

Being a Sending Church – Guest Speaker – July 21, 2019

Let's look at Romans 10.

How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard?^[c] And how are they to hear without someone preaching? ¹⁵ And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"

Here's what I understand Paul as saying.

1. People won't call on Jesus unless they believe in him.
2. They won't believe in him unless they hear about him.
3. They won't hear about him unless someone goes to tell them.
4. And those who go to tell them must be sent.

Here is what I take away.

Sending missionaries is just as important as going as missionaries. Not all of us are called to go, and not all of us are called to send, but all of us are called to do one or the other. The role of sending is extremely important.

Someone pointed this out to me a little while ago. God is both a goer and a sender. Jesus went, but he was sent by the Father. God was actually the first goer. God was actually the first sender. So the tendency to see going as more important than sending is wrong. Sending has its own set of important responsibilities.

Ephesians 3:10

so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.

It's through the church God is revealed.

Together. As a family.

What does it mean for a local church, like ABC, to send a missionary to reveal God to those who don't know him?

When you reap your harvest in your field and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it. It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.²⁰ When you beat your olive trees, you shall not go over them again. It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow.²¹ When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not strip it afterward. It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow.²² You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I command you to do this. Deuteronomy 24:19-22

I find this passage very meaningful when put in the context of what a biblical sending community looks like. Basically it says: take care of each other. Sacrifice a little to take care of each other. Keep the weak in mind. Keep the lonely in mind. Keep the traveler in mind. Don't use your resources all the way to the edges. Make sure some is left over. This is what I call Biblical Hospitality.

First thing we can do to be a hospitable sending church is to keep the house in order here. Realize that when you fight or judge each other and cause division—your actions have far reaching consequences. Love each other and get along. Which I think ABC does well, but things can change really quickly if unity is not intentionally maintained.

Seek to understand and be part of your missionary's ministry.

1. Read and respond to missionary newsletters.
2. Pray for your missionaries. Ask for specific prayer needs.

3. Communicate with your missionaries. Modern technology makes it fairly simple to talk to each other. Phone calls, emails, are great. Also, keep them in mind on Sunday mornings—many of them are living in places where there is no church to go to on Sundays.
4. Help missionaries when they come for a visit to the USA. All their resources are in the countries they live in, so they don't have places to stay, or to host people, or cars, or internet access, cell phones, etc. So, as you have resources, offer them to these missionaries. I think this is something the local church can really assist in.

Finances. How do most missionaries' finances work?

1. They set a budget.
2. They get it approved by their supervisors.
3. They raise donations to meet that budget, and those donations go into a ministry account at their sending organization. A percent is taken out of that budget for logistical support (usually between 10-20%).
4. When payday comes around, missionaries are paid out of the funds in their ministry account. If the funds aren't there, then they don't get paid.
5. They pay the total amount of their health insurance, and they pay both the employee and employer percentages of FICA.

So that's how finances work for many missionaries.

“A soft drink company has done a better job getting brown sugar water to the nations than the church of Jesus Christ has done in getting the Gospel to them.” David Platt, pastor

If you want to get involved somehow but don't know where to start, what I tell people is to give what you spend on Coke or other similar products each month. I think most people spend about 10 bucks a week on Coke, or coffee, or whatever. That's about \$40 a month. That's a good place to start.

Consider giving toward getting the gospel to places where people have no chance of hearing it. Missionaries to places like this, because no one really sees what's going on, are almost always underfunded.

Now you know some things you may not have known before, and I just want to challenge you to process this and to make changes as God leads.

I hope now you understand a little more about sending. It's very a important role for the church. I know many of us here at ABC are involved in missions and missions giving—and I just ask us all to consider what God has been saying this morning. In general, it's very possible to live our life here in America and not ever encounter personally the need for the gospel in unengaged areas. We can even remain uninvolved and not really face any consequences. And you can forget about this sermon when you leave today and nothing will happen to you.

But you can take action and open up a whole new world of partnering with God to reach the nations with his gospel. There's an exciting world of missions out there and lots of ways to be involved. God will not disappoint you.

Let's pray.