

Extra Resources

June 1, 2008

Optional story

Share the following story from the International Mission Board (IMB). “Cuban mission offering brings \$201 and a patched shirt,” Erich Bridges (Feb. 2, 2007) *Baptist Press*.

When time came for the mission offering, a young Cuban Christian took the patched shirt off his back, came forward, and put it in the box. It was all he had, but he gave it gladly.

Another believer gave his socks. Several offered their watches and rings. Another contributed a handkerchief with words from the Bible written on it: “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

A Southern Baptist missionary witnessed this scene on a recent visit to Cuba, where he spoke at a mission training conference involving more than 300 mostly young home missionaries from around the island nation.

“I have never seen that kind of sacrificial giving—not in my country or any other country where we’ve served,” the missionary told International Mission Board trustees during their January 2007 meeting in Ontario, California. “They gave what they had.”

The impromptu mission offering came after the missionary finished his planned participation in the conference. The Cuban Baptist pastor who organized the annual session unexpectedly announced, “We’re glad our missionary brother is still with us. Brother, right after lunch I want you to come back and share for 30 minutes about what God is doing in the world. Would you do that?”

The missionary gulped, agreed, and cobbled together a quick global overview during lunch. After he presented it to the conference participants, the Cuban pastor took the podium again.

“We’re going to be involved in world missions,” he said. “We can’t go and share around the world, but we are praying for missions and today we’re going to give. Some of you might say, ‘We don’t have anything to give. We depend on others to give to us so that we can reach our own country for Christ. One day when we have more we’ll give.’ But if we wait until we have more, we won’t give then, either. We’re going to give today. Brother, what place in the world needs our grain of sand, our mission offering?”

The IMB missionary suggested China, where hundreds of millions of souls have yet to hear of the saving love of Christ.

“We’re going to give an offering to China, then,” the pastor declared. “Let’s pray.”

As the hundreds of Cuban workers bowed their heads, the missionary thought about their financial resources. Most of them work for local churches and make an average salary equivalent to \$10 to \$12 dollars a month. He winced at the thought of challenging them to give to others far beyond their needy shores.

“What happened next was completely unexpected on my part,” he recounted. “When the pastor said ‘Amen,’ the young people ran to the front and began emptying their pockets into these boxes. When the final tally was made and converted into dollars, it was an offering of \$201.55.”

Later, the missionary told the Cuban pastor he would be glad to “redeem” the items given with an offering of his own so that essentials like shirts, socks, and food money could be returned to those who gave.

The pastor was offended.

“Brother, they didn’t give these things to you,” he sternly informed the missionary. “They gave these things to God, and God is going to use these things the way He sees fit. They’re not going to take them back.”

He wrapped up the items and money and gave the package to the missionary, with orders to see that it go toward ministries in China. He heard later that they had begun praying God would multiply their offering—like the loaves and fishes of old—into 1 million Cuban pesos. That’s about \$53,000.

“They believe God is going to do that,” the missionary told the IMB trustees. “I do, too. I don’t know how, but He’s going to do it.”

Then he presented the Cubans’ offering—patched shirt and all—to trustee Chairman John Floyd and Chuck McAlister, chairman of the trustees’ overseas committee. Included was an additional \$160 from a Southern Baptist youth group who gave their own offering after hearing about the Cubans’ sacrificial gift.

“This is a sacred offering” said Gordon Fort, IMB vice president for overseas operations. “When the Lord looked at the widow’s mite, He said, ‘Of all things that have been given, this is the greatest.’”

Numerous trustees in the room rose to ask if they could contribute also. As the package containing the patched shirt and other items from Cuba was passed around, they gave \$2,867.

The multiplication the Cubans asked God for has begun.

July 13, 2008

Optional story

Read aloud the following article: “Journeyman’s experience changing Cambodian lives—and his own” (February 2007) by Dea Davidson, International Mission Board

Even before he’s fully awake, Joshua McFadden knows he’s not in Louisville, Kentucky, anymore.*

Roosters crowing, babies crying, and his neighbors pumping water from the well outside his bedroom window remind the recent college grad that he’s in Cambodia. So do the thatched-roof homes on stilts he passes as he bikes down the red dirt road to a Cambodian-style outdoor diner. Yet, as he wolfs down breakfast and endures teasing by the older village women, he is thankful God brought him to Southeast Asia.

“I love my job. I love these people. I love Cambodia. I love my life,” McFadden says. “I know it sounds sappy, but it’s true. When I’m riding my bike through a village and say ‘hi’ to all the kids, it’s a daily revival. How often do you go through a village and everyone speaks to you?”

McFadden’s interest in sharing Christ internationally sharpened as a result of trips to Cambodia and China in college, but he can see how God started working on him in fourth grade. That year his Sunday School teacher, a journeyman just back from Kenya, brought carved rhinoceroses and tribal masks to class and helped make sharing Christ come alive. That teacher, Randy Jacobs, is now McFadden’s team leader in Cambodia.*

McFadden’s learned a lot since he stepped off the plane in August 2006—not only about fitting in with a different people group but also the importance of helping that people group physically as well as spiritually.

“It’s really important for Christian people to do development work in addition to evangelism to catch the vision for really changing a place,” McFadden says. “I just hope I am able to portray to them someone who genuinely cares about their needs. If we totally ignore the dire situation and physical concerns, it’s not responsible on our part as Christians.”

McFadden and his team minister to the Cambodian people first by providing water filters, locating cleaner water sources, providing medical education and creating educational videos. Within his team, McFadden is taking a key role in animal husbandry and agricultural programs. As he helps his neighbors raise healthier goats and pigs and produce better crops, he builds relationships that give him grounds to share his testimony.

While McFadden loves the work he is doing now, he is excited about plans to move to a more remote village on his own. That village, accessible only by ferry across the Mekong River, has no electricity, running water, or concrete buildings. By choosing to live among

these isolated Buddhist people, he hopes to show them that happiness in life comes not through rituals or things but through a God they have never heard about.

At the end of his two-year term in Cambodia, McFadden hopes he will have helped change the lives of some Cambodians, but more importantly, his life will have changed.

“It’s one of my biggest hopes that I’ll be different when I go home,” McFadden says. “I love my life in America, but I want to go back and be different so I don’t get pulled back into American culture. I think it would be the way Jesus would live on earth.”

*Names changed for security reasons.

August 24, 2008

Optional Activity

Preparing Your Testimony

1 Peter 3:15—“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have...”

Preparing

1. Pray
2. Begin by writing freely and getting all your ideas down on paper. Use Paul’s model:
 - What was your life like before you knew Christ?
 - How and why did you yield your life to Christ?
 - What happened after you yielded your life to Christ?

Life Before Christ

Background: Did you grow up in church? If so, what was that experience like? If not, what was your original worldview?

- What were your attitudes? needs? problems?
- What did your life revolve around? What was most important to you?
- Where did you look for security? peace of mind? happiness? significance?
- How and why did you become Christian?
- When did you first hear the gospel?
- What were your initial reactions to Jesus?
- When and why did you begin to feel positively about Christianity?
- What was the turning point in your attitude?
- What feelings did you struggle with right before your decision?
- What actions did you take to become a Christian?

Life with Christ

- What changes did you see in your life? attitudes? actions?
- How long did it take before you noticed any changes?
- What does Jesus Christ mean to you now?
- What area of your life has the Lord changed most significantly?

3. Get selective. Decide which details are important to each of the three points.
4. Begin writing.
5. Edit and rewrite as needed.
6. Practice! Practice! Practice!
 - Beware of nervous mannerisms.
 - Beware of your testimony being “preachy.”
 - Stick to a time limit.
7. Ask God to give you opportunities to share your testimony and look for openings.
8. Update your testimony regularly.