



Mobilizing the “Alliance Irregulars”

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God desires to use not just missionaries and pastors but bankers, stay-at-home moms, business professionals, gas station attendants, college students, middle schoolers, retired pilots, fifth graders, janitors, and grandmothers to share His gospel with the lost and the hopeless. Are you willing to join the Alliance Irregulars and proudly share the gospel and bring back the King?

The Alliance is and has always been passionately focused on reaching those people who have yet to hear the life transforming message of Jesus. The urgency that drives our missionary zeal is the firm belief that once the gospel is preached to all peoples Christ will return, in accordance with the sovereign will of God. It is for the glorious return of Jesus Christ that we work so hard. It is the reason we train and send our missionaries to foreign fields. And, it is why our local churches invest so much in reaching their communities for Jesus.

Yet, there is another fundamental idea which has driven The Christian and Missionary Alliance since its earliest days that is profoundly tied to preaching the gospel to all peoples in obedience to God’s plan for bringing back King Jesus. If we are going to bring Jesus to the world then we need to mobilize Irregulars.

“Irregulars” of the Bible

“Irregulars” is an early Alliance word which was used to describe everyday men and women who had been transformed by Jesus and were willing to share His gospel. A. B. Simpson used this phrase often because of how he saw God moving in the Bible. When Jesus departed for Heaven, He left the work of the gospel with his disciples. While not many had formal priestly training, this small band was passionately sold out for Christ and filled with the Holy Spirit. What we learn from the early days of the Church was that through the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus was empowering not just professionals but

all people in the work of the gospel. Jesus empowered Irregulars like Stephen, Philip, Barnabas, and Priscilla to bring the good news.

Yet upon deeper inspection, we discover that while these laypeople were greatly used by Jesus, they certainly were not the first Irregulars God used. The Old Testament is filled with great men and women who God used to advance His message. God used men like Joseph and women like Esther to save His people. God sent Daniel to a foreign land so that the leader of a foreign nation might proclaim that the God of Israel was the one true God. God has always and will always use Irregulars in the work of the gospel.

Two Lies

Before moving forward, we must be aware of how the enemy seeks to frustrate the plans of Christ. Specifically, there are two lies that the enemy of the Church wants us to believe. First, he wants the church of today to believe that only the professional can accomplish the work of Christ. He wants us to believe that only those with years of higher education training can advance the gospel—that only those who can clearly articulate their calling to full-time ministry are qualified to go and preach to the least-reached peoples. This is patently false.

The second lie the enemy advances is that the professional ministry worker is no longer needed. This lie is as insidious as the first. It seeks to delegitimize the idea that God does call, equip, train, and send out well-trained and well-prepared professionals for the work of the gospel. While Irregulars are needed, they have always complemented and never replaced God's priesthood. We need our institutions of higher education to help train and equip more men and women for a lifetime of service.

“Irregulars” of The Alliance

Since the beginning God has used both professionals and Irregulars to bring hope to the nations. The Alliance, too, has called for both professionals and lay men and women to advance the gospel. In 1897 A. B. Simpson reminded the early Alliance family, “God has always done a great deal of His work out of season as well as in season, irregularly as well as regularly . . . We claim to be raising up a band of irregular soldiers for the vast unoccupied fields to supplement the armies of the Lord in the regions they cannot reach and work they cannot overtake.” Irregulars stand both in solidarity with and support of those who have been vocationally called to professional ministry.

This phrase “Irregulars” would crop up again and again in early Alliance language. In an 1899 editorial we find the word referenced. “In the army of the Lord there is a place for the lay missionary and the plain evangelist who has not had the advantage of professional training but who knows men and who knows God and who knows how to touch human hearts . . . God has raised up The Christian and Missionary Alliance and kindred movements to send forth these Irregulars.” Irregulars are those who are, at times, overlooked by some but never missed nor unappreciated by Jesus.

In 1901 Simpson again used the phrase to call forth more men and women to the work of the gospel. “God loves to use men in unconventional ways. The need of the Church today is not a larger number of clergymen, but a larger number of men and women in social, secular, and professional life whose entire influence and talents are at the service of the Master. Not a salaried and dependent priesthood who preach the gospel because it is expected of them merely, but a great body of consecrated irregulars . . . who use their earthly station in the providence of God as a standpoint from which to serve and witness for their heavenly Master and bless their fellow men.” Irregulars are men and women who daily interact within a lost and dying world and who often have greater access to the lost than do the professional clergy.

In 1914 Simpson beautifully described The Alliance as

. . . a movement unique in its polity, worldwide in its scope, lofty in its aims and inspiring in its motives . . . a lay movement utilizing agencies for which otherwise the doors had perhaps been closed, and encouraging the consecrated laymen, the earnest business man, the humble farmer boy, the Spirit-filled maiden whom the Master has called and fitted to follow in the footsteps of the lowly fishermen of Galilee and create a new battalion in the army of the Lord, the volunteers and irregulars of whom we have no cause to be ashamed, and who but for this movement might never accomplish their glorious work.

Irregulars are men and women who recognize that God places everyone in the exact spot He needs them in order to bring the light of the Kingdom into dark places. The Alliance embraces and champions the idea that alongside a strong group of ministry professionals an army of regular men and women is needed to accomplish the work of the gospel. Or, as one recent Alliance missionary said, “All of Jesus for all the world takes all The Alliance.” To help equip and empower modern day Irregulars, The Alliance has invested in a variety of opportunities for men and women—both within local Alliance churches and globally through Alliance Mission’s four specialized structures.

“Irregulars” Mobilized

CAMA, marketplace ministries, aXcess, and Envision are born out of a desire to mobilize Irregulars as well as professionals in the work of the gospel. The Office of Ministry Studies also provides training for men and women who feel called to minister and need a more robust understanding of Bible, theology, and leadership through their Ministry Studies program. The office also supports local churches in the development of leaders through the Basic Training program run across the country in several languages.

Recognizing the need and remembering that the fulfillment of God’s mission will bring back the King, The Alliance will continue to invest in building leaders and disciples for Jesus. It will continue to develop ministry professionals through our excellent institutions of higher education. And it will continue to invest in regular men, women, youth, and children who serve in their workplaces, schools, and communities with a passion to bring all of Jesus to all the world.

The fundamental question facing each one of us is: *how will I help bring the gospel to the world?* Since the beginning God has been pleased to use ordinary men and women to accomplish His work; but He doesn't force them. God's invitation is to join a movement of other Irregulars who are sold out for Jesus and willing to share His message and bring back the King. Are you ready?