

CONCEPTS: A Missionary Mindset

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We live in a sin-cursed world. The great majority of the people on the earth and in our nation, state, county, and community are lost, unregenerated men and women. We are commanded and commissioned by our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, to be salt and light. We are to be salt to the saved and light to the lost.

We confess with Abraham that we are “strangers and pilgrims on the earth” (Heb. 11:13b). We look “for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Heb. 11:10). We “desire a better country, that is, an heavenly” (Heb. 11:16). We say with John in Rev. 22:20, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus,” but until He comes we must maintain a Missionary Mindset.

Our family was privileged to be part of a mission assignment in Amsterdam, the capital city of The Netherlands, for three months in 2004 (thanks to the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board and Alcorn Association in Corinth, where I was missions director). We worked with five Southern Baptist International Mission Board families and assisted them any way we could.

Though only for three months, we got a glimpse of missionary life on the field that went beyond a ten-day trip.

Amsterdam was the most pagan, heathen, pornographic, vulgar place I have ever lived. What a place for my wife Becky and three little boys (Bailey, 12; Kaleb, nine; and Austin, six). There were very few saved people around us. The environment around our family was toxic and yet, those three months may have been the best three months our family of five ever had. Why? We had a Missionary Mindset.

We need a Missionary Mindset today in our nation and in our state. A missionary understands they are not permanent fixtures in a foreign land — they are temporary. They do not put down deep roots that take from the soil, but they fertilize and plant — giving, not taking. In the words of Albert E. Brumley’s hymn, “This world is not my home, I’m just a passing through.”

A missionary does not expect to be part of the majority of the culture or religion in the country to which he has been sent. A missionary does not expect to “fit in.” A missionary knows he will be different from the rank and file. He is there to offer a difference.

A missionary is not in a foreign land to defend the reputation and history of his homeland. His purpose is not promoting “nationalism.” The Kingdom of God (Heaven) is his priority. My father Eugene Digby had a life verse: “But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matt. 6:33).

A missionary is not looking for an opportunity to invest money to make a profit. He is there to divest his resources, not invest. Many of us are living and investing in this world as if we will live forever. We won’t. British missionary C. T. Studd wrote, “Only one life, ’twill soon be past, only what’s done for Christ will last.” Our tombstone (Becky’s, Austin’s, and mine) in Henry Cemetery in Corinth bears the following statement: “This short life ’twill soon be past, only what’s done for Christ will last.”

In Amsterdam, I would see something at a flea market I wanted but then I'd remember the fifty-pound baggage limit on the airplane coming home. The only shipments to Heaven will be what we give to others.

A true missionary is not a real estate agent. He's not concerned with property, buildings (rich farmer, Luke 12:16-21), or monuments. Office hours are not the yardstick of effectiveness for a missionary. He is in the people business, introverted or not. He looks for an opening, an opportunity to share his witness and disciple a believer. From the beginning, he is training his own replacement. How wonderful would that be?

A missionary looks forward to going home and seeing family and friends. Even after only three months, we could not wait to see our loved ones. Anyone with a Missionary Mindset looks forward to our Heavenly Home and those future reunions.

When you look at your county, your state, your nation, and it seems to be a strange place, God is calling you to the mission field right where you are.

As a missionary, we are IN the world, but not OF the world. We are insulated but not isolated. We are embedded in the world, not indebted to the world. When you look at your county, your state, your nation, and it seems to be a strange place, God is calling you to the mission field right where you are.

For your own joy, peace, and sense of wellbeing in the coming days, you will need a Missionary Mindset.

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