

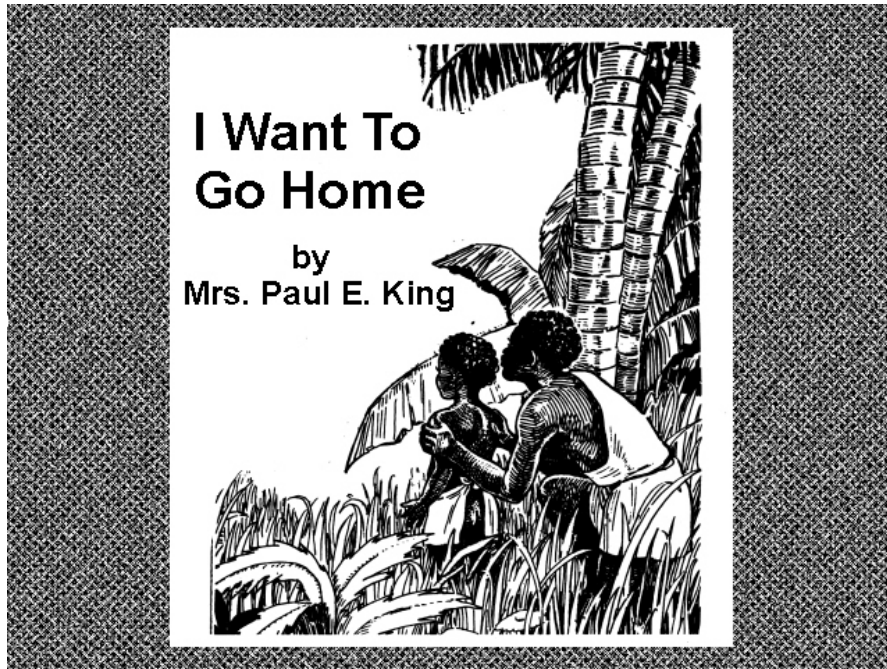
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**I WANT TO GO HOME**  
**By Mrs. Paul E. King**

Rain smashed against the windows. It gushed fiercely through the downspout and dripped from the eaves. He lay there, rolling, turning. Thinking. Weeping, Praying. So he was different, they had said. Unbalanced, too. Well, maybe he was, now that he had time to think things over. Or through.

The rain washed against the windows. Wind crashed against the house. He rolled and turned and tossed. Others were all asleep, he knew. Yes, they slept; he tossed. He listened to the wind. The rain. In it, he heard the sobs. The cries. He felt the cold. Their cold -- his people. Not these in the house -- his people.

He slid his hand across the covers and let it rest lightly on her cheek. It, too, was wet. Wet with tears. Over the same reason . . . or reasons . . . as his. He didn't speak. Neither did she. They couldn't. They were different. Unbalanced. She didn't move, but she was not sleeping. Like himself, she couldn't sleep. He could turn, roll, toss. She lay beside him like a statue, a mummy -- cold with shock, crushed by indifference, numbed by apathy, dying with grief. Longing to "go home."

He was called as a young teen, right after God the Holy Spirit sanctified him wholly. He received his call then. It was as clear as any noonday sun in mid-June. Or July. Or August. He never doubted it. Never shunned it. Never tried to dodge or evade it. It was there -- like his Bible. Like his daily prayer altar in the woods . . . the unmovable rock on the side of the gently-rolling knoll where he daily rendezvoused with God. Not once, but twice -- sometimes more, as work permitted and allowed.

They had thought it was great, his call. "Wonderful," too, one brother had told him. One of his sisters had promised to support him out of her wealth. He hadn't expected it. The poor -- ah, they were the givers, the real supporters, he knew. And now, he was different. Unbalanced.

Rain washed the building, the roof. He turned, sobbed into the pillow. Into his hands, browned and bronzed by a hot tropical sun.

Furlough. The word had had a magic sound to him. To her. To them -- their family. He had rolled it on his tongue like a sweet morsel. She had, too. Loved ones. Friends. They would be reunited; see them all again. Except the dear, departed loved ones, whose passing could not wait for furlough time. They would not be there to meet the plane. Their faces would be missing from an open doorway, their smiles absent from around the table.

Furlough. She had savored it. Longed for it. Looked forward to it. Prayed for it. How tired was her body! His, too. How weary and long were

their days. Furlough. Rest. Loved ones. Deputation work. Happiness. Yes, most of all, happiness. And rest. For a few minutes, at least.

He turned, reversed the pillow, tugged at the covers, wept. He was different. Unbalanced. They couldn't understand him. Had he changed so drastically? he wondered. Or was the change in them? Of course, he couldn't go to see a World Series game with them. Why should they ask him even? He had never loved the things of the world when he was home . . . before leaving for his country, his people. So why would they have dared to ask him now? What a waste of time. And of money, he thought, as the rain smashed its long fingers in smattering force against the windows. He had forsaken the world and all its trashy trappings and amusements when he picked up the cross of the meek and lowly Son of God and became His child, His devoted, loyal followers.

They wondered "where he's been?" "Why" he didn't want to go sightseeing; "Why" he had "no time" for their social parties?

Well, where had he been? He wept. Hard.

Where the conflict with evil is open and intense, this is where he had been. Where the conflict with sin and evil is a fight not a fashion. Nor fun. Where demons and witchcraft are real and fierce. Where people are dying for the help he might give to most of them, not even knowing he has The Help they need most.

He was "a visionary," they said. Yet they had complimented him when he left. Now he was "a visionary"-for leaving parents, brothers and sisters, prospects and home for -- a vision. Of souls. Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.

He's been "out of it" . . . having never been about the no-nukes people. About the freaks. About the late-late shows spewed out over the tube. In fact, the "tube" was a wicked-evil to him before his conversion even. He guessed, lying in the darkness and thinking, that he'd been "out of it" most of his life.

He'd been away too long to "get into the swing of things." So they said. Well, how long had he been away? Long enough for 30 million people to go into eternity without Christ . . . without ever having had a chance to hear the gospel even! And some of them before his very eyes, when that flimsy

riverboat capsized; when that cholera epidemic struck; when that political/religious riot broke out.

Again, he sobbed. The rain seemed to be sobbing with him.

How long had he been away? Long enough to have had two serious sieges of amoebic dysentery; to nurse his wife and small son through several attacks of malaria; to bury two of their four children among the grave of some of his people; to get the news of his parents' homegoing before he knew either was sick.

How long? Long enough to see men and women with no social or economic status turn to Christ from sin and all its attending evils. To see them drink in Bible teaching and preaching like a sponge absorbs water. To struggle and suffer with them through persecution from non-Christian relatives, friends, and villagers, and to see them grow into a stable, steady band of God-fearing, God-following believers comprising, not one body, but many . . . a church here, a church there; in this village, that village . . . conducting their own worship services and develop -- into strong indigenous churches in their various communities.

His clothes. They had told him he "must get a new suit." So, what was wrong with his clothes? They had seen much wear, to be sure. But wouldn't a good steam-press job suffice? After all, the price of that new suit would buy 3,200 Gospels! Didn't they know that while an American spends one day . . . one average, ordinary day . . . in business, 5,000 Indians or Chinese go into eternity without Christ?

He groaned. Deep within himself, he groaned. Then he wept. Again. His people! O God, help his people! He was different. Yes, he was. This love for his people. His relatives couldn't "understand it," this love for "the heathen." "They're filthy!" One had exclaimed. "Filthy. And they lie. I've read all about them. They'll kill you if they ever have the opportunity."

His people. God had called him to them. He loved them. Loved them! The relative knew only their "darker" side. She had never seen their transformed, redeemed lives. Never seen the glory of Heaven on their faces. Never heard them sing. And pray. In the bush. In the hut. In the church. No, she had never seen, never heard, never experienced. So how could she

know? Spiritual things were discerned only by spiritual people, by people Spirit-filled.

So he was different. His sob ended in a sort of contented, satisfied sigh. True, he did have to stumble for a word now and then . . . an English word. But the foreign language in which he had been speaking and teaching and preaching for four years was used exclusively during that time. God had helped him, and her, too, to become fluent in its usage. It flowed from their lips . . . their tongue . . . with beautiful and proper inflection until their people marveled. With his people, he was eloquent. No stumbling for words there.

Different. Where? Who? Couldn't they see the wound they had inflicted by their display of worldly goods? Material things? That yacht. The sports cars for the two teenagers. The motorcycles. Mini-bikes. Four cars in one family -- four people; two of them teenagers. The three (or was it four) huge color television sets; the stereos; finest this, finest that. \$100.00 given towards missions.

Again, he sobbed. The wound opened wide, afresh. His people. God's people! What could God do, if he had money in the amount of only the four cars, the two motorcycles and two mini-bikes, to use toward furthering the Gospel.

Rain spattered against the windows. He heard its dull thud now, not upon a brightly-colored, tiled roof, nor against sparkling window panes, but upon a thatched roof where rats scurried through and bits of thatch dropped onto the crude bed and the floor. He heard the dull, muffled beating of drums, the screeching of monkeys, the call of night birds. "Dear Lord, hasten these last three months!" he pleaded.

She stirred beside him. Like one coming slowly out of shock, she stirred. Then she touched him lightly. She wept. He wept. " I want to go home, " she cried. He echoed her cry.

Different? Unbalanced? By whose scales? Man's or God's?