

MISSIONS

“Revolutionary Faith” by Winkie Pratney

So you want to be a missionary!

You have never made a harder decision. Your own future was already planned out... well ordered, comfortable. You had included with it all you wanted out of life. There was your career, family, friends, home and sweetheart. Maybe you had a safe, secure future ahead. Or perhaps you have been searching for a purpose. You have had a sense of destiny. You have never known quite where you fit in to life. Dissatisfaction with living as you are marked you. You longed for someone to show you the way. You cried out for meaning.

Then Jesus came

He did not come with bribes or bargains. He made no dazzling promises. His eyes just searched your soul, looked right through you. In that eternity of a moment, everything in your comfortable, unconcerned life was weighed in the balances and found wanting.

He said – “Follow Me”

And now you have accepted His challenge. Wherever you heard that unforgettable Voice, whether in a service or under the stars, your answer was “Yes.” You have been chosen for a select group of spiritual commandos; ahead of you is the awesome task of world revolution. You have counted the cost; you are committed. This small sheet will help to prepare you for the tests that will come to try your courage and your choice. Ahead of you lies a costly, challenging future – and the destiny for which you were born.

HIS CHALLENGE – INTO ALL THE WORLD

It was His last challenge and command – “Go – into all the world and preach the Gospel.” Every Christian is in effect a missionary, with every sinner a mission-field. You don’t become a missionary by crossing the sea, but by seeing the cross. When God gets ready to again invade human history, He scatters the seed of men – men of revolutionary faith. You have been called to know Him and make Him known in the field of the world. (Mt. 13:24-43)

The Gospel has always made the greatest impact by its presentation through an alien to the nation. A Jew brought it to Rome; a Roman took it to France; a Frenchman to Scandinavia; a Scandinavian to Scotland. A Scotsman took it to Ireland; an Irishman made mission conquest of Scotland. The Englishmen Wesley and Whitfield took revival fire to America. The Lord Jesus Christ ordained twelve that they might be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach. (Mk. 3:14) Going out for God makes your preaching more effective because:

(1) **A Stranger Is Accepted** – very often, when history has shown that the authority of a local has not been respected. In Jesus' day, men refused to accept His message because they knew His lowly background. (Matt. 13:53-58) We are to be strangers in the earth. (Heb. 11:13) The unknown element draws the curious; God can use this to bring sinners under the sound of Truth, by sending His commandos to the "regions beyond." (Lk. 23:1; Acts 17:18-20)

(2) **A Spirit of Adventure** – brings out the best efforts of the disciple. There are new people, conditions, and dangers to face. The new challenges help keep the witness alert and draw out his utmost abilities under God. Past failures and mistakes have been left behind, and there is a new field to receive the fruit of past experience without stigma. (Lk. 9:1-6; 10:13)

(3) **A Sense of Abandonment** – Called to leave all that is naturally close and dear, a disciple has opportunity to prove the reality of his consecration and dependence on God. By moving out from settled, comfortable home conditions where there is an excess of Gospel opportunity, the disciple is thrown strongly on God, and put before others who have perhaps never heard. Missions practically burn all bridges behind the disciple. (Matt. 10:37; Mk 10:45; Lk 9:23-25)

(1) A MAN CALLED OF GOD

The man that God uses must be sent from GOD. There is a tremendous difference between that man and the man who has an opinion of himself. It is never easy to be God's man; God's choice; God's chosen for a task. Ten of the twelve died a martyr's death; killed with the sword, hanged, flayed alive, lanced, shot with arrows, stoned, clubbed, crucified and decapitated. To serve Christ in missions is to be a "dead man on furlough." Only the consciousness of the sure call of God can give you the necessary courage and wisdom for the task. Unless you are sure of the call of God for missionary work, do something else! Is there a flickering flame in your heart for the field of the world harvest? Can you never blot out the whisper of God for a place, a people, or a ministry? If you cannot live without it, you have a call from God.

God's man will be a man sent from God. There is no room for the cowardly, the fearful, or the cop-out on the mission field. God is looking for men – men of wisdom, men of courage, men of strength and men of character. This will mean strength in four areas of life.

PREPARING YOUR MIND – "Be transformed by the renewing of your mind." (Rom. 12:2)

(a) **MENTAL** – No man will ever be used of God until he is willing to learn. He does not have to be brilliant, but he does have to be open and obedient. The first requirement for a good leader is to learn to be a good follower. George Verwer challenges – "Learn how to bury your own plans and ideas, allowing someone else to make decisions which you

will wholeheartedly carry out. There is no room... for a person with all the answers.”

Strength of mind also means study. The command of the Lord Jesus is to “Lift up your eyes to the fields” – look at the harvest field. Have you done that? Have you spent time in study of missionary fields and methods? How well do you know the needy world you live in? Have you used your social studies, geography and history lessons for God? Do you know what areas of the world are most open and receptive to the Gospel? Have you been faithful in study of languages, or developed any aptitude you have with these that you might have other tongues to preach the Gospel in? Have you loved God with your mind? (Rom. 12:1-2; 2 Tim. 2:15)

Reading must be an important part of your study habits. Try to read as much as possible. This will help keep you abreast of changes and be a store of refreshment, inspiration, and spiritual uplifting. Regular reading brings freshness to your thought on life. Subscribe to a couple of Christian magazines with an emphasis on missionaries or evangelism. Scan every piece of free literature you can lay your hands on in missionary conventions for valuable ideas. Most of all, read biographies and autobiographies of men used of God. Next to your Bible, these will be the most valuable and inspiring studies of your life. Nothing will stimulate you to the work of God in evangelism, missions, or prayer like accounts of men who moved spiritual mountains for God. A brief “must” book list is appended to the end of this tract for you.

PREPARING YOUR BODY – “Your body is the temple, of the Holy Spirit.” (1 Cor. 6:19)

(b) **PHYSICAL** – God’s man must be physically healthy. The mission-field is an energy-taxing task, one that requires a strong constitution. Every man who wants to be used of God should be involved in a sport or physical exercise to discipline his body for God. You have only been given one body for this life, and it is your responsibility to take care of it, rest and nourish it properly, and train it to respond to your mind and spirit. When you find a sport you can play and like, really work at it. Play for all and play to win! There will be chances here also for witness and to develop true Christian sportsmanship and leadership as well as a healthful, relaxing means of training your body. Do not overwork your voice, your eyes, or your digestive system. Learn to really relax. If you burn the candle at both ends to save a little time or a few years, you may not have much left to go out for God with. (1 Tim. 4:8; 1 Cor. 9:24-27; Eph. 6:11-12; Philipians 4:13; II Timothy 2:3-4) Love God with your *strength*.

Learn also to develop some skill that requires painstaking, nerve-wracking coordination; something like playing a piano or other instrument; touch-typing will also prove valuable. Discipline must be practiced also in the relaxed control of body movements; keeping the hands still and to the sides of the body; firmly shaking hands with warmth and then letting go; posture kept upright and feet controlled from shuffling or dragging; stand, sit, and walk tall without stiffness. Learn to look attentively at people when you speak to them. Reject the desires to nervously fidget, and you will begin to break the cycle of habit to gain poise.

Don't be lazy. Divorce yourself from the armchair life. You may not find modern comforts abroad; eliminate things that can make you soft. On the other hand, sleep is important. Don't waste time sitting up late, letting talk drift by, or stay up late spending half the night to finish some exciting book. Curb the lust to finish and you will not be up late in the morning. The King's business is, of course, a different matter. Discipline rest, and free time.

Food is not just a case of likes and dislikes. Learn to like what you are given, unless it will cause actual physical harm. The ability to eat without flinching may mean much to people of another land whose friendship you are trying to win. Be grateful for whatever God provides. Eat enough to keep you strong, but never make a god of your appetite. Learn to go without.

Begin your self-discipline with simple things; tidiness of clothes and room is a good place. Can you imagine Christ with untidy clothes and His belongings in a shambles? Wash out the bathtub or basin after use, make your bed as soon as you get up neatly and tidily. Hang up your clothes, clean the tools you use and put them back in their proper place. This will not only be excellent training for discipleship, but will help you save much time and trouble later on.

Do the difficult at once; begin with the hardest tasks. Stick at them, despite interruption, and stick with them until they are finished. Get rid of them first, and the rest will all be easier. Be determined not only to conquer that boring assignment or job, but to wring a blessing out of it! Say to it, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me!" Learn to choose the hardest tasks, to do what others leave undone. Begin with ordinary home tasks like washing dishes or cleaning rooms, mowing lawns or ironing, cooking or sweeping. Go into them for Jesus sake, and learn the glory of doing the difficult and finding joy in hardness.

PREPARING YOUR SOUL – "You shall love the Lord with all your soul..." (Matt. 22:37)

(a) **SPIRITUAL** – Above all other training, you must be strong in the Lord. God has used the unlearned and ignorant, the physically weak and frail, but He can never use the unspiritual man. E. M. Bounds says it succinctly – "Men are God's methods; the church is looking for better methods; God is looking for better men." All that we are, formed in the crucible of experience under the hand of the Lord is the raw material for revolutionary faith. This will mean priority attention to the spiritual character of our lives.

The Bible is of course, foundational. The man of God must spend time to read it, study it, memorize it, and practice it. He must be preeminently a man of one Book. God's will is revealed in His Word. If you will devote your love and your life to knowing and obeying God and His Word, you will not miss His will or direction. Do you spend time in the Word for your spiritual life? How much time? Do you know enough of the Bible to give a few minutes summary of books like Ezra, Judges, Nehemiah, or Philemon? Could you teach for half-an-hour on any one book of the Bible for a week? Do you have a memorization program? How much do you know of the whole Bible? Have you ever

read it completely through? Do you know enough about it to summarize its basic message in two sentences? If you were now deprived of your Bible, how much of it could you write out from memory? You should study this Book of books as if you will never get another chance to within a year.

Study the Scriptures by marking them, commenting in the columns, underlining verses. Outline what you read. Ask yourself questions. Do not leave the Book until it has blessed you. Begin a study notebook, and file in it everything you learn of value for God. Think about Scriptures until they become a part of you. Fill your mind and thoughts with it.

Study the men that God uses. Out of all the hundreds of preachers, theologians and ministers, God has simple, but searching tests for value. Are they wise to win souls? Then they are qualified with the wisdom of Heaven. Learn from such men. Study their lives and their message. The Lord Jesus gives two further tests – “They should bring forth fruit, and their fruit shall remain.” If a man has a godly vision, and a life that pleases God by devotion and prayer, he will draw souls to Christ. If any man has been taught of God the knowledge of truth, he will not only win souls to God, but those he wins will persevere for Christ. Pay special attention to those men of God in the past or present whose ministries show both. They have learned of Heaven; study them.

Spend as much time with men of God as they will allow you to. Ask God to open the way to get to know them personally, so you may learn from them, then be bold to use the opportunities God gives you. Many will spend time to answer your questions or share with you their own vision. Pray for them in their ministries. Learn from their successes and their mistakes. Dig into history and compare your spiritual development with others used of God. Never be satisfied with your progress. Ask God for holy ambition to be mightily used of Him. Dare to believe for things never achieved before; never rest content on the spiritual status quo.

Strive for accuracy in thinking and speaking. Do not exaggerate stories or add to facts to make people more impressed or amused. God is a God of truth; do not tell “Christian lies”. Do not pretend or pose. Your life will be on public display in the ministry; let it be real. Learn from God when and what to speak, and the value of silence. Never break a confidence. Do not fear to speak the truth, even if it leads to trouble. When God says “speak” give His whole message, in love and honesty, without favor or fear of an individual or a meeting. You must be God’s man with God’s message; if you have nothing from Him, say nothing publicly.

PREPARING YOUR RELATIONSHIPS “...Love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matt. 22:39)

(d) **SOCIAL** – The greatest asset to spiritual unity is the ability to get along with others. The man who would have revolutionary faith must discipline his life to act and not to react concerning the influences of others on his life. You will face many points of difference with others at work in the Master’s fields; points of temperament, culture, understanding, methodology, or theology. These may be used as a blessing or a

barrier. If you will learn God's way of action when faced with differences making the possibility of trouble, you can grow very quickly In God. There is a simple, but far-reaching way –

Use pressure to criticize yourself, not others. Recognize that the spirit of criticism is sin before God, and the quickest way to destroy essential unity. Argument, resentment, self-defense, or anger have no place in the Christian life. You must use these pressures to die to your own self-seeking rights and accept this discipline as from the hand of the Lord. You may be neglected or ignored; slighted, brushed aside; your opinion's not asked, your reputation not recognized, your position or authority not considered. The success, reward, or honor goes to another instead of you, when you felt you worked for it or earned it. You were kind, gave help to someone – and got no thanks or gratitude. Your advice was ignored, or not even asked in a matter where you were an expert.

Perhaps you and a friend share the same room. He is slow, extravagant, and untidy, when you are quick, economical, and clean; or you are steady, generous, and flexible while he is hasty, stingy and finicky. Or some little thing has come up that threatens to damage your day; it is too hot or too wet; someone interrupts you in the middle of something important; an awaited letter doesn't come; the clothes don't fit, the meal isn't right, the pen won't work? You are tempted to pick on somebody who adds to the pressure and let him have it! But if you are, a disciple of Christ, and are in training for revolutionary faith – you cannot afford the luxury of such sin (and it IS sin!) You must conquer through Christ, for unless you are changed you will never change your world. Memorize these two scriptures and let them burn into your daily life: "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and give his life a ransom for many." (Mark 10:45) And, "Judge not that you be not judged." (Matt. 7:1) Amplified and applied in principle, these two verses tell you:

(1) Not to live expecting to receive from others, but only from God; to live instead to give without hoping for reward – to minister, and not be ministered to. Let all the trials of life be simply tests allowed by God to put your love of "being ministered unto" to death. Prove to Christ that you will love and serve Him whatever others do:

(2) To live with a spirit of trust towards your brothers and sisters in Christ. Not to trust their own human frailties, but the Christ in them. Jesus said, in effect with this verse, "When tempted to criticize another, turn it on yourself and leave the other alone." If you recognize the beam of resentment or criticism in your own life, deal with it; then you will either forget your brother's mote and rejoice in the work Christ is doing in and through him, or you will see how the Lord Jesus has dealt with your own failures, and recognize that He is quite capable of dealing with the minor faults of others. Friendships should make us easier to reach by others, and more understanding and helpful.

Exclusive friendships are unhealthy. Marriage may well be God's gift to you, but be sure you do not take this for granted, and walk very softly before God before you make any final decisions in the matter. There are some fields of service that can be best done by a team, and others where a single worker can far better do a certain task, especially in a

new or dangerous field. Pray much about this matter, and expect God to give you a definite word. Popularity is often dangerous; attracting people to one's self, while the more subtle pressure of influence can be a powerful, though unconscious factor to draw others to the Lord Jesus. Never seek the former; live near to Jesus and let Him use the latter. "He made Himself of no reputation." (Phil. 2:7)

If you are wrong, confess it. It will be humiliating, but honest; no-one ever loses standing in the eyes of those he is trying to help by being honest. If you take offense easily, do not go out for God thinking it will not matter. Jesus humbled Himself. He did it deliberately. Live to the Lord, caring little for the praise or blame of men. If misunderstood, go direct to the one concerned, humbly and frankly to correct it. Be willing to learn from the older and the younger, from those you minister with and from those you minister to.

(2) A MAN OF ORDINARY FAITH –

Revolutionary faith is ordinary faith. Ordinary faith is just a simple loyalty to the Word of God, both written and living. Do you believe the word of god? You will never make it in missions unless you can say an unqualified "Yes!" If you do not believe it to be reliable, for Christ's sake and for the sake of others, get out of the ministry. God will never use you, honor you, or guide you until you stand with all you have on His Book and His Son. The two are united; you do not love God any more than you love His Word; you do not obey Him any more than you obey His Word; you do not believe Him any more than you believe His Word. The issue is simple; either it is true, in which case you can confide in the God Who gave it, and expect Him to direct you; or it is not reliable, in which case you will have to guide your own life; God may not.

IF YOU BELIEVE IT – nothing shall be impossible to you! There is no barrier outside of unbelief; revolutionary faith implies only a fulfilling of every condition, which means a literal obedience to the commands of Christ; and simply applying the Scriptures in any case where you find yourself in similar circumstances. God is no respecter of man; what He promised for one man in one situation He promises for all men at any time in the same circumstances, providing the same conditions are strictly fulfilled. Your whole life should be thus geared to be in God's place at God's time with God's message. Every provision will be met, if you will but dare to prove God! He will always justify your obedience fully and wonderfully to bring glory to His Name. The greater the task, the more glory to His Name and He does the impossible through your obedience to Him!

Do not let the methods of men color your outlook and corrode your trust. Through the centuries, God has always found men who dared believe He could direct and provide without the necessity of fleshly schemes. Living by faith is always living without scheming. Do not look to man for help. Follow the men who starred history, and you will see their lives flow with the power of Christ because they dared depend wholly on Him! Read the stories of George Mueller, Norris Groves, Robert Morrison, Hudson Taylor, C. T. Studd, Brother Andrew, David Wilkerson, and see what God has done before and can do again through you! "If God be GOD, then SERVE HIM"... and know the thrill of

revolutionary faith!

David Brainerd (Moody Press, Chicago, 1949);

Hudson Taylor (C.I.M. London, 1959);

C. G. Finney (Revell NY 1873);

Portrait of a Prophet (C. W. Hall, Salvation Army, NY 1933);

Shadow of the Almighty (Jim Elliot, Harper, 1933);

God's Smuggler (Brother Andrew; Revell, 1968);

C. T. Studd (C. L. C. Penn 1903-4);

The Cross And The Switchblade (David Wilkerson; Pyramid, NY 1963);

God's Fool (George N. Patterson)

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