



Becoming a Missionary Worker

By Pastor Jed B. Raquintan

Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek: Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek. And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem. And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily (Acts 16:1-5).

Christians who are either preparing for missionary work or planning to enter the training school for missions are eager to know how to become a missionary. We read literature to enhance the desire for missions. We converse with current and retired missionaries especially the seasoned ones. We expose ourselves to mission fields both local and abroad. We gather all necessary equipping for the work. Then we end up imitating the traditional ways of education, application, preparation, and field destination which every missionary goes through. But then we fail to ask the question *should I apply as a missionary worker? Should I wait to be approached, screened, and enlisted as a missionary? What if no one would discern my desire for missionary work?* Others do not bother to ask their pastor for biblical guidance.

Let me provide the biblical basis for the view that a desiring and God called missionary candidate would certainly be noticed by church mission authorities and would be offered the opportunity to be enlisted as a missionary worker. The above text will be expounded to provide the biblical premise for this missionary view of enlistment.

Timothy was a believer faithfully serving the Lord in his local church at Lystra (v. 1). He was raised by his Christian mother and grandmother (2 Timothy 1:5), though he seemed to have no Christian father. When Paul visited the churches in the area of Lycaonia which he originally planted during the first journey, he met this young man. Divine providence caused this getting to know one another for His glory. On his first journey, Pauline ministry in this area must have brought some impact upon the young ones, perhaps including Timothy (14:1-23). Both the positive and persecutions the apostle

went through must have been known or witnessed by this young man. Certainly, God must be at work in the heart and mind of this young man as he let God impress him with Pauline ministries for the Lord. Young men and women, do you still let God impress your hearts and minds on what God has done or is doing to another Christian worker before you? Are you faithfully involved in the local church ministries? Are you praying God to disclose His plan for your life? What degree to pursue? Why choose that program of study? Sometimes, we are conscious over what people want for us instead of knowing what God wants for us.

There are five clear evidences in the above text which support the view that becoming a missionary means allowing others to discern, to select, and to send you into the mission field. **First, Timothy seemed to be already familiar with Apostle Paul.** We see this in 14:8, 19, 21-23 which displays the Pauline missionary cycle. God might have been convicting this young man to imitate the apostle as he came to know his labors for the Lord. Thus, a desire in this young man to be with him or to work with him in his travels is expected. He also had a good Christian testimony before his local assembly (v.2) and that of others too.

Second, Paul resolved to enlist Timothy into his missionary company (v.3a Him would Paul have to go forth with him). This verb is in the active voice which indicates that Paul is the doer of it. This specific past action is elaborated with an infinitive (*to go forth*). Hence, Timothy would be the recipient of its action. There are reasons for this Pauline interest on this young man. Paul noticed Timothy's good testimony in his local assembly. He must have desired to get Timothy and train him for missionary work. He must have heard the same before other local assemblies. Perhaps Luke could vouch for the same as he wrote of it in the book of Acts. Maybe, even Silas was asked by Paul about Timothy being enlisted. This is typical Pauline character. Note how he got Silas as his missionary partner in 15:40 (Luke used active verb to describe Pauline action to indicate who did the act of selection). By this, we can imply that Paul would probably do the same as it is also missionary enlistment work. Therefore, Paul personally selected Timothy to join his missionary party (consisting of himself, Silas, and Luke).

Third, Paul decisively once secured Timothy into his party (v.3b and took him). This is a past active participle which indicates again Paul was the doer of the action. Further, this act is consistent with the main action of (*would have*) desiring or resolving to have Timothy. Evidently, Timothy did not insinuate to the apostle rather the latter got him or carried him. He did not apply to become Paul's assistant or helper in the mission work. Paul must have told him, *come and join with me in the mission travels and works!*

Fourth, Paul improved Timothy's testimony as missionary (v.3c circumcised him). Circumcision is a Jewish covenant which symbolizes their being God's people. Without it, the new worker would have difficulty ministering to the Jews more so to enter their synagogues for evangelization. Paul wisely acted to equip Timothy for the ministry. He also removed any possible witnessing obstacles especially among the Jews. Again, Paul did this to elevate Timothy's reputation before the Jews. It seemed that Timothy did not have the privilege of arguing with the apostle. He had to follow him for he was cho-

sen by the latter.

Finally, Paul led the missionary travels with the company of Timothy among others (v.4a *they went through the cities*). This is a continual past action where Paul and the rest of party members (Silas, Luke, and Timothy) engaged with.

Thereafter, we see the great results of this new enlistment into the missionary party of Paul. The Jerusalem letter to Gentile churches was delivered (v.4b). The local assemblies of the Lord in the area they went through were continually strengthened by the missionaries. These churches received the edification ministries (v.5a) of missionaries including Timothy. Hence, these solidified churches reproduced themselves by witnessing and baptizing which numerically increased their ministries (v.5b). As the missionaries did their duty, the people excitedly responded and responded by reaching out to their own community with souls saved and added into the churches.

God implants a desire in every Christian's heart to become a missionary. As you ascertain this holy desire, dutifully nurture it to prevent it from loss. Then get all necessary equipping, educational, and ministerial preparations you could get. Simultaneously, pray and wait for the Lord to use people of your local church authorities to discern your divine leading and plan. Amen! ***

Cultism along Missionary Paths

Acts 13:6-12

By Pastor Jed B. Raquintan

Missionary work is pleasing to the Lord when it is done in His way. God's way is only found in His written word. In this article we can learn how Paul dealt with the issue of cultism along the missionary paths. It seemed that the devil was not easily discouraged. He regularly sent obstacles and oppositions to the work of missions. The devil designed these to divert missionary works if not to frustrate or threaten the workers from pursuing the Lord's Great Commission. How did Paul handle this demonic hindrance?

First, the missionaries themselves discovered this demonic hindrance. We see this in verse 6. This demonic agent was characterized by Luke as a sorcerer. As such he is like the Chaldean soothsayers or false religionist priest. He is like those priests or pastors of false religions in our country. He was also a false prophet. As such he used God's word and made prophecies out of it and issued the same to the public so they could be swayed by them. They are like those prophets of various origins that prophesy on the coming of Christ with some specific dates. We have plenty of them here. Charismatics like Villanueva, millenarians like the "son of God" of Davao, and many others have continued to deceive the public with their false prophecies. Only one prophecy made which did not come to pass is sufficient to make one a false prophet (see Deuteronomy 18:22). His race is Jewish which seems to elevate his claim as near to the source of truth – the God of the Scriptures. Further, his name was "Barjesus" which means "son of Jesus." This latter seems to be familiar with the false religionist in southern Philippines who branded himself as the "son of God" which is a blasphemous self declaration. There is only one true Son of God (see 1 John 5:10-13, 21) – the Lord Jesus Christ.

Second, the cultic religionist leader engaged in two specific acts. We see this in verse 8. *One*, he continually opposed or resisted the missionaries. Cults will indirectly resist the coming of missionaries. That is what the Romanist authorities did to the Protestant missionaries who attempted to come to the Philippines during their occupation of the country. Even after their defeat by the Americans the Filipino authorities continued to resist the same. Today another cult has risen with political and economic clout – the Manalistas (INCs). They are also in covert and subtle similar approach to the truth of the gospel especially the Biblicists. To them freedom belongs only to the beholders of their faith. The rest must be subjugated to their faith or be tamed to sympathize with them. Such is cultism at its height! *Two*, the false prophet seeks to sway the new believer from the faith. This is what the Mormons and INCs do to young and less taught Baptists or even apostates religionists. Again such is at its height of cultism! Hence, every missionary worker needs to be aware of the cults' varied approaches and strategies. They are to protect every new convert or church member from these cultic influences.

Third, Paul severely dealt with the cultic leader to prevent his influence upon the new convert, the area's local leader. We see this in verses 9-10. He called him as the child of the devil. That is how we are to treat unsaved religious leaders too (John 8:44). He branded his tactics as mischievous and mean. He regarded him as an enemy of biblical righteousness. More so he unhesitatingly called him as one who perverted God's way. Indeed, every cultic leader or teacher uses God's word but in a perverted manner (2 Cor. 4:1-2). Thus, the biblically uneducated will be deceived by them. So we must engage in constant exposition not only of the Holy Scriptures but also their wickedness.

Finally, Paul triumphed over the false teacher. We see this in verse 11. God's word is victorious over false teaching. Regardless of the smallness of our earthly situations, the truths we possess shall triumph. We do not war with the cults in a fleshly manner through political, legal, and economic powers; but in spiritual and biblical way. We do not compete with them in numbers and wealth. But mark it brethren, God's truth is marching on towards victory in the end of the ages. God's immersionist Biblicist churches shall be victorious through the millennium era. Amen! ***

Remaining Steadfast Amid Missionary Hardships

Hebrews 10:32-36

By Pastor Jed B. Raquintan

Missionary workers do quit after sometime on the mission field. It is heart breaking to hear such news. Why does this happen? Generally, they responded to the hardships faced along the trail of missionary roads. They met the end of the road. They came to the conclusion that the missionary work is no longer worth their efforts. There are however more specific reasons for this missionary mortality. Every worker is still a sinful human being subject to the devil's discouragement. Hence, we at the church must pray and provide for them lest they succumb to the devil's tempting darts that will permanently bring workers down. Let us realize also that every church member is involved in missionary work. Workers are two types. Those who go to the frontlines and those hold the lifeline of the front liners.

How does a missionary worker endure and remain steadfast in the ministry? Church members how do you remain steadfast in the task of holding the ropes? Let me show you from the Scriptures how Paul encouraged the suffering Hebrew believers to remain in the Lord. Consider that this body of believers was tempted to mix the faith with their false Jewish faith to escape persecutions. They were considering taking slow their once zealous service to the Lord. Hence, Paul gave them four pastoral prescriptions to address their sinful decline.

First, Paul commanded them to recall their once courageous stand for the Lord. We see this in verse 32. *Call to remembrance* is a divine injunction given through the Apostle. After they were enlightened or converted (illuminated) they did not succumb to the temptations of various afflictions. In the past they put up a strong stand for the Lord. They were courageous defenders of the faith. They even endured the rigors and wounds of Christian soldiering. But now they are waning and sliding towards compromising the purity of the faith. We all need to beware of weariness in the spiritual battles as missionary workers. We need to overcome even the natural tendency of degeneration. By ourselves alone we can't remain strong. We must rely upon the grace of God and His word for strengthening. As we recall our earlier zeal and courage for the Lord then we can remain steadfast.

Second, Paul reminded them of their former sound attitude towards mission. We see this in verse 34. They showed great sympathy to the apostle while in prison. They sent supports that encouraged the embattled missionary. They sent words of endearment to the lonely apostle as he languished in incarcerating dungeon. Further, they gladly spent their wealth and properties for the Lord's work through Apostle Paul's ministry. These they did with the conviction that in heaven they would have superior wealth. Practically, every peso spent for the biblical missionary

work will have corresponding heavenly rewards. These rewards are incomparable with human recognition. Hence, your spending for missionary work will be appropriately recompensed by the Lord. As church members, let us readily endure hardships as we lose money and wealth for the work of missions. Let us be eager to provide for missionaries and their respective ministries. After meeting our family needs, it is biblical to faithfully sustain missionary works – church planting.

Third, Paul prohibited them from throwing away their courage to do the above godly acts. We see this in verse 35. They were losing fearlessness in supporting Apostle Paul's ministry. They were sliding due to the crunch they were facing. Perhaps, family and relatives' tempting comments were sinking under their skin. State and institutional religions were seeking to persecute them as followers of Christ. This was taking toll in their lives and works. As human beings such is understandable. But as saved people of God we must live by the word of God. When our minds are away from God's word then we will throw away our zeal for the Lord's work of missions. Church members, don't you ever think more so act to throw away the towel for missionary works! Those who are regularly supporting our missionary endeavors must seriously think of remaining. Those who are thinking of stopping must reconsider your decision.

Fourth, Paul invited them to the possibility of receiving God's blessing. We see this in verse 36. He urged them to consider doing God's will. What is it? To remain steadfast in the work of supporting God's work in missions as well as its missionaries is God's perfect will for the Hebrew believers. By patiently obeying the Lord of missions they could possibly receive God's blessing in an unprecedented way. God's blessing or favor is beyond human prediction and estimation. God works in wondrous and unusual way. Every church member that faithfully supports mission work whether its workers or the work itself shall be duly and heavenly rewarded here and there. As parents, how will you answer children's query for your quitting in supporting missionaries or as missionary workers? Are you able to face the possible loss of divine favor or blessing upon you and your family? Amen! ***