



The President's Perspective



What is Missions?

II Kings 7:3-11, tells one of the most intriguing stories in the Old Testament. The city of Samaria has been in the grip of incredible famine, created by the Syrian army that has besieged the city. In the middle of those incredible circumstances, God send deliverance in the form of a "noise". That "noise" is the sound of battle that so frightens the Syrians that they flee in the middle of the night, leaving their tents, supplies, and weapons. Four lepers stumble on the scene and find delicious foods there for the taking. After filling their bellies, they hide all the provisions they can for their future sustenance. As they complete taking care of their own needs, all four come to the realization that what they have just done is the exact opposite of how they should respond. They say, "We do not well: this is a day of good tidings and we hold our peace." They then report to the king, telling him that there is food enough and to spare just outside the city walls. Sure enough, when the king sends to see if this is true, he finds enough provision for he and his people to, not only survive, but to live in almost luxury.

Years ago I heard someone describe MISSIONS and EVANGELISM as simply "one beggar telling another beggar where to get bread." Great definition! Just recently, I was asked by a well-meaning gentleman, "Is all your doing now, just city-wide evangelism?" After I told him an emphatic "NO!", I asked why he would ask that. He informed me that he had reservations about supporting an evangelist who only did crusade evangelism. Let me be crystal clear. Evangelism is to be done THROUGH the local church, but not just IN the local church. Jesus command is still the same, "Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in."

As I am privileged to travel this nation, I see an increasing tendency to limit what is done for Christ to only that which is "inside" the four walls (six, eight, or more walls depending on the type architecture) of the church. Yet evangelistic ministry is to be done primarily OUTSIDE the walls of the church. Should not great support go to the one who is attempting to evangelize outside the comfort and safety of the local church? This past week, my heart was greatly stirred as I heard a dear pastor friend tell, with great joy, of one IN his church who was saved OUTSIDE his church at our last Washington DC crusade. That is Bible missions and evangelism. We are beggars (sinners) who have found a rich and abundant supply in Jesus Christ. We do no better than those Old Testament beggars in II Kings 7, if we merely are glad of what we have, but share it with no one else.

While there is no substitute for the local church, we must venture OUTSIDE the safety of our walls and into a world that desperately needs the Jesus that we have and enjoy. The gospel is the richest possession we possess. May we not, through selfishness or over-concern for our safety, hide Christ and the gospel from a dying world that needs Him and His forgiveness.

"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost." (II Cor. 4:3)

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