

Reading: Nehemiah 1:1-11

*“O Lord, listen! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, hear and act!” (Dan 9:19a)*

This is the day of missionary revival. Several missionary organisations have been born in the wake of this revival. The percentage of Christians in India is on the increase. However, there are certain tragedies in many Churches today in the context of missions. Let us look at this today and tomorrow.

□ *Many Organisers but few Agonizers!*

There is not much difficulty in getting volunteers to organize a missionary challenge meet or a fund mobilization programme or even a missionary prayer meeting. But the actual agonizers in prayer are scarce. Organising needs talents, but agonizing involves tears. Organizing is possible with just fleshly enthusiasm, but agonizing is a spiritual excruciation.

Though organizing is necessary, it cannot precede or take the place of agonizing. Apostle Paul was a great organizer but first an agonizer. He was a missionary institution. He strove in his prayers. He beseeched fellow believers in Christ to strive together with him in their prayers (Rom 15:30). Epaphras of Colossian Church had an organized translocal vision, but he was labouring fervently in prayer (Col 4:12,13). There will be too few problems if agonizers outnumber organizers.

□ *Many Senders but few Soulwinners!*

Jesus was a Sender of missionaries (Mt 10:5,16). At the same time He went out personally as a Soulwinner (Mt 11:1). It is a pity that many Churches are full of supporters only. It is like filling the inside of a Church building with pillars. Imagine! Let us go out with the fishing rod. Personal involvement with souls can never be sacrificed for anything, even if it concerns missions. Jesus was first and last a personal Soulwinner. His primary call to every Christian is to be a fisher of men (Mt 4:19).

Churches must become centres of recruitment and training of soulwinners. Does your Church have a regular training programme for soulwinning? (I am not asking how many missionaries your Church has sent). I hesitate to call one a missionary Church if it is not a soulwinning Church and one which does not produce soulwinners. Away with the unscriptural idea that a soul in distant lands is more precious than a non-Christian in our neighbourhood! Charity begins at home. God usually calls for frontier missions those who are active in neighbourhood evangelism.

O God our Saviour, we worship You as the Lover of mankind. We praise You for Your concern over every man and woman since creation. Your heart yearns for the salvation of each one. Your heart aches for every perishing soul. You are a God of self-revelation. You have been always sending Your messengers to call men and women to come to You for salvation and eternal life. You love us as a Shepherd loves his sheep. You love us as a Father loves his children. Your heart is never at rest until the lost are found. Your outstretched hands are never folded back until the prodigals return. Selfless love!

Thank You, Father, for the call of Jesus to make all His followers fishers of men. You have saved us to save others. You have blessed us to bless others. Forgive us for forgetting this responsibility often. In our religious excitement inside the Church we forget the outsiders. Your Son died not only for our sins but also for the sins of the whole world. You are God not only of the Jews but also the non-Jews. You are God not only of us Christians but also non-Christians. Folks lie wounded by the thief, even Satan. Let's not bypass them like the Priest or the Levite but bless them like the Samaritan. Let's not despise ignorant religionists like Nicodemus or corrupt officials like Zacchaeus or immoral people like the Samaritan woman. Dear Lord, imprint on our hearts that no one is too sinful to be saved by Your power. No heart is too hard to be broken by Your love. No one is too far to be reached by Your hand.

Dear Lord, our cities and towns are getting sold out to drunkenness and debauchery; give us the same burden Abraham had for Sodom. Our cities are proud with technological advancement and knowledge explosion; give us the same burden Paul had for Rome. Pour upon us a spirit of intercession as Epaphras had for Colossae, Laodicea and Hierapolis. Help us weep over the backslidden Church as Jesus did over Jerusalem. Bless us with holy lamentations as Jeremiah had. Visit us again, O Lord, as our hearts and eyes are dry. Send us a revival of prayer. We claim the healing of the five continents through the five bleeding wounds of Jesus.

Almighty God, save us from the curse of satisfaction in our rescue mission. We are substituting giving for going. We have invented easy alternatives for reaching out to souls. Heal our so-called beautiful feet from paralysis. Heal our ears which are deaf to the cries of the needy. Heal our eyes which are blind to the condition of the perishing. Heal our hands which are withered being unable to lift up the downtrodden. Heal our atrophied muscles to snatch captives from the devil's bondage. Heal our dumbness to proclaim everywhere the message of deliverance through Christ. In His Name, Amen!

*(1 Tim 2:4; 2 Pet 3:9; Jn 10:11; Heb 1:1-3; Lk 10:30-35; 15:20-22; 19:8,9,41-44; Mt 4:19; Jn 3:1-3; 4:8-10; Gen 18:23-33; Rom 9:1-3; Col 1:7; 4:12; Jer 9:1; Isa 52:7; Acts 26:16-18)*