



Ultimate Sending Agency

Colin Stoodley, QLD church planter, digs into what it means to follow Jesus' example of being a delegate, messenger or one sent by God.

The New Testament uses a word 'apostolos' to describe the people of God who are sent.

It's a word that describes someone who is a 'delegate' or 'messenger' or 'one who has been sent'. This word is used 79 times in the whole of the New Testament and the vast majority of them, 28 in fact, are found in Acts.

This is the hint that Acts will give us a picture of what individuals and communities of faith look like when they live like delegates, messengers or ones sent by God. Not long after the commission from Jesus (Matthew 28) and the Holy Spirit is poured out (Acts 2), the living as delegates, messengers or sent ones begins. It's not a story of triumph and mastery, nor endless effectiveness. It is a story of engagement and obedience sustained through all manner of difficulty, opposition and physical struggle and empowered by the ongoing work of the

Holy Spirit in and among the people of God. And what's even more incredible is that this was how every disciple of Jesus lived... not just the Apostles, everyone!

So this is why I use the term to describe the Church as 'God's Missionary' We, as a whole and as individuals, are commissioned by God to be His delegates, messengers and ones who are sent out to the world that He loves. Our job is to share the message with people who don't already know of the peace, love and forgiveness that is found in Christ.

Consider these stories of Jesus for a moment.

Think about Him in John 4 when He found Himself the delegate of His Father to the woman who had come from her village to draw water; think about Him in Luke 19 when He got into a conversation with a tax-collector and as the delegate of His Father brought salvation to that man's house; what about when He blessed the children in Luke 18 as the delegate of His Father!?

See what I mean?

In John 8, as the delegate of His Father, Jesus forgives sins in a seemingly impossible context. In Luke 8, as the Father's sent one, He brings true freedom to a man so oppressed by evil spirits that he lives in a cemetery.

And in Luke 7, as God's sent one, He ministered to an outcast and sinner, bringing wholeness and life to her.

In all these ways we see our Lord live as the delegate, messenger and sent one of God. When those who followed Him, followed His example, they too lived out their work as the delegate, messenger and sent one of the Father. This is for all of us!

And then Jesus prayed for us.

"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me." John 17:20-21

We are His missionaries! We are His delegates, messengers and sent ones in the earth. That, for His glory, many may hear and be invited to life in Jesus and also discover that they too are called to be His delegates, messengers and sent ones.

These are the hallmarks of a truly apostolic movement.