

The Story of Jesus

Published By Evangelist Van Billingsley

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Where Are You Sent?

"Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." -- John 20:21

Just as the Heavenly Father sent Jesus to the earth for a purpose, we all have been sent by Jesus for a purpose. These words echo some of what Jesus prayed in His high priestly prayer of John chapter seventeen about sending His disciples into the world after His departure. Whether you are sent to Africa, China, a Sunday school class at your church or to your co-workers and your neighborhood, you have been sent by Jesus. Are you doing what you have been sent to do?

The Evangelist

by Evangelist Van Billingsley

"And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:" -- Ephesians 4:11,12

There is much that can be said on this passage, but for sake of space and what is on my heart for this edition, I will focus on the evangelist.

I am afraid pride and jealousy are two prevalent sins among God's servants. It creates tensions, resentment, and even animosity between men of God all too often. We all deal with it, both in our own hearts and with the affects of it upon our own ministry efforts. I write this article with some anxiety and nervousness. This has been on my heart for a long time and I have put off writing about it, but God has not allowed me to get away from this topic.

The terms we use to describe ministries have been tossed to and fro in their usage and many abuse

and try to redefine those terms. The ministry of the evangelist is often a topic of contention. A short time ago I was part of a discussion among mostly pastors, who debated what an evangelist is or should be. Some tried to discredit the biblical position and redefine its purpose.

Years ago I found that many in the ministry want to sort preachers between being pastors or missionaries while avoiding the evangelists altogether. A missionary is a great thing. In a way, we are all to be missionaries, but I want to be careful to not make less of those who must have regular support

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Our Ministry News. . .



I am extremely excited about getting started with our tent ministry with church planters and struggling churches. We have held two tent meetings in the southeast and I am currently preparing

to head to South Dakota in my bus with the tent in tow. It has been hard work with a fair share of troubles and trials. Our first meeting was held in Alabama with a new work I help a pastor in getting started two years ago. Our second meeting with a church planter in North Carolina had to be cancelled due to circumstances with the pastor's schedule. That meeting was replaced with a combined church meeting between a struggling church and a young church in South Carolina. Our efforts were limited due to the short notice in scheduling, but God blessed in these meetings.

I do not have adequate support for this work, but I am going forward by faith. God will supply every need using His people. As

I write this, I believe I have about enough money for fuel to get to South Dakota. I am trusting God for the funds to continue while there and to work my way back to the southeast.

My trials have included discovering the trailer hitch was just about to break completely off as I was heading into Atlanta. God showed me the problem and I was able to unhitch and go back to the shop of a friend at the church I'd just left on a rainy Saturday night. I was back on the road at midnight thanks to Bro. Steve Kirkpatrick of Philadelphia Baptist in Calhoun, GA. Then during our second tent meeting, my bus died in the church parking lot, but God led me through the learning process of becoming a shade tree diesel mechanic and I was able to fix the engine.

I do not know what lies ahead, nor how God is going to supply the funds to go on, but I will just keep pressing on, for we walk by faith, not by sight!

A Servant of Christ,
Evangelist Van Billingsley

Our Support Needs:

Monthly Support

Our monthly support is divided into three stages: (#1 about reached!)

1. *Required amount to survive while doing full-time ministry and deputation.*
2. *Amount to begin traveling with tent ministry. (Raising funds as I go.)*
3. *Full support*

Small Bus + Motorhome Supplied and in use! **Tent and Trailer Supplied and in use!**

(...continued from cover) *The Evangelist* to live and do the work God has assigned to them, nor do I want to lesson those who uproot their wife and kids leaving their home and other family to give their lives to a foreign field. What I do want to point out is that "Missionary" is not a Bible term but the terms "Evangelist" and "Pastor" are. Those are two distinct Biblical roles of those God calls to the ministry.

The term "Missionary" is a good term

that helps Christians today understand the life and needs of those who are called and sent. It has become such a part of our vocabulary that it must be used to describe certain works and ministries. Though not a Bible term, its meaning is clear; It clearly refers to one on a mission and in our case that mission is the great commission!

All these are good terms and should be used to carefully and honestly describe various ministries to give understanding

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to those in the church concerning these various works. They should not be twisted and debated out of jealousy and pride, or disputed to establish some hierarchy, or pecking order among the brethren.

On the surface, some criticism can be understood. There are many who abuse the ministry creating cause for criticism. This is true for pastors, evangelists, and churches in general. Warning of false prophets Peter wrote, "And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of" (2 Peter 2:2). The problem is that we are all grouped together by those on the outside. A bigger problem is that we're all too often grouped together by those on the inside, mainly by others in the ministry. I've heard pastors criticize evangelists and evangelists criticize pastors all for things common to both groups. I've even heard singer's wives criticize evangelist's wives -- and that from the platform with microphone in hand! This ought not to be! Most notably, this discussion I mentioned recently being a part of involved some who wanted to discredit the position and ministry of what we generally think an evangelist to be, claiming they just lived the high life eating and staying in motels. The strange part about this was that these were pastors stating that they should be the ones staying in those hotels and preaching those revivals; in fact, those pastors were, and have been, doing just that, so I guess they should know. Several of these even stated that they thought the evangelists in the Bible were really more like the church planting missionaries we have today. In other words, they seemed to come to a consensus that the evangelist should be pastoring churches and the pastors should be out preaching revivals. It does not take a genius to figure out that something is getting a little twisted here.

Don't get me wrong; I do believe there are many who abuse the title of evangelist and that is what has caused this attitude

toward this calling. Paul told Timothy to do the work of an evangelist. When work is excluded from this ministry, it becomes something other than the true scriptural ministry of an evangelist. Also, any preacher who does not pastor a church is inclined to call himself an evangelist. Pastors "go into full time evangelism" every time a church runs them off, until they get another church. Try the life of a missionary evangelist. It is far different. And being a "home missionary" makes you like the proverbial "stepchild" missionary too. The rest of the country is not like the "Bible Belt." America is in sad shape and America needs God!

Another idea promoted was that all evangelists should have to pastor a church first. All I can say is do what God calls you to do, and be careful not to exclude a scriptural calling with man made qualifications. Remember, that's what the pharisees did (ordinances of man). The context of our text starts out saying, "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called" (Ephesians 4:1). The context reveals that we are called for a vocation. It is unscriptural to assert that in order to do the vocation you are called to, you must do another first.

I understand the problems with the practices referred to by these critics, but I have seen that in men who have pastored and who still pastor as well. Also, remember that no evangelist preaches in our churches without being invited by a "pastor." If a man comes in and tears up your church in a revival, it is not because you invited someone called an evangelist; it is because you invited that man.

When we qualify what we "think" an evangelist was in the Bible, I wonder how much we actually base that on the Bible. Timothy was told to do the work of an evangelist, and he was a partner to Paul and traveled from place to place, often being sent by Paul to certain areas to minister

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and history states that he pastored in Ephesus at one point. Timothy was never called an evangelist, just told to do the work of one, so we can't make him the scriptural epitome of an evangelist. Philip was called the evangelist. He went to Samaria and preached to them. He then went to meet the Ethiopian then, Acts 8:40 states, "But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea." The next and only time he is mentioned, he is called "the evangelist." Why would we think that an evangelist in the Bible would mean anything else. Scripturally, a missionary is generally either a pastor or an evangelist. If he is planting churches and staying to shepherd those people for any time period, he becomes a pastor. If he is doing what Philip did, he is an evangelist.

I must say that none of these criticisms have been made toward me (to my knowledge). I would not write about this publicly if they were. I pastored a mission church for ten years and worked alongside several pastors working in the local church. When those who are troubled by those who abuse the ministry criticize the office or position as a whole, they do not heal the damage done by those men; those men have their meetings; they have their following. What they do is cast a shadow on the efforts of those who do the biblical work of an evangelist.

Some even try to place unscriptural requirements on the evangelist concerning who he preaches to and what sermons he preaches, limiting him to just preaching salvation messages to the lost. They even

try to invent a totally unscriptural office or position and call him a revivalist. They base this on the meaning of the word formed from "ev" meaning good, and "angelos" meaning message or messenger. These are the same words from which we get "gospel" which means "good news." Winning the lost should certainly be a priority, but making this a limitation to an evangelist is totally unscriptural! When preaching on our text, Bob Jones Sr. said, "He gave these men to the body of Christ. He did not give them to sinners. The evangelist is given to the Body of Christ, the pastor is given to the Body of Christ. The Bible teaches, 'given to the body of Christ.' Every Christian is given to sinners. The pastor is suppose to win souls, the evangelist is suppose to win souls; the teacher is suppose to win souls; all of us are suppose to win souls. The Pastor, The Evangelist, and teachers are given to the saints, not the sinners." Speaking of the evangelist, he said, "His business is to stir up the saints. . . The pastor is to shepherd the sheep." He quoted much of this from hearing G. Campbell Morgan say the same things years earlier.

My Biblical view stated here does not mean an evangelist is one who has a career of filling speaking engagements! There is much work involved in the work of an evangelist. Whether we are pastors or evangelists, our purpose is not to become a celebrity but a servant!

Pastors: Remember, God also gave some evangelists. . . For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. Use what God gave you! --VB

Evangelist Van Billingsley

proclaiming

The Story of Jesus

-- A Missionary to our Homeland --

(334)644-4913 • (706)585-2026

1906 South First Avenue, Lanett, Alabama 36863

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Oakside Baptist Church - LaGrange, Georgia

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vanb@mindspring.com

www.sojministries.com

