

# Some thoughts about the ministry of a Christian missionary

## What is a missionary?

A missionary is a man or woman sent by God.

## What is the task of a missionary?

The task of a missionary is to do

- what God wants
- at the place God wants,
- at the time God wants,
- in the way God wants.

## What is needed if I want to become a missionary?

In order to become a missionary

- I must have learned to listen to the voice of God and to do, what He says,
- I must have learned to love,
- I must know, that my own strength and ability and wisdom and love is not sufficient, and that I really need God for everything,
- I must receive and employ all the gifts God has given me: His forgiveness for my past sins, the life of Christ within me, that is able to transform my life, and especially the love of God that is poured out into our hearts.

When I go, God provides for everything I need: Food, clothing, money, strength, stability, wisdom.

## The best preparation for to become a missionary is

- to let the Lord clean and transform your life,
- to repair the wrong things you have done as far as it is possible,
- to learn to let out the love of God, that is already in you, and
- to do faithfully the seemingly small and unimportant things God has called you to do now.

## God allows temptations now

in order to prepare you for your future ministry, so that you can learn

- to trust in Him and not in you,
- to use His abilities,
- to make you strong in times of temptations,
- to learn to wait for God's moment,
- to transform your character into the likeness of Christ.

When you are sent out, you will become grateful for all the trials and temptations, God has permitted, because these past experiences will help you a lot in your ministry, and God has used them to make you a person He can use.

## What about the long training certain missionary societies require now?

To prepare you for sending out, certain missionary societies require

- four years bible school or a degree in theology,
  - a time at the center of this missionary society,
  - 1 – 2 years language school,
  - a half year to spend at Singapore or Hongkong to adapt to the situation in Asia and
  - a time at the center of that mission in the country you are sent to,
- before you finally can come to the place you are to work. That may mean 6 – 8 years preparation before you can start the work you are called to. And if you are called to serve in a village, you may discover that you have to learn a new language and that there are worlds between a Chinese city and

a village in North East Thailand. And to gain the trust of the village people you have to live amongst them for years. If God calls you to a specific Missionary Society and a specific ministry within this society, then all that is OK. You must, however be prepared that you will have a lot to learn at the mission field after the lot you have already learned before. If you think, that the treasures you have acquired during your long years of study can replace the dependency on the Holy Spirit, you will be in for a big surprise.

There are many missionaries, however, without this long phase of preparation. At the age of 21 Jackie Pullinger graduated in music, specializing in oboe. In the next year she followed the call of God and went to Hongkong. She worked as a primary school teacher in a region controlled by brutal Chinese gangs. God used her to build a foundation that freed at least 500 drug addicts from their addiction and she reached even heads of these criminal gangs. Bruce Olson had begun to study linguistics, but at the age of 19 God lead him to go to Venezuela. 2 years later he started to live among the fierce Motilone tribe. God used him that the indians of that tribe became Christians and found a way to cope with modernity. Most souls in the third world now are won by poor missionaries without a study at a university or a bible school. The churches that send them out have simply not the money to pay for it. Neither Jesus nor his 12 Apostles studied at a University.

**What is then required of a missionary?**

**He loves God and the people to whom he is sent. Without love he is nothing, brings no fruit and damages the kingdom of God.**

He is continually under the leading of the Holy Spirit.

He is open for new things and ideas the Holy Spirit gives.

He is ready to really listen to the people he is sent to and to understand, how they live and what is important to them, how they speak and how they think. That takes years, often many years, and that means to live, where they live.

He is ready to invest his life into the situation he is sent to. How will you get a real impact in a village, if you have to leave after a few years, because your children have to attend a German High School? For the people you work with it makes a big difference, whether you intend to stay for some time only or for many years.

He doesn't run away like a hireling, if it becomes dangerous.

The way of a missionary is to be close to the heart of Jesus and to follow Him wherever He goes. That means to give up everything.

Life as a missionary means to leave parents, relatives and friends.

Life as a missionary may mean long years of hard work without seeing fruit.

Life as a missionary may cost you your reputation, your health and even your life.

The only way a grain of wheat can bring fruit is to die.

Rules and regulations can be a good thing, but if they block the Holy Spirit, they produce death.

**We must ask ourselves:**

Do we build God's Kingdom or our own kingdom?

Do we want to spread the Kingdom of God or our own culture and interests?

Can God rule, or do we want to control everything?

Do we want persons who follow Jesus, or do we want persons to follow us?

Do we want that God is exalted, or do we want that our name is praised?