



Preach and Heal: Mission Mandates for the Twelve in Luke 9:1-6, and the Twenty-First Century Mission Strategies of Selected Mission Agencies in Nigeria

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Abstract

Jesus was strategic in his earthly ministry by going to places to preach and heal. He went about proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and making the sick, afflicted, and oppressed whole again in their body, soul, and spirit. For continuity and the growth of the church, Jesus raised his disciples and gave them the mandates and strategies to go, preach and heal. This study explores the missionary mandates and strategies given to the Twelve in Luke 9:1-6 and their relevance to contemporary mission strategies in the twenty-first century. The passage in Luke 9 outlines Jesus' instructions to his disciples, emphasizing the dual mandate to "preach the kingdom of God" and "heal the sick." These foundational directives not only shaped the early Christian mission but also provide critical insights for modern missionary endeavors. This researcher selected five prominent mission agencies in Nigeria, reviewed their mandates and mission strategies to see their alignment with Luke 9:1-6. This paper argues that while the mission strategies in Luke 9:1-6 can be modified, the integration of preaching and healing remains fundamental for effective mission work, as it addresses both the spiritual and physical needs of people.

Keywords: Preach, Heal, Mission Mandates, Mission Strategies, Mission Agencies, The Twelve, Twenty-First Century

Introduction

Jesus called the Twelve and at a point he sent them to preach and to heal as recorded in Luke 19:1-6. He gave the mandates and the strategies to fulfill the mandates. These Twelve preached, healed and the church grew. In Acts 2 over three thousand were converted through Peter's preaching. While in Acts 3, at the Beautiful Gate, a disabled man was raised. Such instances of preaching and healing continued, and these resulted in the church growth. *This research is an attempt to understand the mandates and the strategies used by the Twelve as instructed by Jesus and compare with the twenty-first-century*



strategies for church growth. Are the mandates and the strategies in Luke 19:1-6 the same as the twenty-first-century's strategies? What are the differences in the strategies and what are the factors responsible for the differences? What is the primacy of preaching and healing to mission? These questions are answered through the interpretation of Luke 9:1-6 using hermeneutics principles, and review of vision, mission, and strategies of five selected prominent mission agencies in Nigeria.

In Luke account chapter 9, Jesus called those the author referred to as "the Twelve" together. Luke used the Markan designation "the Twelve" but does not employ the Matthean phrase "the twelve disciples" or "twelve apostles" to describe those who were called by Jesus to be sent out to proclaim the kingdom and heal those who were sick (van Aarde, 1999). van Aarde (1999) argues that "there is no historical evidence that Jesus was responsible for the concept "the Twelve" or the phenomenon "the apostles." However, it is generally understood from the gospels that "the Twelve" refers to the twelve disciples Jesus called to be with him and that he might send them out (Mark 3:14). According to Luke 6:14-16, these are Simon Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called Zealot, Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot.

Jesus called the Twelve and they had been following him for quite some time on missions. He had taught them kingdom principles by his teaching, preaching, and performing miracles. But a time came that Jesus changed his strategy "from being the one on mission to being the one making disciples who go on mission" (Hoffman, November 24, 2013) In Luke 9:1-6 we have an instance where Jesus commissioned the Twelve to go on the mission to preach and heal.

The Mandate to Preach

The author of the book of Luke reported in chapter 9:2 that Jesus sent out the Twelve to "preach the kingdom of God." The first mandate was to preach, and the content of what to preach was the kingdom of God. The English word *preach* or *proclaim* is translated from the Greek word *Kerusso*. "Luke 9:6 uses 'proclaim the gospel' (*euangelizomai*), but in 9:2 Luke uses 'proclaim' (*kerusso*) to describe their commissioning by Jesus" (Farrell, 1997). Writing about the Kingdom of God in Jesus' Message, Leon Siwecki (2019) sees Jesus in the Gospel as the representative (Lk 17:20-21), the revealer (Mt 11:25-26), the champion



(Mk 3:27), the initiator (Mt 11:12), and the instrument (Mt 12:28) of the Kingdom of God. Jesus was concerned not only with salvation but with the kingdom of God as the definitive vision (Thinane, 2024). The kingdom of God is paramount to Jesus' sending out the Twelve to preach. Coming into the kingdom of God by the recipients of the gospel preached is the goal of the mandate to preach for the Twelve. The terminology and imagery of the Kingdom of God is central to the whole of Jesus's ministry and his announcement of the good news of salvation (Bredenhof, 2021). In carrying out the mandate to preach, Rinawaty and Hannas reiterate that Christian missionaries should master preaching material, various preaching types and techniques, and thereby the sermons become dynamic, biblical and meet everyone's needs.

The Mandate to Heal

When Jesus gave the mandate to heal to the Twelve, he used the Greek word *iaomai* which means to heal or cure (Kittel & Friedrich, 1985). *Iaomai* was the healing approach Jesus used almost exclusively. This was instantaneous miracle healing which involves a release of divine healing power and is often coupled with casting out demons (Virkler & Virkler, 2014). Hill (2007) raises some questions in her attempt to formulate a New Testament theology of health, sickness, and healing. She asks, "What does the Bible have to say about health, sickness, and healing? Can believers expect health and if necessary, receive healing?" She argues that the New Testament writers' theology of health, sickness and healing was shaped by the Old Testament theology, and "further molded by their by their contact with Jesus and by their personal reflections on the implications of the New Covenant." When God finished the creation, he made an assessment and saw that everything was very good. Sickness and death were not part of the "very good," but they came because of sin and the Fall (Hill, 2007). However, God is sovereign to heal all kinds of sicknesses and diseases. Reviewing the healing ministry of Jesus in the Synoptics, Hill (2007) gives the following summary:

Jesus was a healer and exorcist. Healings and exorcisms were considered an indication of spiritual power over Satan or the effects of sin. Jesus' disciples also performed exorcisms and healings. Jesus did not follow any one pattern for his healing ministry. The result of an



attempted healing was always a success, regardless of the means used. His healing ministry evoked in the crowds a sense of admiration and wondering whether Jesus was indeed the awaited Messiah. Jesus' ministry of healing was considered by the Synoptists to be the fulfillment of the Old Testament.

Healing can be medical or spiritual. Medical healing by medications or herbs can be called *healing through medicine* while the spiritual healing that comes in the name of Jesus Christ by prayer, anointing of the sick person or laying of hands can be called *healing beyond medicine* or *healing without medicine*. Spiritual healing was performed by Jesus without medication, and it was always beyond what can be explained by science through experiments or laboratory tests. This kind of healing mandate Jesus gave the twelve to go preach and perform. Kee (2005) asserts that from Jesus' time, "healing is not only the symbol, but also the substance of God's redemption of his people."

Spiritual healing was performed by the Twelve and other disciples in various forms through the name of Jesus Christ. Among the various forms of healing by the Twelve were Peter's, who spoke to the disabled beggar at the Beautiful Gate, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk" (Acts 3:6). Peter held the man's right hand and helped him, and he became healed, standing strong on his feet. At another instance, Peter's shadow brought healing to many who were sick. In Samaria, as Philip proclaimed the gospel, people listened, and the sick became healed (Acts 8:4-8). The mode of healing in the Gospels is simple and involves no empirical therapy (Kittel & Friedrich, 1985).

Medicine, miracles, and magic are the three identified means of healing sicknesses and disease. According to Kee (2005), medicine involves "diagnosis of human ailments and prescription based on a combination of theory about and observation of the body, its functions and malfunctions." Zeff (1997) explains that in the mainstream medicine the diagnosis and treatment of disease is done by a medical doctor who determines the specific nature and name of the disease before the application of various tools which are provided by science and experience to treat a condition. Whereas, naturopathic medicine emphasizes health restoration rather than disease treatment by helping the patient to create conditions for good health. Naturopathic medicine



encourages active involvement of the patient rather than the physician. Healing is operationally defined by Egnew (2005) as “the personal experience of the transcendence of suffering.” It is argued that there is no agreement among academics as to what exactly the process of healing entails. However, some elements of healing are identified by Szawarska (2020) as follows, healing actively engages the patient, it is multidimensional, creative, meaning making and it leads to restoration of balance and the acceptance of status quo by the patient.

Healing Authority of Jesus

Botha (1996) asserts that “Jesus of Nazareth, the historical person, has power over unclean spirits and a variety of illnesses, and with his power he restores people to their place in the community.” Jesus surpassed the traditional healers of the first century by his miraculous healing power that healed the sick such as the woman with twelve-year hemorrhage who could not be healed by all the physicians she consulted despite spending all she had. At the healing of a demon-possessed man in Matthew 12:28, Jesus was accused of using demonic power by the Pharisees to heal, but he asserted that his healing is by the Spirit of God. Shin (2023) declares that Jesus’ “healing ministry in the Mediterranean world was different from the sorcerers and magicians, it was based on his messianic ministry and the power of God’s Holy Spirit rather than on general medical methods.” This same authority Jesus gave to his disciples to heal in his name. Although no particular case of healing was mentioned in Luke 9 when the Twelve returned to Jesus, the demonstration of healing authority by the Twelve can later be seen from how Peter healed the disabled man at the Beautiful Gate, he said, “in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk” and the disabled man began to walk immediately. H. C. Kee (2005) concludes that healing and other miracles reported in the gospels and Acts of the Apostles are divine confirmations of the authority of Jesus and the apostles.

Mission strategies for the Twelve in Luke 9:1-6

Some missionary strategies are derived from studying Luke 9:1-6, 10. These strategies include call into mission work, spiritual empowerment of the missionaries, education, or orientation for the missionaries, sending or mobilization to the field, and reporting to the sending authority.



1. **Call into mission work (verse 1):** The Twelve disciples had been with Jesus for some time, but a time came that he needed to send them out to preach and heal. There were other disciples of Jesus but the Twelve were specially chosen to go on mission in Luke 9. The writer of Luke used the Greek word *sugkaleo* to describe this call. *Sugkaleo* means “to call together to oneself” (Thayer's Expanded Greek Definition). Jesus called the Twelve together to himself to give them the mission mandates and the mission strategies in reaching out with the gospel. The call was to impart them with power and authority for mission. In the twenty-first century, denominational and non-denominational mission agencies play the role of sending missionaries like Jesus did by recruiting those who have been specifically called by God as missionaries and deploying them to locations wherein they can be productive (Ward, 1999). There is no mission without the called ones who will go and perform the mandates.
2. **Spiritual empowerment of the missionaries (verse 1):** The authority is needed from Jesus by the Twelve to give them courage to go, to overcome spiritual forces wherever they go to preach, and to enable them perform healing of various kinds of diseases and cast out demons like their master. The concept of power and authority in doing mission was reiterated by Jesus after his resurrection as evident in his discourse with his disciples in texts like Matthew 28:18 “*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me,*” Luke 24:49 “*I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high,*” and Acts 1:8 “*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*” Like the Twelve, the missionaries lack power and authority in themselves to go, preach and heal. Missionaries need spiritual empowerment to perform the mandates.
3. **Education or orientation for the missionaries (verse 2):** Jesus clearly instructed the Twelve during the orientation before sending them out to preach and heal. He told them to “Take nothing for the journey.” He charged them to go by faith and not to bother about materials needs. Although the approach, “Take nothing for the journey” changed in Luke 22:35-36 because Luke 9 was a short-term mission outreach. They were also educated on how to respond



to hostility through peaceful dispositions to the host community. Evolving from Jesus' orientation to the Twelve, the twenty-first century has expanded the scope of orientation into missionary training and formal missions' education. Missionary training is organised by mission agencies, and this is more of practical than theoretical. The curriculum for the training involves strategies for evangelism and discipleship, establishing rapport across cultures, and dealing with culture shock. While formal missions' education refers to the curriculum at universities designed to contribute to the expansion of Christianity across cultures (Nehrbass, Dunaetz, & Jow, 2024). The twenty-first century mission strategy emphasizes cultural competence or cultural intelligence for cross-cultural mission (Prill, 2023).

4. **Sending or mobilisation to the field (verse 6):** Having been called, spiritually empowered, and trained on how to do mission, Jesus released the Twelve and they went to proclaim the good news and heal people. Missiological training should not take a long time to cause unnecessary delay in the mobilisation of the missionaries in the twenty-first century. While on the field, regular retraining should be organised by the mission agencies and opportunities for further formal missions' education in the university or seminary should be given to the missionaries to enable efficient performance.
5. **Reporting to the sending authority (verse 10a.):** In verse six, the Twelve left Jesus to go on the mission they were sent, but that was not enough to know whether the mandates were fulfilled until they returned and gave their reports in verse ten. Reporting to the sending authority is significant to mission work. "While some missionaries resent any accountability other than directly to God, the experiences of totally independent and free-lance missionaries have demonstrated the need for accountability" (Ward, 1999). It is therefore important to learn from the Twelve, how they reported their activities back to Jesus. Missionaries should give adequate reports of their activities to their sending mission agencies.

The Twenty-First Century Mission Mandates and Strategies

In discussing the twenty-first century mission mandates and strategies, five prominent mission agencies operating in Nigeria are selected to review their mandates, visions, and missions to see how they align with Luke 9:1-6. The selected mission agencies in Nigeria are Calvary



Ministries (CAPRO), Evangelical Missionary Society, Global Mission Board, Messiah Arena, and Nigeria Evangelical Missions Association (NEMA).

Calvary Ministries

Calvary Ministries was formerly known as Calvary Production and from that former name the acronym CAPRO was formed. This mission agency started in 1975 as a spontaneous outreach to the Muslims of Northern Nigeria beginning from Zaria and has now become an international non-denominational Missions Agency (Calvary Ministry, 2024). Her vision is to “see indigenous, autonomous and self-propagating communities of believers among unreached people groups of Africa and the rest of the World,” and her mission is to “identify unreached people groups of Africa and the rest of the World, and in partnership with the Church, mobilise, train and send workers to preach and teach the holistic Gospel of Jesus Christ until an indigenous, autonomous and self-propagating body of believers emerge.” Her strategy is embedded in the Great Commission of Jesus to his disciples in Matthew 28:19. Her community outreaches include healthcare, water, sanitation, hygiene, disaster relief, emergency response, and community church mobilization project, among other activities.

Evangelical Missionary Society

Evangelical Missionary Society (EMS) is the mission agency of the Evangelical Church winning All (ECWA). The agency envisions all nations worshipping God through Jesus Christ and her mission is to glorify God by equipping believers to holistically evangelise the world for Jesus Christ (Evangelical Missionary Society, 2024). EMS’ areas of ministry and strategies include medical, training of missionaries, school, radio ministry, and sports ministry.

Global Missions Board

The Nigerian Baptist Convention was borne out of the mission efforts of the Southern Baptist Convention and in her response to missions in Nigeria, a mission agency was formed in 1953 which later became known as the Global Missions Board of The Nigerian Baptist Convention. Her missions started among “the Unreached People in Shendam area, near Jos, in present day Plateau State” (Global Missions Board, 2024). The



agency's vision is "Reaching all nations for Christ (Matthew 28: 19a; Matthew 24: 14)" and her mission is to advance the Great Commission to all Nations through the Nigerian Baptist Convention by networking with other Great Commission Christian, such that all nations might come to the saving, worshipping and serving faith in Jesus Christ.

Messiah Arena

Messiah Arena is a Nigeria based mission agency comprises of Christian professionals. It is an interdenominational mission organisation with the vision "that none should perish" (1 Timothy 2:4). At the core of her "value offering" is salvation message, followed by free medical care, community transformation, and free welfare packages. As part of her strategies, the Messiah Arena preaches the gospel at every given opportunity, calls missionaries for mission fields, trains missionaries, and provides periodic free medical care, scholarship, and mentoring to the youths (Messiah Arena, 2024).

Nigeria Evangelical Missions Association (NEMA)

NEMA was established in 1982 to build synergy among the indigenous denominational and non-denominational mission agencies in Nigeria (Olanrewaju, 2024). NEMA has over 160 registered members across the six geo-political zones of Nigeria comprising mission agencies, denominations and para-church groups with active involvement in frontier missions. The association's vision is to see "a completed Great Commission through the active involvement of the Nigerian Church and Missions Movement in all the unreached nations of the world" (National Evangelical Missions Association, 2024). NEMA as an umbrella body for mission agencies in Nigeria is committed to increase the level of mission awareness and participation of the Nigerian Church, empowerment of the church and mission leaders, foster partnership and networking between the Nigerian Church and the Global Missions Networks. Her major role is to unite Nigerian Church and missions agencies for the completion of the Great Commission.

Discussion and Findings on the Mission Mandates and Strategies of the Selected Mission Agencies in Nigeria

Regarding the mission mandates, the five selected mission agencies emphasized fulfilment of the "Great Commission" as given in Matthew



28:19 where Jesus commissioned his disciples for world outreach with the gospel. In Luke 9:1-6, Jesus called the Twelve and sent them to the villages nearby but for the twenty-first century's mission agencies, evangelising and discipling the nations of the world are the core objectives. These agencies emphasized mostly the aspect of a mandate to go and preach in Luke 9:1-6 in their visions and mission statements than the other mandate to heal. Although pictures of medical outreaches can be seen on the websites of all the selected mission agencies showing where they organised free medical outreaches. The healing mandate given to the Twelve was purely done through the "power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases" given by Jesus, whereas the twenty-first century mission agencies depict more of medical healing. The twenty-first century mission strategies as exhibited by the selected mission agencies show more alignment with the strategies in Luke 9:1-6 but with a minor variation. The major observable variation in the strategies is that none of the agencies emphasized non-involvement of money or other resources in doing missions. Obviously, all the agencies have a means of raising funds or seeking support for their works as request for partnership are made on their web pages. Meanwhile, the reason for the variation is not far-fetched, the mission exploit in Luke 9:1-6 was for a short while as the Twelve were expected by Jesus to return soon with reports of their exploits. Also, that outreach was at the elementary stage of mission outreach and further instructions would be given by Jesus later in Luke 22:35-36.

Then Jesus asked them, "When I sent you without purse, bag or sandals, did you lack anything?" "Nothing," they answered. He said to them, "*But now if you have a purse, take it, and also a bag; and if you don't have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one.*"

The strategies of not going with "a staff, bag, bread, money, or extra shirt" in Luke 9:3 changed in Luke 22:36. This latter instruction of *if you have a purse, take it, and a bag* supersedes or overrules the former instruction given to the Twelve. No doubt, the twenty-first century mission agencies cater for their missionaries and their family's needs such as accommodation, feeding, children education, and transportation on the mission fields. The twenty-first century missionaries go to the mission fields with their valuables.



Conclusion

The dual mission mandates to preach and heal were conducted by the Twelve through the power and authority given to them by Jesus. The primacy of mission mandates to preach and heal remain fundamental from Jesus to the Twelve and to the twenty-first century mission agencies and their missionaries. The selected twenty-first mission agencies' emphasis is on fulfilment of the "Great Commission" through evangelism and discipleship. These mission agencies emphasized the mandate to go and preach in Luke 9:1-6 in their visions and mission statements more than the other mandate to heal. In fulfilling the healing mandate, the twenty-first century mission agencies depict more of medical healing through medical outreaches. While doing a medical outreach is commendable, we must be deliberate in exercising the spiritual power and authority to heal in Jesus' name as it was done by the Twelve.

Jesus' strategies of calling the Twelve into mission work, empowering them spiritually, educating them on how to go, sending them to the field, and returning to give reports of their mission exploits are still effective strategies used by the twenty-first century mission agencies. The selected mission agencies recruit missionaries, train, send out to the fields, and receive reports from the missionaries. The only deviation from Luke 9 mission strategies is on the instruction not to go with "a staff, bag, bread, money, or extra shirt" (Luke 9:3). The twenty-first century mission agencies seek for supports from their partners to make provisions such as accommodation, feeding, transportation, children education, salary, and pension for their missionaries.

Irrespective of the differences between the mission strategies in Luke 9:1-6 and the twenty-first century mission strategies, the mandate to preach and heal remain sacrosanct from Jesus to the Twelve and to the twenty-first century mission agencies. We must go to preach and heal everywhere.

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