



Center for United States Missions

Mission Moments



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VISION ...and provision

By Mike Ruhl

It must have been the fifth similar telephone conversation in the past month. I listen intently as a missionary pastor unpacks his anxiety about declining and disappearing financial support for his ministry and his turbulent concern about not being around to bring the gospel of Jesus Christ to the many receptive postmodern people in his ripening urban mission field.



What could have degenerated into a woeful, depressing analysis of economic downturn in the church was transformed into a celebration of hope and confirmation of Jesus' promise to all who engage in the Great Commission: "I will be with you always, even to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:20) More than a statement of divine omnipresence, Jesus promises that as believers engage in the Great Commission of "making disciples of all the nations," He will be with us every step and every inch of the way, and He will provide the necessary resources to fulfill His mission.

As you know, Jesus was a magnificent parabolic Teacher ... a master of the metaphor. One time Jesus gave to the disciples a striking metaphor which gave them great assurance that God will provide all that is needed in order for His mission to advance through them.

"Which of you fathers, if your son asks for an egg, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (Luke 11:11-13)

That word-picture from Jesus is a perfect summary of what that missionary pastor and I were empowered to see and to celebrate together by the power of the Holy Spirit. God simply will not release His VISION to a missionary - without also making PROVISION for that vision to be fulfilled. When it comes to authentic mission, God is not in the business of passing out snakes when his missionary people ask for fish, nor does He distribute scorpions when they ask for eggs.

God's missionary people do not lose heart when shekels seem scarce. Instead they turn to God in prayer, conduct self and ministry evaluation, pursue alignment with

the will of the Father, deepen their God-given vision of mission...and then humble themselves to receive the promised fish and eggs.

Be encouraged, dear missionary.
What a wonderful God we have!

EXTRAS

Questions for Reflection

1. How has the Lord kept his promise to provide necessary financial resources for your mission?
2. What portion of your mission-funding resources does the Lord deliver internally (through the people associated with your mission)? What portion does the Lord deliver externally (through some form of grant or "mission subsidy")? How do you feel about that?
3. How do you balance the tension between money and mission?
4. How is the Lord changing or expanding the flow of "fish and eggs" to your mission?
5. How can you exercise better stewardship of the financial resources the Lord is bringing to your mission?
6. What internal and external factors are blocking the flow of God's promised resources to your mission?
7. How is the Lord using you personally as a conduit for supplying financial resources for your mission?

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