

Missions & Financing

Missions and missionaries are words not found in the New Testament. But missions is the principal activity in the Acts of the Apostles, and missionaries are found in every chapter. Today we have evangelism in the context of local church work, para-church organizations, in itinerant work, in various forms of media, local, national and international. Not all of this is called missions. In fact, we might get a wide range of definitions of missions. For our purposes, I am going to define missions as that sphere of evangelistic activity (that is, the spreading of the gospel) from which the evangelist cannot reasonably expect financial support for his work. For that reason, the matter of financing becomes of immediate concern when the word missions is introduced.

There are sharp differences on what is the best, the most scriptural, the most efficient, the most God-honoring way of financing missionaries and mission activities. I do not have many conclusions on these matters, but would like to set down my thoughts and observations for whatever value they might be to anyone involved in this vital evangelistic work.

Faith Missions

This title is a bit presumptuous, for it implies that the work carried on under its methods are works of pure faith, and others are not. I doubt if any of our faith or works are pure; and certainly any valid ministry of the gospel must be a work of faith, else there is nothing in it pleasing to God (Hebrews 11:6).

The word "faith" is generally attached to the mission because the missionary is not accorded a set stipend, either for his expenses in his work, or his personal support, as other missionaries whose support is guaranteed by a church or independent mission board.

The purest form of this type of mission would be a man or a couple, who, led by the Lord to undertake a particular gospel activity, set out to obey the Lord, asking or expecting nothing from any particular person or organization, leaving it up to the Lord of the Harvest to supply the needs through whatever channel He chooses. There can be no question that this is the nearest to the New Testament pattern (if there is such a thing).

Usually such missionaries initiate their work with a period of "deputation", that is, they travel around contacting various persons, churches and organizations, acquainting them with their calling so that those so inclined may be

- C. M.