

## V. WHAT IS A MISSIONARY?

## A. General Definition

1. The missionary is one who receives and accepts God's call to take the gospel to unreached portions of the world.
2. The missionary is one who is sent forth to his work by the Holy Ghost and his home church (Acts 13:1-4).
3. The missionary is one who does the work of a missionary:
  - a. To preach the word (Acts 13:5, 42-44)
  - b. To win the lost (Acts 13:12, 48-49; Acts 16:27-34; Acts 17:22-34)
  - c. To baptize believers (Acts 16:14-15, 30-34)
  - d. To teach the saved (Acts 18:11; Acts 20:20-27)
    - 1) Not shunning the teaching of the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27)
    - 2) An admonishment to watch for wolves that would come in like faithful teachers (Acts 20:28-29)
  - e. To ordain elders (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5)
  - f. To establish churches (Acts 14:23)
  - g. To confirm the churches (Acts 15:40-41; Acts 16:5)

## B. Relationship to Apostles

1. The word *missionary* comes from a Latin word meaning "sent one" while the word *apostle* comes from a Greek word meaning "sent one".
2. In the time of Acts, there were men called apostles who were not of the twelve (Acts 14:14; Romans 16:7).
3. Paul was not of the twelve but was "*the apostle of the Gentiles*" (Romans 11:13; Romans 15:16; 1 Timothy 2:7; 2 Timothy 1:11).
4. Yet, to most people, using *apostle* to refer to missionaries would be confusing and misleading because of the Bible teaching concerning the twelve apostles.
  - a. Their special calling (Luke 6:12-16)
  - b. Their single replacement (Acts 1:15-26; 2:14; 6:2)
  - c. Their special qualifications
    - (1) Companions of Jesus (Acts 1:21; John 6:66)
    - (2) John's baptism (Acts 1:22; John 1:35-37)
  - d. Their special office (Acts 1:20; Ephesians 2:20; 4:11)
5. It would also be misleading because of the signs that an apostle would have had in the early church (2 Corinthians 12:11-12; Revelation 2:1-2)

### C. Relationship to Evangelists

1. Evangelists held a very high position in the early churches (Ephesians 4:11)
2. By simple definition, an evangelist is one who evangelizes or leads others to Christ (2 Timothy 4:5)
3. The work of an evangelist can be seen in the pattern of Philip, the only man in the Bible actually called an evangelist (Acts 21:8)
  - a. Preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ to the lost (Acts 8:5, 40)
  - b. Actively leading lost souls to a saving knowledge of Christ (Acts 8:26-39)
  - c. Opening up new areas to the message of the gospel (Acts 8:5, 40)
4. A missionary must evangelize. However, his work is broader than that of an evangelist.
5. CONCLUSION: A missionary may have the most-encompassing position in the church today. He does the work of an apostle, an evangelist, a pastor and a teacher.

## VI. WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

### A. Importance of the Issue

1. The church plays a key role in missions
  - a. The source of missionary work (Acts 13:1-3)
  - b. The goal of missionary work (Acts 14:23; Acts 15:41)
2. Bible believers are very divided over this issue
3. The doctrine of the church has much effect on how missions works.
  - a. Local church emphasis tends toward:
    - (1) Strong relations with the sending church or churches
    - (2) Ministries under local church or churches
    - (3) Limited cooperation with others
  - b. Universal church emphasis tends toward:
    - (1) Weak relations with sending church or churches
    - (2) Large parachurch ministries
    - (3) Ecumenical cooperation with other groups

### B. Definitions

1. Local church – a group of baptized believers joined together for the edifying of the saints and the winning of the lost under the authority of Jesus Christ and the direction of New Testament doctrine.
2. Universal church – all believers around the world at any given time thought to make up the body of Christ and operate as a force for good in the world

3. Prospective church – all believers in heaven and in earth who have the *prospect* of assembling together in heaven after the rapture. (There is much disagreement on the following points.)
  - a. All believers presently have a spiritual membership in this group
  - b. This church is the most accurate representation of the body of Christ (although the local body is typically “the body of Christ” as well). This church matches the sense in which all believers are one “in Christ.”
  - c. This church is incomplete and has never assembled. It is not the church through which God does His work on earth. It is, rather, a spiritual blessing that offers a spiritual kinship to all believers. It is equivalent to the “*family*” of God (Ephesians 3:15).

#### C. Uses of Church in Scripture

1. Local church
  - a. Clearly most of the references to “church” in the New Testament are references to the local church
  - b. As the emphasis of New Testament teaching and doctrine, the local church should be given first place in our doctrine and practice
2. Institutional Church
  - a. Refers to the use of church as an institution in opposition to references to a particular church. Compare statements about “the family.”
  - b. Examples include Matthew 18:17 (the church in the wilderness) and 1 Timothy 3:5
3. Prospective church
  - a. Refers to all who are saved both in heaven and in earth
  - b. This is the church for which Christ died (Ephesians 5:25)
  - c. This will make up the glorious church presented in heaven (Ephesians 5:27)
4. Universal church
  - a. Refers to all the saved on earth at any particular time
  - b. Considered to be a force for good
  - c. Teaching used to promote ecumenicalism
  - d. Not found in scripture and should be rejected
  - e. Some use *universal church* to refer to the prospective church defined above. Care needs to be taken to find out how terms are being used.

#### D. Conclusions

1. The New Testament emphasis is on the local New Testament church.

- a. It is the only institution established by God for the reaching of the lost
- b. It should be the center of all we do in missions
2. The doctrine of the spiritual body of Christ or the prospective church is given to us as a spiritual blessing. It is not the body through which God does His work today.
3. The teaching of the universal church is a dangerous doctrine and should be avoided.
  - a. It is used by the liberal modernists to teach ecumenicalism and break down all doctrinal barriers
  - b. It is used by the Roman Catholics to teach the bringing together of all Christians under their authority
  - c. It always attacks spiritual and doctrinal purity