

Leon, Gto., Mexico, Feb. 4th 1907

Dr. R. J. Willingham,

Richmond, Va.

Dear Brother:--

I will first state my request and you will then know better what I am driving at in this letter. I hope you will give what I have to say a careful perusal. This is not an impulse of the moment but the developement and result of careful and watchful and prayerful consideration.

I respectfully ask the Board to grant me a leave of absence from my field and work, beginning September of this year, 1907, and continuing till May 1910, or about 2 years and 8 months, for the purpose of going to St. Louis, or some other place in Missouri, to take a full course in the study of medicine, to better fit me to reach the people of this country. This is my petition and I pray that you may hear me as to my reasons. Of course, I ask no financial assistance during my absence from Mexico.

I feel that you will agree with me that every worker for the Master should fit himself to the best of his ability for the special work God has for him to do. To this end, I note every once in a while that a Prof. of the Seminary, or some other great Institution, goes on a leave of absence for a year, or a longer or shorter period as the case may be, to study in Germany or some other great seat of learning. And why? To better equip himself for his special work. We all approve of it. Pastors take a year and go to the Seminary, and others go to Chicago and take a Summer Course. We all say amen.

About six weeks or two months ago I was in Guadalajara, and spent two or three days with Dr. Hooker. He is getting in touch with more people in a day than many of us are in a month. I am not exaggerating the matter in the least.

In visiting our field, we went over to Guanajuato, the capital of this State, a short time ago to see a brother there. We had thought of trying to open work there in case there were an opening. We visited the Methodist Sanitarium there under the direction of Dr. Salmans. They have that city, and 15

years ago the Dr. had to go armed and guarded when he was called out after night. But now they have two self-sustaining churches with their own pastors, and I was in some of their services, and I know of nothing else in South Mexico like it. I asked him for the secret of their success. He said: "Medicine opened the door and my mission to preach the Gospel to this people led me to enter the door, and there you have it."

I then asked: "But, why not have doctors who are not preachers come and open the way, and the preachers then can follow up?" He said: "I have tried that and it has failed utterly. In such cases the people take to the doctor and turn their backs on the preacher when he comes."

From what I have seen, I am convinced that it is the way most blessed of God in this country. And why not? Luke was a preacher and a doctor. The Great Physician went about healing the sick of body and the sick of soul. Why not we do the same? I am anxious to get your consent to this plan, so I can round up my work and get ready. I shall not begin till I get up there as my time is not mine here, and besides I can finish in three years any way.

As to the field here. Josué Valdez is my helper and is capable. Under the watchcare of some other missionary, he could carry on the work till I could get back. He has agreed to stay, if I go.

As to the Printing Plant. That can be turned over to Dr. Chastain, and the paper question will soon solve itself. I have thought it all out, and am sure it can be done.

May I hear from you soon? Love and best wishes. May the Lord lead us all to do the largest possible work for Him during our short lifetime,

Is the prayer of your unworthy servant,

*J. E. Davis*