

MISSIONARY, GO HOME . . . OR STAY.

By Federico José Pagura, then Bishop of the Methodist Church in Costa Rica

If you cannot understand what is happening in this continent, in this hour in which it awakens to the dawn of a new liberation,
MISSIONARY, GO HOME.

If you are not able to separate the eternal word of the Gospel, from the cultural molds in which you brought it to these lands and even taught it with true abnegation,
MISSIONARY, GO HOME.

If you cannot identify with the sufferings, anguish and aspirations of these peoples made prematurely old by an unequal struggle that would seem not to have end or hope,
MISSIONARY, GO HOME.

If your alliance and fidelity to the nation of your origin is stronger than your loyalty and obedience to Jesus Christ who has come to “put down the mighty from their thrones and exalt those of low degree”, (Luke 1:52),
MISSIONARY, GO HOME.

If your dogmatism is such that it does not permit you to revise your theology and ideology in the light of all the Biblical testimony and the happenings of these times,
MISSIONARY, GO HOME.

If you are not able to love and respect as equals those whom one day you came to evangelize as “lost”,
MISSIONARY, GO HOME.

If you cannot rejoice with the entrance of new peoples and churches into a new period of maturity, of independence, of responsibility, even at the price of committing errors such as those you and your countrymen committed also in the past,
THEN IT IS TIME TO RETURN HOME.

But if you are willing to share the risks and pains of this hour of birth which our American peoples are living, even denying yourself; if you begin to rejoice with them because of the joy of feeling that the Gospel is not only announcement and affirmation of a remote hope, but of a hope and a liberation that is already transforming history; if you are willing to put more of your time, of your values, of your life at the service of these people who are awakening, then, stay, since there is much to be done and hands and blood are needed for such an immense enterprise in which Christ is pioneer and protagonist.

Statement made at a meeting of the Missionary Liaison Committee of Costa Rica.

Source: *Exchange. Journal of Missiological and Ecumenical Research*, Volume 1, Issue 2 (1972), p. 50.