

How My Ministry Works

Written by K B Napier

Friday, 13 February 2015 14:42

Some have wondered *why* I do what I do, in the *way* that I do it. Let me explain, giving my own beliefs as to how my ministry works. I perceive that other ministries have a very similar story.

No man can elect himself to the office of evangelist or teacher or pastor. It is with sadness that I sometimes hear from people who call themselves 'evangelists' or 'bishops', without any kind of corroboration. No church or Bible college can 'make' or ordain someone to an office, either; they may only confirm what God has already done amongst them. Colleges and churches can identify who has a ministry, but they cannot *elect* someone to have a ministry. Personally, for example, I find it very odd indeed when hundreds of men come out of their colleges with 'Reverend' attached to their name, yet they have no pastorate or calling, nor proof they are ministers! Rather, this is a proof that they have no ministry with an 'office'.

God chooses who will be pastors and teachers, etc. Their role will usually be shown to the local church by the person's character and work. That is, they will prove themselves to be teachers, pastors, etc. (Note that a pastor is an elder, or presbyter, or bishop. The names are interchangeable). Another sad note is introduced here: when genuinely called men are passed-over because those who think they have spiritual oversight hold to human views of who should, and should not, be in office. I have witnessed this many times.

On one occasion, as I have said elsewhere, an arrogant local church (well known in the UK) 'ordained' a man as a 'teaching elder'. He was going to another locality to pastor a church. But, because he had not been to Bible college, the church he was leaving said he could not be called a 'pastor'! Yet, the very same church ordained *another* man, some years later, as 'pastor', and even proclaimed him 'Reverend', for doing exactly the same thing! Yet, he had never been to college, either. It is all so sad, and highlights human arrogance. (And, anyway, a pastor *is* an elder!)

This was not as bad, however, as the self-elected, untaught 'Reverend', who bought his title from an American title-factory and then put it on his cards! He wrote to churches everywhere offering to speak. When speaking he used an absurd puppet, and his theology was, well, invented and bizarre. But, folks accepted him because of the 'Reverend' tag! He had no calling at all and, listening to his Bible teachings, he was also unsaved. It shows how so many Christians can be duped by a claim.

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God does not just choose who will be given these offices. He also gives a variety of gifts to enable the man to act out the office he has been given, and the Holy Spirit guides him on every occasion he speaks or acts. At least, that is how it ought to be. When the man is true to both the calling and the enabling gifts, he is acting from God.

In my own case, my office in the public ministry is teacher and pastor. What makes a God-given teacher different? Well, anyone can read scripture and theology. That is how universities churn out many theologians. Listen to most preachers and you will hear churned-out material with no real force or aim. Two things are missing – God’s calling to the task, and the gifts. That goes for Christians with *different* gifts, too. (We are all given gifts, but not all are put into office).

When I prepare, say, a Bible study, it is not just a case of reading scripture and regurgitating the texts. Nor is it sufficient to simply rephrase what I read (the usual practice of many preachers). A lot of teachers and pastors read a multitude of works by other Christians and mix their thoughts in the form of a ‘sermon’. I gave up that practice long ago and now rely on God. (No, this is not arrogance; I simply found the Holy Spirit to be more reliable and direct). On very rare occasions I do not seem to have an isolated interpretation and might look at solid Christian works for confirmation, which, at times, provide an answer, but I do not read them routinely in order to get a ‘message’. Only God can give me a message for others.

So, I read the plain text. Then I see what the original language says and interpret according to the meanings given by the Holy Spirit, though after years of doing this work I generally have a very good idea as to what the interpretation is. However, I do not become complacent and always search afresh. Then, I apply the text to today’s situation.

In almost every case, every study or article is ‘aimed’ at someone who reads or hears it, without my knowledge. It usually refers to a modern day problem or situation. I never tackle ‘any old problem’; I only look at what God burdens me with. That is why, at times, the application is full of current problems (such as homosexuality, because of its present world dominance). This occurred recently, but then swung back to another aspect of today – how God gives power and glory to the faithful. I was not trying to ‘balance’ what I said; it is how the Holy Spirit prompted me.

Many applications will contain explicit warnings about issues affecting all Christians. Sometimes, I have to speak of things without knowing who they apply to, or why. It is a mystery to myself as well as to others! But, it strikes home for someone out there, and the Holy Spirit

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has achieved His aim. The message can sometimes hit home in a spectacular way, without my immediate knowledge.

Because I must be given both interpretation and application by the Holy Spirit, I never go ahead with anything until I know what I must say. Often, this is instant. At other times I must wait. On some occasions I must say nothing. Indeed, a few times I have not done a study, for example, because I have been given nothing to say.

In all truth I can claim that what I say comes from God. Of course, those I speak to must check it all out themselves. Like all men, I am prone to mistake and sin! Even Paul admits to that! As a minister I *expect* others to listen carefully and apply what is said to their own lives. Not because I say it, but because of the One Who gives me what to say. I am only a messenger.

I have also noticed that a big part of my ministry is to be a watchman. I can assure you this is not a part-time occupation. Nor is it a socially-acceptable position. Look at the descriptions and you will find people behind the city walls wanting to sleep. When the watchman sees an enemy coming he shouts a warning, but the people continue to sleep, shouting at the watchman to shut up! This part of my work can, at times, be frustrating, but I try always to keep a grip on this, for only God can convince the people to wake up and take a stand. This task is very tiring, because a watchman must stay awake.

Because I feel this calling deep in my soul I have very little interest in being ambitious in a worldly sense. It would be wonderful to have sufficient money to clear my owings, for example, but the fear of God within prevents me from placing much store on the desire. What is the point of me gaining the world and losing my soul? What is the point of getting what is needed, if it prevents me from doing God's will? It is too frightening to contemplate.

It is often assumed by 'outsiders' that I get annoyed when people do not listen or follow what I say, making me out to be a kind of dictator. This is not how I see it. I see it this way: if what I say is from God (and people must check this is so from scripture), then they have no option but to obey it. They are not obeying me, but God! This is exactly what Paul says in scripture. As the messenger, I am just as tied to what God says as those I give the message to. I am no different, because I am also a sinner saved by grace, with the 'old man' struggling to take precedence within!

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So, what I say at any one time is what I honestly know God is telling me to say. Sometimes it seems repetitive... but would you tell God not to keep repeating His warnings to Pharaoh in Exodus? He had His reasons for saying the same thing all the time. If I repeat, it is because I believe God is telling me to do so. Very often I say things I would prefer not to talk about, but I must say them. Remember, too: what is a repeat to you, might be original to others, who might not have heard the previous statements! God has His aims. It is up to His servants to simply pass on His messages. Anyway, hope this explanation helps. You are most welcome to ask questions if you wish.

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