

## Missionaries on the Move

Why do people become missionaries and go live in another country? What are their thoughts as they get ready to depart for the mission field?



### NOT WILLING TO DROP THE BALL

Michael and Tiffany Richardson are newly appointed missionaries going to Tanzania. They have already spent two years in that country as missionary associates and are planning to return. “I’ve always thought the moment you give your life to Christ you’re called,” said Michael. “It doesn’t make any difference between my calling to Tanzania and the calling of any other Christian. “We worked in Tanzania with a tribal group called the Datooga, an unreached people group of 250,000 people. Less than one percent have ever heard the name of Jesus. That’s a huge need and that’s our call. “What pulls me back to Africa and reminds me of my call is that I can drive for miles and miles and miles in some areas and never pass a single person who has even heard the name of Jesus. There are no churches and no one even trying to reach them with the gospel.

“Sometimes I ask myself why I have to leave my family, electricity and running water — the comforts of my American culture — and go halfway around the world to reach these people? Why can’t the local Christians who do live in some parts of the country drive a few miles to reach their own people in their backyards? “At these times the Lord reminds me, ‘Michael, you’ve held their children and played with them. You’ve eaten their food and understand their culture. You can’t blame anyone else if you drop the ball and nothing is done. I’m going because I’m not willing to drop the ball. I want these people to hear about Jesus.”

### THE MACEDONIAN CALL

Tim and Elle Bentley are new missionaries going to Macedonia. Tim commented: “When I was about 14 I noticed a sign in the foyer of our church about a mission’s trip to Macedonia. I said to myself, ‘This would be interesting to go to the area where the apostle Paul ministered.’ At that moment I sensed the Lord saying, ‘Tim, I want you to go to Macedonia.’ “I was shy and said, ‘God, I don’t want to go overseas. I’ll give to missions, but I don’t think that’s what I’m supposed to do.’ “But, from then on, the call of missions became apparent in my life. I spent a year and a half in Macedonia as a missionary associate working with the youth and students. I fell in love with the Balkans and the culture of the Slavic people. I prayed many times, ‘God, if You would just bring me a wife that has a passion for missions I will follow Your call to the utmost ends of the world.’ “I came back on itineration and met a young lady who had always been interested in missions. She had been on missions trips throughout her youth. God brought us together and we got married. He set us apart for a reason; that reason is to do youth ministry in the Balkans area.”

### **AN HONOR AND A PRIVILEGE**

Jonathan and Audra are going to a sensitive country with a closed religious culture. Jonathan said: “We are going to a group of people who have never once in their lives had a chance to know who Jesus is. They have never had a chance to experience the love of God and to know who He really is. “What greater calling is there than to share the love of God with these people. Many of them have never met even one Christian. We want to have a chance to tell them their lives can be changed in a wonderful way. So it’s an honor and a privilege to go. Thanks for sending us.” Audra added: “I don’t mean this to sound super-spiritual, but Christ gave everything for us, so why would we not give all for Him? There are so many people around the world who have not heard about His love. We are going to tell them that Jesus loves them.”

### **“WHY DO MISSIONS?”**

Darron is a single missionary going to a sensitive country. His comments: “Some people ask, ‘Why do missions?’ Some have a misconception that to be called to missions they have to hear an audible voice from God calling them and telling them where He wants them to go. They think if they don’t hear a voice, or see a vision or have some other charismatic experience they are not called. “I don’t necessarily agree with that. Of course, some are called like this. But some are called in other ways. “With me it was a gradual call. There was no particular point when missions came on my radar. However, when I was a junior in college I had this thought come to me that I could be a missionary. I have always been interested in traveling and seeing the world. Couple that with the Scriptures where Jesus tells us to go to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth. “Add to that, when I was younger I was always aware of my mortality. I knew I was going to die some day. When I die, what happens after that? And how could I be free now from the burdens of sin I felt in my heart? I was raised in a Christian home so I got the answers I needed. “But how about the people around the world where there are no churches, no Christians, no preachers, no Bible? Where would they get these answers? That bothered me very much. So if you combine my burden for the lost with my desire to go overseas and experience life in other places — that drew me to missions. “I’m excited to finally be able to travel to a foreign country and tell people that through Christ they will find the answers to life and death and happiness.