

On Mission

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Do you ever notice that we like TV shows and Movies where the main characters are on a mission. Of course, the story may begin by trying to convince someone to come along on the mission. They show reluctance to go along, being tentative, seeming to be not interested, but for some reason they pack their bags or strap on their gun or grab their tools and head out. They are IN, and as time goes on totally committed to the mission at hand. One of my favorite movies growing up was The Great Escape with a star-studded cast, including Steve McQueen. The mission was to escape the Nazi prison camp- everyone pulled together their skills and expertise whether digging the tunnel, designing the rail system inside, getting rid of the dirt, designing the clothing that they would wear not to be detected outside, creating the fake travel documents, organizing the travel plans of each person as they went in different directions, scheduling the escape plan to avoid detection, and many other tasks. Each person was ON MISSION.

Here is what I have noticed in 50 years of ministry: Just because a person attends a church or does some tasks from time to time does not mean that person sees their involvement and presence as being ON MISSION.

In the church planting movement across this nation and around the world, there are people within the mother church who decide to be a part of the church plant in a new neighborhood-these people are said to be ON MISSION. They are expected not merely to attend the new church plant, but to be completely dedicated to fulfilling the mission of this new church-insuring that the planting of the church is successful. They are all IN and dedicated to the new MISSION.

Acts 13:1-13, READ I want you to notice the person called John in this text-he is mentioned twice:

- Various prophets and teachers were in the church at Antioch
- These positioned themselves for ministry by:
 - Ministering to the Lord. Meaning to serve at one's own expense.
 - Rom.15:27-since the Jews shared spiritual things with the Gentiles, the Gentiles should "minister" material things with the Jews (contribution for the poor saints in Jerusalem)
 - Heb.10:11, the priest who ministered before the altar day after day.
 - Fasting (showing their dedication to finding out the will and mission of God for them)

- The Holy Spirit “set apart” Barnabas and Saul (Paul) for this mission, the work He called them to do. And “sent out” by the Holy Spirit.
- They were given a send-off that emphasized that they were ON MISSION-fasted, prayed and laid hands on them.
- 13:5, John (Mark) went and is called “a helper.” Meaning an assistant. No indication that John was going to preach or teach-he was going along to help.
- 13:13, John (Mark) “left them and returned to Jerusalem.” After about a 175 mile boat trip on the Mediterranean Sea-actually Mark was about 3-400 miles away from Antioch, where they began. He was a long way from Jerusalem. Likely this was a lot farther than he had ever traveled, and he was ready to go home.

Later Paul and Barnabas decided to begin a mission.

Acts 15:36-41 READ-The sharp division

- Second Missionary Journey
- Barnabas wants to take John Mark-Paul doesn't
- Paul's interpretation: “deserted.” (NASB) or simply “departed.” Paul obviously lost confidence in John Mark because of his past behavior.
- Barnabas (son of encouragement) decides to pursue a NEW MISSION so as to take John Mark with him (They were cousins). Paul took Silas and continued on the Mission assigned by the Holy Spirit.
- Eventually it all worked out: 2 Tim.4:11-Mark became “profitable” for the ministry.

Called, Appointed, Stewards, Set Apart

- Acts 13:2-“the work to which I have **called** them.”
- Acts 14:23 “**Appointed** elders in every church.”
- 1 Cor.4:2, “In this case, moreover, it is required of **stewards** that one be found trustworthy.”
- Acts 13:2, “**Set apart** for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”

Application:

- Too many “at large” Christians-deciding to serve wherever they chose, instead of being committed to a specific work, ministry, and church.
- Too many independent contractors taking on temporary assignments
- Too many “passengers” on the ship instead of everyone seeing themselves as crew with a vested interest in seeing the ship arrive safely at its destination.
- Too many “customers or consumers” being served within the local church, and not enough waiters, servers, employees committed to the success of the local church.

What does it mean to be “ON MISSION”? in the local church?

- It means you are on the team and have an essential role to play
- It means that when you are there and do not participate everything suffers
- It means you are committed to the group to accomplish the mission God has given us, and that it is just as much your responsibility to see it accomplished as anyone else.
- It means you have a job description (a member of the body) and that you are needed, wanted, an essential worker in this economy of the church. It means God has assigned you your place in the Body of Christ, and that your place is just as important as anyone else.

Calling every member of Central to commit to being ON MISSION. In fact I want to encourage you to respond to the text you will receive after this message with two words “ON MISSION” indicating that you are fully committed to the ministry here at Central in fulfilling our Mission Statement: To lead others to have an authentic and growing relationship with God the Father through His Son Jesus Christ.