

Maintaining Prayer for the World-Wide Outreach of the Gospel

by S.M. Houghton

The sermon emphasizes the importance of co-missionaries in supporting missionary work through prayer and practical aid, and encourages believers to stay informed and involved in the spread of the Gospel.

Scripture: Isaiah 6:8, Matthew 28:19, Romans 10:14, Philippians 4:6, Colossians 4:2, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, James 5:16

Topics: "Missions", "Prayer Support"

Description

S.M. Houghton emphasizes the vital role of 'co-missionaries' in missionary enterprise, highlighting the importance of those who support missions through prayerful interest and practical aid, even if they do not go overseas themselves. He shares his experience of participating in a missionary prayer meeting for over forty years, where a small local fellowship maintained a strong interest in global missionary work. The focus of the meetings includes hymns, Scripture readings, missionary literature, and updates on individual missionaries, fostering a deep connection with the worldwide Gospel enterprise. Houghton underscores the significance of supporting missionaries through prayer, financial contributions, and active involvement in mission work, as every believer has a part to play in fulfilling the Great Commission.

Transcript

The 'ordinary' believer who has no 'call' to the work of Christ overseas may still have an important part in missionary enterprise. It has been said that there are three kinds of missionaries--the go-missionaries (who respond to a divine call), the co-missionaries (who stay at home and help by prayerful interest and, where possible, practical aid), and the o-missionaries (who lack interest in the work of mission). We take up the case of the co-missionaries in one of its aspects, and here the writer draws upon his experience of the 'missionary prayer meeting' covering some forty years. It has never been his lot to belong to one of the larger evangelical churches from which (in all probability) missionaries have gone overseas. Doubtless where this is the case the home church has a distinct responsibility for maintaining a close practical and prayerful interest in such workers. But, in the providence of God, he has been in fellowship with small local gatherings where interest in missionary work has been otherwise maintained. At the outset of his Christian career he belonged to a church in which, unhappily, missionary enterprise was 'taboo'. Indeed it was all but regarded as dangerous, Arminian and unthinkable. Even so, individual members of the church were able to admire records of past historic missionary enterprise, but for the church and denomination as a whole all such activities in the present were scarcely to be mentioned, 'as becometh saints'. They were

certainly discouraged, if not completely banned, despite the commandments of the New Testament.

Shortly, however, a better day dawned and the special monthly missionary prayer meeting became an established feature of church life. It continues so to this day. What pattern does it follow? One of the utmost simplicity. The hymns selected for the gathering will obviously bear upon the missionary theme {e.g. 'O Spirit of the living God', etc.}; the Scripture readings (usually with very brief comment, and as far as possible consecutive from month to month) are chosen from portions of the Word (Gospels, Acts, Epistles) which are missionary-slanted; and then, before prayer, readings follow from current missionary literature. Interest is preferentially concentrated upon individual missionaries known personally to members of the fellowship, or known by reputation, and from time to time their circular letters (where issued) are received and read. The monthly, bi-monthly or quarterly magazines of several doctrinally sound Missionary Societies are received, and carefully selected extracts, in variety, are read aloud to the meeting. It may be of interest to some if precise information is given at this point. Be it said, therefore, that the literature in question mainly comprises the magazines of the European Missionary Fellowship, the Hebrew Christian Testimony to Israel, the North Africa Mission, the Central Asian Mission, the Overseas Missionary Fellowship, the Strict Baptist Mission, and the French Village workers. Be it specially mentioned that the work of the Trinitarian Bible Society is also kept in close view, for it is regarded as rendering one of the most desirable and essential of services to the missionary cause at large; likewise the Scripture Gift Mission.

A large world map is always displayed on these occasions so that friends can have their attention directed to the exact localities involved. This serves to pin-point the interest of the eye, especially where the geographical 'bump' is relatively undeveloped. Thus, if say Nepal or Ghana are in view, a finger will indicate to the ignorant where these countries are located. As opportunity offers, a missionary on furlough or the representative of a Society attends to give a first-hand account of work in hand. Periodically the collections of a Lord's Day are devoted to a worker or society, as may be upon the hearts of the church.

Thus it is that, in a small local fellowship an interest in the world-wide Gospel enterprise is maintained and fostered from month to month and from year to year. There is nothing spectacular to be recorded but in our measure we become linked with those who go forth bearing precious seed. Missionary labours are not recorded in Britain's newspapers; they furnish no head-lines; but in the eyes of the Lord of the harvest--and His eyes run to and fro throughout the whole earth, beholding the evil and the good--they are of vast importance, and stay-at-homes may reckon it one of their choicest Christian and church privileges to belong to the company of the Lord's remembrancers, giving Him no rest until His elect are gathered in from one end of heaven to the other.

Baptise the nations, far and wide

The triumphs of the cross record,

The Name of Jesus glorify,

Till every kindred call Him Lord.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/sm-houghton/maintaining-prayer-for-the-world-wide-outreach-of-the-gospel/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net