



THE FIELD:

WHERE IS THE MISSION FIELD?

The field: this can be a volatile and passionate place. Church is a battle ground for the field. We all have ministry and we all think our ministry is important. Do you have passion and compassion for other ministry? Of course I do Patrick, it's all God's work. That is so dishonest, shame on you. What if a church rated the ministry and decided yours was at the bottom of importance? Inside your heart what would be going on? Should I ask your spouse or best friend and then tell your staff what they said? I know what ministry means inside, I have been there.

Matthew 13:38 "The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the people of the kingdom. The weeds are the people of the evil one." That chapter should be humbling. We are the good seed but it's Jesus who spreads the seed and the angels who

harvest. What is our role? We are to be good seed. The problem is we have taken our role in ministry the wrong way. We create ministry; we chose the field unto which we minister; and we decide who is our focus. That's ministry. The problem is all that stuff. It is God's plan and Gods will, not ours. We are to be good seed.

If you think I am kidding then read **John 6:44 "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day."** Is it possible that God has provided you a field to be good seed in, yet you have gone other places? Maybe God gave you a certain person you decided did not fit your churches mission, yet here they are in your face. I know it's hard but this field is not yours to decide or command. You are just little old good seed.

Below are seven questions about the field. Please don't just scoff at this. Are you really being good seed in the place God has given you, or are you creating ministry in places you feel comfort and safety? Is ministry your ministry? One of the reasons we fight in church is because of ownership: talk about it.

1. SHOULD WE EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED?

God always does things we don't expect. Personally I think he gets a kick out of it. Moses and David certainly did not expect the lives they led. Did Paul plan his trips? What I loved about Paul is his relationship with the Spirit. Several times he said he was going to go this way, yet, the Spirit blocked him, and he ended up going another way. The best part is that Paul was cool with it. Ministry is not yours. If God chose a different path or a different field would you be cool with it? Most time in church leadership where not cool with it. Did the church leaders in Jesus day see Jesus coming? Has God changed your plans? How do you react? What needs to change in you?

2. WE RELATE WITH THE CHURCH BUT DO WE RELATE WITH THE WORLD?

Paul goes into the world to preach. He is in the field. Our problem these days is our definition of the field. If we were honest the field is overseas. Oh we say it's in our community, but the church does not really exist in the community. The other day I posed a question about who is to blame for people not going to church. A friend said the lost use Christians as an excuse. Nice answer but not reality. Christians have been less than stellar in church. As the church, we believe deeply we are not corrupt. It would be hard to relate to sinners if we think we're perfect. Patrick I know I'm not perfect. I hear that a lot, yet our actions speak louder. The other day I delivered a parcel to a naked Goth woman. Can I relate to the world? Can many pastors? Talk about it.

3. SHOULD WE KNOW SOMEBODY BEFORE WE TELL THEM SOMETHING WE KNOW?

In Acts 19 Paul meets some men who are disciples of John. They know half the story. Paul fills them in on the Jesus part. Paul knows these men well enough to give them more information. It says they accepted it. We ask people to come to church, but in the real world they don't have a clue about you. In the old days yes, they had heard about God, but these days no. So here is my thought. Should you experience the real world? What does that mean? Jesus did, Paul did, and today Christians don't. What's wrong with this picture?

4. DO CHRISTIANS HAVE A TWISTED VIEW OF LOVE?

Wrong Patrick we are love! Wrong again! Christians know about love but they don't really love like God. Let me illustrate. 1 Corinthians 13 talks about love. 1 John 4:8 says God is love. We can quote a ton of love scriptures, but is that love? A pastor said to

me “we should just love them.” Is it love when God tells Jesus “die for them”? Is it love when Jesus tells the Pharisees they are white washed tombs? Maybe Jesus was wrong: we should have just loved them. Love is a lot like Ecclesiastics 3. There is a time for anything. Love can be tough love or passionate love when the time is right. My point is that we need to be honest with the world about love and about the gospel. It’s begins with our view of love doesn’t it.

5. IS CHURCH IN TROUBLE IN THE FIELD?

I know many denominations that are in trouble in the mission field. For a hundred years we have done missions badly. We tried to make them like us rather than letting Jesus work in their lives and in their understanding. I know that because most countries won’t let missionaries in, but they will let in workers. How many missionaries expose their faith in the country they are in? They can’t and you know it. It’s the evil governments right? This is not a time for your head to be in the sand or up your donkey. The church is in trouble in the field. In North America we don’t engage the field. We tolerate it. Well that field is rejecting us as we have rejected them. We are in trouble.

6. DON’T WE NEED TO BE CHRISTIAN BUT ALSO ONE OF THEM?

Who is one of them? It’s people silly. You are still a person last time I checked. J Vernon McGee asks the question “we avoid sin but inside we wish we could.” The problem with ‘them’ is that they love sin. The problem with church is we talk dirty about them and their sin as if we hate it. Do we really? If I had a dime for every sinful Christian I have met I’d be rich. Is it because all Christians are sinners? The simple answer is yes. They are, yes they will be, and yes they will die that way. Why, because they are people

silly. The tough part about being Christian is straddling the church and the world. Do you believe you can fulfill the great commission and not be one of them? I hate to burst your bubble but Jesus became one of us to relate to us, Do you?

7. THE FIELD IS GODS TO WIN NOT YOURS.

Time and time again we have tried to control the field. You are good seed and nothing more. If God changed your field is that ok with you? Acts 19:13-16 is us in the field these days. We are getting the snot kicked out of us. Why? We don't go in the Spirit anymore. Meaning we are not led by the Spirit. Patrick yes we are, I take offence to that! Cool but we don't go in the Spirit. I know because of the fruit. Today's ministry is fruit? Wow what low expectations of God you have. I know a pastor that was ecstatic about 8 people being saved in a year. 8? Wow that is a lot of fruit in 365 days isn't it? Again the field is Gods to win and the sooner we realize that the better fruit we'll have.