

AFTER VOLUNTEERING?

Is it? Is it too late for you to rearrange your life to honor Christ's principles in your life?

What did you learn on this short-term medical missions experience about how to serve the Kingdom of God better? We read in Romans 10:9–15 (NIV) *“That if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. As the Scripture says, ‘Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame.’ For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, ‘Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’ How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!’”*

Not all are called to go and be career missionaries. Those who preach must be sent. As you have now seen and perhaps experienced, being sent requires an intensive program of prayer, support, and encouragement. Who is more qualified after this trip to do that for others than you are? You will have been there and you will have a better understanding than most of your friends and fellow church members. You will have seen the difference that prayer and even small bits of financial aid can make. You will be able to empathize better with the dif-

ficult row that career missionaries have to hoe, and you will be a more effective cheerleader and prayer warrior.

Medical missions is not about how much we love people or even about how much we love God; it is about how much God loved us. Can we truly say that we are compelled to tell others because of Christ's love? Was His death in vain or should we truly no longer live for ourselves but rather live for Him?

“For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again” (2 Corinthians 5:14–15, NIV).

What is Christ's love compelling you to do?

We close this book with some wise words from a veteran medical missionary¹:

“You have seen medical missions. Their faces are imprinted on your mind; their blood was so recently washed from your hands. You have heard the cries and you have wiped the tears, from their eyes and from your own. For a brief time, you became part of their lives, and they became part of yours. Medical missions took on a shape, but even more than a shape, medical missions became a name and a face. What will you do next?

The Lord said (to Moses):

‘I have indeed seen the misery of my people . . .

I have heard them crying out . . .

I am concerned about their suffering . . .

¹We acknowledge our debt to Dr. Bill McCoy for stating so well what we could not.

So I have come down to rescue them!' (Exodus 3:7-8).

God never gets on an airplane and flies back to suburbia. The eyes and the ears and the concern of God are forever directed toward the misery and the cries and the suffering of his people. Before you volunteered, before you gave a second thought about the needs of the people served by medical missions, God's heart was breaking over their suffering. It has always been so, and will be so until the end of time.

'So now, go. I am sending you!' (Exodus 3:10).

Moses had already tried to rescue the people in his own strength, and failed miserably. That is why God finds him on the far side of the desert tending sheep. Moses is trying to hide from the misery and cries of the people and, in doing so, is running from God's call on his life. But God invites Moses to participate in His own amazing redemptive purpose, and Moses' life will never be the same!

Medical missions is not something we do, it is something God is doing, and we have the great privilege of participating in it. God is healing; God is redeeming; God is changing lives! *'Through God's mercy, we have this ministry'* (2 Corinthians 4:1). It is only by the mercy and the grace of God that He invites us to participate in ministry. It is a profound mystery but it is clear that we are the instruments God has chosen to rescue his people, to redeem his creation. *'He has committed to us the message of reconciliation'* (2 Corinthians 5:19).

What are we doing with the invita-

tion of God and the message committed to us? Therein lies our only hope for fullness of joy, deep meaning, and freedom from all that would entangle us. Trouble free? Absolutely not! You have tasted some of the many difficulties encountered in medical missions. Cultural differences, limited resources, lifestyle changes, ingratitude, personality clashes, persecution, danger, sleepless nights, excessive demands—the mission field has all of these and more. But these are *'achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all'* (2 Corinthians 4:17). If the call of God for your life is medical missions, then you are among the most privileged. For God has *'come down to rescue them'* and He is calling you to witness and participate in His miraculous work!

Seek the will of God, listen to His voice, and stay involved in medical missions! It may mean a career change. It may mean a new structure to your medical practice or new priorities in the way you make and spend money. Maybe you are called to regular volunteer service or recruiting others or identifying resources to strengthen a specific ministry.

The life of Jesus Christ gives us a clear model for Kingdom ministry. Matthew chapters 8 and 9 vividly portray Christ teaching, preaching, and healing. *'When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless.'* If your experience in medical missions has opened your eyes to the suffering of the crowds, then listen closely for the calling voice of the Lord of the harvest. That voice bears your name."