

Home Missions

We live in a funny country. I don't mean that in the way of humor, but that Americans have a funny way of thinking. I say this because I see it every day in the job I have, in the community I live in, and particularly among the Baptist brethren who believe as I do.

What is it that is so strange about the way we think? Consider this: We think it is a commendable thing to feed people half a world away, yet will not attempt to insure that all Americans eat. Now, I know that this is a free country, and you are free to succeed, and to fail. If you succeed, well and good. If you fail, you must bear it. I don't have a problem with that, and I believe that individuals will never work at anything if we bail them out every time they fail. Rather, what I am getting at here is a set of mind that never seems to want to attend to those immediately about us, yet sees no problem in generously, repeatedly bailing out people halfway around the world.

You know, it is the same with Missions. As a fundamental, unaffiliated, Baptist, I expect for local churches to support missionaries directly through the church that sent the missionary. That way, 100% of the support given is received by the missionary in the field. That is rightly and properly the way it should be. However, this is where the sensible thinking seems to end. You see, there is a heavy bias for supporting missionaries to foreign fields, and little to nothing given in the way of support for missions right here in America. In this regard, fundamental, unaffiliated Baptist churches parallel the rest of American society – we care for those on the other side of the globe, and ignore the folks just down the road.

As one who is directly involved in a home mission, this is disconcerting to me, though I have known it for years. Of course, it was disconcerting when I discovered it years ago. How I found out was through a newsletter put out by a Baptist

ministry in the western states of Wyoming and Nebraska. This ministry is one of providing preachers to go through the small communities and towns in the rural West and preach the gospel where there were no established churches, and no Bible preachers. One of the greatest needs they have is the support of churches to accomplish the burden the LORD God laid upon them for the rural people of the West.

It is no different for any home mission. It is difficult to establish a church and conduct a ministry when one works full time, and then conducts the work of the ministry during the evenings and Saturdays, with Sunday dedicated to conducting services.

Why is it this way? Because this is America! Don't you know, just start a church and they will come! No, I'm not being flippant, or a smart-aleck. What I have seen among brethren is an underlying attitude that somehow home missions will just take care of themselves, and they really don't need the support a foreign missionary needs. After all, any home missionary can get a job, and provide for his needs that way and conduct the ministry **on the side**. Yes, that is actually the attitude of many pastors and brethren in this country. It is utterly shameful and really does help the Devil accomplish his purpose of taking this country straight to Hell. There is a decided lack of understanding that America is one of (if not the) most difficult mission fields in the world.

Now, if you read this, and your attitude toward home missions and missionaries is what is described above, I have some questions for you:

Which do you think is the greater sin:

Allowing someone halfway around the world to go to Hell because they didn't have the gospel preached to them?

Or allowing someone in the town just down the road to go to

Hell because you don't think home missions require support?

If you don't support home missionaries to plant proper churches in this country; how long do you think it will be before there are not enough proper churches to send missionaries overseas?

And finally, *if we don't work to save our own country, how can we save the rest of the world?*