

ETERNAL CPR

Eternal – lasting forever, without end

CPR – Cardiopulmonary resuscitation – effort to manually preserve brain function

Missions and sending out is God's idea and initiative.

There are many examples in the bible we can look at to substantiate this truth.

1. We start with three examples from the Old Testament showing God as the One who calls and sends.

i. Genesis 12:1-3: Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. 2 And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonours you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." In these few verses we see God...

- calling Abram
- instructing him to leave his country of origin [Go from] to another
- sending him away [to] a new land, where He would bestow many blessings, the blessings which were going to be passed to all the nations of the world through him and his descendants.

ii. The second example is in Exodus 3.

Story of Moses' encounter with God in the burning bush. God told him about the difficulties His people were experiencing in slavery in Egypt, how their cry had reached to Him. God's time to set them free had come.

- So, God called Moses and said to him in Exodus 3:10: Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt."
- So, Moses responded to God's call [Come] , and was sent [send] by God to Pharaoh to free the people from slavery to Canaan – the Promised Land.

iii. Third example relates to the many Prophets whom God called, sent to call people to repentance, remind them of the covenant promises.

- Take Prophet Isaiah, for instance, chapter 6:8-9: And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I [send], and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here I am! Send me." 9 And he said, "[Go], and say to this people: "Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not perceive.'
- Here we see the specific calling of Isaiah the Prophet.
- Sent by God to proclaim a message which would fall on deaf ears.

a. So, we see in the ministry of Isaiah, Moses and Abram that it was God who called and send them off to missions, to accomplish their specific tasks.

2. The same is true in the New Testament.

i. Jesus was the first One to be chosen and sent by God.

Before the foundations of the world, God knew that we would sin and need a Saviour to set us free from bondage to sin and God's holy and well-deserved wrath.

- That's why Paul says in Ephesians 1:4 says: even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.
- That is to say, before the world was created, before Abram and Moses, we were already chosen.
- Prophet Isaiah (chapter 53) foretold about the Holy One who would be pierced for our transgression and crushed for our iniquity...speaking of Jesus' work which God had called and set apart for Jesus to accomplish when He is sent into the world.

And when that time was right, Paul says in Galatians 4:4-7: But when the fullness of time had come, God [sent] forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. 6 And because you are sons, God has sent

the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” 7 So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

□ So, Jesus was sent at the appointed, right time, NOT too early or very late, but when the fullness of time had come God [sent] Jesus to die on the cross for those whom He had chosen before the foundations of world.

□ One of Jesus’ Apostle, John 3:17 affirms that Jesus did not come out of His own accord but it was the Father who sent Him: For God did not [send] his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

□ In His high priestly prayer, Jesus prayed: For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you [sent] me (John 17:8).

a. So, Jesus was the first one to be called by God the Father, before creation, and then sent into the world to die for us.

ii. Also, Jesus – the sent One from above, sent disciples prior to His crucifixion, after His resurrection from the dead and ascension into heaven.

□ Prior to His crucifixion and death.

Mark 6:7: And he called the twelve and began to [send] them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits.

□ After His resurrection from the dead.

□ He gave the great commission to His disciples in Matthew 28 to go into all the earth.

□ And again in Acts 1:1-8...granting us the mandate to do missions, to go out into the world as the sent ones.

□ After His ascension into heaven.

□ He and the Father sent the Holy Spirit. Jesus had promised this before His crucifixion and death in John 14:26 saying: But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will [send] in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

□ This promise was fulfilled in Acts 2, on the Day of Pentecost when the Spirit was poured out.

a. So, we see that Jesus and God the Father [sent] the Holy Spirit.

III. Biblical mandate to call, send and the reactions

Since Christ is no longer physically here on earth, who has right to choose? To answer that question, let’s turn to Acts 13:1-3: Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2 While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” 3 Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

Who has the right to call?

It’s clear from v.2: While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said... When Christ ascended into heaven, the powers to choose the servants for missions were not relinquished and passed-on to the apostles or the church. It remains God’s prerogative.

1. Luke says in v.2 (in Acts 13:2) it was God the Holy Spirit, the Third person of the Triune God who chose Barnabas and Saul and then instructed the church in Antioch to set them apart for missions.

i. Paul, a learned and highly respected Rabbi who had been trained by Gamaliel, did not see himself as qualified to be sent for missions. But he and Barnabas were chosen by God the HS, v.2.

2. It is true that certain tasks were reserved for God alone but later given to the Church to carry out.

i. In the New Testament Jesus chose Twelve men and designated them Apostles because they would become the foundation from which His Church would be built.

ii. But after Christ had ascended into heaven, the task of appointing Church leaders was passed-on to the Apostles.

In Titus 1: 5, Apostle Paul instructed Timothy to appoint elders.

In Acts 6, the apostles instructed the people to choose 7-men who would oversee the distribution of food.

iii. But the task of choosing people for ministry was never passed-on to the Apostles nor to any other men, except God.

a. According to v.2, to choose a person for missions is neither an apostolic nor the Church's task. To call for missions remains a divine initiative.

3. Three implications

i. We can't choose people!

And say to them: I want you to become a missionary...' simply because we think that person is suited for the ministry....

We can't do that even if we have lots of money to support them.

o problem is that your money is totally unable to fashion the person's hearts to be suited for ministry to which you are calling him. It can't equip and fashion the person's hearts in such a way that they are suited for the task.

Your money can only be useful to someone who has already been chosen by God because God would have already fashioned and designed the person in such a way that he is a perfect fit for the task at hand.

That doesn't mean we can't encourage someone who displays a specific gifting to go to missions. We can only do that because the person displays visible signs which shows a heart disposed to missions, specific gifting suited for that particular ministry, and a clear testimony (humanly speaking) of God's work in the person's heart to go to missions.

ii. You can't choose yourself!

For the same reasons mentioned above.

But how often people, due to ulterior motives, love of money, prestige, choose and impose themselves into the missions.

Why are we surprised when people, instead of being fed the Word of God, are given green grass and snakes to eat...

Given petrol to drink...

It is God who calls, and He equips and grants then the necessary gifts required for the task.

iii. Every Christian is called into missions.

Some will go away to China.

But you may not go to China, but you are chosen and have been sent by God as a missionary.

Where?

In your neighbourhood

Co-workers

Unbelieving friends and relatives

Every single member of our Churches are missionaries who should go out and evangelize their lost neighbours; co-workers, friends and relatives.

As a Pastor, you can't go on their behalf to evangelize them. Why? Their neighbours; co-workers; friends and relatives are NOT your neighbours; co-workers; friends and relatives.

B. Biblical mandate to send

Look at v.3: 3 Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

1. Church prayed, fasted, sent them off

2. Barnabas & Paul returned to give a report: Acts 14:24-28: Then they passed through Pisidia and came to Pamphylia. 25 And when they had spoken the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia, 26 and from there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work that they had fulfilled. 27 And when they arrived and gathered the church together, they declared all that God had done with them, and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles. 28 And they remained no little time with the disciples.

3. Romans 10:14-15: 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? 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!"

i. Local church oversee the ministry – Acts 14:27, came back to their sending Church and gave a report.

ii. Cannot be a lone ranger.

iii. Other support

Give money

Pray

Do visits

SUMMARY: God chooses, the local church sends, keep this perspective as we do missions.

C. Two challenges and encouragement

Especially in the context of SA.

1. Prosperity gospel

Biggest hindrance to the gospel.

Jesus did not come to give us BWM's, luxury houses, health and lots of money.

2. African Traditional Religion (ATR)

Grew up worshipping ancestors.

Taught from childhood that this is your identity.

Infant before 3-months is introduced to ancestors, a ritual called 'imbeleko'.

All your neighbours, friends, whole village, practice this. It becomes part of who you are.

So, to turn away from ancestry worship is like abandoning your identity.

And the consequences are dire, Lungi my wife excluded by grandfather from all family events.

So, it's NOT as simple as what people seem to think...similar to asking a Muslim to turn from Islam to Christianity.

3. Despite the challenges of the ATR and the prosperity gospel, there is great joy when sinners repent

i. Throughout the Book of Acts, repeated phrase..."Many were added to their number..."

ii. Jesus started with the Twelve, now billions, it grows like a mustard seed.

IV. Conclusion

Missions is NOT an optional extra. It was designed by God to be an instrument by which He would gather peoples from all nations, tribes and languages to worship Him. The Church of Jesus Christ exists for this purpose! To measure the success of any given Church, we don't need to look at their programs, facilities, music or how many full-time staff members are on their payroll. Rather, does your church send called people out (further afield or locally) to do missions?

For this is the sole purpose for which the Church exists! There will be challenges along the way, but take heart, Jesus said in Matt. 28, I am with you till the end of the age...