

Bible Expositor and Illuminator

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World Missions

Righteousness! Luke tells us that Zacharias and Elisabeth were righteous before God. Although obedience to God's Word is an outward sign of righteousness, what lies at the root of personal righteousness? Perhaps Andrew Murray said it best: "Prayer is, above all, fellowship with God and being brought under the power of His holiness" (Wells, ed., *Inspiring Quotations: Contemporary & Classical*, Nelson).

Missionaries realize the importance of prayer for their personal righteousness as well as for the success of their ministry. Prayer letters, prayer meetings, and personal prayer times are the hallmark of a missionary. Missionaries seem to live on prayer. In fact, they entreat us to join with them in prayer for the salvation of individuals, for their coworkers for their families, and for their support.

With all the praying we do for missionaries, it would be nice if Gabriel would appear to us once in a while and say, "Thy prayer is heard" (Luke 1:13). If an angel did appear, how would you respond?

How did the extremely honored and righteous priest, Zacharias, respond when Gabriel said to him, "Thy prayer is heard" (Luke 1:13)? Did Zacharias bow down and say, "Praise the Lord"? Did he break out in a song of praise to God? No! His response was just the opposite.

Zacharias's response was very human. He objected. He knew that he and Elisabeth were old. As godly as he was, as saintly as he was, and as righteous as he was, Zacharias needed to learn that God delights in answering prayers. Perhaps we too need to learn or be reminded that God answers the prayers of the righteous.

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Years ago a friend of mine, Tom, met a drunk person (we will call him Steve) on the street. Although Tom was in a hurry, he stopped long enough to give Steve a gospel tract. When Tom met Steve on another occasion, he asked whether Steve had read the tract. He had not. Tom then spent some time with him, and Steve eventually made a profession of faith.

Not too long after his decision, Steve became seriously ill, was taken to the hospital, and died. Since no one in the religious community except Tom really knew Steve, Tom did the funeral.

During the funeral eulogy and message, two old ladies in the audience continually smiled and nudged each other. Tom had no idea who they were, but it was evident to him that they were enjoying themselves. After the funeral, these two ladies introduced themselves to Tom as Steve's sisters.

Curiosity got the better of Tom, and he asked, "What were you two ladies smiling about during the service?"

They answered, "We have been praying for Steve's salvation for twenty years."

Tom then asked, "How did you come to find out about Steve's decision? Did he call or write to you?"

"No!" they said. "This was the first we had heard of his salvation, but we knew that God would answer our prayers. We came to Steve's funeral to hear how it happened."

Steve's sisters prayed persistently, they prayed expectantly, and they prayed specifically for their brother and his salvation. God answered their prayers, and He answers ours. James 5:16 tells us, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

—Herbert W. Bateman IV

World Missions

Luke 1:26-42 is a beautiful account of a woman who willingly rendered herself to God's service—to God's plan, to God's program, and to God's proposal. It is exciting and it challenges me when I read Mary's humble response to the Angel Gabriel: "Behold the handmaid (bondslave) of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word."

These are the words of a servant. They reflect the attitude of a person bound to God. The words reveal the disposition of someone who is willing and ready to make personal sacrifices for God, for His plan and His program, regardless of the outcome. Like Mary, most people in God's service at one time or another have made a similar response to God. This certainly is true of missionaries.

In April 1948, Jim Elliot wrote in his journal, "Father, take my life, yea, my blood if Thou wilt, and consume it with Thine enveloping fire. I would not save it for it is not mine to save. Have it, Lord, have it all. Pour out my life as an oblation for the world. Blood is only of value as it flows before Thine altar" (Elliot, *Shadow of the Almighty*, Harper Collins). Jim Elliot reiterated this attitude years later as a missionary in Ecuador. He told his wife, Elisabeth, "I am ready to die for the salvation of the Aucas."

God took Jim up on all he had promised. On Friday, Jim met three Aucas. "Two days later," according to Elisabeth Elliot, "on Sunday, January 8, 1956, the men for whom Jim Elliot had prayed for six years killed him and his four companions." These same Auca Indians nevertheless were eventually reached with the gospel by two wives and a sister of the martyred missionaries.

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The examples of Mary, the mother of Jesus, and Jim Elliot stir my heart. They were people who were self-denying, self-giving, and self-sacrificing. It is not unusual for missionaries to deny themselves the rights and privileges of their native country in order to spread the gospel in another country.

Since many countries prohibit foreigners to possess land, it is not unusual for missionaries to give up the luxury of owning their own homes; nor is it unusual for missionaries to sacrifice the celebration of holidays with extended families. In fact, some people who serve in tropical climates or in Africa or in many Third-World countries even sacrifice their own personal health and perhaps their lives to spread the gospel.

Missionaries who rightly serve our Lord and Saviour have the same humble response as Mary did: "Behold the [bondslave] of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word" (Luke 1:38). In fact, we are to serve the Lord in our mission fields with a like attitude.

Jim Elliot wrote, "As your life is in His hands, so are the days of your life. But don't let the sands of time get into the eye of your vision to reach those who sit in darkness. *They simply must hear*" (Elliot). "I know that my hopes and plans for myself could not be any better than He has arranged and fulfilled them. Thus may we all find it, and know the truth of the Word which says, 'He will be our Guide even until death.'"

Lord, as You lead us from day to day, help us have the same attitude as Mary. Help us be able to say, "Behold the [bondslave] of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word" (Luke 1:38). Amen.

—Herbert W. Bateman IV.

8 December 1996

World Missions

Do you remember your response when your children were born? I will never forget mine. When my daughter was born, my response was one of excitement, joy, and praise to God for this precious gift. I was thrilled. I called everyone I knew and announced, "I have a daughter." My response is not unique, is it? The birth of our children tends to excite us all.

The response to Jesus' birth was also one of great excitement, joy, and praise to God. Luke, however, wrote very little about Joseph and Mary's responses. Instead, he recorded the excitement, joy, and praise that came from others.

Joy came with an angelic proclamation for all people: "I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born . . . a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:10-11).

Excitement came with the shepherd's response: "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass" (Luke 2:15). With a sense of excitement and anticipation, the shepherds went to witness and to testify to God's work.

Praise to God came from both the angelic host and the shepherds. The angels said, "Glory to God in the highest" (Luke 2:14). The shepherds, while returning from Bethlehem, were "glorifying and praising God" (vs. 20).

The birth of Jesus was and continues to be a source of great joy, excitement, and praise to God because of whose birth it is. It is the birth of the Saviour for all people—the Christ and Lord over all mankind.

Equally exciting, equally joyful, and equally praiseworthy of God is the birth of a new believer. I was recently reminded of that excitement when I

spoke at a church in Houston, Texas.

The church is a new work composed primarily of Christian internationals from around the world. Thirty-six people from Africa, India, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, China, Sweden, and the United States who live and work in the Houston area meet and worship regularly. More important, the church is made up of people who evangelize the lost.

While I was there, a young man from China made a decision for Jesus Christ. The faithful witness of a coworker and member of the church had had an impact on him for Jesus. As a result, this young man from China put his faith in Jesus Christ. He trusted. He believed that the work of Jesus was sufficient for the forgiveness of all his wrong doings. He became a child of God. He was born into God's family. He was a newborn believer.

The birth of this believer was an exciting event for all of us. Joy and praise to God permeated the church, especially as he told everyone Sunday morning that he was a Christian.

God is doing exciting things in that church. Two months prior to my visit, an entire Filipino family and a man from Sweden made decisions for Christ. The excitement, joy, and praise to God do not just exist here on earth. They also exist in heaven. The Bible says, "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke 15:10).

The birth of Jesus resulted in angels and shepherds glorifying and praising God for having seen the Saviour. We continue to glorify and praise God for the birth of our Lord and Saviour, for without Him, there would be no newborn believers or family of God.

—Herbert W. Bateman IV.

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World Missions

Scripture tells us that when the Magi saw Baby Jesus and His mother, Mary, they "fell down, and worshipped him" (Matt. 2:11). Although Scripture says nothing about the number, the names, or the country of these wise men, many legends exist about them.

Some legends say there were two wise men. Other legends say twelve. Perhaps three wise men came.

Perhaps Matthew's mention of "from the east" (Matt. 2:1) means the wise men were from Persia or Mesopotamia. Perhaps they came from Parthia, Arabia, or India. Maybe they were three representatives of the human race (Asia, Africa, and Europe)—descendants from each of Noah's sons (Shem, Ham, and Japheth).

Who these men were, where these men came from, and how many there were are unimportant. What is important, what is significant, is that these wise men were Gentiles. They were Gentiles who came to worship the Descendant of King David, the promised Messiah.

The expensive gifts brought by these Gentiles from the East reflect their submission and allegiance to this newborn Davidic King (Ps. 72:10-11; Isa. 60:6). Their submission and allegiance to the King are evident in the fact that they also worshiped this newborn King.

Matthew was foreshadowing or signaling an important point—a point that Jesus Himself made to all His disciples. Jesus said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:18-20).

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All nations, all people groups, are expected to join in and send men and women to other nations so that Jews and Gentiles everywhere might worship Jesus. Many nations are able to carry out this great commission because national and theological training at international Bible institutions and seminaries.

For instance, twenty-six Namibians serve as missionaries in other African countries because of Namibia Evangelical Theological Seminary. The seminary teaches, trains, and prepares committed nationals to be competent pastors and missionaries for Jesus Christ in Namibia and other nations in southern Africa.

Many Bible and theological institutions throughout the world are training nationals to do the work of the ministry among their own people. Portuguese Bible Institute, Central American Theological Seminary (Guatemala), and Asian Theological Seminary (Philippines) are just a few of the many that exist in the world today.

A need exists today more than ever for qualified men and women to teach in international Bible colleges and seminaries. Nationals need sound biblical training to shepherd God's people, to communicate God's gospel message, and to send missionaries into the world.

When Jesus was born, only a handful of Gentiles worshiped the newborn King. Today millions celebrate the birth of Jesus and worship Him. One reason is that we are reaching the world more effectively as international Bible colleges and seminaries throughout the world teach nationals to be pastors, evangelists, and missionaries.

—Herbert W. Bateman IV.

22 December 1996

World Missions

"It was revealed unto [Simeon] by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ" (Luke 2:26). After Simeon had seen the Lord's Christ, after he had seen God's salvation for all people (vs. 30-31), after he had seen the One who was to be the light to the Gentiles and the glory of Israel (vs. 32), Simeon was ready for death. Simeon had seen the Saviour—he was ready to die in peace (vs. 29).

What does it mean to die in peace? While serving as a hospital chaplain years ago, I ministered to and grew to love a woman (we will call her Betty) who was dying of AIDS.

Although Betty had grown up in the church, had made a profession of faith as a child, and had been involved in church ministries as a teenager, she had drifted from God. After she married her non-Christian boyfriend, they continued to flirt with illegal drugs, misuse alcohol, and engage in a sexually permissive life-style.

After Betty's marriage failed and she divorced, she met another man, a Christian man. Although Betty gave up her permissive ways, realigned her life with Jesus Christ, married a fine Christian man, and now had a good Christian marriage, she had contracted HIV. When I met Betty, she was struggling with cancer and entering the later stages of AIDS.

Together we grappled with her fear—the fear of physical death. Together we fought off doubts—doubts about her faith. Together we wrestled with what it means to know and experience God's forgiveness.

On one occasion, I read to her from *Our Daily Bread* (March 1993). The verse was Matthew 14:22, part of the section that recounts the time

when Jesus' disciples were crossing the Sea of Galilee in the midst of an early morning storm. Jesus came to His disciples by walking on the water and exhorted them to take courage.

Peter then got out of the boat, walked on the water, and went to Jesus. When Peter saw the wind, though, he became frightened and began to sink. He cried out, "Lord, save me!" (Matt. 14:30). Jesus immediately reached out and caught Peter.

Our Daily Bread's point for the day was this: "When we are tossed by the waves of adversity and buffeted by the winds of human experience, we begin to doubt God's care." We might even say we forfeit God's peace when we refuse to take God at His word. God used our time together and similar opportunities to help ward off some of Betty's battles with doubt.

The resolution of Betty's battles is evident in this prayer she wrote: "God, I am now willing to put my life into Your care. Align my will with Yours, and help me recognize and carry out Your will. Open my heart so that I may be a free and open channel for Your love. Take away my fears and doubts so that I may better demonstrate Your presence in my life. May Your will, not mine, be done. Amen." Two months later, Betty died in peace.

What does it mean to die in peace? To die in peace means having seen the Lord's Christ. When Jesus was born, Simeon saw God's salvation—he saw Jesus, the promised Christ, and thus was ready to die in peace. Two thousand years later, people can still see Jesus and die in peace. Betty did.

Missions, whether across the street or around the world, is about introducing people to the Lord's Christ.

—Herbert W. Bateman IV.

29 December 1996

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John the Baptizer was God's first pathfinder for Jesus. He paved the way for Jesus. He pointed people to God's coming salvation. He pointed people to Jesus.

Today missionaries from all over the world are God's pathfinders. They pave the way for God's great salvation. In fact, over the centuries, countless missionaries have pointed the way to Jesus.

In America, the Puritan John Eliot was a pathfinder for Jesus among the Algonquin Indians of Massachusetts. A black preacher, John Steward, and a converted runaway slave, Jonathan Painter, pointed Wyandot Indians to Christ. Early pioneers like Henry and Eliza Spaulding paved the way to Jesus among the Nez Percé and Spokane Indians.

Evangelists like George Whitefield, Charles Finney, D.L. Moody, Billy Sunday, and Billy Graham have pointed countless Americans to Jesus Christ.

An English lay preacher, William Carey, and the Church of Scotland's first missionary, Alexander Duff, were early pathfinders for Christ in India.

Massachusetts-born Adoniram and Ann Judson, the United States' first foreign missionaries, and George and Sarah Broadman, also from the United States, pointed people to Jesus in Burma.

Today Rochunga Pudaite of Manipur provides translations of the New Testament for those in India, Burma, Thailand, and Sri Lanka. These translations are used of God to point thousands to Jesus.

Robert and Mary Moffat were Scottish pathfinders for Christ in South Africa. A committed Scottish woman, Mary Slessor, paved the way to Jesus

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among the Okoyongs in Calabar (present-day Nigeria), where no white man had been able to survive. Today the evangelical Anglican bishop of Uganda, Festo Kivengere, works to point Ugandans and other Africans to Jesus Christ.

The German-born Karl Gutzlaff and the English-born Hudson Taylor were effective pathfinders for Christ in China. They had a great impact on China for Jesus because they identified with the Chinese people by speaking and dressing like them.

China's most outstanding evangelist was the Canadian-born Jonathan Goforth. Both he and his wife, Rosalind, pointed scores of Chinese, Manchurians, and Koreans to Christ with their "open house" evangelism.

Today Philip Teng of Hong Kong and Paul Yonggi Cho of Korea have taken the lead in evangelizing and pointing people in the Far East to Christ. In fact, Paul Yonggi Cho pastors one of the two largest Protestant churches in the world today.

In Latin American, C. I. Scofield paved the way to Christ when he sought to resolve Costa Rica's spiritual poverty. Missionaries were sent not only to Costa Rica but also to El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua.

Today the native-born Argentine evangelist Luis Palau points thousands of Latin Americans to Jesus through evangelistic crusades, television, and radio.

At one time, John the Baptizer was the only one who pointed people to Jesus. Since then, thousands continue to be used by God to point the way to God's great salvation through Jesus Christ.

—Herbert W. Bateman IV.

5 January 1997

Most of us live hurried lives. We are hard-pressed at work, at home, and at church to accomplish more than a twenty-four hour day seems to allow. The demands are overwhelming. In fact, full schedules cause many people to depend on a scheduler to stay organized and productive. The scheduler helps busy people plan their day, stay on top of events, boost their productivity, and find more time for family and leisure.

More important, a scheduler helps busy people prioritize—weigh the importance of each task for long-term as well as short-term goals. Some things are high on the priority list; other things must wait. Sometimes priorities shift at the last minute to meet highly important and urgent needs; nevertheless, prioritizing is paramount.

The account of Mary and Martha is about priorities. Jesus said to Martha, "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:41-42). "But one thing is needful" is a statement that sets priorities. Jesus commended Mary for taking time to sit and listen to Him. Regular listening to Jesus through Bible study is a priority.

Another priority set by Jesus is found in Matthew. Jesus said, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (28:19-20).

Sadly, the importance and urgency of missions across the street and around the world are no longer important and urgent priorities in many

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churches today. Some churches view missions as highly important but not urgent. They invite missionaries who are raising support to visit and present their programs. They express an interest in supporting the missionary but withhold any decision for a year. The missionary cannot advance but is left in a holding pattern. Missions is important but not urgent.

Other churches view missions as urgent but not important. They too invite missionaries to visit and present their programs. They too express an interest in supporting the missionary. They, however, provide the missionary fifteen dollars a month support. As gracious as that fifteen dollars might appear, it is not in keeping with today's cost of living. An urgency exists, but missions is not important.

Christianity Today (July 1995) recently reported that the Latin America Mission (LAM) was questioned about its fund-raising techniques. The allegation was that LAM practices "a Madison Avenue, hard-sell" approach. Why? Why would a mission agency resort to such measures? One reason is that missions is not an important and urgent priority in many churches today.

Many churches need a scheduler. They need help in prioritizing the important and urgent matters. Many people are willing, ready, and waiting to go. They just need a church to send them.

Jesus said that He came to this world to seek and to save the lost. When He returned to heaven, He left us with that task. Let us not be Marthas, "troubled about many things" (Luke 10:41). Let us be Marys. Let us prioritize and focus on what is important and urgent.

—Herbert W. Bateman IV.

12 January 1997

Jesus once asked His disciples, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" (Matt. 16:13)? Who was Jesus, anyway? Most people of His day viewed Him as some sort of prophet (John the Baptist, Elijah, or Jeremiah, for example).

Islam, a state religion in some twenty-five countries and the professed religion of over 1 billion individuals, continues to consider Jesus to be a prophet, a great prophet. In fact, according to the Koran, Muhammad, founder of Islam (A.D. 570-632), was convinced that Jesus was Allah's prophet who prepared the way for his arrival.

Muhammad viewed himself to be a prophet to the Arabs in much the same way that Jesus was a prophet. In fact, Muhammad taught that when Jesus was born, it was foretold that Jesus would be someone who would be noble, live a righteous life, and be favored by Allah in this world as well as the next.

Muhammad listed Jesus with various prophets numerous times, but he emphatically denied that Allah ever had a son. In fact, Christianity is condemned for teaching that Jesus is the Son of Allah.

Muhammad nevertheless portrayed Jesus in the Koran as a significant messenger of Allah with superior gifts. From His cradle, the Koran ascribes these words to Baby Jesus: "I am the servant of Allah. He has given me the Gospel and ordained me a prophet. His blessing is upon me wherever I go, and He has commanded me to be steadfast in prayer and to give alms to the poor as long as I shall live. He has exhorted me to honor my mother and has purged me of vanity and wickedness. I was blessed on the day I was

born, and blessed I shall be in the day of my death; and my peace be upon me on the day when I shall be raised to life."

In the Koran, Jesus has the highest ranking among all the prophets. He has special abilities to further proclaim Allah's message. In fact, His abilities prepare for the grand finale of the prophets—Muhammad himself. Despite His prominence in the Koran, Jesus' position there is less than what Peter said about Jesus. Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16).

Peter's confession occurred just prior to Jesus' teaching to His disciples on humility, love, and forgiveness (Matt. 18). Since Jesus, in His first advent, appeared not as the majestic Ruler but as a suffering Messiah who would take away the sins of the world, the disciples had to learn how to love and forgive one another. Jesus thus began to prepare His disciples for His departure—His death and resurrection.

Islam, like many religions throughout the world today, has an elevated view of Jesus. Jesus, however, is not the Messiah who suffered death and resurrection for the sins of the world. In fact, the Koran denies the crucifixion of the Messiah. In Islam, salvation does not come through Jesus Christ; it comes through the Koran.

Missionaries who minister to Muslims have a difficult task because Jesus is highly venerated as a great prophet. He is, however, more than a great prophet, a moral teacher, or a good example. Jesus is "the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16). He came and took away the sin of the world, and He provides salvation to those who trust in Him alone.

—Herbert W. Bateman IV.

Judas Iscariot's betrayal alerts us to the fact that no one is exempt from the possibility of betraying Jesus. As the disciples sat together with Jesus at the last supper, Jesus made an announcement: "Behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table" (Luke 22:21).

After each of the disciples had dipped his hand into the bowl with Jesus, Jesus announced that someone close to Him, one of His followers, one of His companions, was about to betray Him. Although the individual was not specifically identified by Jesus, he was a comrade of Jesus.

Judas, perhaps afraid of exposure because the other disciples had asked if they were the guilty party, also asked, "Master, is it I?" (Matt. 26:25; cf. vs. 14, 16). Judas asked whether he was the one who would betray Jesus.

Betrayal occurs in various forms. It appears that Judas's betrayal may have been rooted in monetary gain. He exchanged loyalty for lucre, friendship for finances. Evangelists, missionaries, and missionary agencies are not beyond betraying their loyalty to Jesus for lucre, their call for coins.

Are you surprised? Why? In all likelihood, one or two well-known television evangelists just came to mind. They had a tremendous ministry, extraordinary visibility, and the trust of millions of people; but they betrayed Jesus for money or for power or for sexual fulfillment.

I once knew of an extremely poor elderly woman (we will call her Mary) who rented a second-floor apartment in a dilapidated home because she could not afford anything else. She had nothing because she had been an alcoholic nearly all of her life.

At the age of fifty-eight, however,

Mary came to know Jesus Christ as her personal Saviour. She turned from alcohol to Jesus. She gained victory over something that had enslaved her nearly forty years.

Since Mary was a shut-in, she always listened to radio and television ministers. In fact, she loved listening to those who spoke about God on the radio and television.

One particular evangelist she loved listening to received a monthly gift of twenty dollars from Mary. Twenty dollars was an extremely large amount of money to her; nevertheless, she faithfully sent twenty dollars to the evangelist, who, it turns out, was self-serving.

I do not condemn those who betray God and His people. God will handle that responsibility. I do not chide Mary, either; nevertheless, good evangelists, missionaries, and mission agencies have suffered because of similar betrayals.

We need to make our dollars count for missionary outreaches. We should not make our money scarce. Churches and individuals are, however, to hold evangelists, missionaries, and mission agencies accountable for their support.

If you financially support a missionary you have not heard from in six months to a year, how do you know he is still on the field? Perhaps he has returned home and taken a job. Are you supplementing someone's income or supporting missions? Regrettably, betrayals occur.

Judas willingly betrayed Jesus for money. Keep in touch with those you support financially. Pray for those you support. Do not, however, allow your support to be misused by someone who has betrayed Jesus.

—Herbert W. Bateman IV.

Barnabas, "son of consolation" (Acts 4:36), a person Luke described as "a good man" (11:24), was chosen and sent by the Jerusalem church—the mother church—to investigate the mixed congregation of Jews and Gentiles in Syrian Antioch. Were the happenings in Syrian Antioch of God? Was it God who was at work in Antioch? These were some of the Jerusalem church's concerns.

As a result, the church sent Barnabas. Barnabas was a man who had distinguished himself as one who had a generous spirit (Acts 4:36-37). He was a man who was understanding and compassionate (9:27; 15:37-39). He was a man who was an encourager.

When Barnabas arrived in Syrian Antioch, he saw God's grace in action. He witnessed God's grace operating among Jews and Gentiles alike. In fact, the entire book of Acts points out that God's grace in action transcends all people groups and cultures. God's grace looks beyond race, color, and creed.

As a result of what Barnabas witnessed in Antioch, he "exhorted (encouraged) them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord" (Acts 11:23).

The church at Antioch had obviously begun well. They merely needed encouragement in the Lord. They merely needed someone to urge them to carry on in their loyal service to Jesus Christ—to exhort them to continue in their obedience to their Lord.

God's grace abounds all over the world today. Perhaps you can give testimony to God's saving grace in the world today. Perhaps you recently received a prayer letter from a missionary that reflects God's saving grace, or perhaps you have experienced first-

hand God's saving grace in a person's life. God's saving grace permeates the world.

Today more than ever, churches are needed to send people who are like Barnabas—people who are understanding of other people's cultures and not judgmental. Missionaries are needed who will dwell on biblical issues. The proclamation of the gospel suffers when people advance Western cultural ideas as biblical mandates. Condemning moral issues will not win target peoples to Jesus Christ.

Churches are needed to send men and women who are understanding and compassionate, not insensitive to new believers and the struggles they face. For instance, for many Arabic, Jewish, Japanese, and Filipino believers, baptism equals a relinquishing of all family ties. We need to be sensitive to such realities.

The church needs to send people who are able to urge other believers to carry on in loyal service for the Lord Jesus Christ. Churches need to send people who are able to encourage believers to continue in their obedience to Jesus Christ.

More important, the church needs to be about the business of sending. The Jerusalem church took it upon itself to send Barnabas to investigate a possible happening of God in Antioch. When Barnabas arrived, he witnessed and testified to God's grace in action.

The historical cry for people to go is superseded today by people who wait. People wait for churches to send them. Today a missionary waits an average of two and a half years before he is actually able to go. Many Barnabases are waiting. They need only a church to send them.

—Herbert W. Bateman IV.

Stephen was a man whom Luke described as being "full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom" (Acts 6:3), a man "full of faith and of the Holy Ghost" (vs. 5), and a man "full of faith and power" (vs. 8). Stephen was a man who stood firm for Jesus. He was a man who spoke up concerning Jesus and a man who surrendered all for Christ.

Stephen applied his convictions concerning God's redemptive program through Jesus to such issues as the land (Acts 7:2-36), the law (vss. 37-43), and the temple for Jewish believers (vss. 44-50). He stood firm for those convictions. He spoke up concerning those convictions. He surrendered his life for those convictions.

The Bible tells us that James the brother of John (Acts 12:2), was also martyred for his faith by Agrippa, grandson of Herod the Great. In fact, Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* (Foxe, Revell) reveals how most of Jesus' disciples were martyred.

The martyrdom of Jesus' disciples, however, should not surprise us. "The Gospels warn continuously that the lot of the disciples would be cast in persecution in imitation of Jesus' own fate (Mk. 13:9-13, Mt. 24:9-13, Lk. 21:12-19)" (Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church*, Baker).

The possible loss of one's own life for the sake of the gospel has always existed for believers. The Apostle Paul gave his neck to the sword. Polycarp (A.D. 70-160), taught by the Apostle John, champion of apostolic tradition, and faithful pastor in Smyrna, was burned alive for refusing to deny Jesus Christ.

Jan Huss (A.D. 1373-1415), was a University of Prague graduate, priest, and Bohemian reformer. With his neck chained to the stake, he was exhorted

to recant his teaching that repentance and remission of sin come through the gospel of Jesus Christ. He refused and was burned alive.

Many people such as Patrick Hamilton, John Hooper, William Bungeor, and Elizabeth Cooper were burned alive at the stake for standing, speaking, and surrendering all for the gospel of Jesus.

Others were martyred while attempting to preach the gospel in new and foreign lands. In 1839 John Williams was clubbed to death and his flesh eaten by natives of Erromanga (one of the islands of Vanuatu).

Dave Bacon, Cecil Dye, George Hosback, Bob Dye, and Eldon Hunter were martyred (1944) while attempting to reach the Ayores in Bolivia with the gospel. In a similar vein, "Operation Auca" in Ecuador ended in tragedy. Nate Saint, Roger Youderian, Jim Elliot, Pete Fleming, and Ed McCully all were martyred while attempting to reach the Aucaas with the gospel in 1956.

Most recently, while serving Jesus Christ in Columbia, Steve Welsh and Tim VanDyke were taken hostage by Marxist revolutionaries in January 1994. They were later killed in June 1995 during a gun battle between the Colombian military troops and the Marxist guerrillas.

Everyone who professes Jesus to be his Saviour is a follower—a disciple—of Jesus Christ—and is thereby subject to persecution and even possible death. Jesus Himself said, "If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you" (John 15:20). How ready are we to be Stephens—to stand, to speak, and to surrender all for the gospel of Jesus Christ?

—Herbert W. Bateman IV.

World Missions

Although we know very little of Aquila and Priscilla, we know enough to affirm that they were close loyal friends to Paul and that they were dedicated servants of Jesus Christ. Paul referred to them as his "helpers in Christ Jesus: who [had] for [his] life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only [he gave] thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles" (Rom. 16:3-4).

While in Corinth, Aquila and Priscilla offered Paul hospitality (Acts 18:2-3). After moving to Ephesus, they hosted a congregation of Ephesian believers in their home (1 Cor. 16:19). They up-dated Apollos on some significant details to complete his teachings about Jesus Christ (Acts 18:26).

They may have helped finance Paul's trip from Ephesus to Jerusalem (cf. Acts 18:20-21). Perhaps they were involved in saving Paul's life during the silversmith riot at Ephesus (cf. 19:23-41).

There are enough facts known about Aquila and Priscilla to conclude that Aquila and Priscilla were a married couple who loved God. They served God together. They sacrificed for God. They remind me of a missionary couple in the Philippines.

Joni and Li WyWy are servants for Jesus Christ to squatters living outside the upper-middle-class village of Paranaque (a suburb of Manila). They live in a makeshift home like those of the WaWa people of the village. Their home might be compared to a makeshift home you might see built by a homeless person here in the United States, except their home is tidy, clean, and well maintained.

Most Filipino squatters, however, live in a one-room dirt-floor shack with no

running water and minimal furniture. Within these makeshift shacks live impoverished families. They are poor financially. They are poor spiritually.

Joni and Li WyWy have chosen to minister to Filipino squatters. As husband and wife, Joni and Li WyWy do not just take God's message to the village and return to a plush home in Paranaque. They exemplify God's message of salvation to the people in these squatter villages by living with them and living as they do.

A CPA by profession, Joni gave up his line of work to attend Asian Theological Seminary (ATS) and serve the Lord as a missionary to Filipino squatters. While Joni attends ATS, Li WyWy conducts Bible studies with the village women.

They also help squatters financially. Those who make professions of faith, and depending on the extent of their need, receive a male and female pig to breed. One-tenth of their income from the sale of the piglets is given to Paranaque Bible Church. They in turn reinvest the money in other male and female pigs for other squatter families.

Supported by Paranaque Bible Church, Joni and Li WyWy's ministry is one of love, service, and sacrifice. Although extremely poor by North American standards, they are helpers in Christ Jesus who daily lay down their lives for the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Joni and Li WyWy are a twentieth-century Aquila and Priscilla. They are a married couple who truly love God, who serve God together as a team, and who truly sacrifice for God. Perhaps your church supports similar missionary couples. Take a moment to pray for them.

—Herbert W. Bateman IV

World Missions

Timothy was born to be a missionary. We learn from Paul that Timothy had known the holy Scriptures from his childhood (1 Tim. 3:15). Like his grandmother Lois and his mother, Eunice, he had a sincere faith (1:5).

After Timothy accepted the gospel message, his God-given gift for service was recognized by church leaders (1 Tim. 1:6). He proved himself to be faithful in the Lord (1 Cor. 4:17). He proved himself to be someone who looked out for the interests of others (Phil. 2:20). For that reason, Paul sent him to Corinth and Philippi to serve God's people in Paul's stead (1 Cor. 4:17; Phil. 2:19). Timothy was a true missionary.

Some people, like Timothy, are born to be missionaries. I grew up with one such person (v.o. will call him Carl). I first met Carl at the age of twelve in Sunday school. I was visiting his church. He came up to me during the pre-Sunday school hour, introduced himself, sat with me, and showed me the ropes.

As time went on, Carl and I became friends. I was always a welcome guest in his home. Dinners with his family after Sunday worship were not an uncommon event in my life; nor was spending a weekend with Carl unusual. In fact, it was at Carl's home that I learned about family devotions.

It seemed that the entire family was mission oriented. His parents were graduates of Columbia Bible College, a fine evangelical school that promotes missions. His uncle was a missionary in Iran. It was only natural that Carl had aspirations of being a missionary. When asked as a teenager, "What do you want to be when you

grow up?" Carl always responded, "I want to be a missionary."

Throughout our junior high and senior high public school days, I never knew Carl to aspire to anything other than being a missionary. He wanted nothing more and nothing less—nothing other than being a missionary for the Lord.

Carl faithfully attended church, youth group, and a teenage organization known as High School Born Againers (HiBA). When participating in high school orchestra and marching band, he was a life-style evangelist. His life exhibited his testimony. I, like many of my peers, had always admired him. I think we all knew that Carl would one day be a missionary.

Carl eventually went on to earn his undergraduate and graduate degrees from Columbia Bible College. Most recently, Carl and his family returned for their third term as missionaries to Taiwan.

Like Timothy, Carl knew the holy Scriptures from early childhood. Like Timothy, Carl had a sincere faith in Jesus Christ. Like Timothy, Carl looked out for the interests of others. Like Timothy, Carl proved himself to be faithful to the Lord. Like Timothy, church leaders recognized Carl's God-given gifts for service. Like Timothy, Carl was sent to serve. He continues to serve Jesus Christ in Taiwan.

Look around. Do any Timothys exist in your church? Who will be the missionaries of tomorrow? Perhaps a few short-term mission opportunities for your young people will cause some young person in your congregation to aspire to one day be nothing more, nothing less, and nothing other than a missionary for Jesus Christ.

—Herbert W. Bateman IV