

A MISSIONARY MOMENT

BY

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Every missionary moment is different. Some are successful, some are not so successful. The following missionary moment took place in the early part of 2003 in Monimbo, Nicaragua. A lady named Martha was saved. The Lord filled her with joy. She was baptized, joined the church, and displayed a changed life. One day she asked me if I could preach a revival crusade at her house. She said, "I have 10 children, and only one will go to church with me." She wanted me to preach the Gospel to them. I promised her that as soon as possible, I would honor her request. On a subsequent trip to Nicaragua, I scheduled this meeting. Martha said, "I will prepare."

When I arrived in Monimobo I checked into a little hotel which consisted of a little room, a bucket of water and a foam rubber mattress. On Monday, the night the meeting was to start, I went to her house. She had her yard clean and swept with about 50 chairs set up ready for the meeting. Martha was excited because all of her family was coming. At 6:00 in the evening, we started the meeting. Almost all of the chairs filled.

We had no music. I tried to pray and I tried to preach. It was one of the most difficult times I have ever had in trying to preach. It seemed as though my words would not come out. While I was preaching, I had an awful thought. "I will be glad when this is over." In a little time, I closed the meeting. I went to my little hotel room, frustrated. I began to pray more diligently, but with no relief. If possible, Tuesday evening, was worse. Wednesday was even worse. There were dogs running into the yard, and children fighting. I think some of the adults were having a difficult time also. My thoughts were, "In five days; I can go home and get away from this horrible meeting." I seriously thought about quitting. I even thought maybe I can get sick. I found the grace to keep going.

In the meantime the meeting was moved from her yard to a little pole tabernacle building with a grass roof. On that evening the little building was packed, maybe 60 or 70 people. My gospel preaching confidence was shattered. I decided to stand up and try to preach anyway. I read a text from John 3. I had barely finished the text when a lady about 60 years old stood to her feet and began to scream: reconcile, reconcile, reconcile. I asked the interpreter what was happening. He said, "She

wants reconciliation with God." I motioned for her to come forward; she acknowledged that she wanted to be saved. In the front of that congregation she professed Christ as her Savior. Her countenance was changed.

She went back to where she was sitting, and began to pull a lady I assumed was her daughter to the front of the building. I asked what she was doing. She said, "I want my daughter to be saved too." I appreciated her evangelistic zeal, but that is not exactly how we do evangelism. By the way, we generally do not give invitations openly. This was a spontaneous response. A few weeks later, the daughter was genuinely converted. This family to this day, maintains a good testimony.

Having seen this lady converted seemed to help my attitude. I thought I would finish my message. But the Lord was not finished with His preaching. Immediately, a young well-dressed man said, I have a question. He said, "All my life, I have gone to churches, but I have never heard before that we are saved by faith alone. Would you explain?" I took time to talk about salvation and justification by faith alone. When I finished, he said, "I want this." I want this salvation. Then and there he professed Christ as his savior. Things were different in this meeting. I felt so ashamed of my inward thoughts. I began to try to read the Bible text again, when another young man holding a little baby, who was standing beside a young lady with two small children, said, "I want to say something. This is my girlfriend. These are my children. I have been saved and I want to be baptized, but the church will not allow me to be baptized since I am living with this woman who is not my wife. He thanked the Lord for saving him. He said, "Please pray for me. I want to be baptized." The young lady walked down the aisle. I asked her, "Don't you want to marry this man so he could be baptized?" She said, "No!" and a pause, then she said, "I want to be saved!" Now I am thinking I am in a dream. The presence of the Lord was so real. She gladly received Christ. She stood up and told everyone that she had peace. They were married soon after that, and then a few weeks later both of them were baptized. When I return to this area of Nicaragua I look in on them. They are doing very well. They are growing Christians. Almost immediately, others in the meeting began to share their faith. This is not a dramatization, but this is a true missionary moment