

# WHAT CONSTITUTES A MISSIONARY CALL



**ROBERT E. SPEER, D.D.**

**INTERCHURCH WORLD MOVEMENT  
OF NORTH AMERICA  
45 WEST 18TH STREET                      NEW YORK CITY**

# What Constitutes A Missionary Call

An Address  
Delivered at the Student  
Conferences

by

ROBERT E. SPEER, D.D.  
Secretary, Presbyterian Board of  
Foreign Missions

INTERCHURCH WORLD MOVEMENT  
OF NORTH AMERICA

45 WEST 18TH STREET

NEW YORK CITY

*Reprinted by the Interchurch World Movement, by Courtesy of the Student Volunteer Movement For Foreign Missions.*

Price, 5 cents each, 50 cents per dozen, \$2.75 per hundred.

# What Constitutes A Missionary Call

---

What constitutes a missionary call? I think almost all of us are familiar with the issue that is involved in this question; some of us because we have faced it in our own lives and have tried to work our way through to an answer; and some of us because we have met it in the lives of other men, some of whom were honestly endeavoring to find an answer to it, and others of whom were making it a cover for all sorts of immoral subterfuges and evasions and untruths of character.

In two regards it is a good sign that men ask this question with reference to the work of foreign missions and their duty to it. It suggests that men think of the missionary enterprise as a solemn enterprise, an enterprise that is related in a singular way to God, and over which God exercises a singular care; and in the second place it indicates that they believe, if they are sincere, that their lives are owned by a Person who has a right to direct them and whose call they must await. When that has been said, however, I think everything has been said that can be allowed in favor of that question, and I want to go on at once to say that it is a question which can easily become thoroughly heathen and un-Christian.

By what right do we sever our life into departments, either geographically or other-

wise, and say with reference to certain departments of life, "Now I will not enter upon that sphere of life until I have a call different in degree or kind from the call with which I would be satisfied to enter upon any other department of life?" What right has any man to be willing to study law under any less positive assurance that it is the will of God that he should do it than a man must have who goes out into the mission field? You and I have no right to set off certain departments of life from other departments and to say of those, "Those departments are different from others; we will not think of entering upon those without special divine sanction, without an unusual sort of divine leading different from the kind with which we would be satisfied to enter upon any other branch of service." What is there in the Rio Grande to compel a man to have one kind of assurance that it is the will of God that he should preach on the south side of it, and another kind that he should preach on the north side of it? Is this world so different in different parts of it that I should be willing to work in Texas on grounds that I should not regard as sufficient to allow me to work in Mexico? What is there in the oceans that warrants a man demanding evidence that it is the will of God that he should work on one side of them that he does not demand as justifying his working on the other? This conception of distinction in the sacredness of spheres of life is pagan. Christianity contends that the whole life and all service are to be consecrated

and that no man dare do anything but the will of God and can know nothing less or more than that it is God's will that he should adopt any course. And there can be no more than this either required or possible in the case of foreign missions.

Suppose I were a slave owned by a master, and cotton was ready to be picked, and the order had gone out from my master that the cotton must be picked at all hazards all over the plantation: because he had not come personally to me to speak to me, might I plead, "In the absence of any specific call from my master, to pick cotton, I will go a-fishing, or I will do some business of my own?" Is it not a fair analogy? You and I stand in a world where the Master's work needs to be done. He has told us to go out into this world and do His work. Because He has not come and spoken individually to us and said, "This work is your individual work," are we therefore free to go about our own business?

And if men are going to draw lines of division between different departments of service, what preposterous reasoning leads them to think that it requires less divine sanction for a man to spend his life easily among Christian people than it requires for him to go out as a missionary to the heathen? If men are to have special calls for anything, they ought to have special calls to go about their own business, to have a nice time all their lives, to choose the soft places, and to make money, and to gratify their own ambitions. How can any honest Christian man demand a call not to do that

sort of thing, and say that unless he gets some specific call of God to preach the gospel to the heathen, he has a perfect right to spend his life lining his pockets with money? Is it not absurd to allege that a special missionary call is necessary, while a man may go on any pretext into any work that means simply the gratification of his own will or personal ambitions?

There is a dilemma involved in this erroneous conception of the missionary call. We believe surely that God has an interest in the evangelization of the world. If He has an interest in the evangelization of the world,—I mean any particular interest in it, that leads Him to desire to have it done,—He must have “called” enough men, on the theory that He does call men in that special way, to evangelize the world. Well, it has not been evangelized. So either God has not called them, or else He has called them and they have not gone. You who believe that this kind of a special call is necessary have to believe in consequence that there are a lot of men around this country who have been called in this supernatural way into the mission work and have not gone, or else that God has no particular interest in the present evangelization of the world, or else you have to abandon this notion of special missionary calls.

After all, what do men mean when they speak of the necessity of a special missionary call? Do they mean that a man has to have some supernatural kind of mechanical indication of the divine will? “A call,” men say, “for example, like that that came

to the apostle Paul; I would be satisfied with that. Or the kind of a call I have heard Bishop Thoburn speak of; I would be satisfied with that." I believe they had these experiences, but I do not believe it is necessary that everyone should have them. David Livingstone had no such call. He says himself that he went simply out of a sense of duty. William Goodell had no such call. He consecrated himself behind an old tree stump at Andover over his Bible and the last command of Jesus Christ. Henry Martyn, William Carey, Keith-Falconer, nine-tenths of the great missionaries of the world never had any such calls. Now if a call like this is necessary before a man may be sure that it is his duty to go out to the mission field, did these men do wrong in going? Do you say that the noblest men that ever served God in the world flew in the face of Providence because they did not have the particular sort of call you are asking for?

Or a man says he wants a dream. The other night I dreamed that I went trout fishing, and I met a lady, and she asked me for my rod, and I loaned it to her, and she cast the fly through a window of a grain elevator and caught a little black puppy. Now do you mean to tell me that that was a divine indication of what my duty was to be on the following day? And yet there are scores of men who would laugh at this illustration who have hid behind the pitiful evasion that they lack a nocturnal missionary call, who have alleged if only some divine leading might come to them of the



kind that came to Paul, they would go. Dreams do not exempt men from the use of reason. God does not call men in absurd and frivolous ways. If God is going to have dealings with you, He will have them in the broad daylight. That was the time of all but one of Paul's missionary visions. It is not necessary for Him to go about in the night when our wits are asleep to show us what His will for us in this world is. He is going to deal with us as men, and expects us to judge as we judge between our dreams as to what ones of them are nonsense and what ones of them fall in line with the rational purpose of God for us revealed in the facts of the world and of our own lives.

Or a man says that he does not *feel* specially called. Well, feelings are often a mere matter of health; more often they are a matter of other things. They are not lawless and unordered. You and I do not regulate our lives by mere feelings in other regards. Feelings spring from the stock of information in our intellects, from the attitude of our wills, from the bearing of our hearts toward God and toward the world. If we do not "*feel called*" the most natural explanation is not that we are not called but that our feelings spring from uninformed minds, from careless hearts, from unsundered wills. This is the explanation of the absence of calls which Dean Vaughan suggested: "Know, and you will feel; know, and you will pray; know, and you will help. You will be ashamed of the sluggishness, of the isolation, of the selfish-

ness which has made you think only of your own people and your father's house." Men cannot define what they mean by the "missionary call" without getting into difficulty, and in the case of all men who are really called convincing their own minds, if they are honest and fair men, that they must go, while if they have been selfish and insincere they will discover that they have not been open to any such missionary call as they allege they believe to be necessary to warrant a man's going out into the foreign mission field.

I believe that a great deal of the confusion that surrounds this subject—and there is much of it—springs from the failure to discriminate between two clearly different things: one, the will of God for me; and the other, the method of the manifestation of that will to me. It is a matter of no consequence to me how God reveals His will to me; what I want to know is what that will is. It may come in some mysterious way; it may come from the voice of a friend; it may come through the influence of some address or book. I care not; the supreme thing is that God has a will for every man of us, and that no man of us has any right to specify one way, and one way alone, in which that will may be revealed to him, or to discriminate against any one work in life by conditioning God and requiring of Him some peculiar mode of procedure in summoning us to that work.

The whole thing reduces itself to this simple proposition. There is a general obligation resting upon Christian men to

see that the gospel of Jesus Christ is preached to the world. You and I need no special call to apply that general call to our lives. We do need a special call to exempt us from its application to our lives. In other words, the presumption under which we are living may be held to be the presumption that the great will of God desired beyond the peradventure of a mistake that the gospel of His son Jesus Christ, the only Saviour, should be made known to the whole world, should be carried to every creature in the world. You and I need no special divine revelation to our own personal lives to indicate that we fall under that general duty. What we need is a special call to assure us that we are exempt from personal obedience to that presumptive and general duty.

But there are men who say, "I deny that there is any such presumption. The presumption is in favor of a man's staying just where he was born." Well, then, if there is such a presumption as that, it is overcome by the greater need of the world. When a man stands face to face with such a need as that which exists here, and then contrasts it with the need that exists over there, I believe he must see that that need overcomes any mere presumption, if such did exist, in behalf of a man's staying here. But I deny that there is any such presumption. You cannot defend the presumption that every man ought to stay in the condition in which he is born. If I am born in a deadly, unhealthful region, is there a presumption that I should stay there? If I

am born a kleptomaniac, is there presumption in favor of my continuing so all my life? It is nonsense for men to allege that the mere fact of having been born in such and such a condition puts them under a presumption of duty to remain there. The fact that you are born in a Christian land creates just the contrary presumption, the presumption, namely, that you are to carry what exists here to the lands where it does not exist.

There are men who say, "No, you are unfair in that. We hold that there is no presumption either way, that every man ought to stand with a perfectly open and impartial mind before the question of the duty of his life to the world, not casting the weight on either side of the scale." That would be all right if you and I were living in little boats out in the middle of the Pacific ocean, but it is impossible so long as we are here. No presumption! Why, the atmosphere in which we live coerces and shapes us in spite of ourselves and creates a powerful actual presumption. All those tentacles that every day are clinging closer and closer to us are setting at prejudice the interests of the other half of the world. We do not live where it is possible for any of us to say, "I will just move along steadily, no presumption on either side, until some special indication of duty comes to me." I believe that Keith-Falconer was expressing the truth when he closed those last addresses of his to the students of Edinburgh and Glasgow with the sentence: "While vast continents are shrouded in al-

most utter darkness, and hundreds of millions suffer the horrors of heathenism and of Islam, the burden of proof rests on you to show that the circumstances in which God has placed you were meant by God to keep you out of the foreign field." In other words, every man of us stands under a presumptive obligation to give his life to the world unless we have some special exemption granted personally to us that excuses us from the weight of this general and presumptive obligation.

I am willing to go further than that. If I were standing by the bank of a stream, and some little children were drowning in the stream, I would not need any officer of the law to come along and serve on me some legal paper, in which my name was definitely entered, commanding me under such and such penalties to rescue those drowning children. I should despise myself if I should stand there, with the possibility of saving those little lives, waiting until by some legal proceeding I was personally designated to rescue them. Or, if you do not like that figure, I can suggest another. I have some neighbors who are starving, and I have bread in abundance, and I stand and watch them day by day, with pinched faces, ravenous, suffering agonies, while I have bread in abundance and to spare. I do not need anybody to come with any court order specifying me as an individual bound to feed those hungry souls. You would not either. Why do we apply, in a matter of infinitely more consequence, principles that we would loathe and abhor if anybody

should suggest that we should apply them in the practical affairs of our daily life? Listen for a moment to the wail of the hungry world, feel for one hour its sufferings, sympathize for one moment with its woes, and then regard it just as you would regard human want in your neighbor, or the want that you meet as you pass down the street, or anywhere in life. Every one of us rests under a sort of general obligation to give life and time and possession to the evangelization of the souls everywhere that have never heard of Jesus Christ, and we are bound to go, unless we can offer some sure ground of exemption which we could with a clear conscience present to Jesus Christ, and be sure of His approval upon it.

Now what grounds of exemption are just? A man says, "Well, the inability to learn a language constitutes a ground of exemption." Yes, if it is real; but is there any man that will allege that as his disability? Most of you talk one language already. I could imagine a mute alleging that excuse, but not an adult man who has managed to get into college. We have learned one language. There are a few million babies in this country learning a language now, and they haven't nearly as good a start at learning a language as you and I have. There is a multitude of ignorant people coming over here from the slums of Europe, and before very long many of them, with dull and undisciplined minds, will be speaking our language fluently. The brain is not the only faculty used in the acquisition of a

new language. A man who mingles among the people takes the language in through his pores. And after all the great faculty is the will. If a man wills to learn and goes out among the people, he will learn. Any man who has a jaw can learn a second language, just as he learned a first, if he wills to do it and sinks himself among the people to whom he goes. It is a very different thing learning a language on the other side of the world from trying to pick it up here. As Mr. Wilder used to put it, learning a language here is just like pouring water in the little interstices of a sponge for a day or two until you get it full, while learning a language over there is sousing your sponge in the water and letting it penetrate every pore. Every man of us who has learned one language is able to learn another if we want to and will put our lives into it.

Some one says, "Isn't want of health a sufficient excuse?" Yes, but you are not always a trustworthy judge. In our Board we distrust a man's judgment on this point unless we know what his own personal attitude is toward the missionary enterprise. We want men to judge the physical capacities of candidates who have a heart for the evangelization of the world as well. I urge freely that a man who has no proper physical qualifications ought not to go, but I fear that few men are competent to say for themselves whether they are thus qualified or not. I remember a story that Mr. Forman used to tell of an interview he had with a student in the state of Iowa, who al-

leged as a reason for not going as a missionary to India that he had had a sunstroke. He proposed accordingly to spend his life in Iowa. "Well, my friend," said Mr. Forman, "where did you have that sunstroke?" "I had it here in this state." "Now, look here," said Mr. Forman, "I have lived most of my life in India, and I have never had a sunstroke, and you propose to spend your life where you have already had one sunstroke and where for all you know you may have another."

Now Mission Boards are not looking for men liable to sunstroke. They purpose to act with good sense and because they do act so, they know that often a man who is not perfect physically will be as well in Chili or Korea or China or India as he will be here at home, and that it is worth while running a little risk for the sake of the good work that he will be likely to do. It is exceedingly easy for the man who wants to, to find some subterfuge by which he can escape from the grip of duty and the privilege of glorious sacrifice in life.

Or a man says, "Is not the want of spiritual qualifications an adequate exemption?" Never. No self-created excuse can keep a man out of the mission field. Every man of us may have all the spiritual qualifications necessary for missionary work, and if we do not have them, it is a difficulty which springs from our own moral delinquency and not from any of those circumstances beyond our control in which alone can lie an adequate exemption. A man not spiritually fitted ought not to go, but neither



is he fit to stay. His immediate duty is to clean up and empower his life.

Or a man says, "Is not the great need here at home an adequate excuse?" Where? where? What great need do you mean here in the United State? Do you mean the great need out in the western states? I could name half a dozen on the moment whose combined population is less than the population of the city of New York, and they are the great home mission fields in the west, and they have a Protestant evangelistic agency at work in them immensely greater than that employed in the whole city of New York. Besides, are you going there? As for the cities, there are in New York below Fourteenth Street for about half a million people more than one hundred Protestant chapels and churches. And are you going there? A man is something beneath contempt who alleges as a reason for not going to the foreign mission field the existence of a need at home to which he has not the slightest intention of devoting his life. He may pass for a very religious man, he may be waiting piously for a call, but he is a dishonest man and there is a core of insincerity in his heart. No, the need here in the United States constitutes no adequate exemption from the missionary call. If a man has got a special call to some definite work here at home, I grant that that may constitute an exemption. I believe there are men who are exempt from the general call because of the manifestly definite and special divine work that is laid upon their shoulders here, but no man dare

allege a mere general need existing here at home, least of all a general need which he intends subsequently to ignore, and under the cover of that, slip out from the grip of the missionary obligation. No man has a right to settle in a little country town in Ohio and practice law, on the ground that there is so much greater need for Christian work in the slums of New York than in central Africa. No man has a right to go into business in Montreal under the pretext that the vast West is so much more needy than China. If I refuse to preach the gospel in India because it needs to be preached in Arizona, or Assiniboia, what relevancy does that argument have to my preaching the gospel nowhere, but subsequently settling down to an easy and selfish life in Savannah or Halifax? Or what consistency is there in refusing to go to Siam because the need of Christian work in the rural districts in America is so great, and then settling down to preach the gospel in some city or large town? The fundamental necessity of life and character is veracity, and such a course is the antithesis of veracity.

Or a man says: "I have already started to prepare for some work here at home. I am on my medical course, or my law course, or my course in pedagogy. Do you mean I am to throw up all I have gained and go out to the mission field?" I do not say so. I do say that the fact that you have got so far does not constitute a presumption that you are exempt. All that special training may have been given you for some specific

purpose; no knowledge is lost out on the mission field. Besides, I ask you just to stop and think a moment. You men have already got your professions chosen and are headed toward them, and many of you have only considered the necessity of a call as a sort of afterthought when forced to face foreign missions; you never thought of it when you were making your choice of your profession, but only now when the missionary claim is pressing a little uneasily upon your consciences. But are you sure that God wants you to be a doctor or a teacher? Ought you not to have as much assurance that it is God's will that you should be, as you think is needed in the case of a foreign missionary? As a Christian man, your life belongs to Christ and your business is to do the will of God. Are you convinced that it is the will of God that you should go on with your preparation for some secular work at home? If not, have you a right to go on with it? If you think you have, will you not admit the legitimacy of the same element of possible uncertainty in the missionary call?

What profession is it that you believe warrants you in giving your life to it instead of to the missionary enterprise? Is it law? I have no word to say against the practice of law. But I remind you, as Mr. Depew is reported to have stated to the graduating class in the Yale Law School some years ago, that there were then more than 60,000 lawyers in this land; and, as Justice Brewer is said to have declared at a meeting of the American Bar Association,

in St. Louis, that not much more than one-half of that number could find legitimate business to do. The rest had to do other things or manufacture illegitimate business on which to live. The number of lawyers has since doubled.

Is it medicine that you are going to take up? There are more than 150,000 doctors in this country already, one to about every six hundred of the population. You well know that there is not enough real sickness and disease among that many people to maintain a doctor, and that is one reason why there are so many quacks and corrupt and unworthy men in the profession. The New York Sun some years ago reported Dr. Billings as complaining, at the meeting of the American Medical Association in session in New Orleans, of the excess of medical colleges. The country needed about 2,500 medical graduates annually, he said, and it graduated 10,000 to 12,500.

Do you intend to teach? There are more than 600,000 teachers in this land now, and you very well know that every time an attractive opportunity presents itself there are scores of applicants.

I present to you an opening in which we cannot find enough men, doctors, teachers, ministers, workers of all sorts, all over the mission field; a thousand million sinning and suffering men and women, and only a little handful of men and women giving the gospel to them. I do not understand the moral constitution of the man who can deliberately face that comparison and then set up the claim that he feels he is chosen to

practice medicine or law or teaching here in this country unless he has a special call designating him as one of the men to go out to the immensely greater need, and such a call as he has not regarded as necessary to his practice of medicine or law or to teaching.

Or a man says, yet once more, "Is not the love of home an exemption?" Let Jesus Christ reply. "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me." Or a man says, "Is not the love of life, the desire to spend it richly here an exemption?" Let Jesus Christ answer again. "He that hateth not his father and his mother, and his brother and his sister, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." Life an exemption! Life was given us on such terms as to constitute a presumption for its expenditure, not to be nursed carefully in velvet, not to be spent in personal enjoyment, but to be poured out in the richness of great sacrifice.

Every time I go down south and the train stops long enough in Salisbury, I go out to the little graveyard in the middle of the town and walk to a grave in the center of the yard that I found many years ago when I was wandering through the cemetery between trains. I remember still the first summer day when I came upon that grave. Something on the stone caught my eye from a distance. I came up and read upon it the inscription which stated that there lay the body of F. M. Kent, Lieutenant Colonel of the First Louisiana Regulars, who died in 1864, in the month of April,

and underneath were these words: "He gave his life for the cause that he loved." Near by was the grave of John R. Pearson, First Lieutenant of the Seventh Regiment of North Carolina, who was shot at Petersburg, at the age of eighteen, and beneath the name and simple record were the words, "I look for the resurrection of the dead." And I took off my hat and stood beside the graves of the eighteen-year-old lieutenant and the older colonel who had given their lives for the cause that they loved. Did they wait, do you suppose, until Jefferson Davis had served a personal summons upon them? Was that the way men did in those days? Did they refuse to volunteer in 1861 until they had, each man of them, a personal call with his own name filled in, signed by the hand of Abraham Lincoln or Jefferson Davis? Men then despised the spirit that would have prompted such an attitude. Shall men do less than despise it now?

This whole business of asking for special calls in the missionary work does violence to the Bible. No man thinks of interpreting his Bible so in other matters. There is the command, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." You say, "That means other men." There is the promise, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." You say, "That means me." You must have a special divine indication that you fall under the command; you do not ask any special divine indication that you fall under the blessing. By what right do we draw this line of distinction between

the obligations of Christianity and its privileges, and accept the privileges as applying to every Christian and relegate its obligations to the conscience of the few?

It does violence to the working of the spirit of God. He does not work over men's faculties; He works through them. In every other department of life He does it; He will do it in this department, or He will not work at all.

It does violence to the ordinary canons of common sense and honest judgment. We do not think of ordering other departments of our life on this basis. By what right do we single out this department and apply to it these exceptional canons? I think ex-President Patton of Princeton was representing the situation truthfully when he used the illustration: that if he was employed by the owner of a great vineyard to gather grapes in the vineyard, and the general instructions were that as many grapes as possible should be gathered, and he came down to the gate of the vineyard and found there around the walls the vines well plucked and the ground covered over with pickers, and away off in the distance no pickers at all and the vines loaded to the ground, he would not need any special visit and order from the owner of the vineyard to instruct him as to what his duty was. Do we?

There is something wonderfully misleading, full of hallucination and delusion in this business of missionary calls. With many of us it is not a missionary call at all that we are looking for; it is a shove, that

is all. There are a great many of us who would never hear a call if it came; somebody must come and coerce us before we will go into the missionary work. There are men who say they would go if they were called, but they would not go. Back in Jesus' day men thought they would do things if they only had certain evidence, but when the evidence came they did not do them. We think we would believe on Christ if we saw Him. Most of the men who saw Him did not believe on Him. It is the old rebuke of Abraham over again. "Father Abraham," said the outcast, "will you not send some special messenger to warn my brothers?" Said Abraham, "They have Moses and the prophets; if they will not hear them, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." There are many men who say they would believe in Christianity if they had a miracle. They would not believe in Christianity if they had a miracle. The men who will not believe in Christianity without a miracle will not believe in Christianity with one. The men who will not go out to the mission field, as a rule, without this specified method of being called would not recognize it if it came. It is just a matter of the whole bias and bent of a man's character, whether he is one of these reluctant, stagnant men, the men who stand still until they are pushed, or one of these aggressive, eager men, the men who move until they are stopped. I like to go back and read over and over the life of the Apostle Paul as illustrative of the right type of man. He never sat down and



waited for a dream to come and guide him; he never waited for any external mechanical directions to shape his course. He was working through what we now call Asia Minor, and his path was determined by indications of the Spirit, not as to what he should do, but as to what he should not do. The Spirit forbade work in Asia. He tried Bithynia, and was again blocked. So he came down to Troas through walls of negative guidance (Acts xvi: 6-8). Paul did not say: "I will wait till I feel a call." He pressed ahead until he was obstructed. There is a deal too much lethargic waiting for divine guidance, when what God is wanting is to see some sign of life and movement to guide. You can steer a moving, but not a motionless ship. Doubtless a man may bustle about so in his own fussy plans as to be in no fit condition to hear divine counsel or to seek it; but there is no warrant in Paul's method for the course of those who dislike to move toward the foreign field unless compelled from without.

At the end of this hedging in and hedging off, Paul got some positive leading; but even then his conclusion of duty was an inference. He interpreted his dream in the spirit of his life. He was a going man and he was looking for beckonings. It was the man not the dream that led to his crossing into Europe. Some modern evader would have called it a mere dream, and pronounced it utterly insufficient reason for any such serious forward step.

Ramsay thinks the Macedonian whom Paul saw was Luke. How otherwise could

Paul know it was a Macedonian than by recognizing a Macedonian acquaintance? There was nothing peculiar in the dress of the Macedonians, and Luke was probably the only Macedonian he knew. "We can imagine," says Ramsay, "how Paul came to Troas, in doubt as to what should be done. As a harbor it formed the link between Asia and Macedonia. Here he met the Macedonian Luke; and with his view turned onwards he slept, and beheld in a vision his Macedonian acquaintance beckoning him onward to his own country."

Possibly Paul and Luke had been sitting up late that night talking about Macedonia, and Luke had urged arguments by which he would persuade Paul to come over there, and when Paul went to sleep, he was full of Luke's arguments, and at last had his dream and there was Luke again appealing to him to go over to Macedonia. It was not the dream that took Paul over. It was the last confirmation, but Paul would have got to Macedonia without any such dream. The dream was not the call. The facts of the world and of Paul's own life were shaping his course according to the will of God. He was the sort of man who did not wait for external guidance, who sat down until somebody came, upset him and made him go; he was the type of man who fixed his eyes on a great goal and moved toward it. "Yea," he says, "so I have been ambitious." What for? A special call? "Yea, so I have been ambitious to preach the gospel, not where Christ has been already named, lest I should build upon another man's founda-

tion: but, as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see; and they that have not heard shall understand." (Rom. xv:20, 21.)

Well, you ask, Do I mean that you should take your lives in your own hands in this matter? That is precisely what I am protesting against. That is exactly what we have done. We have taken our lives in our own hands and proposed to go our own way unless God compels us to go some other way. What I ask is that we should give our lives over into Christ's hands, to go Christ's way until God shall reveal to us some special individual path on either side of that great general way which Jesus Christ has marked out before His church and for which He is calling everywhere for men. But you say, "Do you mean that every one is to go or to try to go?" No, I do not. I am not trying to specify any course of duty for any man, or any method of the revelation of duty to life. God has His own way of guiding every life. I believe He wants men as Christian lawyers, doctors, teachers, business men, ministers, artisans at home. And I believe that if we neglect our own house or nation we are worse than infidels. What I am trying to do is to cut out some of those quibbles and sophistries and self-deceptions by which men satisfy themselves in the evasion of missionary duty and to correct honest misconceptions which confuse and mislead men. I plead that the missionary duty be given its fair consideration in the investment and use of life.

I want to say three last things.

In the first place God does not want any conscripts. If that is what you are waiting for,—to be conscripted,—I do not believe that the call will come. What He wants is volunteers, men who will give themselves in the spirit of Isaiah, "Here am I, Lord; send me."

In the second place, for each true Christian the post of sacrifice and of difficulty is the post of presumptive duty. I do not understand how a man can turn aside to make a fortune here, to gratify an ambition here, without a special call. I do understand how a man can feel that without such a call it is his duty to give himself to the post of greatest toil and earthly loss and danger. I remember one of the illustrations that Mr. Charles Studd used when he was here, of the appeal that was made for volunteers before the Ashanti expedition went some years ago to Africa. They called out at Windsor the Scots Guards, and the colonel commanding made a frank statement of just what the expedition was and what was involved, and then he called for volunteers, and he turned away for a moment, and when he turned back the whole line was standing, apparently just as it had been before. He looked up and down the line for a moment in indignation, and then he said, "What! the Scots Guards, and no volunteers!" and one of the officers standing by said, "Colonel, the whole line stepped forward." They were not waiting for any specific personal injunction. Every man jumped at the chance of sacrifice, recognized in the call to hardship and dan-

ger the glorious call, and would only be turned back from it, as Gideon's companies turned back, when specially exempted by the elimination of God.

And, last of all, I think love will hear calls where the loveless heart will not know that they are sounding. Will you look in your own heart again and make sure whether or not the call has not been there all the time? Have you been near enough to Jesus Christ to hear Him speak? Has your heart been open enough to the world in sympathy and love to hear the wail of its woe? If there were a hundred little children crying, a mother would be able to pick out the voices of her own, especially if they were voices of pain and suffering. There is a mighty keenness in the ears of love, and I wonder whether, after all, that may not explain a great deal that one is perplexed over in this matter of special missionary calls, whether after all it is not often just a matter of callous heart, of reluctant will, of sealed mind.

God so loved the world that He gave. It was need in the world plus love in God that constituted the call to Christ. Do we need more than sufficed for Him? If they were our own, would we hesitate and hold back?

“What if your own were starving,  
Fainting with famine pain,  
And yet you knew where golden grew  
Rich fruit and ripened grain,  
Would you turn aside while they gasped  
and died,  
And leave them to their pain?”

Let us lay aside now all double-dealing, all moral subterfuge, all those shuffling evasions by which the devil is attempting to persuade us to escape from our duty, and let us get up like men and look at it and do it. Students are old enough to decide to do their duty. They are old enough to decide to go to college, they are old enough to decide for law and medicine and other professions; they are old enough, too, to decide this question also. God forbid that we should try behind any kind of pretext to hide from the solemn personal consideration of our vital duty. "Go ye out into the ignorant and sinful world and preach the gospel to the lost." Have you any reason for not going that you could give to Jesus Christ? That is the real question for every man of us.

Other Life-Work Literature  
Published by the  
INTERCHURCH WORLD MOVEMENT

---

**THE FULFILMENT OF LIFE.** By G. CAMPBELL MORGAN. Per copy, 5 cents; per doz., 50 cents; per 100, \$2.75.

**THE PROBLEM OF GUIDANCE—**By S. D. GORDON. Per copy, 5 cents; per doz., 50 cents; per 100, \$2.75.

**HOW TO KNOW THE WILL OF GOD—**By HENRY DRUMMOND. Per copy, 5 cents; per doz., 50 cents; per 100, \$2.75.

**RELIGION IN THE HOME—**By WALTER W. MOORE. Per copy, 5 cents; per doz., 50 cents; per 100, \$2.75.

**THE PATH INTO THE WILL OF GOD—**By EDWIN M. POTEAT. Per copy, 2 cents; per doz., 20 cents; per 100, \$1.00.

**THINE ONLY SON, or THE STEWARDSHIP OF FAMILY LIFE—**By EDWIN M. POTEAT. Per copy, 2 cents; per doz., 20 cents; per 100, \$1.00.

**HOW I FIND THE WILL OF GOD—**By GEORGE MUELLER. Per copy, 1 cent; per doz., 10 cents; per 100, 50 cents.

**HOW TO FIND YOUR LIFE-WORK.** By J. CAMPBELL WHITE. Per copy, 1 cent; per doz., 10 cents; per 100, 50 cents.

**WHY I AM GLAD I AM A MINISTER—**Testimonies of Fifteen Ministers. Per copy, 10 cents; per doz., 75 cents; per 100, \$6.00.

**HOW CAN PASTORS AND OTHER LEADERS HELP YOUNG PEOPLE TO FIND THEIR LIFE-WORK?—**By J. CAMPBELL WHITE. Per copy, 1 cent; per doz., 10 cents; per 100, 50 cents.

The following cards have been prepared for individual signature of consecration and life-purpose:

- One for Parents.
- One for High-School Age.
- One for College Students.

Samples of these cards free in quantities, at following nominal prices to prevent waste, 20 cents per 100.

A packet containing a sample of all this material will be sent postpaid for 25 cents.

Write for descriptive list of Life-Work charts on art paper, 24 x 36 inches. Price 30 cents each or four for \$1.00, postpaid.

