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The Autobiography
of a Missionary
Dollar



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The Autobiography of a Missionary Dollar

I am a missionary dollar. On a bright Sunday morning in a country church I was placed in the contribution plate by a good man, who gave me as an offering to Foreign Missions. I am sent on a sacred mission, because this good man offered a prayer as he gave me, that God would bless me as I journeyed to many strange and far-away lands. I go to represent my friend who dedicated me to this service.

The church treasurer sent me to the office of the State Mission Board. Here I found the secretary of the State Mission Board and his colaborers active in their efforts to lead the churches to do much more for missions. Such efforts as these can be maintained only at considerable expense. So before I departed on my long journey, I contributed three and one-half cents to help meet the expenses of the State Mission Board.

I was then sent by the treasurer of the State Mission Board, along with a great many other dollars, to the Foreign Mission Board at Richmond, Va. Immediately, I found myself in a foreign atmosphere. I should have felt quite out of place, but for the fact that I was joined by a great host of other dollars

that were bent upon a similar mission. I felt greatly strengthened and encouraged by this company. I felt that united with so many others I could do vastly more than I could single-handed. I became conscious of new power.

What a busy beehive I found the Foreign Mission Board rooms to be! It takes about ten rooms to accommodate the different departments and they are all crowded, too. The treasurer, of course, took me in charge. He certainly has his hands full in receiving and disbursing such large sums of money. The secretaries are planning, writing, traveling constantly in order to keep the great work before the people at home and to maintain the mission operations abroad. What volumes of letters are sent out! Great quantities of literature of all shapes and sizes are produced and distributed. About a dozen people are kept busy in these rooms attending to the multitudinous details incident to so vast an undertaking.

The board impressed me. It is composed of a number of men who take seriously the task committed to them by the Southern Baptist Convention. They give much time to consideration of the complex problems that arise in the ten fields in which our work is being conducted. What strange words they used as they discussed the needs of the various fields! It seemed to me that the needs of all the world were focussed before the sympathetic attention of these men. They planned to

meet as many of these needs as they could, but, alas, were compelled to turn a deaf ear to very many. They considered most carefully how I and others along with me should be distributed in order to make us accomplish the greatest possible good. When they had finished their deliberations, I felt sure I was appropriated in the way that would enable me to accomplish the greatest good. It was decided to send me forth in the following portions to the various fields: Africa three cents, Argentina six cents, Brazil twenty-two cents, China thirty-six cents, Europe six cents, Japan six and one-half cents, Mexico eight cents.

I asked how much I should give toward the expenses incurred in Richmond and was surprised to learn that they needed only seven cents from me. I gave that much gladly, for I do not see how so much could be done at so little expense. I learned also that the support of the wonderful work accomplished by the Woman's Missionary Union and the Laymen's Missionary Movement needed two cents more. This I also gave with hearty appreciation.

It was a pleasure to make the contributions I made to help meet these expenses, for I could see how necessary it is to incur these expenses. Besides, I realized that those who are working in behalf of missions in these offices are doing mission work just as really as those who go abroad. But there was one item of expense that I contributed to very reluctantly. I was called upon to contribute

two cents toward the interest account. I did not like to do it, but I had to do it because there was no way to avoid it. What a large waste this interest account is, and it appears to be worse when we realize that it could be avoided if everybody would send in their offerings to missions in a systematic way!

It was a fine experience for me to observe how this vast missionary enterprise is operated. I experienced genuine comfort in learning about the careful planning the Foreign Mission Board is giving to its work. It was reassuring for me to know that the Foreign Mission Board was behind me and that it will uphold the work I went forth to do. By its constant thought, planning, prayers, the board will do its utmost to see that others come after me to press forward the conquest in all needy fields.

MY JOURNEY TO CHINA.

The first field entered by Southern Baptists was China. We began work in that country immediately upon the organization of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845. In this oldest field the board has developed four great missions, so, in thinking of the work in China in comparison to the work in most of the other fields maintained by our board, it is necessary to think of the work in China as being in four great missions, the work in each one of these missions being as large as the entire work in each of several other countries. To the work in China it was decided I should

contribute thirty-six cents. So I went forth and journeyed through the missions in North, Interior, Central and South China and found 166 foreign missionaries, 520 native workers, 376 schools of all grades, in which there were 9,242 students last year; 7 hospitals, in connection with which 63,296 people were treated last year. In all these fields the work is prospering wonderfully. During the last year there were 2,618 baptisms and the membership of the 133 churches has reached the grand total of 19,636. It is a great and growing work and yet I was saddened to realize that we are maintaining missionaries in only one-third of the provinces in China, and that the very growth of our work has thrust upon us urgent opportunities which we are unable to meet.

MY JOURNEY TO AFRICA.

My next journey was to Nigeria on the west coast of Africa, a country in which the board began work in 1850. This is a most interesting field and I was sorry that I could contribute only three cents toward its redemption. I learned that the mission in Nigeria had gone through very trying difficulties. Sickness and death had devastated the ranks of the missionaries, because the climate had been so hostile, with the result that the board is maintaining in this field now about the same number of missionaries it was twenty years ago. In spite of difficulties, the situation is at present very much more hopeful.

The health conditions have been very much improved. The preaching of the gospel has been successful. We have in this field twenty-five churches, with a total membership of 6,573; last year there were 656 baptisms; several of the churches are entirely self-supporting and, in addition, conduct vigorous Home Mission operations. In this field we support 16 missionaries, 54 native workers and 45 schools of all grades, with a total enrollment of 1,601. We have a prosperous theological training school. I found two very successful doctors, for whom the Judson Centennial fund is soon to provide hospital buildings. Mohammedanism is crowding down into Nigeria and it is necessary for us to greatly augment our forces in order to stem the tide. If the present missionary force could be doubled at once we would be in position to take care of the situation.

MY JOURNEY TO EUROPE.

I set forth on my journey to Europe, carrying the six cents which I was to contribute to that field, with misgivings on account of the European war. My fears were confirmed when I reached the field. I was informed that many of the pastors in Italy had been drafted into the army and that the theological school in Rome was closed. I was encouraged, however, to see that the remaining pastors were doing their utmost to reach and maintain the work in all the churches and in spite of the great turmoil there were 89

baptisms during the year. The war has opened unusual opportunity for the distribution of literature. Dr. Whittinghill has prepared a series of splendid pamphlets which is meeting with a wide reception. More than 100,000 New Testaments and portions of the New Testament were distributed to the soldiers and our magazine called "Bilychnis," which is the greatest religious magazine in Italy, has had a prosperous year and is more appreciated now than ever. I witnessed many examples of heroic sacrifice and devotion to the cause, amongst the 1,194 members in our churches, which made me feel that when conditions become normal again they will be able to accomplish very much more for the spread of the gospel than they have at any time since Southern Baptists entered this field in 1870.

MY JOURNEY TO MEXICO.

At first thought one might have supposed that it was dangerous to enter Mexico during the last year, but in considering the needs of our two missions in Mexico, it was decided that I should contribute eight cents to that great field, which the board first entered in 1880. I found conditions very much disturbed. For several years revolution has succeeded revolution and the country is torn to pieces in a most distressing way. A number of our missionaries have been compelled to leave the country, but several of them have been able to remain at their posts. Quite a number of them have been able to do a suc-

cessful supervising work from the border through correspondence and by occasional trips into the interior. I was greatly surprised to find out how much had really been accomplished. The native ministry and the church members have shown themselves to be remarkably faithful. They are willing to endure for the cause's sake and many of them have suffered greatly during these troublous times. The salaries paid to these natives are not adequate to meet their needs and yet they are standing faithful to the work and accomplishing a great deal. The new constitution has raised additional difficulties in the way of our work, but the impression of all seems to be that methods will be found by which we can go on in a helpful way with the evangelization of the country. I am convinced that this is no time for us to desert a great and a needy people. If ever they needed help, they need it now in the midst of this great turmoil and distress. I was pleased to learn that in Mexico during last year there were 354 baptisms, which was almost double the number baptized the year before. The present membership of the churches is 2,909. I was pleased to note that the publishing house, temporarily located at El Paso, is carrying on its work about as usual.

MY JOURNEY TO BRAZIL.

I took up my journey to Brazil with very great interest, because this field, entered by Southern Baptists in 1882, is the second larg-

est of the Foreign Mission Board. I found two great missions extending over vast territories, the North Brazil mission stretching from one thousand miles up the Amazon river down to Bahia, the South Brazil mission spreading itself over the remainder of the territory to the south. To the work in these two great missions I gave twenty-two cents and was happy to see it expended so wisely. I met in Brazil 56 foreign missionaries and 120 native workers. I discovered 38 schools of all grades, in which were 1,341 students. Distressing financial conditions have existed during the year on account of the European conflict, but in spite of all the difficulties a successful year's work was done. There were 2,284 baptisms and the membership in the churches has reached the grand total of 14,959. I was happy to observe the splendid seven and one-half acre campus which the Judson Centennial fund secured for the college and seminary at Pernambuco during last year, and also the magnificent forty-five thousand dollar new main building which the Judson Centennial fund provided for the Rio College and Seminary. These two institutions were greatly set forward by this new equipment. The new building for the Rio College and Seminary is the best mission college building in Brazil and will greatly increase the efficiency of that rapidly growing institution. I must confess that my pride was elated when I saw the splendid property recently purchased for the Baptist publishing house in Rio, which

is now known as the Carroll Memorial. I was deeply impressed when I reached the far southern rim of our work to learn that a native pastor had given ten thousand milreis with which to erect the church at Invernades. This is a hopeful sign, and yet I was not surprised at it when I learned that 71 out of the 172 churches in Brazil are self-supporting. I was glad to realize that I had come to help a people who were so willing to help themselves

MY JOURNEY TO JAPAN.

Our board began work in Japan in 1890. Because I had heard so much about the virile Japanese people being the leaders of the Orient, I was happy to have the privilege of seeing them and of contributing the six and one-half cents I had to spend toward our work in Japan. Upon close observation I was not disappointed in the favorable estimate I had already made of the Japanese people.

I visited in Japan 19 foreign missionaries, 24 native workers—all rendering splendid service. I was interested to find out that the arrangement for the permanent home for the Baptist theological seminary in Tokyo had been finally completed. The Northern and Southern Baptist boards have decided to use the old Duncan Academy site for the seminary. There we have a dormitory and some other buildings which, with some additional buildings the Judson Centennial fund will erect, will provide us with a sufficient equip-

ment for the present. I was happy also to be present at the opening of the Southwestern Academy at Fukuoka. During its first year this boys' academy enrolled 110 students. I was interested also in three kindergartens which are doing splendid work. This pleased me greatly, because I discovered that the kindergarten offers very unusual opportunities for successful Christian effort in Japan.

I was impressed by the fact that we haven't reinforced our work in Japan as much as we should. We ought to give immediate attention to this field and greatly reinforce the number of missionaries in that country.

MY JOURNEY TO ARGENTINA.

Argentina is our newest field. The board began work there in 1903. I was happy to contribute six cents to this young and vigorous mission. I discovered it to be one of the greatest farming and stock-raising countries of the world and its capital, Buenos Aires, the largest city in South America. In the vigor of its life and activities I was reminded of our great Southwest.

I was greatly pleased with the prudent and carefully-planned work the sixteen missionaries of our board are carrying on. They have now associated with them 19 native workers. I rejoiced to note that they now have thirty-four churches, including those that are reported in Chile, with a total membership of 2,321. During the last year they baptized 265. I was glad to see that they had made

a beginning in school work. They have now seven schools with 172 students. The theological training school at Buenos Aires is making very encouraging progress.

I was impressed by the fact that there are a large number of cities, outside of Buenos Aires, that have not yet been opened by missionary effort. Certainly wonderful opportunities are to be found in those cities. Over in Chile, where an independent Baptist work has grown up, they need more help that we have been able to give them. Surely, God is calling us into some of these open fields, for they are certainly ripe unto the harvest.

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Thus I went the rounds of our seven great mission fields. I saw many strange sights and peoples. The strangeness of it all interested me profoundly, but, above everything that impressed me, were the spiritual needs of the multitudes. And oh the multitudes! How they throng the earth! How they strive through idol worship and other false religions to satisfy their soul thirst! Seeing all these needs makes me wish I could multiply myself several times and that I could get back to the good friend who dedicated me to this service and help him to realize how much good he has done and how really he, himself, has gone to the various fields by sending me. I know that if he could witness the care with which I have been handled and the good I have accomplished, he would take a larger share in this work next time.

I have expended myself in the fields and yet my work is not done, for the good I have helped to do will live after me and other dollars which shall be given by my good friend and many more like him will carry the work on in ever increasing power until the time shall come when the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God as the waters cover the sea.

SENT ABROAD

AFRICA 3 cts.

EUROPE 6 cts.

ARGENTINA 6 cts.

JAPAN 6½ cts.

MEXICO 8 cts.

BRAZIL 22 cts.

CHINA 36 cts.

How
The
Missionary
Dollar
Is
Spent

HOME EXPENSES

Laymen and W.M.U. 2 cts.

Interest 2 cts.

States 3½ cts.

Richmond Office 5 cents