A MAN ON A MISSION

MISSION - a calling; an objective or task that somebody believes it is his or her duty to carry out or to which he or she attaches special importance and devotes special care.

A man on a mission – that was my first impression of Bill Winston. Yes, his calm exterior portrayed a well-dressed "IBMer", but burning within him was a passion for people, and a desire to bring them to Christ. There was a life that radiated from him that I had never seen before. In the 25-plus years I have known him, his previous endeavors dimmed as the sense of "mission" rose to prominence in his life. Yes, he fought over 250 "missions" as a fighter pilot in the U.S. Air Force, but now the "mission" took on an eternal significance.

"Mission" has been embedded in his DNA to the degree that in 1984 God used him to pioneer a church in Minneapolis, Minnesota, called "Mission Temple of Faith". His first ministry newsletter, penned while still in graduate school at Oral Roberts University's Graduate School of Theology and Mission, was entitled "Mission Report". That first issue detailed his experiences while on his first mission trip to Haiti.

It was this sense of "mission" that drove him to preach outdoors in the low-income housing projects of North Tulsa while still in grad school, with a make-shift sound system and metal folding chairs, proclaiming the good news to the poor. It was "mission" that caused him and I, on Christmas day of 1985, to search out "Ms. Love" and bless her with bags of groceries – all we could find at the one convenience store we located that was open that cool Christmas morning.

There is no question about it – working under a man with a mission will keep the fire under your feet! Just ask his staff, who tirelessly labors to keep up with the latest project he has launched to expand the Kingdom. His latest project he has launched to expand the Kingdom.

What began, for him, as a thought, a desire, a dream, a home-grown crusade “in the hood” has blossomed into a church of 20,000 members, a worldwide ministry, schools of ministry and business, shopping malls, businesses and outreaches, speaking engagements across the globe, and the establishing of Christ-centered business schools in South and Central America.

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African and Asia.

Wow. How will God use YOU, in the unique fashion with the gifts and potential that He’s placed inside of YOU? How are you reaching mankind with the goodness of God? What is the race that you are running in this life? Let me make it easy for you. Some will take the lead, some will work behind the scenes, some will watch the babies while the parents help with another’s mission, and all will share in the rewards. Everyone playing their part. Every member necessary and important. No task being insignificant or unnoticed by our Heavenly Father.

The Apostle Paul, reflecting on his life’s commitment and work, wrote:

“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.” (II Timothy 4:7-8).

If you’re like me, you’ve wondered, “What is my course? What is my gift and calling? To answer that, I am reminded of a story Jesus told of the Good Samaritan. Just look at the multitudes who have been wound and left half-dead. The harvest is plenteous. I dare you to show the love of God to someone today. God will show up to you, as His love flows through you. A kind word or gesture. A compliment or word of encouragement. An invitation to visit a worship service or even the offer of a ride there and back. An offer to buy groceries, or just time spent with a teen to show that you care. Giving comfort. A phone call. A card expressing gratitude. Sharing your personal testimony of what God has done for you. Telling a stranger that they matter to God, and that He loves them. Bringing a soul to Christ. Getting them filled with the Holy Spirit. Sowing an inspirational book or CD. Volunteering faithfully in your church’s outreaches to the community. Feeding the hungry. Clothing the naked. Visiting one imprisoned. Healing the sick. Good works. Acts of love. By God’s grace. On a mission.

Whether it’s in the townships of South Africa, among the amputees of the Congo, at the orphanages of the Caribbean, in the sewers where the street children of Bolivia make their homes, or on the streets of Chicago – God is saying “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Let us say with Isaiah, “Here I am; send me.”

And by the way, that “man on fire” is my husband, and I owe him my life. My travels with him to the nations has brought such an awareness of God’s love for all people, especially those who are suffering. For God to reach them, we must be the ones to go. So, the “Go ye into all the world” gets up close and personal, and the assignment to mature and equip His Body so they can go has dwarfed every other church activity in my mind and heart. Win souls. Make disciples. Build His Kingdom. Here am I; send me.