

Sight to the Blind: The Missionaries Influence on the Mission Field

Dr. Don Sisk



When missionaries reach individuals with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, that transforming power can shape cities and even entire cultures. This is what the Apostle Paul and his companions did in the first century. They evangelized the lost, edified believers, established local churches, and as a result, they turned the world upside down. Today, thousands of missionaries are following the example of the Apostle Paul. All around the world, the power of the Gospel has left its mark.

INDIA

Perhaps the most outstanding example of influence of a missionary on a community was William Carey's impact on India. Not only did he evangelize the lost, teach believers, and translate the Bible into their language, but he also worked to change some of the horrible pagan customs in India.

When a man died in India, it was customary to tie the body of the widow to her dead husband's corpse and burn them together. His heart sank every time he heard news of another woman burned alive, and he began to do all that he could to have this horrible custom outlawed. Little by little, he gained the support of other Indian people who joined with him to demand that this custom be outlawed.

After many years of protest and gaining the support of the people in his community, the horrible custom of burning a living widow with a dead corpse was outlawed in India.

VIRGIN ISLANDS

When Dr. Ray Thompson went to St. Thomas, part of the Virgin Islands, a child could not obtain a birth certificate until he had been christened. The Moravians and Lutherans who established the first churches in St. Thomas practiced baptizing infants and shaped the laws around their denomination.

After being in the islands for several years, Dr. Thompson gained the ear of some government officials. After explaining to this group why Baptists do not baptize infants, the law was changed. Now infants can obtain a

birth certificate without being Christened. This is a good thing, because now 40% of the people in the Virgin Islands are Baptists.

PERU

In one city where Tom Pace has ministered for many years, his impact is obvious. Before going to Peru as a missionary, he majored in cinema at LeTourneau University. Because of the lack of programming in the early Peru television stations, Tom Pace was able to produce a series of Christian programs and air them at no cost.

Many people were saved through his television programs and local church ministry, and Brother Pace became a well-known figure throughout the city. Some of the city leaders even asked him to run for mayor. Of course, he refused to run for political office because he knew the Lord was making a greater impact through the Gospel ministry.

JAPAN

While only three in every two hundred people are Christians, biblical principles have had a great influence on the entire nation of Japan. Many customs and practices have gradually but significantly changed, and I believe it is because of the influence of the Christians in Japan.

PHILIPPINES

The influence of Dr. Rick Martin is readily seen in the city of Iloilo, Philippines. With his emphasis on education, his desire to help all of the people, and his passion to be used of God, the entire city has been touched. He ministers to many forgotten people—the deaf, the blind, the mentally challenged, and the lepers. In this way, he has captured the hearts of the entire city.

UGANDA

Missionaries have greatly influenced the country of Uganda. They have been willing to teach the Ugandan children. They have provided food for refugees. They have established orphanages for the many children that have no place to live. As a result, many communities are being touched and changed for the glory of God.

While we have a great interest in the souls of men, we must not forget that man is not just a soul, he is also a body. Christ ministered to the physical needs of the people to which He preached, and so should we.

It is not the primary purpose of missions to change the culture of the people. Missionaries go to preach Christ, not to change customs and traditions. But when faith meets a culture, the culture will change.