

Book  
Review



by C. S.

# The Challenge of Missions

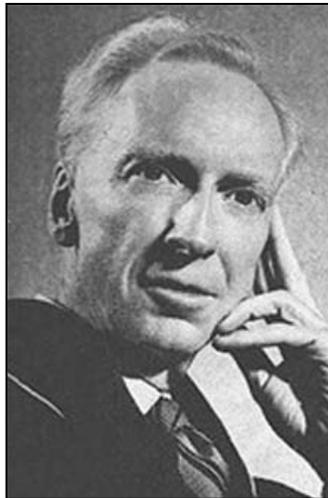
by Oswald J. Smith

The *Challenge of Missions* is an inspiring book, a plea for a vision for God's Kingdom worldwide. It is not necessarily a missionary manual, but it is a motivational summary of our duty as Christians, with specific and practical applications. The arguments set forth are scriptural and logical. In the forward it is recommended that every member of the local church read this book, that all may be driven by the same passion.

Oswald J. Smith, a Canadian pastor, wrote this book, which was first published in 1959. His life's motivation and goal was to put first the evangelization of the whole world. He moved to Toronto to pastor a church, and just as he was about to preach his first sermon there, the treasurer approached him saying, "We've told you everything about this church except one thing—we're in debt."

Oswald headed for the pulpit, and as he went he prayed: "Lord, I have been wanting to find out for a long time whether or not a certain passage in Thy Word is true." True, he meant, from a practical standpoint, referring to the verse, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God [the extension of His worldwide Kingdom] and all these things shall be added unto you" (Mt. 6:33).

That Sunday morning he preached a missionary sermon. Then also in the evening. He asked the people to come back every night of that week, and gave them missions again. The next Sunday morning he preached three missionary sermons, and took up three missionary offerings. In the end, the people caught a vision



for the Lord's work, and without a word being mentioned about the home needs, they were shortly afterwards paid off as well. His whole life was driven by a desire to make the foreign mission field the main priority of the church. He was sure that "the light that shines farthest shines brightest near home." His life motto was, "You must go, or send a substitute," and "Why should anyone hear the gospel twice before everyone has heard it once?"

In chapter four the question is asked, "Will Christ return to earth before the world has been evangelized?" In Chapter five he takes a realistic look at whether or not we are succeeding in bringing the gospel to all people. Chapter six raises the question, "Why have we failed to evangelize the world?" The answers include: not being convinced that the heathen are lost, not following the right methods, and too much emphasis on education. If you're wondering why else...then you should read the book!

On the subject of Prayer, Smith says the following:

Humanly speaking the task is absolutely impossible. There are more heathen today than there were a century ago in spite of what we have done. What is the solution? "Money," replies one. "Let us gather together millions of dollars and we can evangelize the world." "Men," answers another. "Give us sufficient men to go and we will accomplish the task in this generation."

No, friend, that is not God's method. Neither money nor men will do it.

Listen: "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the labourers are few." There you have the difficulties of the task, a great harvest and an inadequate number of harvesters. But hark! The Master continues to speak. Thank God, He has the solution and the problem is solved. "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest" (Matt. 9:37-38).

We have by far too many labourers now, labourers, I mean, of the wrong kind. They do not know their business, nor how to garner in the ripened harvest. With their Modern Theology and Social-uplift ideas they have sought to do what can never be done. Would to God they could be sent home! What a blessing it would be to countless thousands! Our business is to "pray the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth labourers." And when God sends men He always sends the right kind. This then is the secret—PRAY.

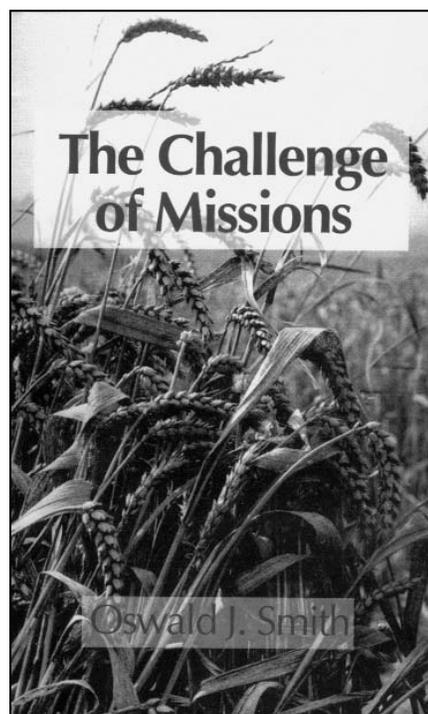
The rest of the book speaks of giving, sacrificial living, what is a missionary call, and hardships to be faced. Another few chapters talk about New Testament methods. The writer is very strong on indigenous principles, much because of his study of the work in many lands.

Concerning missionary preparation, he writes:

There are two kinds of volunteers, passive and active. The passive volunteer says, "Lord, here am I." Next year he says it again, and five years later he is saying once more, "Lord, I am still here." Here he is, here he was, and here he always will be. He has an idea that he has to wait until he hears a supernatural voice, or until God reaches down, picks him up and transplants him to some foreign land. God cannot use passive volunteers.

The active volunteer says, "Lord, here am I, send me." He puts a "go" into his volunteering, and setting his face like a flint, he prays through hindrances and overcomes obstacles. By faith he opens closed doors, prays in, or earns, the money he needs...and finally, after overcoming every obstacle, he reaches the field. Nothing is allowed to stand in his way. God can use active volunteers.

In summary, if you want your vision to be stirred and encouraged, read this book. It should be read with discernment, but mostly with a teachable attitude, a longing to know God's heart. I'm sure that God will bless it to your heart. Included on the previous page is another excerpt to give a flavor of the book.



**The Challenge of Missions**  
is available through

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