



Philosophy of Missions

GRACE CHANGES EVERYTHING

The gospel compels us to be engaged in missions.

What makes a church old? It is not the age of the facility, the congregants, or the pastor. Instead, a church gets old when she forgets that Jesus commissioned her to take the gospel to the entire world (Matt. 28:18-20); churches get old and die when they lose their outward face.

We are blessed because our forefathers prioritized this outward face, existing not just for themselves but also for those far from God. They left us a “young legacy,” and we deeply desire to keep in step with it.

We are passionate about reaching those who are far from God, because we worship a God who was passionate about reaching us (Ps. 96:1-3).

“Seeking the worship of the nations is fueled by the joy of our own worship. You can’t commend what you don’t cherish. You can’t proclaim what you don’t prize. Worship is the fuel and the goal of missions.”¹
Passion for grace-filled missions comes from the joy of experiencing gospel grace; missions is joyful participation in the spirit-empowered work of Jesus.

OUR VISION FOR MISSIONS

*Sending disciples who enjoy God’s grace
to extend his glory through service and multiplication.*

The Apostle Paul wrote in Ephesians 2:17: *And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near.* In this verse “he” refers to Jesus, while “you” refers to the people who lived in Asia Minor. But Jesus never went to Asia Minor, so how could Paul say that Christ preached to them? The answer: Paul could say Christ preached to them because the *church* came and preached to them. Because believers are united to Christ in his life, death, resurrection, and ascension, we are extensions of his work to make all things new (2 Cor. 5:14-21).

God enables every believer to be part of this work, giving us all spiritual gifts that can be used to multiply gospel grace. Our goal is to engage every church member in serving with our church and our partners that we might all share in the joy of participating in his spirit-empowered work (Col. 1:10).

¹ From a sermon preached by John Piper at Bethlehem Baptist Church preached on October 27, 2012 titled, *Missions Exists Because Worship Doesn’t: A Bethlehem Legacy, Inherited and Bequeathed.*

OUR MISSIONS PHILOSOPHY

Mandate, Message, Methods

We pursue missions with great care and intent: it is rooted in a Biblical mandate, based on a clear message, and focused on a number of important methods.

Mandate. The mandate for Christians to participate in missions does not just begin with the Great Commission in Matthew 28; God's plan of redeeming the nations is a guiding principle seen throughout the Bible. Since the beginning of time (Gen. 3), God's command to mankind has been to fill his creation with his redeemed images and with his promise of redemption. Missions is a response to this promise and the fulfillment of all the promises God gave to all of mankind since creation.

The mandate to make disciples is given to *every* Christian because all Christians are priests, strangers, witnesses, servants, and exiles in this world (2 Peter 2:4-12). We strive against an environment where church members come to consume religious goods and instead emphasize a commitment to serve - both in the local church (internal ministry) and in the broader community (external ministry).

Our desire is to *send* all members to *invest* in missions so that our city and our world will be saturated with thriving grace-filled and gospel-driven ministries.

Message. We approach the message by thinking first and foremost about substance: the content of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

God's Word can be summarized as the story of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration. In short, God created the world good, human beings messed it up with sin, Jesus Christ is redeeming it, and one day Jesus Christ will return and finish restoring his creation. We have a God who provides salvation, a human condition that requires salvation, a Savior that secures salvation, and a response from us that receives it.

The Gospel message powerfully transforms our understanding of the flourishing that God intends for his people, our vocations, our culture at large and the kingdom that comes as the King (Jesus) rules over every sphere of our lives. This is what it means to extend his glory: for the Kingdom to come. This is the message that we carry forward as we fulfill the mandate of missions.

Method. After mandate and message comes methodology. While the message and mandate are precise, the methods often used in missions are multifaceted and vary depending on the context. We believe Jesus taught that missions must include both *word* and *deed*:

Word. Proclaiming the Gospel of grace is a central biblical model for the demonstration of Christ's command to love (Romans 10:14, Ephesians 4:15).

Because God is a personal God intimately involved with his creation, each story of redemption is unique.

Therefore we affirm multiple methods of evangelism, including sharing with friends and strangers in large contexts and one-on-one.

Deed. Serving with acts of mercy is a central biblical model for the demonstration of Christ's command to love (Mark 10:45, Matthew 19:19).

Because God created the material world and Jesus himself took on a body, all of the universe will be renewed.

Therefore we affirm that the gospel is the good news that through Christ, the power of God's kingdom has entered history to renew the whole world through deed.

We proclaim the Gospel in word and deed through *service* and *multiplication*:

Service. All church members are encouraged to be involved in serving the church and the city by using their God-given time, talents, and treasure.

- [Time](#): sharing hours and minutes with one another for eternal impact.
- Talents: exercising spiritual gifts to build our church community up in truth and love.
- [Treasure](#): giving monetary resources to the vision and mission our church.

Multiplication. Together, church members seek to multiply grace locally and globally by starting new works and bringing resources to existing ones.

OUR MISSIONS PRIORITIES & PARTNERSHIPS

*Priorities: Church Planting, Evangelism, Justice and Mercy,
Cultural Renewal*

*Partnerships: Unreached People, Long-term Partnerships, Local Leadership,
Home-grown Missionaries*

The Apostle Paul prayed for the Colossian Christians in Col 1:10: *to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.* Paul implies here - and we know from experience - that there is a knowledge of God that comes while bearing fruit in good work.

Providing opportunities that give church members this specific discipleship opportunity - to acquire the unique knowledge of God gained through service - is a high priority in selecting Missions partnerships. We seek to *make disciples who make a difference* by engaging our members in partnerships around the following priorities:

Priorities:

1. *Church Planting.* We pray and work for a "church for every people and the gospel for every person." We believe the best way to the Kingdom is to plant churches.
2. *Evangelism.* We are evangelistic, sharing the gospel with the nations. We apply the Scriptures directly to issues that matter, present the gospel intelligibly to non-Christians, and partner with those who do.

3. *Justice and Mercy.* We desire to work with ministries that restore justice to the vulnerable. We desire to be a part of restoring dignity to those who have been enslaved and abused.
4. *Cultural Renewal.* We are committed to cultural transformation brought about by laity in the marketplace who view their vocations as holy callings in which they, as salt and light, express the message of the cross.

Partners:

1. *Unreached People.* We look for partners working with people groups who lack sizable churches and resources to evangelize their own communities and require outside (cross-cultural) assistance.
2. *Long-term Partners.* We form deep, long-term relationships with fewer ministry partners that will result in strong financial investment and the sharing of human capital (e.g. congregational involvement). We desire to have networks of people connected to - and acting on behalf of - each ministry.
3. *Local Leadership.* We support churches that are “*in the community, for the community.*” We desire to connect with (preferably national) church planters and church planting movements across the world proclaiming the Gospel of Grace and the transformative work of the Holy Spirit.
4. *Home-grown Missionaries.* We identify and support missionaries that God raises up for local and global missions from our own church. We pray that through the discipleship of our own members God will continually raise up more laborers for the harvest.

These priorities, laid on the foundation of our philosophy and vision, drive the missionaries we support, the trips that we take, the prayers we pray, and each and every component of planning. We work together to enjoy God by extending his glory among the nations so that God receives the praise he is due.

CONCLUSION

William Carey, a missionary who blazed the trail to India in 1792, saw his mission as a miner penetrating into a deep mine which had never been explored, and with no one to guide him. He once said to Andrew Fuller and John Ryland, *I will go down, if you will hold the rope.* And John Ryland reports: *He took an oath from each of us, at the mouth of the pit, to this effect—that ‘while we lived, we should never let go of the rope.’*²

We are committed to *holding the rope* of our young legacy by sending disciples who enjoy God’s grace to extend his glory through service and multiplication.

² Peter Morden, *Offering Christ to the World* [Waynesboro, Georgia: Paternoster, 2003], 167