the call of God upon his life for special service in a variety of ways.

III. PAUL AND BARNABAS

The last missionary personalities in the Acts of The

³³ Acts 8:26.

³⁴ Acts 8:29.

³⁵ Acts 8:31.

Apostles which were included in this study were Paul and Barnabas. In this instance, once again, the church takes an important part in the calling of its chosen vessels. The church at Antioch was in session with prophets and teachers being present.³⁶ In the midst of a fast, the Holy Spirit said, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them."³⁷ Paul was a chosen vessel of the Lord whose ministry was to be among the Gentiles.³⁸ God had already made this clear, but after the speaking of the Spirit, the people of the church at Antioch placed their hands upon them and prayed for them.³⁹

Perhaps it needs to be emphasized that God had already spoken to Ananias about the distinct mission of Paul. The Spirit spoke to Paul and Barnabas about their being separated unto such a ministry. Then the church confirmed it by the laying on of hands and giving them their blessing.

From the Acts of The Apostles it has been shown that the ministry and message of the Holy Spirit is closely related to the missionary call. There are certain marks which run through each of the individual's experiences that have led them to distinct Christian work as recorded in this book, However,

³⁶ Acts 13:1.

³⁷ Acts 13:2.

³⁸ Acts 9:15.

³⁹ Acts 13:3.

set down an exact pattern to follow. The cases recorded all differ in certain details.

A further analysis of these findings are discussed in chapter five.

CHAPTER IV

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES CONCERNING THE MISSIONARY CALL

The dynamic of personality is often a clear reservoir where practical truth may be seen. Even such great doctrines as the Trinity are brought into focus by their outworkings in human life.¹ The missionary call and its implications are no exception.

For this study the field has been narrowed down to the modern missionary period. This is roughly from the life of William Carey to the present. Six outstanding and representative missionaries have been considered. They were as follows: David Brainerd, J. Hudson Taylor, Jonathan Goforth, Cecil Troxell, Charles E. Cowman, and William Carey.

I. DAVID BRAINERD

When one considers David Brainerd and his life it is once more proof that the measurement of a man is not always to be judged by the longevity (quantity) of life but often by its intensity (quality). While on one side of the Atlantic a man by the name of John Wesley was shaping

¹ H. Orton Wiley, Christian Theology (Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press, 1940), II, p. 394.

theological thinking, another by the name of Brainerd was on the other side of that body of water adding to the devotional fervor of Christian living. By the age of twenty-nine he had so lived as "a bundle of fire" that the sparks were caught by Henry Martyn (missionary to India and Persia) and Robert McCheyne (missionary to the Jews).

David Brainerd perhaps has no peer as an example of a devout Christian in this age. His soul burned within him to be a flame of fire for God. It must be remembered that in that time there were no missionary societies in America, no agencies about David Brainerd designed to promote missionary work of any kind. His support was not given him from his native land but from Scotland where the light of missionary responsibility had begun to shine.

Many times in the diary of Brainerd it is stated that he was in the depths of spiritual depression. Under the heading of April 10, 1742 are these words; "I am all sin; I cannot think nor act, but every motion is sin."² When in such times he often turned to the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. It revealed to his heart three things; (1) the inner secrets of sin that were in his own heart; (2) the heart and love of the Saviour; and (3) the open door of

² J. M. Sherwood, editor, Memoirs of Rev. David Brainerd (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1884), p. 23.

access into the hearts of the heathen.³

To get the development of the call that God gave to this chosen vessel, David Brainerd, it is necessary to turn again to his diary as found in the Memoirs of Rev. David Brainerd.⁴ Due to his own sense of such a great need Brainerd had a deep desire that all others should have their needs met in Christ. Under the date of April 2, 1742 the following comments are found: "Some time past, I had much pleasure in the prospect of the Heathen being brought home to Christ, and desired that the Lord would employ me in that work."⁵

Without further comment, the next step in the study of his missionary call is under the date of April 12, 1742:

I was especially assisted to intercede and plead for poor souls, and for the enlargement of Christ's kingdom in the world, and for special grace for myself, to fit me for special services. I felt exceedingly calm, and quite resolved to God, respecting my future employment, when and where he please.⁶

Just a few days later, April 19th, the whole of his diary entry is made up of his desire, resignation, and

³ E. Myers Harrison, Heroes of Faith on Pioneer Trails (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1945), pp. 20, 21.

⁴ Sherwood, op. cit., [n. p.] .

⁵ Ibid., p. 21.

⁶ Ibid., p. 24.

pleading for power in regard to his future employment.

April 19. I set apart this day for fasting and prayer to God for his grace; especially for the work of the ministry; to give me divine aid and direction, in my preparations for that great work; and in his own time to send me into his harvest. . . . In the forenoon, I felt the power of intercession for precious, immortal souls; for the advancement of the kingdom for my dear Lord and Saviour of the world; and withal, a most sweet resignation, and even consolation and joy, in the thoughts of suffering hardships, distresses, and even death itself, in the promotion of it, and had peculiar enlargement in pleading for the enlightening and conversion of the poor Heathen.⁷

From this time on David Brainerd no longer enquires as to the will of God for his life but only pleads for purity and power in service.

May 1. I was enabled to cry to God with fervency for ministerial qualifications, that he would for the advancement of his own kingdom, and that he would bring in the Heathen.⁸

Rev. David Brainerd knew and saw the depravity of his own sinful heart and found that the message of Christ was "wondrous sweet." He was convinced that Christ was the answer - the only answer - to the deepest longings of the soul. He believed that others were just as thirsty for salvation as he and he longed to proclaim the answer especially among the neglected and mistreated Indians.

⁷ Ibid., p. 25.

⁸ Ibid., p. 28.

II. J. HUDSON TAYLOR

Another outstanding missionary figure is that of James Hudson Taylor, born May 21, 1832. From the moving events of his life it may be seen that other factors played an important part in his missionary call.

Young Taylor was partially weak in his body and it necessitated his staying at home and in close contact with his godly parents. By the age of four his father had taught him the Hebrew alphabet and by five his father had instilled into him the need for the heathen to be converted. At this early age he once said: "When I am a man I will be a missionary, and go to China."⁹ His father, James Taylor, had been much interested in China and had many books about the country. It was impossible for the father to go to China so he prayed that God would give him a son and that he might go in his place.¹⁰

Another strong influence in the life of James Hudson Taylor was that of his church. It was the Methodist Church in Barnsley and in 1839 they had the Centenary celebrations where great stress was given to undertaking new missionary adventures. To the sorrow of his father, there was one

⁹ Marshall Broomhall, Hudson Taylor, The Man Who Believed God (London: China Inland Mission, 1929), p. 20.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 20.

country which he noticed that had been left out, it was China. This hurt him deeply and he expressed it to his son. Then about the same time there was published what was probably the first Protestant Missionary Atlas of the World. The atlas had no map of China in it at all. Shortly after these things were noticed so keenly by the Taylor family the children were introduced by their father to the book, Peter Parley's China. Hudson Taylor's sister, Amelia, and he himself read the book again and again until she too resolved to accompany him to the far away land.

Some months after his conversion there was a deep struggle for victory over sin. He had seemingly lost his "first love" and along with it his zeal for souls. The following is taken from a letter which was sent to his sister Amelia:

Pray for me, dear Amelia, pray for me. I am seeking entire sanctification. Oh that the Lord would take away my heart of stone and give me a heart of flesh! Mr. Simmons gave us our tickets last Sunday. The verse is: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean." (Ezekiel 24:25) Oh that I could take hold of the blessed promises of God's Holy Word! My heart longs for perfect holiness.¹¹

That very day the prayer of J. Hudson Taylor was answered and he promised, "If God would only save me

¹¹ Ibid., p. 27.

completely, then I would do anything in his cause He might direct."¹² The outgrowth of such a prayer and promise was recorded by him after the experience in the following manner:

Never shall I forget the feeling that came over me then. Words can never describe it. I felt I was in the presence of God, entering into covenant with the Almighty. I felt as though I wished to withdraw my promise but could not. Something seemed to say, "Your prayer is answered, your conditions are accepted," and from that time the conviction never left me that I was called to China.¹³

III. JONATHAN GOFORTH

Jonathan Goforth was born February 10, 1859 near London, Ontario. He came from a very devout home where his mother was an outstanding Christian. She read to him the scriptures daily and he read the Psalms to her at the age of five. Goforth had a sensitive spiritual nature from his youth and he had a longing to be converted from the age of seven. One of his school mates records the following about him while still in his early schooling: "I clearly remember seeing him, day after day, studying these maps: the World, Asia, Africa."¹⁴

At the age of eighteen he was converted and at once

¹² Ibid., p. 27.

¹³ Ibid., p. 27.

¹⁴ Rosalind Goforth, Goforth of China (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1941), p. 21.

became a personal worker. He started a Sunday School class, opened a Sunday evening service in a school close to his own home, and distributed tracts far and wide. Shortly after this there came into his hands a copy of The Memoirs of Robert Murray M'Cheyne. With the reading of this there came a deep decision to be done with the petty ambitions that had thus far been his and to yield himself to the Christian ministry.¹⁵

For a time, the thought of being a foreign missionary never entered his mind. Dr. G. L. Mackay, of Formosa, was to speak in Knox Church, Ingersoll, and young Goforth was invited to attend. The following quoted parts from the writings of Jonathan Goforth were more lucid than paraphrase could possibly be:

For two years (said Dr. Mackay) I have been going up and down Canada trying to persuade some young man to come over to Formosa and help me, but in vain. It seems that no one has caught the vision. I am therefore going back alone. It will not be long before my bones will be lying on some Formosan hillside. To me the heartbreak is that no young man has heard the call to come and carry on the work that I have begun.

As I listened to these words, I was overwhelmed with shame. Had the floor opened up and swallowed me out of sight, it would have been a relief. There was I, bought with the precious blood of Jesus Christ, trying to dispose of my life as I please. I heard the Lord's voice saying, "Who will go for us and whom shall we send?" And I answered, "Here am I; send me." From that hour I became a foreign missionary. I eagerly read everything

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 28.

I could find on foreign missions and set to work to get others to catch the vision I had caught of the claims of the unreached, unevangelized millions on earth.¹⁶

From that moment on there was an undying drive to evangelize the unreached for Christ. Though there were many dark times yet he never doubted the call that God had placed upon his heart.

IV. CECIL TROXEL

The missionary call of the one who founded the National Holiness Missionary Society's work in China is clear and distinct. As in others, it was not a matter of chance or of the moment but had a long series of events. These events led to the climax in dedication to God's will. One day the leader of the Children's Missionary Band of Normal, Illinois, a Mrs. Augustine, said: "Boys and girls, people in India today are worshiping wooden gods - gods that even the white ants can chew to powder. Many people have never heard of Jesus."¹⁷ This impressed the young lad and shortly he said, "I want to go to India when I grow up and tell them to worship Jesus."¹⁸ Mrs. Augustine was then impressed to

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 29

¹⁷ Mrs. Cecil Troxel, and Mrs. John J. Trachsel, Cecil Troxel, The Man and the Work (Chicago, Illinois: National Holiness Missionary Society, 1948), p. 13.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 13.

place her hand upon his head and pray for God's protective hand to be upon this lad and lead him to be a missionary.

Cecil Troxel was converted at the age of ten in the Methodist Church where he was a faithful attendant. The experience had a great affect upon him and he shortly began to save money for the missionary cause.

When fourteen the Lord called him to preach. Upon telling his mother of the incident she chided him by saying: "How can a boy know what God says? Moreover, no boy of mine shall ever be a preacher. Preachers are always poor and have to move around from place to place."¹⁹ But no matter how close the obstructions came to his personal life he continued on with his calling.

Closely associated with Cecil Troxel in his early religious experiences was one Woodford Taylor. They both had been deeply under conviction for heart purity and on September 10, 1899, after some discussion, went to Taylor's room to find their need met.

Troxel wrote later of the experience saying, "We were crucified with Christ. An ocean of divine peace was let loose upon our souls. The work was done. We arose from our knees having covenanted with God that we would obey, even if it meant going to some foreign field."²⁰

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 17.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 21.

Some time after this experience Woodford Taylor went to a missionary meeting and afterwards he said to Cecil Troxel, "I believe the Lord wants me to go to China with Mr. Houlding."²¹ Troxel was much impressed and set aside each Tuesday evening to the study of the Bible, missionary papers and books. He was determined to seek the will of the Lord for his own life. The following best explains his dramatic call:

After one of these evenings spent in meditation and prayer, he fell asleep and dreamed of a great wheat field, waving green as far as eye could see. No fences - only an expanse of potential harvest. As he watched, the wheat ripened and rippled in the sun. Slowly each yellow head of wheat turned into the face of a yellow man. Again the wind rippled the wheat and the heads all bowed - and lo, they were queus! China calling! In the stillness of this great commission Troxel arose and stole out of the house to the pasture so that no one would be disturbed. In that trysting hour of decision, Cecil Troxel's, "Here am I, send me" matched the vision glorious.²²

V. CHARLES E. COWMAN

Another outstanding missionary figure was that of Charles E. Cowman, missionary to Japan and founder of the Oriental Missionary Society. His lifetime was a series of events that led him to say that he had no calling but simply that God had chosen him. Mrs. Cowman, the author of Charles

²¹ Ibid., p. 24.

²² Ibid., p. 24.

E. Cowman, Missionary - Warrior,²³ points out how definite and clear his choosing by God must have been by a brief sentence found in his Bible: "Called to Japan. August 11, 1900. 10:30 a.m."²⁴

Though the experience was definite it seemed to have no great emotional stir with it. There were three things that stood out in his life; "The revelation of God, the collapse of self, and the commission for service."²⁵ As Mrs. Cowman came home from the morning service in the local church she was met by her husband who greeted her with the news. He had been called to Japan. In quietness before the Lord, away from his business, with no great appeal having then been made, his heart was still before the Lord and yet the "vision was almost blinding."²⁶

However, this did not come along by accident for preceeding had been many missionary meetings and prayer bands. The Christian men in his office had just recently sent out a native Japanese to work in Japan and his heart was filled with the thoughts of such a task. Previously his soul had been filled with the Holy Spirit until he was used to the

²³ Lettie B. Cowman, Charles E. Cowman (Los Angeles, California: The Oriental Missionary Society, 1928), 431 pp.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 95.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 95.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 96.

whisper of His voice.

VI. WILLIAM CAREY

The last modern missionary leader to be considered was William Carey, the father of modern missions. Some have claimed him to be the most significant character in the history of the church since Paul. At least he was the one who opened the door to foreign missions after it had been closed for such a long time.

William Carey became a discoverer of many things in an unexplored world. At the age of seventeen he was converted and discovered the grace of Jesus Christ for the sins of his own heart. Until the age of twenty-eight he busied himself with the studies for the ministry and preaching in several small churches.

The next great discovery of his was that the great commission applied to all and was a command to be heeded. At a ministerial meeting he proposed a discussion upon the subject of world evangelization and was flatly and rudely turned down. After this he spent a good many years preparing and studying maps of the heathen world. He prepared a lengthy pamphlet entitled, The Enquiry, in which he described the terrible condition of the lost and called for some immediate action.

At another ministerial convention he was given the

opportunity to speak first and he presented the claims of missionary work upon the church. The people walked out without doing anything and it stirred him to such depths that he asked the chairman, a Mr. Fuller, to "call them back and let's do something in answer to God's call!"²⁷ Fuller responded and before the meeting was adjourned the following motion was passed: "Resolved, that a plan be prepared against the next Ministers' meeting at Kettering, for forming a Baptist Society for propagation of the gospel among the heathen."²⁸

When the motion was carried out sixty-five dollars was received and they looked about for a missionary to send. Carey didn't know what was expected of him in further action. Besides pastoring a now prosperous church he had a wife and three children.

Turning again to Isaiah 54, he discovered six startling words which immediately followed - indeed, were a part of his great text. These six words which stood out in letters of fire were: "For the Lord hath called thee." The Holy Spirit confirmed in his soul that these words did constitute a divine call to him to cross the seas as a witness of the Redeemer's concern for a lost world.²⁹

From the study of these six prerepresentative missionaries there are certain points worthy of consideration in respect to the subject at hand. None of these observations

²⁷ Harrison, op. cit., p. 46.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 46.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 47.

will fit completely each individual case. Human personality and experience cannot be placed in equations which do not vary.

The religious environment played an important roll in setting the stage for a missionary call. They were taught the scriptures in the home and in the church. Their atmosphere was saturated with prayer and devotions.

Christian literature made its impact upon the thinking of these men. Biographies, travel books, geographies, and atlases were some of the instruments used by God to open their eyes to the great world need.

The churches and pastors, along with Christian friends, were helpful to them while they were seeking direction from the Lord. Some of the churches were not always sympathetic with the proposed plans but in several cases they offered valuable assistance.

An experience in Christ for the forgiveness of their own sins preceded the call to the specific area of service. The blessed peace that was their showed them what the power of Christ was in relation to their own sin problem. This in turn gave them the "first love" to tell others the story.

Still another characteristic trait is worthy of close observation. Several of the missionaries either received their call with or just after the experience of sanctification. The whisper of God's voice was discernable to them when the clamor of worldly ambition was silenced from their souls.

Further observations have been drawn from this biographical study in the last chapter.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This concluding chapter will consist of a series of observations, some general factors, and a personal evaluation of the study.

I. OBSERVATIONS

1. It was shown in chapter two that there are today at least three approaches to the missionary call. Each marshalls more or less scripture for its support.

2. Much of the confusion regarding the missionary call was found to be caused by an over-emphasis upon one group or another.

3. The so-called, factual - need approach, as the sole requirement for a missionary call was found wanting in both the study of the Acts of The Apostles and in the biographical study. It is true that the need was present in each case considered, but it was also there before there was the specific call to the yielded soul.

4. The so-called, professional - aptitude approach, falls far below that found in the New Testament and in the great missionary leaders. From this study the conclusion may be drawn that God is not as much interested in ability

as in usability. True, the various ones studied had great abilities, but they were useless to the cause of Christ until yielded to Him.

5. The so-called, bi - world approach, most closely adheres to scripture and sanctified personality. There are the demands which are made upon all Christians - the general call; there are the calls given to certain Christians - the specific call.

6. The Holy Spirit was seen to be primary as the leader and empowerer for special service. In both chapter three and four it was noted that the Holy Spirit was honored by each one of the personalities studied.

7. The last observation to be made is that behind nearly every call there was some foundation that had been laid, either by family devotions, a spiritual church, a concerned pastor or friend, and/or good Christian literature.

II. FACTORS

In the body of this work it was found that no two experiences were alike. God does not fit the individual to the call, but rather the call to the individual. From this enquiry several factors were found which would in part determine the validity of a missionary call. They are as follows:

1. There must be a deep religious experience of

conversion that meets the individual's own spiritual needs.

2. A sound, if not passionate, devotional life of Bible study and prayer.

3. A longing for, or having experienced, a life of holiness.

4. A realization of the lostness of sinful man and the adequacy of the Saviour.

5. An intimacy with the blessed Holy Spirit so as to hear the whisper of God.

6. The confirmation of friends and church to the validity of the call and the ability of the called.

7. An open door to service.

These are but seven factors lifted from this study and are neither inclusive or exclusive.

III. PERSONAL EVALUATION

This study warrants a much more extensive handling by someone who is intimately associated with the missionary movement. The work has been stimulating and the subject practical. Trying to be objective with such a mass of subjective material has been bewildering and confusing. Preconceived ideas which are trite and simple in regard to something as eternally important as a call to special Christian service is foolhardy.

Whatever may be the factors and causes, one stands amazed, as lives and abilities are brought before the Master for distribution as salt to the heathen world.

THE END.

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