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Reflection on the life of a Christian missionary nurse – MARTHA WALL

Introduction: brief introduction of the nurse, Martha Wall

Martha Wall lived an example of dedication in the service of God and mankind. Who accepted without reservations the holy will of God to serve in a foreign land away from her initial vision of being a nurse in her home country, America. She also came to understand the importance of missionary work even when she regarded it as the work of the “outcasts”. Combining these two services together she used them effectively for the good of the poor and the deprived in remote underserved, underdeveloped, and developing regions. She knew well that nursing is a vast health field with many challenging factors that include the protection of patients, promoting health and well-being, preventing illness, alleviating pains and suffering, etc. Christian Missionary Nurse Martha Wall used her services to spread the gospel through the lives she touched, affect the health of the communities where she worked possibly, satisfying her physical and spiritual life by winning souls to God.

Born on 22nd March, 191 in Hillsboro, Kansas, The United States of America, to a traditional Christian family. In her youth, she joined a German Mennonite church, strengthen her Christian faith, and later, a devout member of both the non-denominational Salina Bible Church and the Baptist Women’s Union. Her mother supported her passion for missionary work and medicine. She studied theology at Tabor College, and wrote for Tabor Spectator “The View.”

She was inspired by a sermon about missionary work by Tabor missionary Alumna, Jake Eitzen in 1937. She prayed to God to “make me the kind of nurse that you want me to be”. The next day she got a leaflet with the inscription “The Cry of the Leper” with a series of dialogues with her

spirit that God wants her to work in underdeveloped nations, and that informed her desire to apply for the Sudan Interior Mission Leper colonies in Nigeria.

An American Christian medical missionary, philosopher, registered nurse, and author, best known for her humanitarian work in providing health care to lepers in British Nigeria in the 1930s and 1940s with the Sudan Interior Mission. After returning to America in the 1950s, she worked as a Clinical Supervisor of Vocational Nurses for the Kern General Hospital, and as an instructor and director of nursing services for Bakersfield College in the 1960s. A dedicated member of the California State Licensed Vocational Nurses. She created Children's Welfare Center, Katsina Leper Settlement, and chairperson fundraising events. At the age of eighteen, inspired by the book "In His Steps" she was challenged to follow the footsteps of Jesus; willing to give up all pleasures to please God, dedicating herself to practicing nursing and taking Bible classes at Tabor College.

Martha Wall traveled to Monterey, California for the Bible Conference in late 1937 to begin her training with SIM for her missionary work. Inspired talks from medical missionaries; Dr. Thomas Lamble, Dr. J. Sidlow Baxter and Dr. Rowland Bingham, the founder of SIM. With financial support from her hometown church, she left America in November 1938 to Lagos, Nigeria with the Sudan Interior Mission.

When she got to Nigeria, she acted as a medical missionary for Sudan Interior Mission in different communities in Nigeria.

- i. Playing the role of; Bible teacher, nurse, doctor, writer, anthropologist, interpreter, photographer, and caretaker for orphans.
- ii. She created Children's Welfare Center at Katsina Leper Settlement to keep the children away from contracting their parents' leprosy infections.
- iii. She spent her first few months at the Wushishi compound taking care of the orphans and learning the Hausa language.
- iv. She taught basic mathematics and finance class to orphans and adults.

- v. In Kano station, she acted as the primary doctor for 40 patients with various ailments, and also leads in morning Bible service before treatment
- vi. She learned about tropical diseases, their British names for medicines and medicines that cannot be mixed, made pills, and mixed ointments.
- vii. She worked in Katsina Leper Settlement and acted as a doctor, recording the changing conditions and providing them with emotional and spiritual support.
- viii. She promoted Christianity among local Muslims.

She documented her missionary work in Sub-Sahara Africa in “Splinters from an African Log, 1960” Medical missionary work in infectious disease, Leprosy, and treatment. she worked with Sudan Interior Mission Kern General Hospital, Bakersfield College. After her nursing career, she retired to her hometown, she died at the age of 90 years.

The effect of spreading the gospel; the Christian missionary nurse helps in spreading the gospel by using a strategy of treating the patients with tender loving care medically and spiritually by encouraging them to convert to Christianity. they care for the spiritual, emotional, and physical needs of the individuals and communities. This helps to strengthen the local churches or establishes a church where there was none before. The missionary nurses educate trainers who train other community and church members, which makes the work self-sustaining and does not require much reliance on or support to continue. After treating sick patients, the nurse teaches them about personal hygiene, purifying their water before drinking, eat more healthy food and fruits and vegetables a nurse seeing the effect of the impact you have created in other people’s lives gives people more joy than you can imagine. Seeing that you have saved a dying person and giving hope to the hopeless comfort your soul, and gives the nurse renewed strength to continue. You see yourself in giving glory to God for using you to save others. It is satisfying more than material wealth.

Missionary nurses are often found themselves in remote areas of the world serving economically communities that lack necessities that most people take for granted such as; access to clean

water, adequate housing, good food and nourishment. Other challenges include the threat of violence from war or local conflicts, inadequate transportation, language barriers, and their believe in fetish beliefs.

A lot of responsibilities await Nurses, preventing illnesses is most often a primary goal of missionary nurses. To achieve this, they will often administer vaccinations to adults and children and educate individuals on ways to eliminate infection-causing micro-organisms. For instance, missionary nurses may stress the importance of good hygiene and clean drinking water by showing them how to create toilet areas and boil water to kill bacteria. From what I learned from Martha Wall, as a potential missionary nurse, it is important to learn other skills, besides nursing skills, since you may work in remote or underdeveloped places of the world because you will often be expected to jump in and help wherever you are needed like: digging wells, erecting buildings, preaching or teaching basic skills.

The life of Martha Wall thought me humility, that as a child of God, I need to seek direction for what is best for me, I don't decide where to go or when to come in the journey of life. For the word of God says that our taught are not His (God's) taught and our ways are not His ways. I humble myself to serve people assigned to me by God, and in doing so, I know God's blessings will always be upon me. We are only instruments in God's hands. May we allow Him to use us for the betterment of other people around us for His greater glory.

A missionary nurse cares for patients in underserved regions of the world. Because many remote underserved communities don't have access to advanced medical equipment or medical supplies, a missionary nurse and her team can make a huge difference in the lives of those who need it most. Despite the global progress of medicine in recent times, rural communities worldwide suffer from inadequate medical care. Communities in rural areas often suffer from a lack of access to healthcare facilities, qualified medical practitioners, antibiotics, and immunizations that could dramatically improve their lives. Missionary nurse, work hand-in-hand with medical teams to provide direct patient care, educate communities about health and illness, participate in community development projects, and promote the spiritual well-being of the less fortunate.