

# *The Biblical Model for Sending Out Missionaries*

BY MILTON MARTIN

## I. The Problem:

It is time to send out a Clarion Call. Just like the early church, we find that there is a crisis in our churches and in missions today. We are not being faithful to the command which our Lord gave us, to "preach the gospel to every creature." (Mark 16:15). Cults and false religions are growing at a more rapid pace than Christianity. Over 3 Billion people on planet Earth have never heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ even one time. Over 3,400 languages do not have a single verse of Scripture. Those we send to the mission field are not prepared or equipped to survive the rigors of the spiritual battle and every year our missionary force is diminishing 8-12%. What is the problem? The problem is that we have strayed from the clear commands and guidelines of Scripture. We must realize that "my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD." We must agree with God's ways and obey the Scriptures. We must build on the solid foundation of the promises of God, not on the crumbling structure of tradition or habit. We must remain teachable and tender to the leading of the Holy Spirit in these days if we are to ever be effective in our task of world evangelization.

## II. The Preparation:

Our preparation must start with a thorough study of the Word of God - "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (2 Tim. 2:15). After rightly dividing the Word, then we must be prepared to act according to the truth that is revealed. We must be doers of the Word and not hearers only! The early Church in Jerusalem had the same problem we do today. She was not faithful to the Commission that our Lord gave her to take the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all nations and to all languages and to all peoples on the face of the Earth. She grew so quickly and gained so many members that she became self-centered and forgot the very reason for her existence. Because of this, the Lord allowed persecution to come upon the Church. Scripture tells us "And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the Apostles." (Acts 8:1) Verse 4 tells us: "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word." As a result, some true believers sprung up in Antioch. The New Birth was so real and so evident in their lives that the world put a nickname on these in their midst. That nickname was the word "Christian" - which meant that they were "little Christs." Scripture tells us in Acts 11:26 "And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."

Soon, news got back to the church at Jerusalem about these Christians in Antioch of Syria. The Church in Jerusalem sent Barnabas to Antioch to investigate. Barnabas, the "Son of Consolation" was the one who always had a heart to help. That one who had a heart as few others that are mentioned in the New Testament. When he discovered that what had happened in Antioch was real, he went to Tarsus to find Paul. Even after Saul's (Paul's) conversion in Acts Chapter 9, everybody else was afraid of him - they did not have confidence in him. But Barnabas did, and he brought Paul back with him to Antioch. Now they are in Antioch laboring together in the church.

### III. The Process God Used:

It was revealed to Saul on the day of his conversion that he was to be a chosen instrument of God in taking the Gospel to the nations. In his testimony before Agrippa in Acts 26, Paul relates the Lord's call upon his life: "But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee." It was also revealed to Ananias in Acts 9:15 that Saul (Paul) was to be a chosen instrument of God. "But the Lord said unto him, (Ananias) Go thy way: for he (Saul) is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel"

Now we are in Acts 13 and it is A.D. 45. We find that Barnabas and Paul have been laboring together in the church at Antioch. Barnabas was perhaps the key leader in that church. Beginning in Acts 13:2, we want to break these Scriptures apart and look at them phrase by phrase in a very simple manner. Scripture says "As they ministered to the Lord," We find that "they, (the church collectively) ministered to the Lord." The Greek word used here for "ministered" is that "they worked publicly." God uses those who are actively and faithfully serving Him NOW. We also see that Barnabas and Saul were actively serving the Lord in their local church! God has chosen the church to be His vehicle for proclaiming the glorious Gospel of His Son Jesus Christ. The only plan God has placed His stamp of approval on is not an organization, fellowship or association, but a local, New Testament church!

### IV. The Pattern:

During His earthly ministry, Jesus did not spend His energies organizing and orchestrating large groups and gatherings to carry on His work. Rather, "he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him" (Acts 8:1) He entrusted the eternal destiny of souls and nations to a small group of baptized believers (initially only 12 in size) and then He sent them out two-by-two. We find that in every single instance in the New Testament, when men were sent out, they went out two-by-two. Always. Our Lord began with twelve and He sent them out two-by-two. (Mark 6:7) Then He sent out 70 and He

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sent them two-by-two. (Luke 10:1) And you'll find here the first missionaries, Barnabas and Saul. And then on the second trip it was Barnabas and Mark, and Paul and Silas. Jesus would not even send the Disciples on a simple errand except two by two. (Matt. 21:1-3; Mark 14:13) God's pattern is to send out faithful men through the local church, and to send them out two-by-two! May God bring us back, not just to one portion of the truth of the Word of God, but to the whole counsel of God that we find in Scripture!



We find also here in our text that the church at Antioch was in a time of worship. This was not an unusual or occasional thing - apparently, they did this on a regular basis. And the Scripture says, "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted," But at this time, we do not find Saul or Barnabas going before the church and saying, "It's time for us to go." We do not find them telling the church of the call God has placed on their lives, but rather "As they (the church) ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said." The Spirit of God did not speak to Barnabas and Saul! The Holy Ghost spoke to the church! But this is not how it is done today. Truly, we do much by tradition, and not by the Scriptures. May God bring us back to the Scriptures! So, it would be like this today; the Spirit of God would speak to a local church and tell them: it's time for the Smiths and the Jones to be sent out. The evidence of God's call and blessing upon their lives is already there. They have proven themselves faithful servants and stewards in the church and they are ready to go! I have found in other parts of the world that many times men don't know the terminology. They don't know how to tell you that God has called them. But you see the burden; you see the evidence; you see the fruit. It's real. It is there. And you see, just as the Holy Ghost spoke to the church at Antioch, He can speak to our churches today. But let me ask you - can your church recognize the speaking of the Spirit of God? Or have you come to the place where you have relegated spiritual matters into the hands of just the "clergy" or the "full-time ministers" on the Church staff? Dear friends, God's plan is that the members of our churches, must know how to recognize the speaking and the moving and the guidance of the Holy Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit spoke to the Church at Antioch. And this is God's plan for us today as well. You see, today we have come to the place to where we say a

man is qualified to be sent as a missionary because he is a Bible School graduate. He finishes Bible School and then approaches a church, and he approaches the pastor and tells him of the burden and the call that God has placed on his life. But this is not the example we see here in Scripture; we find here that the Spirit of God spoke to the church at Antioch. In Acts 13 :2 "the Holy Ghost said, separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." They were called to a foreign missionary work. They were not to continue being under shepherds of a local flock. Now they were set aside to something else. May I say to you today, that there is a difference in being a pastor and in being a missionary. A missionary has another mindset. A pastor can see to that one flock and has a heart for that flock and can love that flock and guide that flock and feed that flock. But a missionary - and if you'll follow the testimony of Paul, you'll find he always saw an entire province or an entire area. He saw Galatia or Asia Minor or Macedonia or he saw Achai. He looked on to Rome and he looked on to Spain. He preached the Gospel in Illycium, which is now the country of Albania. "Round about," he said (Rom.15:19). He saw entire areas, large geographical areas, and saw those areas as a whole. He was set aside for a work. And he was able to get into at least 17 different areas of the world. And if God shut the door in one, he just looked in another direction and moved on. A work. They were set aside for a work.

Now it seems that fasting is an unknown doctrine and an unknown practice in our Baptist Churches today. But fasting is still in the Bible. Fasting is not trying to get God's attention or trying to persuade God. Actually, fasting has to do with getting the attention of our own flesh. You see, fasting is the practice of deliberately and voluntarily abstaining from usual nourishment. It's meaning can be further expanded to include temporary abstinence from anything in order to give more concentrated attention to spiritual matters. So, this Church it seems, was in a time of worship. This Church in Antioch was in a time of prayer and fasting.

Now, obviously we cannot give a lesson here on all that the Bible has to say about fasting, but I would give some thoughts that pertain to our subject today:

- 1) Fasting is the personal, voluntary humbling of the heart before God that will increase a brokenness of heart and a burden. Psalm 69:10 and Psalm 35:13 speak of the humbling of the soul and the affliction of one's soul in order to get the personal attention of the flesh.
- 2) Fasting is a commitment to self-control Self-control (temperance) is one of the nine fruit of the Spirit that are mentioned in Galatians 5:22-23. It seems that in this country today, there is not a whole lot of self-control when it comes to food. If you will just notice how over-stuffed most of us are. Fasting is a worship activity that increases spiritual receptivity by creating a climate where the Holy Spirit of God can speak.
- 3) Fasting plays a part in getting guidance from the Lord - in Ezra 8:21-23 we see there the guidance that was sought and then the protection that was found for their children and their material substance. And that guidance and protection involved fasting.

4) Fasting is concentrated spiritual preparation for Holy Spirit empowered service. And if there was ever a time when we need to know the power of the Holy Spirit in our services, and the power of the Holy Spirit upon our preaching, we are in those days! Our Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ himself, "was led by the Spirit into the wilderness" according to Luke 4:1 for 40 days of fasting. Then after that period of time Matthew 4:4 and Luke 4:14 says "angels came and ministered unto him" and "Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit."

5) Lastly, fasting is a specialized service ministry that increases spiritual usefulness for the totally committed believer. In Luke 2 we find a very special lady known as Anna. The Bible mentions some 2,989 different characters in the Bible, but in Luke 2:36 it says "And there was one Anna" and her ministry was (plural) "fasting and prayer!" It seems that this dear saint of God was so sensitive that she could recognize the nudging of the Spirit of God, and she would go into a special time of prayer. We need some "Annas" brought up in our churches today. We need some "Annas" to be in fastings and prayers. We need those who will put everything else aside when there is a special need or nudging from the Holy Spirit. We need those who are available when the Spirit of God moves.

In Acts 16:3 we find a something repeated again: "And when they had fasted" If we really want to be obedient today, in every sense of the word, then our churches would spend time in prayer and fasting before ever selecting a missionary candidate. Our churches would spend time in fasting and prayer when sending out a missionary.

And again, in verse 3: ""And when they had fasted and prayed" The greatest need in the cause of Christ is not more money, not more men, but it's more prayer. It's a ministry that God has designed so that every single believer, regardless of how young or how old- regardless of their position or station in life, every single believer in Jesus Christ can be involved. The ministry of intercession. It's a ministry that every believer must be involved in. We think that when we don't pray for others, we sin against them. But Scripture tells us in 1 Samuel 12:23 that prayerlessness is a sin against God. "Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you:" (Acts 13:2)

One of the primary reasons we are not hearing the call of God in our churches today is because He does not have the liberty and freedom to speak! We are not in the attitude of prayer and fasting to where we can recognize the voice of Spirit of God. We are not spiritually "in tune" with His voice. How can He ever impress upon a church His will unless we are able to hear?

V. The Penalty We Face:

Did you know that there are many examples in the New Testament of churches that the Holy Spirit spoke to, and they did not heed, and they did not recognize the speaking of the Spirit of God? All seven of the local churches that are found in Revelation chapters two and three - each one of those seven churches, the admonition was "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches" Those churches did not listen. Those churches did not heed. And so those churches ceased to exist! That nation, which is now the country of Turkey, became a Muslim nation - not a Christian nation. There are more places mentioned in what is now the country of Turkey in the New Testament, than any other part of the world. Look at all the churches, all the places mentioned in the book of Acts. Then the church Epistles - so many of those places are mentioned. But to those churches, the Holy Spirit was not real. His voice was not real. Do you suppose that maybe they came to the place which we find in this country today? Isn't Christianity almost a cultural thing? Even in some good, Fundamental, Independent, Baptist Churches? More often we hear "It's the thing to do" and "it's the way it ought to be" rather than "Thus saith the Lord."

### VI. The Price That Must Be Paid:

True spiritual service exacts a heavy toll. A toll that many are not willing to pay. But we do not have a choice of whether we will pay the price or not, it is a command. We are commanded to "Pray without ceasing." (1 Thess. 5:17) The Scripture does not say IF we fast, but "WHEN ye fast ... " (Matt. 6:16). Yet the Lord is not pleased with our "sacrifice" of effort and energy, if it is not in complete obedience to His will, "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." (1Sam. 15:22) We must make sure that not only are we doing God's work, but that we are doing it God's way!

In Exodus 17:8-14 we have an example of Biblical intercession. We learn from Deut. 25:17-19 that Amalek had attacked the children of Israel as they came forth from Egypt. He had attacked the weak and elderly in the rear of the caravan.



Because of this cowardly attack by Amalek, Moses told Joshua, "Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand." (Ex. 17:9) Remember that Aaron and Hur went with him. You remember that as long as Moses' hands were uplifted, Israel prevailed down in the valley in the hand to hand conflict. But his arms got tired. And when his arms fell, Israel began to lose the battle. You see, Moses' intercession (symbolized by his upraised hands) for the children of Israel was the key factor in the battle in the valley. "And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed." (Ex. 17: 11) When the protection of intercessory prayer was let down, men on the battlefield fell under attack. Each time Moses' hands went down, the lives of men were put in danger. The victory that day was not decided down in the valley. It was not decided in the face to face, hand to hand combat. The victory was decided on the mountaintop of intercessory prayer. Did you know that the very same battle is being waged today? And the victory will not be decided through money or the number of men on the front lines - but by the prayers of the saints of God in our churches today! "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;" (2 Cor. 10:4)

Your missionaries know when you're praying for them and when you're not. And those times when you're not praying, the enemy comes in like a flood with his accusations and your missionary becomes the casualty. Because of your prayerlessness, your missionary suffers!

### VII. The Parting:

Next, we find the phrase "when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them." This was a commissioning - this was a vow of commitment from this church. Your responsibility to your missionaries does not end when they leave for the field - that is just the beginning. It is not a slight thing to say we are going to sponsor a missionary family. First of all, there is the responsibility of prayer. You send one out and you fail to have a prayer group or a prayer chain that can be called upon in a moment's notice, then it is just like sending a soldier to the battlefield and then withdrawing everything from him and leaving him alone and defenseless in the middle of the enemy. When you lay your hands on your missionary, you are making a commitment, you are making a vow there that you will pray for them. That you will stand behind them and give them your moral support. You will defend. You will comfort and console. In their time of special need you have those that will spend time in prayer for them.

There's something else that's involved as well. Responsibility. Now you take on the responsibility for the moral teaching, doctrinal stands, and family life of that missionary. You are responsible with the nation that they enter. Did you know that? Your church is now legally responsible. There's some today who are very fearful about liability and about being sued. Well if you are fearful in that respect, if there is that lack of trust and faith, then don't send them out as missionaries. Don't lay your



hand on them, don't identify with them. There is much more than just laying on of hands and sending them out. There is the meeting of needs. I'm talking about spiritual needs. In that husband, in that wife, in those children, in that family. The Bible says in 2 Cor. 1:7 that you become a partaker with them - "knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation."

### VIII. The Personal Application:

Beginning in Romans Chapter 10 verses 13 we find a personal challenge - "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" Whosoever includes YOU. Have you called upon the name of the Lord? Have you trusted in His blood as the only acceptable sacrifice for the payment of your sins? Have you surrendered control of your life and will to Him? Is He YOUR personal Lord and Saviour?

If so, then verse 14 "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" Do you know the purpose of your life as a child of God? Or has your life become so centered on SELF that you have lost the burden to share the Good news with a lost and dying world?

Are you being obedient to the Lord's command to get the Gospel to "every creature?" What right do you have to hear the Gospel again and again when there are so many that have not heard even one time?

Verse 15 - "And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" Except they be sent. Let me ask you something ..... if the Holy Spirit of God spoke to your church, and your church said your family was to be sent out with another family - would you be ready and willing to go? So that your church could follow the Scriptural example of two-by-two, are you ready to be sent out for a year, maybe two or three years? Would you be submissive to your church? Could you obey? Or is it that we've been caught up in 20th century America and in this current of life today? Are you so entangled with the affairs of this world, that if your Church were to respond to the leadership of the Holy Spirit of God and say - YOU, the Spirit of God has singled YOU out, could you go?

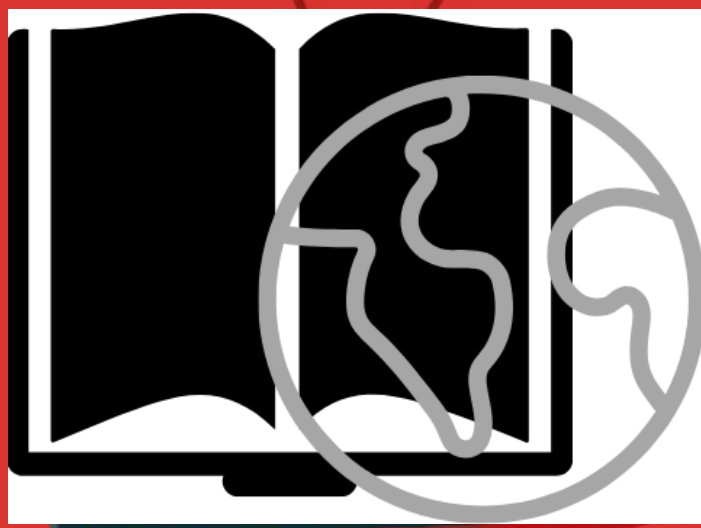
Or are you so far in debt that it would take you ten years to get free? 2 Tim. 2:4 tells us "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life." What a sad fact tonight, over 3,400 languages without a single preacher, without a single verse of Scripture. Now that isn't God's will. You see God's got some men - but the problem is that they are so entangled with the affairs of this life that they can't serve God as they should. It may be that YOU need to get back. Instead of your eye on things, you need to look to "Jesus the author and finisher of our faith;" (Heb. 12:2) Maybe you need to "lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us," (Heb. 12:1) and get in the race, and run the race for the Lord Jesus Christ. You know, I find it interesting, in Matthew 4 when the Lord called some men - some ordinary fishermen - he doesn't use those who are high-minded; he uses the simple that he might bring to naught things that are - "That no flesh should glory in his presence." (1 Cor. 1:29) So he called some fishermen. And in Matthew 4:19-20 "And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets and followed him." Straightway means at once. There wasn't any dilly-dallying around. These men moved at once. And then it says (verse 21-22) "he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him." Immediately. Half of the world's population, 3 billion souls, have never heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ one time. You know why? Because our Christianity has become something that's passive. Now we feel that we have our Church staff; we have our missionaries. We send them out and my obligation is taken care of. This is not Biblical! I find no place for a child of God to sit on the sidelines. All throughout the New Testament we find always, for every child of God, there is a ministry. In your church there is a function and a purpose for you. If you've not found your place, the entire body suffers. Cut your hand off, cut your arm off - see how this physical body will suffer? And because many have not found their place in God's plan for their lives, there are those today who have never heard the Gospel. It doesn't end here, but you see, it has repercussions that reach around the world. There are tribes and languages right now that do not have the Word of God in their tongue; do not have a single preacher, because some have not been submitted just to the will of God. Some have not found their place in that body where God has put them.

It must begin with you. Why don't you get to the place where you can straightway follow Him. Decide now that you are going to put your affairs in order - that you're going to get to that place of

availability. That's the place that every believer in Jesus Christ ought to be. Why should it be, that just those on your staff or your missionaries are expected to live by faith? When four times in the Scripture (Bab. 2:4; Rom. 1:17; Gal 3:11; Heb. 10:38) it tells us "The just shall live by faith." Period. It's time we face some facts. It's time we get serious. It can't be "business as usual" any longer. We don't have much time. Most of what we're living for is going to burn up - it's all going to be gone. Only truly what's done for Christ will last. Don't you think it's time?

And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. Romans 13:11

And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. Revelation 22:12



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