

Jensen Missions

Iringa, Tanzania

East Africa

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Food For Thought For The Mission-Minded (part 3)

Information is powerful! How often have we in hindsight realized that we had made an uninformed choice or decision? In this third installment we challenge those who are in the position of deciding what mission work to support to "do some homework." Elders, church leaders, preachers, deacons, please be willing to invest some time before investing money! If you are really mission-minded, vow to educate yourself before hastily committing funds to a work.

Many church leaders seem to make a common mistake. Namely, *assuming* that a man with good business savvy will make good mission decisions for the congregation (I have seen the same mistake made in the selection of a treasurer). An example would be appointing a corporate-world wise man to be a deacon of missions. Judgments will likely be made without any real knowledge of missions or missionary challenges. The whole "bottom line" and "budgets" and "numbers" mentality will likely be transferred right over from the secular arena into the spiritual kingdom. A brief survey of God's dealings with his people in the past ought to give us a clue that Jehovah is able to bless His people with great victories, even when such seems unlikely from the human vantage point. Elders must educate themselves to be able to get beyond basic questions i.e. *how much money is this missionary saying he needs? How many baptisms are being reported?*

Think about the difference between childlike questions and adult questions. The type of questions asked reveals a person's level of knowledge. (continued on pg 2)

MEMBER OF THE MONTH



Meet Mama Zawadi! Her name is not Zawadi, but she is the mother of Zawadi. Women are more commonly referred to in this way: Mama _____, meaning mother of _____, usually naming their first-born. Mama Zawadi is a widow; her husband was the first one from Iringa to attend the Chimala School of Preaching. Mama Zawadi has known much heartache - death of her husband, death of at least two children, and recently the death of a son-in-law. Two of her grandchildren live with her; they are the children of her deceased daughters. Despite her hardships, she always has a smile on her face; something most of us need to do a little more.

Food For Thought...continued

The foregoing questions are rudimentary. Consider an example of a more penetrating question. *Is the mission work under consideration following a paternal or an indigenous approach?* While these two methodologies can have some overlapping, they are quite distinct in practice and long-term outcome. I would highly recommend as mandatory "homework" for every elder, deacon, etc. the fine booklet by Rod Rutherford titled: "Practical Principles of World Evangelism" (available at www.rodutherfordbooks.com). This web site states: "It is excellent for elders who really want to know how to work effectively with missionaries." Brother Rutherford, now in his seventies, has vast, in-the-field experience in many foreign fields including Africa and Australia. If you obtain this fine material be sure to read carefully pages 85 to 109 if you wish to understand why the question posed above is so important. As knowledge increases, effectiveness in fulfilling the great commission will increase.

With heaviness of heart I must say that most of our American-funded efforts are following a paternalistic method. Such can be characterized by (seemingly) "amazing and exciting growth" in its infancy. But a genuine analysis will reveal a condition more often than not, of what the Hebrew writer described (5:12-14). The synthetic "propping up" with dollars, which often flies under the banner of "helping the needy", needs to be exposed. The greatest missionary seemed to learn the difference between helping and enabling (cf. 2 Corinthians 12:13). While this point might be puzzling upon first reading, I pray that with study of methodology it will become clear.

While we are giving attention to education I wish to offer a word of caution. I am pleading with you, dear reader, to be humble enough to resist a specific temptation. Namely, not to allow one or a few brief mission visits to swell your head. A brother makes a two-week visit to the country of _____, and returns with a comprehensive understanding about missions. The crash course has worked a miracle. He has become the Guru of missiology. In reality, I would venture to say that every missionary who has *lived* in a foreign field will tell you it was far different than the view he had from a brief visit. Am I in opposition to supporters visiting the work in person? On the contrary!!!! I am a vocal advocate encouraging supporters to visit the work and see for themselves. You can be encouraged and also encourage those you visit. I must add this side note. Often, if there are shenanigans taking place on the field, every façade deemed necessary by the charlatans, will be erected in time for the visitor's arrival. You will be shown what they want you to see! Remember, being informed before your visit will better equip you to assess the work you are shown.

George Jensen 2011

Journey with Joy.... It's Time For Some Good News

Recent news of the killer tornadoes that have swept through the South has been very sobering. Images and videos made available online underscore the reality that there are a lot of people suffering in ways that they could have never imagined. It seems like every week we hear some sort of bad news - death, cancer, injuries, natural disasters, etc. Hearing such things is disturbing, and rightfully so, especially when we see people suffering. As fellow human beings, it ought to stir within us the desire to help them. Showing love and compassion to those who are hurting is what Jesus wants us to do.

However, **as Christians, we need to keep our perspective.** I think sometimes we get so distraught about the trials of this life that we unwittingly give the impression to those watching us that this physical life is what it's **all** about. Is it? Is that the impression we really want to leave with people?

Whether we are dealing with crises in our own lives or in the lives of others, we need to stay focused on the bigger picture - life after death. The biggest tragedy is not the loss of all earthly possessions or the loss of physical health, but the loss of a soul.

Despite all of the bad news that comes our way, there is GOOD NEWS! The GOSPEL, when accepted on God's terms, gives us hope with a heavenly view - a confident expectation of life eternal, free from the sufferings and heartache experienced in this earthly life. That is good news!

When we are in the midst of ministering to the physical needs of those who are hurting, don't forget the bigger picture. Let's help people realize that this physical life is not what it's all about. There is hope for something far better, if we are willing to prepare for it. Everyone needs some GOOD NEWS! 