

Biblical Missions Work

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[0 : 00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alpharetta, Georgia. During this time, missionary Randy Stirlwald joins us to address the biblical method of church planning.

Well, good evening. I had the ghost out of Christmas Past show up tonight. And Terry Childers, we were together in Eldorette eight years.

And then he was in Nairobi a number of years before that. And so I was quite taken back when I saw him. And so I'm glad that he's here at the conference.

And it was wife and son and daughter. And we had a great time. We used to eat Chinese food at the Chinese restaurant in Eldorette.

Well, I don't know really what to say. We've been at it for two days. And I think that the first 30 minutes I told them everything I knew.

[1 : 07] And the next five or six hours I made everything up. And so I don't know when it will catch up with me. But we'll see.

Acts chapter 14. I preached a message a couple of years ago. I'd come home for my son's graduation from university. And so I was invited to a missions conference.

And we came home a little bit early than what we had planned to be in this missions conference. Or to be with this church. I'm sorry. And I preached a message.

And I had no idea until a couple of months ago that it was on the church's website. And I think that the pastor told Jason, because we were at Decatur Baptist Church together in their missions conference.

And so I feel like I'm preaching to the choir first off. And then a bunch of the guys have already heard it on the internet off of their website.

[2 : 15] And I really thought about, well, not preaching it here. Because everyone, so many have heard. But just very, not very long ago, I was with the church.

And again, I presented this portion of scripture. And I was taken aback because after I had presented this, shared this scripture with the church, the pastor got up behind me and said, you know, well, that's methodology.

And that's the way, that's one method of doing it, of doing mission work. And it kind of took me aback because all I did was share scripture.

And I didn't know scripture was methodology. Now, if I'd been Brother Gardner, I probably would have said something to him. But I'm not.

So I bit my tongue in the afternoon. And then I preached that night. And I went on.

[3 : 34] But I think what we find is in this portion of scripture, I see that this is the way Paul did his mission work.

And I have to wonder and I have to think about it whether, whether, would we consider what Paul did as methodology or would the Holy Spirit consider it methodology?

Or would the Holy Spirit, because he's placed it within the word, is that something on our heart that this is maybe the way that we're supposed to do it?

Is this, this is how Paul did it? It's very clear here that this is how the apostle Paul did it. And so, is this methodology or is this the way we're supposed to do it?

So let me just share the scripture with you tonight. Acts chapter 14 verse 21. And when they had preached the gospel in that city and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciple, exhorting them to continue in the faith, that we must, through much tribulation, enter the kingdom of God.

[4 : 59] And when they had ordained them elders in every church and had prayed, then with fasting, they commended them to the Lord on whom they believed.

And after they had passed through Pisidia and came to Pamphylia, and when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down to, into Atalia, and then sailed to Antioch and whence they had, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled.

And when they were come and gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.

And there they abode a long time with the disciples. This is the end of the first missionary journey. Paul and Barnabas have completed, and they had, as they had gone through many, now many different towns, many different cities on this first missionary journey.

Now let me set precedents first, because I think I'm preaching to the choir. You know, when you get all these missionaries that are up here, and of course the vision of this church and the training that this church does for missionaries.

[6 : 34] But as we see the Apostle Paul now, there was something that's interesting to me that's found in chapter 13, verse 1. And so as we set that, this is the sending out of Paul and Barnabas.

It says, Now at the church that was at Antioch, certain prophets and teachers, as Barnabas and Simeon, who's called Niger, and Lucius now of Cyrene, and Manan, who had been brought up with Herod the Tetrarch, and Saul, and they ministered to the Lord and fasted, and the Holy Spirit said, separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work wherein I have called them.

Now beloved church, I want us to understand first that the calling of Barnabas and Saul was not a private affair between Barnabas and Saul.

The first thing that we see is, is that the leadership of the church was also called by God concerning the calling out, the separating out of Barnabas and Saul.

You can't separate missions and the local church. The local church now is a major part, and you've caught that vision.

[8 : 00] You've caught that vision with training men to go to the field. You've caught the vision that this is an affair of the local church, and that the local church does the work, and God calls the local church.

We've talked this week about pastors, and calling out pastors, and I shared that oftentimes, we don't have a culture of men being called, and oftentimes missionaries are waiting for men to be called.

And so one time, a missionary in Nairobi talked to me, and they said, well, we just don't understand how you have so many pastors now in Eldoret, because people are just not called here in Nairobi.

And I thought about that, and I thought, you know, we don't wait for somebody to say we're called. We look for men, and we allow the Holy Spirit now to work in our heart that we look for a man.

Now we look to train a man, and at the end, God has called him. Now not everyone goes out to be as a pastor, but many of them do.

- [9 : 34] It's the work of the church to look for the calling as well. It's the work of the church. Here was the church at Antioch, and God just didn't say, all right, I want Barnabas and Saul.
- He didn't just call Barnabas and Saul. They didn't come forward in a meeting, and say, you know, privately, they didn't come forward in a meeting saying, you know, you know, I think now that that God has called us to take the gospel to the Gentiles.
- The church knew that that this was a joint effort, and it's a joint calling, a joint calling, and that's what we see. Now let us look at the work of Barnabas and Saul.
- How do we do mission work? That's what we've been talking about. How do we do mission work? Well, I don't know how other people do it.
- I just want to share with you how Paul did it. It says, and when they had preached the gospel in that city. Paul and Barnabas had traveled when they left Jerusalem, I'm sorry, when they left Antioch.
- [10 : 54] In chapter 13, it tells us that they went to Cilicia, and then to Cyprus, and then to Panthus, and to Perga, now in Panphilia, and to Antioch in Pisidia.
- They went to Iconium, they went to Lystra, they went to Derbe, and it says also in chapter 13 and 14 as well, to the cities of Lycania.
- These are the ones that are listed. And so what did Paul do and Barnabas do when they entered each one and every one of these churches?
- They preached the gospel. They preached the gospel. And that's what missionaries are. I thought when this young lady read the letter from the missionary in Papua New Guinea, I thought, you know what we really ought to do is just have an invitation now.
- What a letter. What a letter. That ought to have been enough, I think, tonight. I think if you'd given an invitation, I would have surrendered to Papua New Guinea tonight.
- [12 : 03] What a letter. They preached the gospel. They preached the gospel. Every city they entered into, they preached the gospel.
- And then look, the next thing it says, and they taught many. They taught many. Listen, they preached the gospel.
- We have sometimes now frontier missionaries, they're called, and they want to go into areas and they preach the gospel and they leave.
- They preach the gospel here and they get in their truck and they move on. But that was not what Paul and Barnabas did. They taught many.
- Those that came to Christ, they disciplined. They disciplined them. They began to teach them the word of God. They took from the Old Testament now the scripture that they had and they showed through the scripture that it is Christ.
- [13 : 11] And I'm sure that much of what Paul will write later through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, I'm sure that he shared these doctrines, these things, that that he wrote to Rome.
- Now the book of Romans, I'm sure that he shared this doctrine that he had with them. They disciplined.
- They taught many. Mission's work is not just now preaching the gospel. It's not winning people to Christ and as we would say in Kenya, leaving a baby under a bush.
- They're not abandoned. They're not left. They were taught. They were taught. They disciplined them.
- And that's the ministry of the missionary. Now, it says that when they had taught, it said that they returned again to Lystra, to Iconium, to Antioch.
- [14 : 22] These were locations that we'd already listed in chapter 13 that they had been to. And so, this was a ministry of teaching and it's a ministry of continual teaching.

Many men, many people on mission fields, we are the only resort they have. Brother Terry and I, being in western Kenya, now, if we didn't teach them, if we didn't provide lessons for them, if we didn't, now, disciple them and bring them up, there's nobody else to do it.

And they had no other resource. The people of Kenya live on a dollar a day. A dollar a day is the average that's in Kenya.

And especially out in the area where we were. Now, and in the countryside, a dollar a day. You don't find any bookstores. Now, they don't have any other resource that they can go to.

And what few, and there's a little bit around, but what few is there. Now, they can't afford anyway. It takes 80 cents of the dollar that they make to be able to exist.

[15 : 48] And so, and so, there's the teaching aspect. There is the discipling aspect. I'm sorry. And that's the word, and that's my fault.

Go ahead and bring it. They asked me about water, and I said, no, I don't ever drink water when I preach. And that is the, that is the death nail of a fool.

Because just as you say, I never drink water when I preach, that's when you have to have it. They taught.

And they continued with the teaching ministry. They continued to teach. In Kenya, we, we have, we have a discipleship program that is within the churches.

And then, when young men come to the Bible Institutes, we have a teaching program. Our students come in for one week a month for three years. Because we're a country church.

[16 : 56] We're not in the cities. Now, Brother Gardner, I think, has been trying to get me to surrender to go to cities ever since I've been here. I was a bus kid growing up.

Now, somebody brought me to church. I'm just a hillbilly. I remember when I surrendered to be a missionary. One of the pastors, one of the men who had been my pastor, now, took us on for support because he thought, number one, we would never get to the field.

Number two, he thought we'd starve to death. Well, I got to the field and I didn't starve to death. I should have starved more, a whole lot more than I have. And that's what he told me.

He didn't tell me that at the time, but some years later, he said, that's the only reason we supported you. I was a bus kid. Wasn't really a problem, but so shy.

Could never stand before anyone. We're teachers. Teachers of the word. Now, to these men, they are, I want you to look at verse 22 then because, because I've already been warned there's a trap door underneath this.

[18 : 14] Now, and Chris, I appreciate you telling me that. 22, confirming the souls of the disciples. They disciplined them.

Now, and then they went deeper than that. They confirmed them. They grounded them. Now, the work of missions is grounding people.

Now, there's all different kinds of programs. As I've already mentioned, our work in, our work in Kenya, we start with the discipleship. We go to the Bible Institute.

After the Bible Institute, we have, for the pastors, we have three pastors conferences a year. And then, we have a program for the pastors that we have study books that we have put together.

And, and in those study books, now they, they take them home. They study for three months. They come back and they take an examination. The only reason I do an examination is I want accountability.

[19 : 20] I want to make sure that they're studying it. To confirm, to firm them up, to establish them. It's a continual process.

You know, beloved, for us, here in America, you know, we've got our pastor, we've got our, we've got our church, now, and, and you go in and there is, there is, somebody recommends a book to you.

You go into the bookstore, you buy the book. Now, you perhaps listen to different radio stations and radio programs that help you, that help confirm you.

On the mission field, they don't have that. And so that work of confirming becomes the missionary to do. They established them.

And we do all the different programs to establish. Now, the believers. Establish, confirming the souls and then encouraging, exhorting them to continue in the faith.

[20 : 25] A lot of times, beloved, the missionary's job is to encourage. When you live in a third world country again and people live on a dollar a day, there is always needs.

Their children are sick. Their wife is sick. You know, sometimes the burden, the burden becomes so strong because who again is their resource?

The resource of the missionary. Missionary, can you help me? Missionary, can you help me? Missionary, can you help me? And we can't do everything now.

But beloved, to take some time with them. We have an open door policy. And so, there were times that pastors coming in, whenever a pastor comes to our home, they're welcomed.

Phyllis is always there, my wife, now, and she fixes food for whoever comes in. Now, that's a Kenyan culture. That's a custom. You never come into somebody's home without something to eat.

[21 : 29] And so, they're welcomed just as we would be welcomed into their home. And we can't always provide everything that they need, but we can take enough time to listen to them, to have prayer with them.

we encourage them. Encourage. And then, verse 23, and when they had ordained elders in every church.

Now, that's a verse that sometimes Baptists wish that were, not the ordained part, but that word elders sometimes make Baptists nervous. Because it's been, it's been used differently at times than maybe the biblical intent.

But, I want you to think about the word ordained. I know you all have had a lot of ordinations in this church. But, when is a person ordained?

When were they ordained? Now, were they ordained when all the reverends came up and they, he kneels down and they put their hands on him and then we say, okay, bless God, he's ordained.

[22 : 50] But that's not what the word ordained means. That's just confirming him. That's a, that's a, that's a prayer that the, that the reverends do, the other, other reverends do for a man who has joined them in the service.

The word ordained means to be selected by a vote. Do you know when ordination takes place? You have the council and they've read you the report now to you and so the council now says that we have examined him on your behalf.

You invited us to come and to examine him and we have examined him on your behalf and we have found him to be doctrinally sound.

Then what happens? One of the deacons of the church stands up and says, what? I move that this ordination continues and then there's a second and then the church votes that's when the man is ordained.

He has been selected by this congregation. They have voted upon him selected. Look what the apostle Paul did.

[24 : 15] It says that they ordained elders in every church. He sent Titus and he told Titus ordained elders in every church.

He sent Timothy and said to Timothy ordained elders in every church. What they did was they went and they taught this church how to select leadership from among themselves.

The apostle Paul was not a pastor on a foreign field. He was a pioneer missionary and what he did was he taught the church how to select its own leadership.

leadership. As missionaries our responsibility is not to be a pastor of a church. It is to win people to Christ.

It is to disciple them. It is to establish them in the word. It is to encourage them and then it is to lead this church to look unto itself for its own leadership.

[25 : 34] And that's what Paul did. today there is the idea of missionaries being pastors. And they go to the field and they pastor for 15 years or 16 years and then they decide it is time to go back to America and so they look around and try to find someone or maybe they have trained someone through the time but now it becomes a time just to turn it over to someone.

Paul didn't turn the work over. They ordained elders in every church. Select your own leadership.

leadership. That's the work of a missionary. It's just to provide for the church. They're able to select their own leadership.

leadership. When we went to Kenya there were a lot of people doing a lot of different ways and we went to the city of Eldoret and we began with our first church and from the very beginning we began to look who now can we win to Christ, our first man that out of our first church had been a Muslim and converted to Christ.

He had already been saved then through another church in the country of Uganda but I got the opportunity to lead his mother to Christ. I got an opportunity to lead his brother, two of his brothers to Christ and then an opportunity to lead his wife to Christ all from the Muslim faith.

[27 : 34] And we that was our very first church and from that time we looked for a man. We looked who can be won to Christ and who we can disciple and who we can establish in the word.

Who can lead the church? Some of the questions that have been asked this week they said how do you select a place to start a church?

We never select a place to start a church. We look for a man. We look for a man. Terry knows every village is the same.

Every village is the same. So it doesn't make any difference which village you go to. Because every village now they can have a hundred or two hundred or three hundred in church.

And so we look for a man. They ordained elders in every church. Now the work of the missionary.

[28 : 41] This is what Paul did. Again he preached. He disciplined. He established. He encouraged. And then he had a ministry of teaching the church to select its own leadership.

So that church goes on. That's the work that Paul did. That's the work of the missionary. And that's the work that we've tried to do for these 33 years in Kenya.

And then I close. And again you understand this. But it says. And when they were come. and had gathered the church together they rehearsed all that God had done with them. And how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles. You all are very much aware of this.

The missionaries came back and reported to the sending church. They reported to the sending church. All that God had done. Beloved is I've had a great time.

[29 : 56] This week. And I'm always encouraged to be around young missionaries because I'm not a young missionary anymore. I sometimes in my head I think I'm a young missionary.

But it doesn't take very long for the truth to come out. And so it's a great encouragement to me because Brother Gardner informed me this week that I got 10 years it best laughed.

I thought I could do more than that but I've learned he knows best. Jason do you ever challenge what he says? Very rarely.

I think he's in trouble because the answer was oh no never. So it's been a great time for me to be with these young missionaries because I got 10 years left and that's about it.

And that's the truth. Let's do the work of missions. And let's do it the biblical scriptural and I guess some call it methodology I think it's kind of hard to call what the Holy Spirit says methodology because if we were to determine our own methods I'm not sure why the Holy Spirit would have put this in here.

[31 : 28] That's exactly what Paul did. Let's have Kenyans leading Kenyan churches.

Let's have Chileans leading Chilean churches. Let's have Peruvians leading Peruvian churches. We can do that if we disciple, if we establish, if we encourage.

We can do that. We can do that if we'll do it God's way. Then we'll be able to ordain pastors in every church.

God bless you. Thank you pastor. God to go to go to the Lord. God wants me to go somewhere and be a missionary.

I feel like the Lord has spoken to my heart. I don't know if there's somebody that might feel that way tonight. God to pray. God I'm here. Maybe God would send you to the mission field.

[32 : 43] Maybe if God hasn't spoken to you about going to the mission field, you do know in your heart that you ought to be more involved in praying and leading people to Christ here and helping disciple people here and helping be a sender.

If God spoke in your heart in any way, I want to God do work in your life. Father, I love you. I thank you so very much for the opportunity to serve you.

I pray that your name would be honored. God, I pray our people would do as you would have them do. I give you all the glory and all the honor for all that you do. need to have to God to have for who are ladies way good Kelvin Joe■