

WHAT MAKES A MISSION A RESCUE MINISTRY?

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"What God has joined together, let not man put asunder." (Mark 10:9)

"The visible church exists in the world, under the providence of God, for the purpose of proclaiming the Gospel to all people, and winning to Christ from among all nations those who are His elect. Christ's great commission given to the church at the end of His life on earth, constitutes the program for the church until Christ visibly comes again." (*A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion* - Dr. James Oliver Buswell, Jr.)

I believe it is very important if you and I are going to communicate to the community, that our ministry and vision of goals must be done in the light of the local church with whom we are identifying ourselves.

"The relationship between the Church and the Mission may be illustrated by the relationship between a lighthouse and a lifesaving station. The lighthouse warns ships away from danger - it lights up the entrances into the harbors. Its work is preventive. It guides strong ships well-manned and well-equipped. The lifesaving station, on the other hand, deals with the shipwrecked, delivers from actual or impending calamity. 'Let the lower lights be burning.' When ships are close to the shore, the lighthouse, lifting its light high into the sky, does not mark out the shoreline. 'Brightly beams our Father's mercy from His lighthouse (the Church), but to us (the Mission) He gives the keeping of the lights along the shore.'" (The Rescue Mission Manual - William E. Paul, D.D.)

I. If the rescue mission is to function properly in its appointed relationship with the local church, we will recognize that:

1. Our appointment to service is the same--our Heavenly Father.
2. Our object of affection is the same-- The Lord Jesus Christ.
3. Our spiritual resources are the same--The Holy Spirit.
4. Our authoritative message is the same--The Scriptures.

II. I believe that before we can go further into communicating to the community the vision and goals of our ministry, we must evaluate, examine and judge ourselves in the light of the divine Calling, the Divine Witness and the Divine Life. (I Timothy 4:1)

1. Take heed to the minister.
2. Take heed to the ministry.
3. Take heed to the scripture from which the ministry evolved.

4. Beware as to the representation of our ambassadorship to Christ and of our outreach to His blood-bought church.

III. Our responsibility to communicate is a divine responsibility. (Ephesians 3:8-12)

This is all wrapped up into the challenge and in the person of Jesus Christ who fulfilled this passage and is reincarnated in our lives that our ministry may be to His satisfaction and in the will of God as found in Isaiah 61:1-3.

Yet through careful examination of that which is found in Luke 4:18 & 19, the emphasis is placed upon the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives, enabling us to fulfil this in all love. This is the ministry to which we have been called, to show forth the love of God as found in Christ, exemplified in our lives and proclaimed with our mouths and believed with our hearts.

IV. Some practical and simple ways of communicating your ministry to the community

1. Ever inform the local church.
2. Do everything above board.
3. Never exaggerate your needs.
4. Always be visible and make yourself available.
5. Function well within your ministry. You too, are an epistle read and known by all men.
6. Be concerned about the opinion of your clients.
7. Visit the local pastor.
8. Have ample material on hand for missionary conferences and seek to be involved.
9. In your film or slide presentation, make sure your film or slides are up-to-date.
10. Make sure that your appearance is appropriate for the occasion.

V. Keep abreast of new problems that may be confronting your community. The community needs to see your involvement in endeavoring to solve social problems.

Without question, there ought to be concern about the AIDS crisis, the breakdown in families, men's hearts failing them for fear, those that are bound by narcotics-- whatever the problem, the Mission needs to be on top of it.

The evaluation of your Mission ministry needs to be reviewed periodically, for what was done a few years ago, may be obsolete today, though the message remains the same. You should be aware of keeping activities up-to-date and act accordingly.

In closing:

1. Function as a RESCUE station.
2. Perform your ministry in the power of the Holy Spirit.
3. Make your work known through the newspaper, radio, and television. Make your publications of top quality.
4. Your performance--your appearance, what you may have said, may the church as well as the Lord be able to say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."
5. Be willing to pick up sticks in order to have an acceptable ministry. (Acts 28:1-6)

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