Meditations

for the

Missions Heart

A 40-Day Journey to *Renew* Your Vision



GENE DANIELS

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Meditations for the Missions Heart: A 40-Day Journey to Renew Your Vision

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Previously published by Condeo Press in 2012, but out of print since 2022.

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Published by William Carey Publishing
10 W. Dry Creek Cir
Littleton, CO 80120 | www.missionbooks.org

William Carey Publishing is a ministry of Frontier Ventures
Pasadena, CA | www.frontierventures.org
Cover and Interior Designer: Mike Riester

ISBNs: 978-1-64508-677-2 (paperback)
978-1-64508-678–9 (epub)

Printed Worldwide

29 28 27 26 25 1 2 3 4 5 IN

Library of Congress Control Number: 2025942074

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Our Common Struggle

I urge you, brothers and sisters,
by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit,
to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me.
—Romans 15:30

Paul was writing back from the front lines of a spiritual war, asking the Christians in Rome to "join" him in his struggle. But in the days of donkey and camel travel, just how did he expect them to do this from hundreds of miles away?

Times have certainly changed. We have internet phone service and video conferencing, but the question remains: How do we truly join hands together across the world in mission? What does it look like in the spiritual realm when those on the field and those at home partner to fulfill the Great Commission? Perhaps we should begin by trying to understand the concept of spiritual position.

With a world map in hand, we can quickly identify the exact geographic location of a missionary living in a hostile foreign country for the sake of the gospel. The physical arena of their calling defines their position. But what of the missions hearts back home? What is their position on the spiritual map of world missions?

First, we must understand that in the kingdom of God, spiritual position means much more than the place where one happens to be drawing breath. The most important question

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is not, "In what city do you dress for work most mornings?" but rather, "Where is your heart beating while in prayer?"

There are some good and decent missionaries in faraway foreign fields who live as if their hearts are back home on a couch watching TV. There are also people who will always live in the same small hometown yet suffer and bleed with those on the gospel frontiers as if they were there in the flesh. The distance is nothing to them because they can literally see the lost of the nations with their hearts. The truth is, the position of the heart is all that really matters.

There is a great need for more people at home who clearly understand this truth: unsung heroes who realize that their assigned place of service is on their faces before God.

This is implied by Paul's words here near the end of Romans. He asked his friends to "join" him, but I do not think he expected them to make a trip. To Paul, the moment they hit their knees in Rome, they joined him in resistance against an unseen enemy circling over his head in Corinth. Their hearts immediately moved them from beside their bed or mat to the front lines, by divine calling, taking their solemn place alongside the apostle as he struggled for the faith.

Sometimes I fear that we do not recognize this for the urgent appeal it is. Paul was facing a bona fide war; he was not just writing in metaphor. There were tangible powers of darkness holding captive the people Paul was trying to

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reach, real demons behind false gods. His preaching had stirred the hatred of a pantheon of Roman deities, and without difficulty, they could find human fists ready for use against the aged apostle.

Paul was in hand-to-hand combat with an unseen enemy, and he needed people who would join their hearts to his, bringing him real aid in a real war. Thankfully, Paul knew where to turn when calling fellow soldiers to join him on the front lines. Evidently, in Rome there were proven men and women who were known to be ready whenever there was a spiritual firefight. Paul didn't have to coerce them. He simply needed to inform them—the time had come; the enemy was now engaged. These were not passive observers of mission; they were able fellow soldiers willing to add the weight and authority of their spiritual calling to the cause.

The huge distinction we usually make between the missionaries on the field and those back home does not exist at this moment on the battlefield. The issue is always one of the heart. There is a great need for more people at home who clearly understand this truth: unsung heroes who realize that their assigned place of service is on their faces before God.

Moreover, no matter what our role in the Great Commission, we must constantly challenge ourselves about the position of our hearts. This is far more important than the physical location of our bodies. In the kingdom of God, there is no such thing as a second-class soldier because of where one physically lives. And that, dear ones, is the beginning of what it means to have a missions heart.

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