

My Call to Be a Missionary

Jeremiah 1:5

Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.

Each of mom's children were taken to church and dedicated to God in a formal baby dedication. I wasn't aware of my dedication since I was still a very tiny baby, but I grew up with the constant reminder that Mom had dedicated me to the Lord. She told me that the Sunday after I was born on September 14, 1947, I was in the back pew of the church being nursed by her and by the Word of God.

In my case mom had prayed that God would make me a missionary. Thirty years later Mom's prayer was answered. Mom always made sure we all knew exactly what she prayed for us. I grew up with that awareness from my earliest memories.



As I've already shared, we had a big family and we were often poor. Our houses were small and our furniture was used and well abused. Yet Mom considered it important to expose her children to missionaries whenever possible. Mom was a missionary prayer warrior. So, when the week-long missionary convention came around every year

Mom made it her business to invite the missionary over for dinner. What better way to expose her children to the exciting life of a missionary? With so many other families better off and with fewer children it must have seemed strange to the pastor to send a missionary to one of the poorest families in the church. Those missionary conventions and missionary visits had a profound impact on my life.

When I was nine years old I remember going to the altar at the end of a missionary service and dedicating my life to the Lord to be a missionary. If I remember right, he was a missionary from West Africa. I was stirred by the adventure of living in the jungle. I am sure in my innocence I thought it was more like being Tarzan than evangelizing, but God used that to mark me for life.

By the time I was in high school we were still going to those week-long missionary conventions even on school nights when we had homework and better things to do. In many ways we hated being dragged off to church every

night, but the long term effect was to infect us with a love for God and missions. Though I wandered far from that call on my life, it still was stuck in my heart and mind.