

The Missionary MEMO

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Tips and Tidbits for Cross-Cultural Missionaries

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The Silver Chair

By Chase Reynolds

The missionary, or prospective missionary, has a long list of “must read” books, books like *Through Gates of Splendor*, *Eternity in Their Hearts*, *Getting Ready to Go*, *Cross-Cultural Conflict*, *One Thing You Can't Do in Heaven* and many more. In spite of the already potentially daunting task of digging through this wealth of wisdom and insight, I'd like to suggest adding yet another volume to the list - *The Silver Chair* from *The Chronicles of Narnia*.

In his article “Sometimes Fairy Stories may Say Best What's to Be Said,” Lewis writes,

I saw how stories of this kind could steal past a certain inhibition which had paralyzed much of my own religion in childhood. Why did one find it so hard to feel as one was told one ought to feel about God or about the sufferings of Christ? I thought the chief reason was that one was told one ought to. An obligation to feel can freeze feelings. And reverence itself did harm. The whole subject was associated with lowered voices; almost as if it were something medical. But supposing that by casting all these things into an imaginary world, stripping them of their stained-glass and Sunday school associations, one could make them for the first time appear in their real potency. Could one not thus steal past those watchful dragons? I thought one could.

In *The Silver Chair*, Lewis does just this. He strips “mission work” of jargon, cliché, and the sometimes numbing familiarity. Through the adventures of these children we experience:

- (1) the necessity and practical obstacles of maintaining a sense of call,
- (2) temptations peculiar to those who are sent,
- (3) the subtlety of our enemy's tactics,
- (4) manifestations of true and honest courage, and
- (5) a surprising, but realistic, conclusion to a successful work.

We also see how each of us are engaged in a work saturated with grace and sovereignty! The story serves not as a text but as an observatory. It's not a place to discover these things (God's Word is more than sufficient for that!), rather it's a place to encounter truths central to mission work and the missionary's heart in an unguarded environment.

So can God-called, church-sent missionaries really be aided through spending a few hours with a children's book? I suggest we can. *The Silver Chair* offers yet another venue through which we can gain valuable understanding and insights drawn from God's Word “so that [we] might finish [our] course with joy, and the ministry, which [we] have received of the Lord Jesus.”

Chase Reynolds is a Bible Translator sent out by New Hope Baptist Church of Tuscaloosa, Alabama

Full of Jesus

By Randy Cloud



In 1954, Rice played Alabama in the Cotton Bowl in Dallas. Alabama Football player Tommy Lewis found himself in a very awkward position. In the first half, he watched from the sidelines as Rice fullback Dick Meagle carried the ball down the field for a sure touchdown.

As Meagle ran right in front of the Alabama bench, Tommy Lewis, overcome with excitement, dashed out onto the field and tackled the runner. Then he ran to find a place to hide.

We need to be so full of Jesus that we cannot refuse to tell others about the Savior.

The next week, Ed Sullivan interviewed the young football player. Sullivan asked him, “Tommy, why did you do it?” He replied, “Well, Ed I guess I just got so full of Alabama that I could not help myself.”

We need to be so full of Jesus that we cannot refuse to tell others about the Savior.

We have the glorious message of Jesus Christ to proclaim to a lost and dying world. People need salvation in Jesus Christ.

May God help us to accept the challenges to go, stand and speak in the power of Jesus Christ. It will be worth it all when we see Jesus!

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Foreign Workers & False Professions

By Lynn Raburn



The night was truly dark in the Nairobi slum and the scant light cast by the homemade oil lantern barely lit the room. Seven men lay on scattered bunks around the barracks style room and all eyes were on me. It was a rare moment for an *mzungu* (white man) to knock on a door at night in the slums and I had everyone's attention. After exchanging customary Swahili greetings and hearing all of their names, I explained who I was and why I was there. Then for about fifteen minutes I shared with them the message of salvation through Christ Jesus the Son of God. At my invitation, five of the seven men said they prayed to receive Christ. I walked out into the dark African night exuberant over those decisions.

I never saw those men again. They lived less than 100 feet from our church door

I never saw those men again. They lived less than 100 feet from our church door but they never came once.

but they never came once. I have no idea that there was any change in their lives at all after the *mzungu* walked out the door. Will I see them in heaven one day? I'm not as sure now as I was that night.

On our way to Mexico in 1976, my first trip out of the United States, Harold Williams warned us about evangelism south of the border. He quoted a long time missionary to Latin America who warned that people in that region tend to make false professions of faith in order to please the *gringo* preacher. That missionary is not the only one to experience the effect of a foreigner on false professions.

Missionaries in Russia were thrilled with the response of the people to the preaching of the gospel shortly after communism collapsed. They were soon frustrated, however, when they realized

that the same people were making professions of faith over and over again. Evangelists would pass through the country with their big crusades and the missionaries would watch their church members get saved in every crusade. The evangelists left with a good tally of professions to report and the missionaries went to work to try and straighten out their converts.

Medical campaigns run by those who do not understand the power of perceived debt have seen almost as many professions of faith as the total number of patients treated. That makes for great reports for the crusader but huge frustration for the missionary on the field when almost none of those converts ever show up for church. Those who

The missionary has to be very cautious when witnessing to someone over whom he has "power."

use medical campaigns wisely separate the medical treatment and the evangelism. They let the foreigners do the medical treatment and the nationals handle the evangelism. There are generally fewer professions but more people probably get saved.

One missionary was fired by his church because he refused to do crusade evangelism. He tried to explain to the visitors from home that people would make

professions in order to please the American visitors but that after they left he would have a hard time bringing these people to a true faith in Christ. False professions make real evangelism difficult. The visitors wrote off their missionary as un-evangelistic and he was forced to find a new sending church.

A recent report from Mongolia reads, "After a sermon in Mongolia, it is not common to have an invitation. No one is asked to come up and be saved. No one begs them to come say a prayer to be rescued from hell or make a decision for Jesus. Mongolians are smart people and when they realize that they are doomed to an eternity in hell's torment-

Many would respond to an invitation if that's what they thought the missionary wanted.

ing fires no one needs to tell them to cry out for help. After they have professed Christ and before they are baptized, they must attend a three hour baptism class to make sure they understand what professing faith in Jesus is and that baptism and church membership have nothing to do with them getting into heaven. Our biggest fear is for someone to think that just saying a few words, walking an aisle or being baptized will get them into heaven. This is especially important with an American missionary. Many Mongolians would respond to an invitation if they thought that was what he wanted."

Let no one think that these missionaries are un-evangelistic. On the contrary! God is using their wise methods and the preaching and teaching of His Word to plant thriving churches in Mongolia.

Over the years we learned some valuable lessons in Kenya. We learned that

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Leaving Them Behind

by Brenda Raburn

One of the most difficult things we ever did was to put our daughter in college and then leave her behind while we returned to Kenya. We missed so many important events in her life and it was during college that she chose her career, her mate, and how she would walk with God. It was hard!

It is hard and yet it is a normal part of missionary life. Here are some lessons we've learned that may help you deal with this difficult time.

Remember your goal as a parent.

Our goal in raising our kids is to make them independent. We **have** to let them go. If we have taught our children well and prepared them to walk with the Lord on their own, we can let them go with confidence. I've heard Lynn counsel missionary mothers, "This is like finishing a chapter in a book. When you turn this page, this chapter of your life is over. There is, however, another chapter ahead of you and it will be just as good as the chapter you just finished - only different."

Remember your calling.

The God who created the family is the same God who called you overseas. He will help you through this.

Help each other.

You and your husband need each other and this is a good time to pull together. It is not a good time to have a dirty rotten attitude and blame him because God has called you overseas.

Accept help and advice from others.

It may also help to talk with other missionaries who are going through the same thing or have already gone through it. Your situation may not be identical to theirs but they will at least understand how you feel.

Stay around for the first semester.

It will help with their adjustment if you can be available to your MKs. You don't necessarily have to have them live with you but they need to be able to see you on a regular basis and call on you whenever they need to or want to. Whether they are in a dorm room, apartment or living with another family, it actually helps if they can live on their own while you are still around.

Resolve any conflicts with them.

Conflicts with teens is common and this is a rough time emotionally for both of you. Be forgiving. Remember that par-



ent- child relationships seem to improve with age as they mature. Don't leave for the field with family issues not settled. Your kids need to know they are loved unconditionally. Tell them that you love them. Leave them with your blessings.

Provide for them financially.

Be sure you know how much it will take for them to live and help them as much as you feel is appropriate. Be sure that they know how to open a bank account,

balance a checkbook, use a debit card and stay out of debt. Assure them that they can call on you for help if they really need it.

Protect them.

Before leaving them on their own, be sure to talk to them about issues like pornography, homosexuals, female safety, drinking, drugs, and credit card debt.

Build a support system for them.

Will any relatives live near by? Is there a good church family? They need to know who they can count on when you are not around. They need to know where to go if they have health or dental problems, car problems, or problems with relationships.

Arrange for convenient communication.

Research and find the best methods available, whether it is phones, phone cards, email, Skype, or instant messaging. No matter how old they get, they will always need their parents and they need to be able to talk when they want to.

Trust God.

Just as God enabled you to leave the United States behind and move to your field, He will enable you to handle this situation. He is aware of what's going on and He cares. He can take better care of your kids than you can.

Set them free.

Let God work in their lives in ways that only He can. Realize that some things He can only do when you are out of the picture. The greatest blessing is to see them know the reality of God in their own lives.

Pray for them.

They need your prayers and praying will be good for you. God hears and He answers. Won't it be exciting to see what He does in answer to our prayers for our children?

A Recipe for Your Cookie Monster

By Brenda Raburn

Lynn is the cookie monster at our house. One of his favorite cookies in the Nutter Butter Peanut Sandwich Cookie. He was never able to enjoy those in Africa but recently Greg Curtis, pastor of Oak Grove Missionary Baptist Church of Oklahoma, gave me a recipe that is as close as you can get to the real thing. My cookie monster tried them and certified the recipe. Here it is for your cookie monster.

1 cup butter flavored shortening (if unavailable, use margarine)
1 cup creamy peanut butter
1 cup sugar
1 cup packed brown sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
3 eggs
3 cups all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking soda
1/4 teaspoon salt

Filling:

1/2 cup creamy peanut butter
3 cups confectioners sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
5 to 6 tablespoons milk

In a mixing bowl, cream the shortening, peanut butter and sugars. Add vanilla. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Combine flour, baking soda and salt; add to creamed mixture. Shape into 1 inch balls and place 2 inches apart on ungreased baking sheets. Flatten to 3/8 inch thickness with a fork. Bake at 375 degrees for 7—8 minutes or until golden. Cool on wire racks. In a mixing bowl, beat filling ingredients until smooth. Spread on half of the cookies and top with another cookie. **Yield:** about 4 dozen.

Foreign Workers & False Professions

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it was more culturally correct for a Kenyan to tell you what you wanted to hear than to disappoint you. To avoid the false professions that would result from that attitude, we totally abandoned the practice of raising hands to profess Christ. We learned to connect our evangelism to the church location and greatly increased the retention of converts. We learned to let the nationals handle the soul winning, even when the *mzungu* did the preaching. We quit emphasizing professions of faith and started reporting only baptisms. Is that anti-evangelistic? I don't think so. I think it is being, as Christ said, "*wise as serpents and harmless as doves.*" As the missionary learns the language, learns and adapts to the culture, and learns to love and understand the people, he will learn how to best approach them with the gospel message so that the Holy Spirit can do His work and real professions of faith in Christ will result. The methods the missionary chooses may be very different than those he would use in the United States but they will be appropriate for his field.

The Missionary MEMO

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For Missionaries Only

Make Plans Now to Attend the

2009

International Missionary Retreat

September 5-10, Aegina, Greece

Aegina is an island 35 minutes from Athens via ferry
Flights & train travel should terminate in Athens

Facilities:

Hotel Danae, Aegina

www.danaehotel.gr

Please do not make your own reservations.
We have blocked the rooms for the retreat at a special rate.
40 Euros per person half-board

Schedule:

Arrival, Friday, Sept. 4
Saturday, Sept. 5, day trip to Athens
Sun. - Wed., Sept. 6-9, Retreat Services & MK VBS
Thursday, Sept 11, day trip to Corinth

If you plan to attend, please email
Lraburn@faithNLR.org
with names and number in family.