

The Amazing Power of Motivation

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"No vocation will be answered with complete dedication unless there is strong motivation." R. Pierce Beaver penned these powerful words nearly 40 years ago and athletes, astronauts and armed forces have often proved them true when the only chance of success hinged on the presence or absence of strong motivations (Beaver, R. Pierce. 1968. *The Missionary Between the Times*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday).

Strongly held motivations are important to missionaries. Men and women of God, spurred on by solid aspirations have staying power. They prevail over culture shock. They persevere through the trials of language learning. And they persist over loneliness and disappointment until the task is accomplished.

Compelling motives are equally important to local churches. Congregations, gripped by the call of God, are not easily dissuaded from their objective but stay the course until they attain spiritual victory. Their evangelistic outreach possesses vitality and transforming power, both for those being redeemed and for the congregation itself.

Fundamental motivations for missions flow from one's understanding of the Lord. They are rooted in Scripture and reflect the character of God. They are also anchored in one's experiential relationship with Christ. Paul declared that the love of Christ—Christ's for Paul—compelled him to share the gospel with others (2 Cor. 5:14). Only this kind of biblically and experientially rooted conviction will stand the test of adversity.

Passionately held motivations gave impulse to the missionary endeavors of the first century. The early Christians were ridiculed, arrested and threatened, but they kept on preaching about Jesus. Relentlessly, regardless of the cost, they shared the news of redemption both with near neighbors and distant foreigners. Like a wildfire the church spread from Jerusalem to the far reaches of the Roman Empire. Just imagine what will happen when today's church is compelled by similar motives!

