

Don't Complicate the "Missionary Call"

by David Sitton | July 27, 2011

I was never called to be a missionary, nor was I drafted. I volunteered. No special call was needed. I chose to go; I wanted to go; I was compelled to go. And where I go is always determined by an open Bible and a stretched-out map of the regions where Christ is still unknown and un-praised!

I chuckle when I hear missionaries and pastors talk about "surrendering to the call" of ministry. I always want to ask, "After you surrendered, were you water-boarded, or just hauled off in handcuffs and leg irons." Was it really necessary for you to be abducted by a heavenly vision before you would go into the work of the gospel?

The missionary call is not like a prison dog that tracks us down, sniffs us out, and hog-ties us for the nations. That is silly-talk and really bad theology. Nowhere in Scripture is a mysterious (supernatural) call a prerequisite before we can respond to the Great Commission. The opposite is actually true.

Don't Wait for a Call

No aspect of mission is more bogged down with extra-biblical baggage than the "missionary call." The clear command of Christ "to go" should be, by itself, sufficient to set you on your way "into all the world. . . proclaiming the gospel to the whole creation" (Mark 16:15). You can't go wrong by trying to go. Trust the Lord to direct your moving feet. If you are convinced of your "call" to "stay", this will only serve as added confirmation that you are right. Don't fear the risk of ending up some place the Lord doesn't want you. Too many already took that "risk" when they assumed a stateside ministry or vocation with no confirmation other than their own desires.

Dramatic calls to ministry are the exception. If you have it in your heart to go, then go. Then, lean on the sovereignty of God to get you where he wants you in the harvest. Don't worry about "running ahead of God." You aren't that quick!

Try to Go

Paul tried to go into Asia, but the Lord wouldn't let him. He then tried to go to Bithynia, but was "kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia." Still, he kept trying to go. I count at least six cities in Acts 16 where Paul tried to take the gospel. It was only then that the Lord gave him a vision of the Macedonian. He woke up the next morning and immediately headed for the regions north, having "concluded that God had called them to preach the gospel in Macedonia.

The heavenly vision wasn't a "call" to mission, it was specific guidance for missionaries that were already going.

The point? Don't complicate the missionary call. Get radical with the going and God will get radical in the specific guiding.

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