

Biblical Strategy of Missions

Have you ever gotten instructions with something you were to put together? You knew you were too smart to read the instructions. After all the instructions are for people who do not know what they are doing. You have watched others do it. You have had education beyond kindergarten. You have seen one before. And of course you have the ultimate test. You have the picture on the box. However something happens in your spirit when it is completed you look at it and realize it either doesn't look like the box and /or it doesn't work.

My son John received a working model engine for Christmas...

- A working plastic engine. 73 step-by-step instructions. Easy to setup.
 - We started. Each picking up after each of us began to question our knowledge and experiences.
 - We built it at least four times before it would begin to work.
 - We would partially read the instructions and study the picture yet we struggled to get it to be EXACTLY RIGHT.
 - However when we followed ALL 73 steps word for word we had it running.
- “Oh, at least you had fun....” Yes, three grown men knowing how to put an engine but can't do it is not fun; we call that frustration.
- “Oh, at least you made memories....” We made memories all right! Well, let's say there is no Hallmark card that describes it. And we have not taken it out since. It is a monument to our failures. Making memories of grief.
- “Oh, at least you can say you have done it...” Rather we can say we tried it on our own. We based our attempts on experience previous knowledge and ingenuity and just traditional male domination.
- Had we consulted the instructions to the last detail we would have been able to pick up after the last fellow and continued on and the model would have worked.

Consider the present state of missions today. We have many out there taking a stab at missions and growing frustrated with its implementation.

- We have parachurch ministries building hospitals, orphanages, food centers and the like out there all calling what they do missions.
- We have men who have simply taking themselves from a Pastorate here and placed themselves in a Pastorate outside the contiguous United States and called it missions.
- We have modeled what others have done until we have ended up with something that doesn't work or even represent what the box looked like.
- Then we wonder why we have an attrition that is staggering.
- Then we wonder why the romance of missions isn't enough to keep them out there.
- Then we wonder why _____

Is ALL wrong now? NO!! Most emphatically NO!!! Is ALL right now. I am not sure. However we do not have to guess. We STILL have the instructions. We still have the box. It is time we go back to the model and see what we should have done and should be doing.

Lest we think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, consider with me the Biblical model of missions. This model is not man-made. This model is not to be our interpretation of his word but the exact replica.

I. What is our biblical command in relation to World Wide Evangelization?

- Christ gave a specific command recorded five times in the NT.
 1. Matt 28:19-20 The Emphasis on the Purpose of Missions.
 - a) Win them. Wet them. Work them.
 - b) Evangelize, Baptize, Exercise.
 2. Mark 16:15 The emphasis on the Preaching of Missions.
 - a) The focal point of our effort is preaching.
 - b) It is our command, commission and consolation.
 3. Luke 24:47 The emphasis is on the Proclamation of Missions.
 - a) Repentance.
 - b) Remission.
 4. John 20:21 The Emphasis is on the Power of Missions.
 - a) The model of the Father Sending the Son.
 - b) The model of the Son sending us.
 5. Acts 1:8 The emphasis is on the Places of Missions.
 - a) The Home Place: Jerusalem.
 - b) The Hardened Place: Judea
 - c) The Hopeless Place: Samaria
 - d) The Hard to reach place: Uttermost part.

II. What happened after he left?

- A. They are told to tarry for power. Luke 24:49 "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."
 1. The word "tarry" means to sit down and dwell.
 2. This would most certainly have been God's style of things for God often said be still so I can talk to you.
- B. They were all filled with the Holy Ghost to stand before men from every nation under heaven Acts 2:5
- C. These folks had one testimony. They were able to hear the wonderful works of God in their own language.
- D. Peter preaches the first Mission Message. It was a mission message that sent the gospel around the world.
 1. Repent. Be Baptized. Respond while HE is calling.
 2. SUMMARY: The work done on the day of Pentecost reached three thousand souls. They were baptized. These men went back to their regions of the world. They went back with the Lord in their heart, with baptism in their heart. With the power of God in their lives. These men were devout Jews, now they are in the place of having the

gospel in their hearts and with the burden of folks at home. The gospel is in their hands and hearts.

III. Paul's involvement in the planting of churches

- A. His involvement began before he played for our team.
- B. God used him in placing incredible pressure on the religious-political system and those that had been getting their feet under them were now sent to many places with the seeds of truth for the Holy Spirit to take and use to plant churches.
 - 1. They were scattered throughout the regions of Jerusalem.
 - 2. They were scattered throughout the regions of Judea.
 - 3. They were scattered throughout the regions of Samaria.
 - 4. They were scattered throughout the regions of the uttermost parts.
- C. God saves the best player on the other team and he becomes a dominant force in evangelization of their world.
- D. From AD 47 – 57 Paul begins churches in the four provinces of the Roman Empire.
 - 1. Galatia
 - 2. Macedonia
 - 3. Achaia
 - 4. Asia
- E. After 10 years without planes large financial resources or the large baby bottle placed in the mouths of young ministries to rely on man. Paul headed west and the churches were not going to perish in his absence. Romans 15:24,28
 - Consider this these churches were really established.
 - a) The very thought that they could be left standing on their own stands in opposition to our current day thinking.
 - b) To think that churches could so rapidly and securely be planted seems to us today without credibility.
- F. What has happened?
 - 1. Missionaries have sailed overseas and had a burden for souls, a call from the Savior but a used a strategy from man.
 - 2. There now appears to the honest soul a chasm that exists between Paul's methods and ours is wide.
 - a) Are we right and he wrong?
 - b) Was he right and we wrong?
 - c) What happened to our thinking?
 - (1) (1) The history of missions in the last 150 years may have reshaped the thinking of missionaries to the extent that we no longer follow a biblical pattern.
 - (2) (2) The trend of imitation and oral history and the perception of missionaries have all played a part in the erosion of the Bible method of church planting.
 - (3) (3) At best what we do in missions today is take fragments of Paul's methods and apply them, but is that enough? Is that what we are supposed to do?
 - 3. Yet the truth remains, Paul was not the only one who used these methods as others went out and did the same.

- G. Was it Exceptional times and exceptional men?
1. Did they have greater advantages in birth, education, call?
 - Or was it taking the model Jesus gave them and really applying it.
 2. They had no printed word.
 3. They had no super infrastructure of many churches just the leadership of the Holy Spirit coupled with an unadulterated passion for souls of men.
- H. Does the distance from Paul's time erode the necessity to copy what they did? No!
- I. Did Paul gather congregations or did he plant churches? I say he planted churches!
- J. Our western culture /society stands in opposition to the methods of Paul.
1. We believe that we are superior to all in education, culture and background and we must go and train the poor nationals in heathen lands.
 2. Our culture of self-reliance, independence and organization naturally gets imposed upon the people to whom we serve.
 3. We expect them to be an indigenous church but have our organizational structure.
 4. Paul chose to grasp fundamental principles with an unhesitating faith in the power of the Holy Ghost to apply them to his hearers and to work out their appropriate external expressions of them.
- K. Clearly he succeeded in doing what we have so far only tried to do.
- L. Questions to consider of Paul's methods.
1. Did he deliberately select strategies points to establish churches?
 2. Was his success due to an extraordinary people who received his appeal?
 3. Were the social, moral and religious conditions so different from modern times that we are excused?
 4. Was there a specific benefit Paul had that we do not have to exempt us from his level of success?
 - a) Miracles.
 - b) Preaching.
 - c) Finances.
 5. What were his methods?
- IV. IV. Answers to the questions of the methods of Paul?
- A. Did he deliberately select strategies points to establish churches?
1. The Holy Spirit leActs 16:6,7
 2. Paul spoke of regions more than cities.
 3. By reaching 2-3 centers of influence Paul had stated he had reach a provincRomans 15:19,23
 4. It seems that the places Paul went were centers of
 - a) Roman administration,
 - b) Greek civilization,
 - c) Jewish influence and
 - d) Commercial importance.
 5. Summary: He was led as God opened the door. Wherever he was led he found a center of influence.
- B. Was his success due to an extraordinary people who received his appeal?

- Certainly not.
 - a) The Jews rejected and caused the gospel to be focused on us. Paul preached against the Jews.
 - b) First he would speak at the synagogue and then at the home of a citizen of good reputation.
 - (1) (1) Philippi - Lydia
 - (2) (2) Thessalonica – Jason
- C. Were the social, moral and religious conditions so different from modern times that we are excused?
 1. Certainly not.
 2. The men were believed in demons.
 3. Superstition abounded.
 4. The men were idolatrous.
 5. And practiced slavery.
 6. They also were a barbarous people. They watching people eaten alive in theaters.
- D. Was there a specific benefit Paul had that we do not have to exempt us from his level of success?
 1. Miracles: In 5 towns (Lystra—healed the cripple; Philippi—expelled a demon; Ephesus—handkerchiefs brought diseases and evils spirits to depart. Troas—Eutychus) Yes they were part of his ministry but not to gain further converts.
 2. Finances: Certainly he did not seek financial help for himself. He took no financial help from those to who to whom he preached. He did not administer local funds.
 - The difference today is astounding.
 3. Preaching: The Gospel all he spoke of was the gospel. He did not have the eloquence of others. He knew what God did for him!
 4. Nothing is OVERWHELMINGLY different from his day to ours.
- V. V. What can we learn from this?
 1. We still are bringing the gospel of salvation to heathen lands it has not become indigenous. (Webster – Native, Produced Naturally)
 2. We plant works that are dependent on outside help.
 3. Missions is still the same.
 4. We have approached the dark heathen lands with our typical racial and religious pride. We believe we are superior.
 5. We have approached missions from the point of the wealthy man who pitches a dime in the cup of the poor. We should have approached it from the husbandman who casts seed for the dependence of his family.
 - a) We have done everything for them.
 - b) We have taught, baptized, and shepherded them.
 - c) We have managed their funds,
 - d) We have ordered their services,
 - e) We have built their churches,
 - f) We have provided their teachers.
 - g) We have trained and ordained.

- h) We have done everything but offer them equality.
- i) We have done everything for them but not with them .
- j) We have treated them as dear children and not the brethren.
- k) We have made ourselves indispensable.
- l) We have taught our converts to turn to us, and not Christ for guidance.
- m) We have taught our converts to turn to us, and not Christ for fiancés.
- n) We have become the Holy Spirit to them. Does he only speak to us and then us to them?
- o) We shelter them from disaster or ruin and think we are doing the best thing for them.
- p) We have become enablers in missions instead of emancipators.
- q) We bring them our law and order in service, which we know are not perfect. We do not allow them to come to their own order.
- r) If indigenous churches are our goal, then we ought not to use slavery to be the training for liberty and autonomy.

VI. What were his methods?

A. He was a preacher of the gospel.

1. Consider the Portrait of his heart:

- a) He had an undeniable priority.
- b) He had an undying passion.
- c) He had an undiminishing prayer life.
- d) He had an understanding of people.
- e) He had an underlying purpose.
 - Romans 9:3 For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:
 - Romans 10:1 Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.

B. He sought to give up the work to them immediately and willingly.

VII. Summary.

- A. Make all your teaching simple so those who are your learners can grasp it, practice it and pass it on.
- B. When you organize keep it such manner that it can be understood and maintained. The test of any organizing is naturalness and permanence.
- C. In matters of finance, the church must control and maintain their own business.
- D. Instill a sense of mutual responsibility. The church is responsible for itself.
- E. Believe in your people, allow them to make mistakes and learn from them.