

" SO SEND I YOU"

"Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." John 20:21.

Evangelism is the proclamation of the good news of God in Christ with a view to winning others to faith in Him as their personal Saviour and fidelity to Him as the Lord and Master. It is the primary function of a church and the first duty of every Christian.

One cannot be a follower of Christ who does not give his or her life to the task to which He gave His life.

Four things should prompt us to carry the gospel of Christ to those who have not received Him as their Saviour.

1. The command from above.

Farewell instructions always demand attention. With infinite tenderness Christ gave His final command to His followers. He said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." "As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you." Since He is our Master, He has the right to command, and we must not ignore His command. It is serious business to disobey the command of Christ. If we love Him, we shall strive earnestly to obey Him and to please Him.

As an incentive to obey the command of Christ we have His noble example. Christ lived, suffered and died to save the lost. To us He has said, "Come ye after me; and I will make you to become fishers of men." To be a Christian is to be a follower of Christ. To be a follower of Christ is to have the same purpose in life that He had. "He came to seek and to save that which was lost." Is it your purpose to win lost souls to Him? If not, why do you call yourself a follower of Christ? What is the response of your heart and life to our Lord's supreme command?

2. The cry from beneath.

In Luke 16:19-28 Christ tells of the pitiful cry of a lost soul in Hades, revealing his agony and pleading that someone go to warn his five brothers, "lest they also come into this place of torment." The soul that is spiritually sensitive hears the anguished wails and pleading cries from the nethermost regions, "Christian, hurry to our relatives and friends still on earth, hurry to your neighbors and friends, hurry to lost souls everywhere, and warn them of the unspeakable torments of hell and plead with them to turn from sin to Christ speedily, lest death find them unprepared and under the condemnation of a just God." Does the cry from beneath cause your heart to burn and your lips to vibrate with the precious story of redemption from sin's sad captives? "Plead with them earnestly, plead with them gently, tell them of Jesus the mighty to save."

3. The plea from without.

At Troas Paul had a vision and heard a voice utter the fervent plea, "Come over and help us." The multitudes of Macedonia and Europe, servants of Satan and without the Saviour, were in a desperate plight and needed the help which Paul could offer. How Paul labored, prayed and suffered to bring them into a saving knowledge of Christ! Redeemed hearts today should be stirred to similar endeavors by the dark and desperate need of multitudes all around us without Christ and without hope. All people need Christ.

4. The urge from within.

Our Lord's life was under the compulsion of a mighty compassion. We are told repeatedly that He was moved with compassion, that He yearned and wept over the lost. Wherever He went He saw two things: ripe harvests and a scarcity of laborers. Does He not see the same things today? And surely the explanation for the lack of laborers is to be found in the lack of love for Christ and for lost souls, the lack of a great urge from within. God's Word denounces Christians who are lazy in the presence of great harvests which wait for wise and zealous reapers. "He that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame" (Proverbs 10:5). So yield your life to Christ and be filled with the Holy Spirit to the extent that you can know the reality of the experience of Paul, who said, "The love of Christ constraineth me."

Paul said, "I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise and to the unwise" (Romans 1:14). Paul was a debtor to Christ from Whom he had received love, light, life and liberty. He was debtor to men also because of what Christ had done for him. He manfully acknowledged his indebtedness to all types of men -- the Greeks and Barbarians, the wise and the unwise, the intelligent and the ignorant, the learned and the unlearned, the cultured and the uncultured. He freely admitted that he was debtor to every nation under heaven, and to all classes in each, without respect to color, character or condition of life. Paul declared his readiness and willingness to meet his obligation to the utmost of his ability. He was ready to go anywhere and to do anything for the furtherance of the gospel and for the glory of Christ. He regarded missions as a debt rather than an object of charity.

Southern Baptists will always owe a debt of gratitude to God for the life of Lottie Moon and to those faithful missionaries who have succeeded her. We thank God for the inspiration of these devoted lives.

Lottie Moon, the third of seven children in her wealthy family, was born on December 12, 1840, at Viewmont in Albermarle County, Virginia. While she was a student in the University of Virginia she was saved. The Civil War broke out immediately after her graduation, so she served as a nurse in Charlottesville during the hostilities. At the end of the war she entered the teaching profession. While she was teaching at Cartersville, Georgia, her pastor preached a missionary sermon, using the text, "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest" (John 4:35). At the close of the service, the young teacher said to the preacher: "I have long known that God wanted me in China. I am now ready to go." She was appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1873 to do educational work in China.

The work in China was difficult and progress was slow. Miss Moon gave long hours and all of her energy to the work. Time came for her furloughs, but she would not leave China unless there was someone sent to fill her place. The Foreign Mission Board was in debt and no replacement could be sent, so she stayed on in China.

One Sunday morning in 1887 two Chinese men appeared at her door in Tengchow, China, after a seven-day journey from Pingtu, 115 miles to the north. Miss Moon welcomed the tired travelers who had come to request her to come and witness to those in Pingtu. How could she tell them that she was making plans to return to America for a long needed rest? How could she make them understand that eleven years without a furlough had left her with an aching body and a tired mind? So, once again she pushed aside the dream of a furlough until a more favorable time.

Repeatedly, Miss Moon pleaded for someone to come and relieve her. She was desirous of going home, but not willing to leave until Pingtu was provided for. Because her

pleas were unheeded, she wrote an article which appeared in the December 1887 issue of the Foreign Mission Journal, suggesting that Baptist women take an offering and observe a week of prayer to assure new recruits for China just before Christmas.

In 1888 she expressed her full commitment by writing, "I would I had a thousand lives that I might give them to the women of China!"

That year the women prayed and gave \$3,315.26, a sufficient amount to send three missionaries to China. Charlotte Diggs Moon did not count it personal sacrifice to leave the comforts of life in the South to help extend the light of the gospel in China.

It was December, 1912, when friends realized that she was suffering from malnutrition and depression. Because North China was in the throes of a famine, she had denied her body nourishment in sharing food with others. She could not eat when she knew that her friends were hungry. The doctor, who found that she was slowly starving to death, suggested that if she returned to the United States there might be hope for her life.

A nurse and the ailing missionary were placed on a ship which was bound for the United States. On Christmas, while the ship was anchored at Dobe, Japan, Miss Moon died. Her body was cremated and her ashes buried in Crewe, Virginia. The marble slab which marks the spot reads: "Forty years a missionary of the Southern Baptist Convention in China" and "Faithful Unto Death." That year the offering for missions in China was \$31,875.63. At the end of 1912 Southern Baptists had mission work in eight countries. During the next twenty-five years, 1913 to 1938, Southern Baptists entered only three new fields -- Palestine, Spain and Chile. Prior to this year about seventy-nine million dollars have been given to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering.

Southern Baptists now have work in fifty-one countries. The missionaries always sense a spiritual uplift during the Week of Prayer for Foreign Missions.

Miss Martha Hairston, Recife, North Brazil pointed out two main buildings on the campus for Christian educators and said, "These buildings were made possible through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering."

Mission fields need more workers and more money. Through our prayers and offerings we can assist in answering some of the pleas. Hope we can have 2,000 missionaries under appointment by 1964. Over two billion are yet unsaved.