

NONE BUT GOD

The Testimony of the late Dr. H. Mel Rutter, from WWII to a life of missionary service.

"...he being dead yet speaketh." Hebrews 11:4

Part 4 (final): HIS WILL REVEALED

Back home after two years of war in the South Pacific, I was again united with my precious wife, Dottie. During my college years, I pastored in Texas and Louisiana. Every time I heard a missionary speak, my heart was always smitten, and my memory was taunted with the thin, sallow faces of lost, hungry souls whom I had seen in New Guinea, Morotai, the Philippines, and Okinawa. I became so perturbed about becoming a missionary that I often sought the counsel of a professor or an experienced pastor. They all had the same information – that at thirty years of age with seminary before me, I would be too old to go out as a foreign missionary under a denominational board. This would stifle my deep desires for a while, but I could not get away from the tugging in my soul for other lands that had never heard the Gospel.

My wife and I took our vacation in Mexico, in the summer of 1946. This added fuel to the fire that burned in my soul. The burden constantly became more intense and real during my seminary years. I prayed constantly, and the burden became heavier. But I said very little about it to my wife. I had talked, and prayed, about it many times with Dr. George Shaefer, a dear Bible teacher from the First Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas. He had always admonished me to pray, saying, if God really wanted me to go that He would someday make it all clear to my wife, also.

In May of 1952, while attending the Southwestern Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, and pastoring a church near Dallas, we attended the Southern Baptist Convention that was held in Miami, Florida.

The last night of the Convention, Dr. Baker James Cauthen brought an excellent message on missions and gave a heart stirring challenge for men and women to GO! Somehow, I felt in my soul that this was it! I felt that this night I would have to either surrender to go or the burden must be lifted.

I was standing next to Jimmy Powell, a dear friend of ours from college days; next to him was his wife, Myrtice. And then, Dottie was on the other side of her. My heart pounded furiously in my breast – the invitation continued – God's Holy Spirit was manifest – many were going down the aisle to the front. We were all praying earnestly. I could see Dottie praying and could tell that she was crying. Then, I heard a rumbling – I looked up – Dottie was coming toward the aisle with the grim determination of a General Pershing tank (best looking tank I have ever seen), and I followed her down the long aisle to the platform of that great auditorium. It was strictly an instrument flight since I could not see for the tears. All the way down I kept saying, "Praise God, we are going. I do not know how or where, but praise Him, we are going!"

After the service, we talked to Dr. Theron Rankin, then head of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. We told him what the Lord had done in our hearts, and he was very pleased, but noticing the gray in my hair, he asked my age. I told him that I was 35 and still lacked some in seminary. "You are too old for foreign missions" he said. It was with such an air of finality that our hearts sank as though they had weights of lead tied to them. As we walked down the aisle – It seemed even longer going out, since our hearts were so heavy.

Early one morning, as was my custom, I returned from my study at the church for breakfast. "Honey," I told my wife, "I am going to write to Emil Aanderud, in Mexico, and see if I can visit him for a while and see the field." I got the letter off that very afternoon, and the next day I received one from Emil. I raced into the kitchen with the letter flying full mast saying, "Look, Honey, a letter from Emil!" "Calm down; it could not be an answer," she said, "he has not had time to receive yours yet." My heart sank – what could he be writing to me about? I started back over to the study, opening the letter on the way. I had almost reached the door, when I saw the words that again filled my joy cup to overflowing. Up went the letter to full mast again, as I rushed back into the house – "My letter has not reached him yet, but he has written asking me to come down for two weeks." I knew God was working!

As rapidly as I could, I prepared to be away from my church field for two weeks. Those two weeks I spent with Brother Emil – visiting the services – praying – watching God at work in the slum areas of Mexico City. I spent much of my time in prayer and in the Word, and after about a week, I knew that God wanted me to work among the Latin people. So, I promised Him I would do His will.

Upon my return to Texas, I resigned my church telling them of God's call to the foreign field. I was over the age limit for serving as a foreign missionary with the Southern Baptist Board, knew nothing of doing deputation work under a Faith Board but had the knowledge that God had said, "GO!" And like Studd, I just took the Board of Three – The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit – and prepared to go. We sold our furniture, our new car, paid our debts, bought us a second-hand car, loaded our few personal belongings in the back, and took off for Mexico in January, 1953. When we arrived in Mexico City, Dottie, and Kenny (then 17 months old) had high fevers. We found out later that they had the old-fashioned flu. We had \$27.62 in our pockets and no promise of support. God had called, and we just took Him at His Word that He would supply our needs!

We stopped to get penicillin shots, and when we went back outside, we found that our car had been broken into and many of our belongings had been stolen. We took a room in the Palace Hotel; it certainly was no palace. I could hear Dottie and Kenny tossing restlessly in their sleep, as their fevers mounted. I was pretty well beaten down, tired in body and weak in spirit. Satan knew it was a good time to launch a fierce offensive. "Why don't you admit that you have made a mistake and go home? Here you are – your wife and baby are burning up with fever, your money is almost gone, you have no promise of another cent, and you know no Spanish – why not just admit you are wrong and go home while you have a few dollars to get you to the border!" He kept taunting me. Never had his onslaught seemed so fierce. I was weakening – I turned toward the wall. THEN IT HAPPENED! I saw it all again!

Oh! It was so plain – I saw a cannibal with green hair, and I heard him ask in broken English, "Is white boy a Christian?"

I could see the little girl hanging so close to the hot flames – the Japanese officer standing with drawn sword – the terrified mother nearby and then, I heard the little girl say, "Mommie, Mommie, don't tell them. Jesus will take care of me."

I passed along the line of starving Chinese, dying – helpless – doomed without strength and without hope. I saw again those little orphans at the very end of the line, tired – weary – hungry, but, even in the very throes of death, singing, "Jesus loves me, this I know for the Bible tells me so!"

My soul cried out, "Yes! Yes! Dear God, I will stay." As the deep folds of peaceful sleep embraced me, I knew that it was NONE BUT GOD and that He Who called me would also keep me!

And keep them He did! They served in foreign missions and served missionaries from 1953 until their promotions to heaven.

After hearing this testimony at Virginia Beach, Virginia, we were also called to a life of overseas service. I was thirty-one years old when I resigned my teaching position, and sold or gave away most of our possessions in preparation for moving overseas. We assumed various posts from 1978 until 2016. Our first assignment was pastoring a military church at Chicksands Air Force Base, England. We realized after three years of duty that President Clinton would eventually close many of the bases in the United Kingdom, so, I packed up and moved my family to Southern Africa where we worked for another thirty years in East Africa's Zululand, and in the Bophuthatswana Homelands below the Kalahari. I guess you could say, it was NONE BUT GOD.

Chaplain Ron



Above: Dr. H. Mel Rutter, President Emeritus, and International Representative

Below: When Dr. Mel Rutter and Dr. Bill McCorkle came to visit us while pastoring a military church at Chicksands Air Force Base, we put them up at this cottage in Surrey, where Dwight D. Eisenhower planned the D-Day invasion.

