

MACEDONIAN CALL

"Come over into Macedonia and help us." (Acts 16: 10.)

INDIANAPOLIS, IND., AUGUST, 1926.

MISSIONARY LETTER

Dear Brethren in Christ Jesus:--

When you look over the brotherhood and see the utter lack of interest in the salvation of souls in the minds of the great mass of the brethren, and consequently the lack of interest in trying to establish new churches and to strengthen weak ones--does it not fill your heart with sadness? If it does not, we would better begin to worry about ourselves, for the great purpose of Christ's coming to this world was to seek and save that which is lost.

Of course, I know that we are living in an age of apostasy and indifference; an age when many people are forsaking what truth they have and are going after the wisdom of men in religion; an age when the spirit of the world has about quenched the Spirit of God in the hearts of so many professed Christians. But nevertheless I believe that there are great opportunities before the true Church of God, if it were just ready to grasp them. Denominationalism is crumbling to pieces, and many people are longing for the old ways and the old paths. I believe that I can get out with a tent, and with plenty of means behind the work for advertising, can establish several new churches each year, and look after them.

The Church of Christ needs to learn the lesson of zeal as taught in the New Testament, and of the advancement of Christ's kingdom as taught by both prophets and apostles. Daniel said that the kingdom of Christ should break in pieces and consume all these earthly kingdoms, and Isaiah said that of the increase of Christ's kingdom there would be no end. Jesus said, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." The apostolic Christians so spread the gospel that Paul could say that it had been preached to every creature under heaven.

When we look at the people called the Church of Christ, we find the apostolic doctrine but not the apostolic zeal. Nearly all the denominations have more zeal than the Church of Christ, though we say that they have much error and that we have the truth. It seems that the children of error are more zealous than the children of truth.

We do not have the missionary spirit that we had seven or eight years ago. ~~xxxxxxx~~ While I was with Bro. O. M. Blackorby several days ago (a brother who you know is interested in missionary work), we looked over the reports of several years ago, and there was much more of a spirit of advancement than now. In Indiana we probably have one hundred churches which report through the Review, and about twenty-five preachers. Yet I do not remember seeing a record in the Review of a single new church being established in Indiana by these churches and preachers last year. Don't misunderstand me. There was much good done, and many souls saved; but there were no new bands established by us in the state. Quite a number of preachers spend much of their time in other states, which partly accounts for the poor showing. Brethren, are we satisfied with this record?

While many are drifting into this indifference and worldliness I am glad to say that in my visits among the churches I find some who have a growing desire for purity and advancement among the disciples, and are making great sacrifices to save souls. It does me good to be with such people.

Possibly the greatest means of advancement of the gospel in apostolic days was not through formal missionaries but through the individual zeal of the soul-stirred convert. When the disciples were

scattered abroad because of the persecution of Saul, they went everywhere preaching the Word. I believe that the way above all others to save the world is to get every individual Christian so enthused with the old story that he will wish to tell it to others. But the Philippian brethren sent once and again to Paul's necessities while he was out preaching the Word in new fields, and he commends them for their zeal in that respect. This is a good example for us. Philippi was in Macedonia, and it was a man of Macedonia which called Paul there. So the Macedonians through the Philippians passed the gospel on to others when they themselves had believed--just the way we all should do.

When we make an effort to plant the church in new fields, especially in the larger towns, I believe we should put out the men who can tell story of Jesus in most forcible way. Instead of forcing beginners into mission fields and using the strongest preachers always with the largest churches. But most preachers have families, and "who goeth a warfare at his own charges?" Do you ever ask these mission workers how much they are getting for the labor, and try to make up the deficit in their living? I believe there are quite a number of preachers who would like to spend much time in new fields. Let us see that those men have a living, who are enduring the hardships of going into new fields.

NOTICE!

Here is a plan which quite a number think will do some good in stirring brethren and churches to help the mission workers. I have a mimeograph which I am using to the glory of God, and am willing to give freely of my time to the work of getting out some literature to help. About once in two months, how would it do to print missionary letters on sheets the size of the one you are now reading (which is printed on the mimeograph), having short, pointed articles on mission work, suggestions about how best to do it, etc.? These Missionary Letters could be sent in bundles to some interested person in a church, and he could distribute them on Lord's days to those who he thinks might become interested. People are not going to do missionary work unless they are educated to it, and why not commence such an education NOW? By coming to the people in this way (a little different from any other yet tried), possibly some good could be done; and if only a little, it would be that much. I feel sure that brethren will support this work so that we can almost send it out free.

Isolated disciples have a good chance to work according to such a plan, for they can send of their means to the mission workers and their needs which we shall try to keep before the reader. We would like to get the names and addresses of all isolated disciples who would like to have a church planted in their community, and who are willing to make sacrifices to keep it going? Too many brethren are losing their souls by going into a community where there is not an apostolic church, and by going to asleep in the arms of the Devil of this world. The scattering of disciples in apostolic days became one of the means of spreading the faith, while today it seems to be a means of losing our faith.

Possibly, too, if we can get brethren interested in the work of saving souls, they will lose their contentious spirit and their hatred of others, and mere local church troubles may diminish some.

Brethren, what do you say? Show this Macedonia Call to other brethren and talk about establishing the Cause in some adjoining community. Let me hear from you whether you endorse this FULL ALTOGETHER to stir the brethren to greater missionary work. Let's arouse ourselves from our indifference.

D. A. Sommer,
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Indianapolis, Ind.

Commendations of This Missionary Plan

I sent the foregoing page to about 150 brethren, and here are some comments which I take the liberty of culling from private letters:

O. M. Blackorby.--I have your letter enclosing copies of "Macedonian Call", and I like it fine. Certainly letters of that kind will do some good and we might be able to stir a real mission spirit by keeping it up. Let me know if you receive any financial support on it from other sources; and if not, how much you will be short for postage and paper on the first issue.

(Remark.--Review readers know that this brother has a real interest in mission work. He is highly respected by the people in the community where he lives, and I am sure that what he receives for mission work will be used conscientiously.)

W. E. Ballenger.--I am sure glad you are pushing mission work. The missionary spirit has died out in the last few years. The growth of the Cause depends on mission work. I am at present in a mission meeting with Bro. Brinker. I have been starved out of the field a few times but will try again. I think your idea of getting this before the brethren fine, and I believe others will favor the plan. If you will give me an idea of what it will cost to get out that sheet, I will help raise the money.

(Remark.--There are several preachers, who, like Bro. Ballenger, have been "starved out" of mission work. He did not intend that for publication but I believe it should be said. Brethren, let us cut down on our fine clothes, fine homes, fine automobiles, joy rides and many other luxuries, etc., and save a few souls with the money. Will God hold us guiltless if we don't?)

J. A. Collins.--Began here (Huzzah, Mo.) last night with small audience, and will continue as long as interest demands. This is a mission point--only one member here, a man well informed in the Bible. Since talking with you, I have thought much about how to arouse the brethren to a sense of their duty. I believe the plan you suggested is worth a trial. I am sure it can do no harm. If the overseers in the congregations can be persuaded to take the matter up with the various congregations and discuss it among themselves, we may be able to accomplish something. I believe in mission work, and engage in it as far as I am able, but the lethargy of the brethren prevents us doing the work we should do. I will talk this to the brethren where I go.

(Remark.--Here is another preacher who is interested in mission work. Brethren, ask these men who are working in new and weak fields, how much they are getting, and then ask yourselves if you would be willing to work for that much.)

Edward Buttram.--I am now at Alley, Mo., trying to do some good, but it is a hard fight, for the church has not been meeting on the first day of the week for about a year. In regard to the proposed sheet, I think it is good. I believe it will cause many to think of the careless condition they are in. I expect to do what I can to help along. How do you have in mind that that work will be sustained? I believe disciples will help, if you would mention it in your next issue that all who wish to help can send their finance, and thus start the work to rolling. Some of these churches are young, and while they know how they came into existence is a good time to get them to reach out to help some one else. Let's set our stakes and stay with the work until others can see the results.

(Remark.--Here is another preacher who has sacrificed much to save souls. He told me that he quit preaching last fall to support his family, and made as much at carpentering last winter as he had in three years preaching. Yet when he catches up in finances, he goes back to the field to save souls. Must a man use for God his ability to preach, but your ability to make money may be used nearly altogether for yourself--to furnish luxuries for yourself and family? I mean YOU--I am not talking to the Chinese or Jews! If you don't know, the next time you pray (if you do pray), ask the Lord about it--the One who died for YOU.

J. W. S.--I realize that the missionary spirit is waning, (this I regret), and feel that it should be revived, if possible. I think the plan you speak of (through the Macedonia Call), could be worked for good. I also think you could do much good by going into new fields with a tent. May the Lord bless every effort for the advancement of the Cause, I will try to assist you take up the tent work.

(Remark.--The wind blew down and to pieces an old tent I was using this summer, but we finished a fine meeting in an old Christian Church building. But a mission meeting in W. Va., had to be abandoned for lack of tent.--D. A. S.)

G. I.--I received one of your letters, "Macedonian Call", which I heartily endorse. I think the ablest men should be sent to the mission field, that they may be able to manage anything that comes up. Ero. Lon and I have some money put side for mission work and ~~think it a good way to help support the gospel.~~

(Remark.--This is a good example. If brethren can not get a church as such interested in pushing out, they can individually help the mission workers, which is in fact the way most of it is done. This brother and sister sent five dollars to help in this good work.)

B. R.--I endorse all you say in the letter (Macedonian Call), and am willing to help finance it.

Floyd Bradley.--I most heartily endorse the plan you suggest for stirring the missionary spirit among the churches.

Edmund Ratta.--Your plan might do some good, so go ahead. Praying you may have success in that mission effort, etc.

D. W. Clothier.--I think your plan outlined in the circular letter is all right, but when churches are in the condition they are in, it is hard to interest them in anything.

(Remark.--Possibly if we can get brethren interested in saving souls they will cease trying to be "great".)

WHAT ARE WE DOING?

I wish I had space to print all that was in the letters from which I have taken the liberty to take the foregoing extracts. I rejoice that there are a few souls which are not asleep. The cost of putting out this issue of the Macedonia Call is about \$35, most of it for stamps. Fifteen dollars have been paid. Who will help make up the deficit, and help on the next issue? My work is donated. Probably once in two months is as often as we can put it out now, and its existence depends on YOU. I mean the one who is reading this NOW. All who wish several copies of this free, can send for them to D. A. Sommer, 918 Congress Ave., Indianapolis, Ind. Also, to help in mission work, I will reduce to fifteen cents a copy the price of the song book, "Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs", to be used in new and weak places. It has many good invitation songs. The purpose which I have had in talking and writing so much on Mutual Edification has been to develop the churches so that they could largely take care of themselves, and could then stand behind the men in the new and weak fields. But many churches today wish to be entertained than to be useful for the Lord. I would like to hear from every one who endorses this plan mentioned in this letter. I believe there are great opportunities before the true church. I recently held a meeting in a dilapidated Christian Church building, near which five disciples were meeting, and we left twenty-three substantial people worshipping God, most of whom came out of Babylon or the world. The private personal work of one brother caused the establishment of that church. There is as fine a prospect there as I know of, but it took zeal and talk and prayers to bring it all about. Until the church gets on its knees there is not much hope.

The Macedonians are calling from many places. Do you hear them?