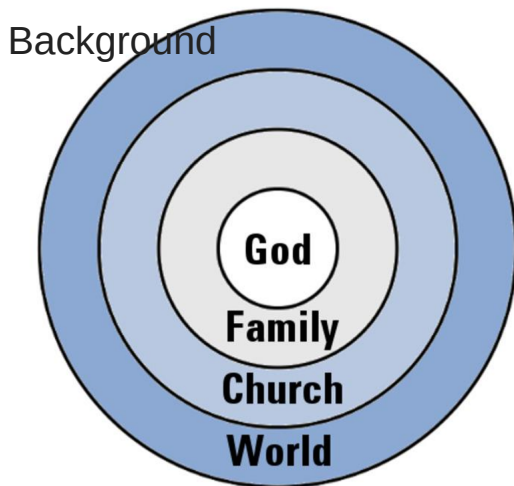


2026-07-14: “I Send You to the World” (HSB Summer Convention)

“As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.” (John 20:21)



The order matters!

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)

The Lord commanded the disciples to wait until they received power from the Holy Spirit, and then go witness for Him in Jerusalem, then branch out to Judea and Samaria, and then to the end of the earth. And if you read the Book of Acts, you will find that exact structure in the Book of Acts.

- Ch. 1-7 serving in Jerusalem
- Ch. 8-12 in Judea and Samaria
- Ch. 13-28 in the ends of the earth

And this is the reality of serving. I need to let the Lord prepare me, and then start in my inner circle in my family, then branch into serving my church and community, and then the rest of the world.

Many people get very excited about going on a Mission Trip and evangelizing in a foreign country and going to do many services away from their city and their church... but unless I have a foundation of serving my family and serving my community and my church, I will not be successful.

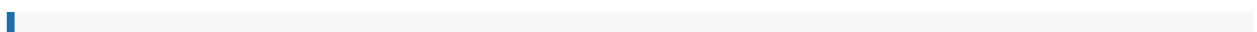
Nation of Israel

I want to start by talking about the Nation of Israel and the Old Testament.

- When King Solomon built the Temple of God and was dedicating it, he prayed a long prayer in 1 Kings 8. See this part...
 - “Moreover, concerning a foreigner, who is not of Your people Israel, but has come from a far country for Your name’s sake (for they will hear of Your great name and Your strong hand and Your outstretched arm), when he comes and prays toward this temple, hear in heaven Your dwelling place, and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to You, that all peoples of the earth may know Your name and fear You, as do Your people Israel, and that they may know that this temple which I have built is called by Your name.” (1 Kings 8:41-43)
 - He understood the mission of Israel. He knew that people from far countries would hear about the true God, come to Him and know Him and worship Him. He understood God’s plan. God did not choose Israel instead of the nations, but He chose Israel for the sake of the nations, to bring about their repentance.
- That has always been God's plan...
 - To Abraham: “In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” (Genesis 12:3)
 - To Moses: “You shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” (Exodus 19:6)
 - To Isaiah: “I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.” (Isaiah 49:6)
 - In every Law the Lord gave, He elevated the behavior of the Israelites over that of the people of other nations.
 - In every Commandment, He guided the people to holiness
- But unfortunately, at every turn, instead of Israel influencing the nations, the nations influenced Israel
 - Instead of remaining holy, they worshipped idols
 - Instead of showing the nations who God is, they became just like them
 - They took their wives.
 - They adopted their idols.
 - They learned from their sexual immorality.
 - They didn’t want to be different – “Appoint a king for us to judge us like all the nations.” (1 Samuel 8:5)
 - They wanted to fit in

I Send You into the World

Fast forward a few thousand years... the Lord Jesus gathers His disciples in the Upper Room. He washes their feet. He eats with them the Passover. He gives them His Body and Blood and institutes for them the Eucharist. He teaches them about the Holy Spirit. And then He prays to the Father these words:



"I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world... I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me." (John 17:15-18, 20-21)

"I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one."

- He will not just take us out of the temptation and corruption and sin of the world, but He sends us and He will protect us from the evil one.

"They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world."

- We are not from here, but our citizenship is in heaven. We are just sojourners, traveling here, dwelling in tents (our bodies) until such time that we are received in glory to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven with the many mansions!
- Being a Christian was never about fitting in

"As You sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world."

- So even though the world is full of sin and corruption and temptation, the Lord is still sending us into the world.

"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me."

- This is our mission. This is WHY we are sent into the world
- St John Chrysostom - "There is nothing colder than a Christian who does not try to save others."
- **People must see Christ in your life before they hear about Him from your mouth. The greatest obstacle in evangelism is NOT a lack of arguments... it's Christians who look like everyone else.**

What is the World?

So what is the world we are being sent into? What does it mean "I send you into the world?" This isn't some abstract sentence... but the "world" is where you're going when you leave this convention.

- School
- Part-time job
- Entertainment

- Digital World (Social Media, Group Chats)
- Friendships
- Everyday Life (Store, Restaurant, Driving, Gas Station, etc.)

This is the world we are being sent into. And for all of these different settings of the world, there is a Danger of Conformity.

- “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind...” (Romans 12:2)

But also in all of them, there is an opportunity (and a commandment) to witness to the Lord Jesus Christ.

- “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16)
- They'll see YOUR good works and glorify WHO? Your Father in heaven

We'll take the settings one by one, and try to identify the dangers of conformity, and the opportunities to witness in each one. As we go through them, examine yourself. Ask yourself if you are conforming or if you are witnessing. Ask yourself if you are taking seriously the mission that the Lord has sent you on.

1. School

Conforming

- Cheating because "everyone does it"
 - Kids from Egypt who were surprised they can't just pay the guy at the testing center
- Cutting corners
- Laziness
- Doing the minimum
 - One guy took "easy-A" classes and then struggled to pass his MCAT
 - One guy who used AI for all of his assignments and then couldn't get through a technical interview. Never got a job and had to switch to a different field.
- Seeking popularity
- Being ashamed of being Christian
- Hypocrisy
 - Being one way at church, and one way at school/work
- Conforming my appearance - hairstyle, manner of dress, etc.

Witnessing

- Refusing to cheat (or help someone cheat)
- Being honest, even if it costs you
 - Example: You forgot to do an assignment... tell the truth. Instead of making up lies "Wi-Fi was down" or "Canvas wasn't working" or old school "My dog ate my homework"

- You aren't prepared for an exam... take the lower grade and the lesson learned. Instead of cheating for the higher grade.
- Here's a controversial one... You're playing basketball or soccer and the ball touches you and goes out... be honest! Even if the referee didn't see it! People enjoy playing with honest players and good sportsmanship.
- Including the lonely student
- Respecting your teachers and speaking respectfully
- Being joyful instead of constantly complaining
- Being dependable
- Being generous
- Pray before you take an exam
- Pray before you eat your meal
- Let your speech be holy "Thank God" - "God willing" - "Pray for me"

2. Friendships

Conforming

- Foul Language
 - Arabic or English
 - When someone comes in confession and tells me they're struggling with cursing - I usually ask "well do you curse at church?" - no. "Do you curse at home?" - no. "Did you ever curse in front of me?" - no. Not to minimize the sin, but to show him that he KNOWS how to turn it off. He turns it off on a DAILY basis. A lot of the time it's like "it just slipped out" - but I know how to turn it off, I know how to make sure it doesn't slip out. So it's just a matter of doing that everywhere.
- Choosing friends based on popularity
- Giving in to peer pressure
- Drinking/vaping/smoking because friends do
- Mocking others to fit in
- Dating when it is not the right time
- Outside Friends vs. Church Friends
 - Many times youth ask "what's the difference between having church friends or friends outside the church?" and it might even be "well my church friends do the same things as my friends outside the church do." - They curse, they vape, they smoke, etc.
 - There is a huge difference
 - The church friends are doing those things, and after doing it, they regret. And they are maybe trying to stop. They are struggling. They are following up with a Father of Confession and trying to improve. Trying to do better.
 - Maybe the outside friend vapes and thinks "there's nothing wrong with this" - or curses and it never crosses his mind that maybe I shouldn't talk like that

Witnessing

- Being loyal

- Not only when I "need something" or when I "stand to benefit"
- Not only until "something better comes along"
- Not only until I am needed, or until it becomes hard
- I met a guy in one of the churches, it was his first time coming to a Coptic Church. He told me that he was baptized and married Ethiopian Orthodox. But he never went to church. Hasn't attended a liturgy in 30 years. Was never interested. He was a very very high functioning orthopedic surgeon - one of the best in the country and he would travel around the country teaching other orthopedic surgeons. And he had many friends. He told me he hosted many parties at his house - wine and cheese parties. Lots of money, lots of influence. Then he had a stroke. And his brain gave out, and he couldn't move, and he couldn't speak. And for many many months - no parties, no influence, no speech, etc. As he started to get better, he reached out to all his friends, only four people showed up for him. One of those was a Coptic Guy and that's what led him to come and see the Coptic Church and start attending in it. Being a loyal friend is witnessing to the Lord Jesus Christ!
- Encouraging friends toward Christ
- Keeping in mind the Church Schedule
 - When I plan to hang out with my friends... it should NEVER be on Saturday night or Sunday morning! I know that I have Vespers and Midnight Praises on Saturday night, so let me not schedule hangouts or restaurants or birthdays or celebrations on Saturday night or Sunday morning!
- Forgiving Quickly
- Being Trustworthy
- Helping friends when they are struggling
- Love
 - Without compromising truth
 - Love means seeking the salvation of your friend

3. Entertainment

Conforming

- Normalized media that uses language not suitable for my ears
- Normalized media that has nudity or sexual content?
 - IMDB has the most watched TV Show of all time: Game of Thrones
 - TV Shows now - even if they don't plan on being very sexually explicit, usually sneak in a nude scene in the first episode or two in order to HOOK YOUNG MALES onto the show.
- Normalized music that is sexual in nature?
 - One time I went to pray on the car of a HS Boy and we prayed and we sprayed water and everyone was very happy. Then he said "Abouna can you drive my car" - it's a little tradition we have that after we pray on a car, we take it for a spin. So I agreed, and I sat in the car... we turned the car on and it immediately starts BLASTING music by a guy who I honestly would not even be comfortable saying his NAME or the TITLE of the song.
- Normalizing sin like LGBT, Infidelity, etc.

- Hollywood is currently glorifying infidelity in movies - they say it is "soulmate" and it is "romantic" etc.
- Hollywood is currently pushing LGBT in as many movies and shows as they can in the name of "representation" and "equality" and even "love"
- Those shows and movies are not for me. If I am watching them, then I am conforming myself to the entertainment of the world
- What is worse than all of those now is when I also RECOMMEND something for someone to watch

Witnessing

- Choosing entertainment wisely
 - Fill your mind with good things
 - Garbage in, garbage out
 - Holiness in, holiness out
- Having self-control
- Being willing to say no.
- Using my time wisely

4. Everyday Life

Conforming

- Speeding/Road Rage/Pride on the Road
 - Refusing to let someone merge
 - Honking in anger
 - The honk is to make someone aware of something, not to punish or embarrass them
 - When I drive, let me always remember that I am representing Christ... when someone sees me drive and they see the cross hanging from my mirror, what will they say?
- Rude to service workers
 - Cashiers, Waitresses, Flight Attendants, etc.
 - When I go to my flight on Frontier and all I paid for is a Personal Item, and my Personal Item doesn't fit in the Personal Item bin... whose fault is that? Maybe I got away with it before... maybe on a different flight they didn't check... maybe I bought something on my trip and it made my bag bigger. So what should I do? Fight the flight attendant? Get angry at them? But it's my fault!
- Stealing
 - Getting a water cup at McDonalds and filling it up with soda... that's stealing
 - Abusing a Self-Checkout at a grocery store... stealing
 - What if I go to a restaurant, I get my check and I see that the cashier forgot an item on my bill - and it saves me a lot of money. Don't you know that if you don't tell her, that's stealing?
- Vacation

Witnessing

- Thanking Employees
- Being patient
- Smiling
- Good Driver
 - I let people merge
 - I don't speed or weave through traffic
 - I don't honk for no reason
- Returning extra money and paying honestly
- Helping a stranger
 - Someone needs help loading something in their car at Home Depot
 - Someone needs help carrying out groceries at the store (elderly man/woman who needs to get the water bottles from his cart to his trunk)
 - Someone needs help getting something off the top shelf or carrying something heavy
- Holy Speech
 - Throughout the day "Thank God" - "God willing" - etc.
 - When someone asks you "How is your day going?" - "It's going good, thank God!"
 - When someone asks you "What are your plans for the weekend?" - "God willing I am going to..."

5. Digital World

But there's one more world that didn't exist when the New Testament was written, and it's a world that ALL OF YOU are Sent into TODAY. Probably even BEFORE you leave this convention...

The Digital World!

20 years ago if you wanted to escape from the world, you could go home... but now the world comes with you, in your pocket and in every screen around you. Constant notifications and buzzing and trying to get your attention.

And it actually encompasses all of the above..

- Everything we said about how I talk with my friends, also applies to how I text them
- When we talked about cheating in school... yes, even in an online class.

So let's identify some of the dangers of conformity in the digital world, and opportunities to witness.

Conformity

- Pornography
- Doomscrolling
- Wasting hours
- Seeking likes/followers

- Group Chats
- Hiding behind anonymity
- AI Misuse

Witnessing

- Sharing holy things, encouraging content
- Speaking kindly
- Moderation in Social Media and AI use

Conclusion

All of these examples boil down to about five virtues:

1. Integrity - doing the right thing when no one is watching
2. Purity - guarding your senses, your heart and your mind
3. Love - treating everyone as made in God's image and concerned for their salvation
4. Courage - willing to stand apart from the crowd
5. Hope - when someone leaves a conversation with me, they are more hopeful and they feel they have seen Christ

Notice that we didn't say anything about preparing a sermon. We didn't say anything about giving a speech. We didn't say anything about learning apologetics. Don't think that "I Send You into the World" means I am sending you to give a sermon, no but let your life be a sermon.

People must see Christ in your life before they hear about Him from your mouth.

Revision #4

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