



The "Call" Series



Universal Call
To Ministry



Pastor Stan Lubeck

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THE UNIVERSAL CALL TO MINISTRY

Romans 11:29 for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable. NIV

The call to salvation and the call to the ministry are one and the same!

The nation of Israel was called to be a blessing to all people of the world and yet they chose to enjoy the blessings of God while refusing to carry out their end of the deal.

Exodus 19:5-8 Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, 6 you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites." 7 So Moses went back and summoned the elders of the people and set before them all the words the LORD had commanded him to speak. 8 The people all responded together, "We will do everything the LORD has said." So Moses brought their answer back to the LORD. NIV

It was a conditional promise. If they accepted God's call, then they would be His people. The condition was that they would be priests and a blessing to all peoples of the earth.

Though they verbally agreed, they never carried out what they promised God they would do!

They became a "RELIGIOUS PEOPLE". They settled for the presence of God in worship, and did not carry out the mission that God had given to them. They saw that God wanted to bless them, but they failed to do their part and be a blessing to others. They became just like the prodigal son's older brother. They were self-righteous and did not care for anyone else. Their thought was, "what about us, pay attention to us, throw a party for us, we are the center of attention...".

So, instead of becoming a people on mission from the King of Kings, they settled for becoming a religious people.

God called them to be a kingdom of priests.

What does it mean to be a priest? _____

A priest is a person who represents God to the ungodly.

Therefore God called a "New Israel" to fulfill God's mission of redemption in the world (Matthew 21:43 "Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit. NIV).

This mission is communicated in unity with the salvation experience...

2 Corinthians 5:17-20 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. NIV

1 Peter 2:5 you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. NIV

1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. NIV

Something is considered "HOLY" when it is "set apart for God's special use."

When it comes to the priesthood of the believer, the Christian not only has direct access to the throne of God in prayer, but is called to be a blessing to the entire world. This is INCARNATIONAL ministry. It is the way God desires to carry out His ministry. It is through people like you and I that God is choosing to reveal Himself to a lost world.

How many members do we have in our church? How many ministers?

When I said to Him, "I give you my life", it meant that I desired to carry out what God has called me to do. In my heart I want to obey Him and set up His kingdom composed of those who also want to obey Him.

Isn't it kind of crazy that we have to spend so much of our time and energy coming up with ways to entice members into a program of bible study and Christian development?

Why do you think this is? _____

I cannot imagine a college football coach saying in a soft voice, "Would you players please come to practice next week. Last week we didn't have enough come out in order to scrimmage. I don't want to offend anyone, if you don't mind being inconvenienced, we could be a better team if we practice a bit before the game this weekend." That coach wouldn't last one season. These players are volunteers for the most part, but they are learning the disciplines of begin professionals. Every good coach knows the value of inspiration, and hard work as ingredients for success on the gridiron.

Vince Lombardi - Practiced Lombardi time. If you did not show up at least 15 minutes early, then you were late.

It is assumed by the coach that the reason the players signed up was that they wanted to play to win, and were willing to make whatever sacrifices were needed to do so.

The coach does not have to take attendance each week of who was there. The players check in to communicate if they are sick or going to miss due to some emergency... For football players to show more commitment to football than many Christians show to the mission of God, is an embarrassment to the Lord God Almighty.

For those who are called of God, spiritual growth, development and equipping for the ministry are not optional.

What makes a great team? _____

THE CALL TO SALVATION AND THE CALL TO THE MINISTRY ARE ONE AND THE SAME CALL.

The pastor is not the hired gun. In the old west, when there were outlaws coming into town, the mayor might choose to hire a skilled gunman who would run the bad guys out of town. Some churches think of the pastor in this way. They think that the pastor is paid to do all ministry.

Key: You and I cannot pay some one else to do what God has called us to do! Yes we are to honor God with our resources, but that is the easy part. God wants us to honor him with everything we have. Have you ever thought of tithing your time?

What kind of impact would be made if every believer was consciously aware of being a minister of God throughout the week? What difference would it make when a tragedy happens in the place of employment?

In a church where they have made it a habit to call the leaders "Lay Pastors", a funny thing happened at the hospital. When the Senior Pastor showed up to call on a church member, the hospital nurse commented, "how many ministers do you have in your church? You are the 10th minister to show up to see this person..."



Shared Ministry by Joe R Stacker and Bruce Grubbs:

- 1) All believers are ministers called to serve Christ.
- 2) Distinctions among believers are according to function and role, not rank.
- 3) Ministry is the work of the whole church and the responsibility and privilege of each believer.
- 4) Pastoral ministry is the enabling, equipping, guiding function necessary to make the church effective in ministry.
- 5) Pastoral ministers should relate to each other and all believers as equals before God and in service to Christ.
- 6) Pastoral ministers accomplish their work best when they work as servant-leaders.
- 7) Prominence, authority, and influence come from faithfulness in service not position, role, or function.
- 8) Ministry, both that of the church and of pastoral ministers, is most effective and fulfilling when conducted according to spiritual gifts and motivated by the Holy Spirit.
- 9) Relationships among believers and between believers and pastoral ministers are best defined and expressed through covenants.
- 10) Ministry effectiveness of both the church and pastoral ministers is evaluated by both qualitative and quantitative standards.
- 11) Interdependency is the nature of the church's relationships both among believers and with other bodies.

Which principle is most ignored in the church today? _____

Which is least understood? _____

In the past, when we have called on the laity for a ministry, in almost every instance, it was for a ministry that was expressed in the church. It was almost as if our major concern was not to penetrate the world with the reconciling gospel. It sometimes seemed that our major concern was to keep the institution functioning. We did not even consider opportunities to be used of God out in the marketplace, and school systems. Teaching the illiterates to read is an outstanding opportunity for outreach. Adopting a foreign exchange student. Adopting a minor league pro ball player who is away from home for the season. Adopting

families from other countries, who have moved into the neighborhood.

1 Corinthians 12:7 Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. NIV

1 Peter 4:10 Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. NIV

Exploring the possibilities:

1) Like Paul, go for the open door.

- 2 Corinthians 2:12 2 Now when I went to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ and found that the Lord had opened a door for me, NIV
- Colossians 4:3 And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. NIV
- 1 Corinthians 16:9 because a great door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many who oppose me. NIV

Though at times it may be Satan who is closing the door...

- 1 Thessalonians 2:18 For we wanted to come to you—certainly I, Paul, did, again and again—but Satan stopped us. NIV

2) Use your spiritual gift where you are.

3) What do you have a passion for?

4) Get feedback from those who know you best.

5) Each gift is used to serve the body of Christ. Get started serving, and this will help you begin to define specifically what God wants you to do...

Conclusion: God is more concerned with what you are than with what you do. Like a branch that is abiding in the vine, where the fruit is a natural product, so should the fruit of your ministry be when you are functioning according to the spiritual gifts given by God. There is always the pain of pruning that God performs. This means that being in the middle of the will of God does not mean that life is going to be easy necessarily. If you will be concerned to take care of the depth of your relationship with God, He will take care of the breadth of your ministry in the world.

