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### **Reflection on the life of a Christian Missionary**

It's beautiful to see the health field be surrounded by Christian nurses especially in today's society. Martha Alma Wall was born March 22, 1910 in Hillsboro Kansas. She was raised in a Christian household and was a devoted member of the non-denominational Salina Bible Church and Baptist Women's Union. After becoming a registered nurse at Christian Tabor College, Martha started her new journey in America as a clinical supervisor of Vocational Nurses for Kern General Hospital during the 1950s as well as an instructor and director of nursing services for Bakersfield College during 1960s. She was known as an American Christian missionary, philosopher, nurse and author.

During Wall's education period her father threatened to disown her when she decided to join a German Mennonite church. Martha continued to dedicate her belief and Christianity ways and it eventually convinced her father to also believe in the same religion. Wall's always had the support of her mother during her missionary work. Her dream was always to become a nurse and even though she never was married nor had children, she always claimed to love the toddler orphans who she cared for at the Katsina Leper Settlement and treated them as her own. Wall's practiced nursing and bible classes at Christian Tabor College where she was involved in extracurricular activities and regularly attended church services. Wall writes about in her book, *Splinters from an African Log*, about a poor image of a missionaries as she believed they were outcasts who worked with foreigners because they were not able to deal with their present realities.

Wall's journey to missionary started when she first listened to a provocative sermon by Tabor missionary alumnus Jake Eitzen in 1937. After the sermon she believed that God was instructing her "All these years you have been praying every day, "Lord make me the kind of nurse that you want me to be. Well, I'm showing you now this is the nurse I want you to be." The next day during science class Wall read an opinion piece in a leaflet that was given to her and titled "The Cry of the Leper." Which explains, the existence of Sudan Interior Mission leper Colonies in Nigeria. Suddenly wall became sadden by what she read and immediately attempted to disregard it and believed that missionary work was not part of God's plan for her life and that it will also distract her from becoming a distinguished nurse. The following week Wall's mother unintentionally turned on the radio to a program about missionary work, which Wall interpreted as a second sign from God to encourage her to reconsider her career path. She took the next step to apply to Sudan Interior Mission, as well as applying to work at California hospital. Sudan Interior Mission accepted her application within a few weeks and she began training.

Wall began to travel to Monterey, California to start her training and to learn more about begin a missionary. By the end of her months training, Wall's desires completely changed as to wanting a life as a missionary rather than begin a nurse in the United States. A church from Wall's hometown of Hillsboro agreed to financially support her dreams and she then took a train to Brooklyn to meet other missionaries before they left the United States. November 1938, Martha started her new journey as a medical missionary for the Sudan Interior Mission in different communities in Nigeria. Wall's roles included Bible teacher, nurse, doctor, writer, anthropologist, interpreter, photographer and caretaker for orphans. She created the Children's Welfare Center at the Katsina Leper Settlement to give the opportunity for babies and toddlers of

parents with leprosy to live near their parents without the risk of contracting the disease and to provide care for the children regardless of their parents' health.

Wall's role was a primary doctor for a group of 40 patients with various medical diseases. Before treating her patients, she will lead the morning with a Bible service. She also trained a local teenage boy to help distribute medicine and interpret for patients who did not speak Hausa. She also studied doctor's notes and learned how to make pills and mix ointments. Wall's impactful missionary was dedicated to hundreds of adults and children with leprosy, treating them with medicine, recording changes in conditions daily and providing them with emotional and spiritual support.

Her journey in Nigeria ended and she returned back to America in the early 1950s. Wall then worked as a Clinical Supervisor. Throughout her adult life she was a dedicated member of California State Licensed Vocational Nurses Association, chairing fundraising events and giving tours of her hospital to other nurses. She believed it was her duty to treat her patients first then feed them spiritually by encouraging them towards Christianity. Wall then retired and went back to her hometown Hillsboro where she died at the age of 90.

Reflecting on Martha Wall's life it shows me that no matter how much we try to control our life God will always be in control and lead us his way rather than our own way. This nursing career has been a very difficult path for me but God is showing me this is my story and no matter what I will become a nurse in his timing. Just last semester I was attending a non-Christian nursing school and I went through a lot of struggles during exams but no matter what I never gave up my faith. I ended up failing out of nursing school and I thought my career was over but God had different plans for me. My professor recommended me to apply to Alliance University and within a few days I was accepted. The lord has made this all possible for me and this time I

wasn't taking control. I now understand why God leads us to certain paths for a season. Once I'm done with nursing school I would like to speak at different colleges/universities in regards to not giving up on your dreams and desires if it's in God's plan. Attending a Christian college has completely strengthened my faith and provides me the opportunity to connect with other believers. Martha Wall was not just a nurse but a Christian Nurse and I admire that.