

## QUALIFICATIONS OF AMERICAN MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION TEACHERS

Applicants wishing to teach under the auspices of the American Missionary Association received a circular that laid out the requirements for an appointment. This circular focused on six qualifications, presented in this excerpt from an article in the *American Missionary*:

1. *Missionary spirit.* As our work is to be carried out in a country devastated, and in society demoralized, and generally made hostile, by war, no one should seek, accept, or be recommended for, an appointment who is not prepared to endure harness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ—to do hard work, go to hard places, and submit, if need be, to hard fare—to subordinate self to the cause and acquiesce cheerfully in the directions and supervision of those who have the matter in charge. For this, however, there can be no adequate preparation, but a true missionary spirit. None should go, then, who are influenced by either romantic or mercenary motives; who go for the poetry or the pay; who wish to go South because they have failed at the North.
2. *Health.* The toil, the frequent hardships, the tax of brain and nerve, that may be encountered in the full and faithful prosecution of this work, will justify us in giving an appointment to do one not enjoying good health. This is not a hygienic association, to help invalids try a change of air, or travel at others' expense.
3. *Energy.* The service demands not only vigorous work as laid out and required by others, *in the school room*, but a disposition and ability to find something to do beyond these prescribed duties—to set oneself to work—to seek to do good for Christ and his poor, by ministering to the physical wants of the destitute; by family visitation and instruction; in Bible reading and distribution; in Sabbath School teaching and in Christian missionary labors generally.
4. *Culture and Common Sense.* It is a mistaken and mischievous idea, that “almost anybody can teach the Freedmen.” Nowhere is *character*, in the school and out of it, more important. More than at the North should the teacher have resources in himself, on which he can fall back in the absence of those helps, which school laws and a correct public sentiment here afford. They only should be commissioned, least likely to make mistakes, where mistakes, when made, can so seldom be corrected.
5. *Personal habits.* Marked singularities and idiosyncrasies of character are specially out of place here. Moroseness of petulance, frivolity or undue fondness for society, are too incompatible with the benevolence, gravity, and earnestness of our work, to justify the appointment, or recommendation, of any exhibiting such traits. Neither should any be commissioned who are addicted to the use of tobacco or opium, or are not pledged to total abstinence from intoxicating drinks.

6. *Experience.* As a general rule only those should be commissioned, or recommended, who have had experience in teaching, and whose experience, especially as *disciplinarians*, has been crowned with marked success.

["Teachers: Their Qualifications and Support," *American Missionary* 10 (July 1866): 152.]