

WHAT ARE MISSIONS?

Missions is an interesting term. In the Bible, you will never see the word *missions*. If you pick up a Strong's Concordance and look up the word *missions*, you won't find it there. The closest thing we have in the Bible to the word *missions* is the word *apostle*. Not the big "A" - Peter and Paul and the rest - we are talking about the meaning of *apostle* established in **Ephesians 4**, concerning the gift and calling of an apostle. The Greek word is *apostolo*. It doesn't designate geography, or purpose; it simply means "one who is sent out." Sent out for what reason? For whatever purpose or calling God has planned!

When we think of missions, typically, we think of the foreign mission field. We think of jungles, or the far reaches of God's green Earth. But Biblically defined, missions have nothing to do with geography. The apostle Paul, the great New Testament example of a missionary, went on three missionary journeys in the book of Acts (four if you count the trip to Rome), but he never left his country! He went all over Western Europe, and Eastern Asia; he was in Philippi, Corinth, and numerous other places, but he never left the Roman Empire. As a matter of fact, almost everywhere he went, the people spoke Greek. You see, missions are not about political boundaries or cultural boundaries; they are simply about going where God has called you and doing what He has commanded you to do.

ACTS 13:1-5

"Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, 'Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away. So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. And when they arrived in Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. They also had John as their assistant."

WHERE DO MISSIONS TAKE PLACE?

In **Acts 12:24**, we see a description of the local fellowships in Antioch and Syria. We are told the Word of God grew and multiplied there. Missions are not separate pieces of the body of Christ; they are the natural outpouring of a healthy church. As people are equipped through the teaching of the Word of God, they are raised up and called out by the Holy Spirit. Not all churches have a "missions heart," but if the vision of the church is to feed, love, and equip the sheep by teaching the Word of God, the Holy Spirit will stir people's hearts and missions *will* occur.

Let's talk about a missionary church, Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa. For thirty-five years Pastor Chuck has had a simple heart - feed and love the sheep. As he teaches the Word, the Lord does a work, and the people step up, and step out in faith. What happens? **Acts 1:8** *"And you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."* A beautiful progression takes place, and it follows the simple pattern God gave us. They go out into Orange county (Jerusalem), Southern California (Judea), the United States as a whole (Samaria), and finally to the uttermost parts of the earth. Sometimes, God calls people to go down the road, and other times He calls people to go ten thousand miles across the ocean.

WHO SHOULD BE A MISSIONARY?

Acts 13:1

“Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.”

In this verse, we’re given a diverse list of men: Barnabas, Simeon, Lucius, Manaen, and Saul. That ought to give us hope, because it shows us that God uses diversity, and as the body of Christ, we are quite the varied bunch. Also, notice that God called out the core members of the church. Unfortunately, many churches today do the opposite. Often times when we imagine missionaries, we picture the odd man on the fringe who thinks bugs are tasty and showers are optional. But rather, the leadership, and those who are at the core of the church are the ones who should be sent. There are three reasons why this is the case.

1. The core members of the church are spiritually equipped for the work of the ministry.
2. When the core members are sent out, you can have confidence *God* will be doing the work through them, because He has already been doing so.
3. When the leadership leaves, they create a void, an opportunity for others to be raised up. Once the next person has been raised up, they can be sent out, others can be raised up, and they can be sent out. Do you get the picture? It’s simple, but incredible.

How did Costa Mesa plant churches all over the world in 35 years? They believed people weren’t raised up to stay; they were raised up to go. That should be the natural flow within the church - being poured into, raised up, prepared, and sent out. If this isn’t happening, there might be a problem: complacency. When people get too comfortable, they become confident they can do what is required, and no longer dependent on Jesus. That’s why it is sometimes necessary to step out in faith to see if God might want to do a work with you somewhere else.

HANGING OUT ON THE VINE

As we continue to look at what Biblical missions are all about, it is incredibly important to note what someone is to do if they have a desire to be a missionary. Looking at the examples of Paul and Barnabas, we find they were sent out *as they ministered unto the Lord (Acts 13:2)*. If there is nothing else about missions that you catch, don’t miss this. This is huge. Someone might say, “Well, I’m not called to be a missionary. It’s not my heart, or my desire.” First of all, don’t be so sure. I know a missionary in Scotland who always says, “If the missions’ pastor asks you out to lunch, pack your bags! Because you might be a missionary and not know it.” You do not know what the Lord might want to do or how He might want to use you. But even if you’re not called to missions, the principle found in this verse is applicable to all Christians. As a matter of fact, this is one of the essentials of Christianity and a fundamental of life and godliness. What were Barnabas and Saul doing when they got sent out? **Acts 13:2** says they were ministering unto the Lord. They were not having a global strategy session on how to break the 10/40 window, or in the middle of a conference on how to evangelize the un-reached people groups of the world. Not that there is anything wrong with those things, don’t get me wrong, but their focus was one something better, it was on Jesus Christ. They were ministering to Him, abiding in Him, and as they did so, the Lord called them out.

All of us need to be careful not to get our focus on the wrong things. The wrong things can be “good” things, like ministry, family, and marriage, but they are wrong because they are not Jesus. In **John 15:4**, Jesus gives us a beautiful truth, one to store in our hearts, *“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.”* If you look at a vineyard, you will notice the branches on the vine are never striving. They are not trying to figure out what fruit should come from them, they are simply hanging out on the vine, and because they are on the

vine, there is fruit. How do you know what Jesus wants you to do if you are not asking Him? If you're not looking to Him and abiding in Him, how are you to know to what you are called to? That's why we need to make sure to take our focus off *good things* and put it on Jesus Christ. Once your focus is on Jesus, you don't have to try to figure out what you are called to, He will direct you. You're not going to miss any good thing the Lord has for you if your eyes are on Him. It's beautiful and simple. It's just hanging out with Jesus. Sharing the Gospel and serving Jesus are simply outflows of our relationship with Him.

WHY WOULD GOD CHOOSE TO USE ME?

Did you know that God doesn't need us? That was a devastating realization to me. I thought the Lord had given me a heart and a passion for missions because *He* needed *me*. I was amazed to find out that not only does God not need me, He could do it easier without me. It's true, I know myself! So, I asked, "Lord, if you don't need me, then why would you use me?" His answer blessed my heart, "Because I love you." So often we get it all backwards, thinking it is our personal responsibility to bring the Gospel to a dying world. It is true that nations are perishing because they don't know Jesus Christ as their Savior, and there are people who have never even heard of the name of Jesus. However, the Lord does not use us because He *needs* us. In **Revelation 14:6**, one angel preaches the Gospel to every tribe, kindred, tongue, and nation. One angel does what the church has not been able to do in 2,000 years. It is not out of necessity that God uses us; it is because of His great love for us.

I Corinthians 1:26

"For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence. But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—that, as it is written, 'He who glories, let him glory in the LORD.'"

If God has chosen to use you, it is probably because you are foolish! The word *foolish* in the Greek is the word *moros*, where we get our English word *moron*. So God chooses to use us because we are morons? Yes! You might say, "Wait a minute, I'm not sure I like this; it is kind of offensive." Well, it should bring you great joy. We were not chosen because of our great ability, intellect, talent or attractiveness (thank God!). God chose us because of His love for us, and He uses us in spite of us! That should give us great hope because the burden is not on us. It's not about our performance, how much we read the Bible, pray, and go to church.

You may think that you are not equipped or qualified to serve Jesus, but God does not always choose to use the people that are best qualified for the job. If we were qualified to do the work, then we would tend to rely on our own ability to get it done, rather than being dependant on Jesus. By calling us to a work far beyond our own ability, God ensures we will be dependent on Him. It has been well said that God equips the called, rather than calling the equipped. Did you ever wonder why God would call the apostle Paul to the Gentiles and Peter to the Jews? Paul was a Pharisee of Pharisees (**Philippians 3:4-6**); if anyone should have been called to the Jews, you would think it would have been Paul. And Peter, simple hardworking Peter, would have been seemingly perfect for the Gentiles. Yet, we see God did just the opposite. The Lord did not call them to their strengths, but to a life of dependence on Him. God takes men and women from all

walks of life to serve in ways they would never have imagined, but when you look at what happens, there is no question that God has done a work.

WHEN DO WE GO?

Acts 13:2

“As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, “Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.”

There is a difference between going and being sent. **Acts 13** lays out the model for being sent. It wasn't Paul and Barnabas who decided to go out and to minister the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations. They were looking to Jesus and in His time, the Holy Spirit said, “Now give me these two men. I have a work that I want to do through them.” There is great confidence when the Holy Spirit calls us, because if He's the one who begins the work, He is going to finish it. Paul and Barnabas did not have to worry about how or where to minister. They did not stay awake late at night trying to figure out how to reach the lost. There was no planning of evangelistic crusades, outreaches, or concerts. The Holy Spirit was the one doing the work. The same is true for us. We do not have to figure out where, when, or how to minister, if we just continue abiding in Jesus Christ and trusting in the fact that it is a work of the Spirit, He will finish what He begins.

This is an important truth because missions can be difficult. Not all places are like Southern California, where you put up a Calvary Chapel sign and people start flocking to it. Instead, they might think you are a cult and not want anything to do with you. You might go five or ten years and see five or six people get saved (half of whom do not come to church). It can be depressing, overwhelming and difficult. However, if the Holy Spirit has sent you out, you can rest in that confidence. Just abide in Jesus Christ, and the Lord will do the work; He builds His church and adds daily such as should be saved (**Acts 2:47**).

Look again at **Acts 13:2-3**; the whole body heard the call from the Holy Spirit to send Saul and Barnabas out. That is how it should be, and this is so important, because during the difficult times, you need to have the confidence that it was the Lord Himself who called you. Paul understood the difficulties that occur in the mission field; in **II Corinthians 1 8-10** he wrote, *“For I would not have you ignorant brethren, of the trouble that came on us when we were in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure above strength in so much that we despaired even of our life.”* Here is the apostle Paul, the great example of a missionary from the book of Acts, who wrote one third of the New Testament. He was used more mightily of God than most men in history, and, as he is out ministering, he writes that he was pressed above measure, above strength, so much that he despaired of his life. We need to understand that wherever the Lord calls, whatever ministry, whatever mission He sends us to, it will not always be easy. Now the difficulties have purpose, Paul goes on and says, *“We had the sentence of death in ourselves so that, we would learn not to trust in ourselves but in our God who raises the dead.”* How did Paul endure? How did he make it through the tough times? By understanding it was a work of the Spirit, not himself. He learned to trust in Jesus Christ.

MISSIONS VS. CHURCH PLANT

Acts 13:4-5

“So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. And when they arrived in Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. They also had John as their assistant.”

There is a difference between missions and a church plant. *Missions* is a very broad term encompassing many areas of ministry, but at the heart of missions there must be the preaching and teaching the word of God. Missions can involve serving in an orphanage in the Philippines, helping out with humanitarian aid for new immigrants in Israel, or running a school for children in Central America, just to name a few. It is Biblically mandated that we care for those who are in need (**James 1:27**). However, if you are doing those things and you are not teaching the Word of God, frankly, you are sending someone to hell clothed and full. The teaching of the Word of God is fundamental. It is the greatest need - the only one that gives people eternity with God.

Church planting, as the name implies, means starting a new church. It is very possible that in conjunction with the church plant there may also be outreaches to the needy and poor, but the main focus is always on establishing a local fellowship of believers. When you have the teaching and preaching of the Word of God, people will naturally begin to minister to the needs around them. A healthy church feeds the hungry, clothes the naked, and loves the widows and the orphans.

Acts 14:21-23

“And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, “We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.” So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.”

As Paul and Barnabas were on their way back from their first missionary journey, they visited every city in which they had been teaching and preaching. They laid hands on, and appointed elders in all the churches. Now, that sounds ordinary, but there is something you might miss. When Paul and Barnabas were first teaching and preaching the Word, they did not appoint elders. They simply taught, preached and went on to the next city. It was not until they came back through that they appointed elders. Why? Paul and Barnabas did not randomly pick four people and say, “You four are going to be the pastor, assistant pastor, worship leader, and children’s minister.” That is appointing (even if you think they show talent or ability). Instead, when they went back through each city they noted what God had already done. The guy who was teaching the people the Word of God must be the Pastor, because he was feeding and loving the sheep. The one with the guitar (or the equivalent of the day), worshiping and leading others in praises to the Lord must be the worship leader. The one loving on the kids, telling them about the love of Jesus Christ must be the called to the kids. As the Holy Spirit called out Paul and Barnabas, they were dependent upon Him to do the work. They did not appoint. God anointed. They simply recognized the call of God.

The Apostle Paul did not go about as a missionary merely to convert individuals, he went to establish churches from which the light might radiate throughout the whole country. The secret of success in this work lies in the beginning of the ministry. It is the training of the first converts which sets the pattern for the future. If the first converts are taught to depend upon the missionary, if all work, evangelistic, educational, and social is concentrated in the missionary’s hands, the infant church learns to rest passively upon the man from whom they receive their first insight into the Gospel. Their faith, having no room to grow and no opportunity to develop, lies dormant. Instead of seeking strength in the working of the Holy Spirit, they seek it in the missionary. If we are not cautious, we run the danger of becoming indispensable. By teaching the national believers to turn to us and accept our guidance, inadvertently, we train them to put their trust in us. We believe that it is the Holy Spirit who inspires and guides us, so why do we have a difficult time believing that the same Spirit will guide and inspire them? We believe that the Holy Spirit has

taught us and is teaching us true conceptions of morality, doctrine, ritual, so why do we struggle to believe that the same Spirit will teach them? If we desire to be effective it is absolutely necessary that we first have faith in the Holy Spirit. If we have no faith in the power of the Holy Spirit in them, they will not learn to have faith in the power of the Holy Spirit themselves.”

(Excerpts modified from “Missionary Methods: St. Paul’s or ours” – Rolland Allen)

CONNECTED TO THE BODY

Acts 14:26-27

“From there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work which they had completed. Now when they had come and gathered the church together, they reported all that God had done with them, and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.”

After Paul and Barnabas completed the work that God sent them to do, they returned home. What was the work they were called to do? In Paul and Barnabas’ case, they were called to plant churches. Is that always the case? No, not necessarily. You see, whatever work the Lord wants to do is between the Lord and you. And when the work is completed, you come home. Is that work always church planting? Not necessarily. For that matter, long before the Lord can do a work through you He must do a work in you.

I have known several missionaries who went out and experienced very difficult circumstances. There came a point when they said, “I think the Lord is telling us we are done.” There was no church planted, no revival that took place, but God had done a sweet work in the hearts of those who went. When that work was completed, the work they had been recommended unto the grace of God to do, it was time to come home.

Why did Paul and Barnabas come home? So they could bless the church with a report of what Jesus did in and through them! Missions are not only about sending out the missionaries, and loving and caring for the missionaries while they are away, they are also about blessing the church with the knowledge of what God has been doing. And Lord willing, a caring relationship builds between the missionary and the sending church.

I knew a couple who served in Varanasi, the holiest Hindu city in India. It is a place where the Hindus go on pilgrimages to worship their six million gods. The missionaries would stand in the temples on the sides of the river and preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Very few people will ever stand in a Hindu temple and preach the name of Jesus, but through our relationship with the missionaries, we get to hear the reports of what God is doing all over the world, and how God is working, loving, and reaching out to people everywhere. That is the picture of missions the Bible lays out for us.

MISSIONARIES STAY CONNECTED THROUGH BIBLE STUDY GROUPS

It is very important that the missionaries feel loved and remembered. For this reason, the men’s and women’s Bible studies make it a priority to keep the connection between the church body and the missionaries strong. Each of the men’s Bible study groups takes responsibility for one of the missionaries, and each of the women’s Bible study groups takes responsibility for one of the missionary’s wives. The Bible study groups give support, encouragement, weekly prayer, and care packages to their assigned missionary. This creates a close connection between the missionaries and the fellowship, and when short-term mission trips become available there is always a great response from the body!

SHORT TERM MISSIONS

There are five passages of scripture that specifically deal with the purpose of short term missions:

- **I Corinthians 16:17-18**, *“I am glad about the coming of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, for what was lacking on your part they supplied. For they refreshed my spirit and yours. Therefore acknowledge such men.”* The church of Corinth loved the Apostle Paul and wanted to show that love practically. They sent Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus on a short trip to minister to Paul and supply that which was lacking. In doing so, they refreshed Paul and the church of Corinth.
- The apostle John said, *“I have many things to write unto you, but I did not wish to do so with paper and ink; I hope to come to you and speak face to face, that our joy may be full,”* (2 John 1:12). In going to see those we love, we refresh them. When we bring back the report to the church of all Jesus has been doing on the mission field, the church is refreshed as well. Newsletters and emails are wonderful, but to personally see God work is much better.
- **Philippians 2:25**, *“Yet I considered it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier, but your messenger and the one who ministered to my need;”* (i.e. Gummy worms, turkey jerky, Carnation instant creamers, etc). The church of Philippi also loved Paul and so sent Epaphroditus to minister to his wants. He was sent on a short-term trip to minister to a full-time missionary.
- **Acts 8:14**, *“Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them.”* Accountability also comes from short-term trips. In Acts 8, Philip went down to Samaria and preached the Word of God to the Samaritans. When the church in Jerusalem got wind of what was happening, they sent Peter and John to check it out.
- **Acts 11:22-23**, *“Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch. When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord.”* After the martyrdom of Steven, the church was scattered as far as Antioch of Syria preaching the Word of God. When the church in Jerusalem heard of what was happening, they sent Barnabas. I love how Barnabas *“saw the Grace of God”* working in the church, and encouraged them to continue in the Lord. He was sent out to see what Jesus was doing in Antioch, but he also encouraged the church there. (Interesting to note that he ended up staying there in Antioch. More often than not, those who go on short-term trip end up staying as full-time missionaries.)

We go out on short-term missions to encourage, refresh, provide, and establish accountability. As a missions pastor, I make it my aim to see the missionaries every year. Every other year, I will go and visit them in the various countries in which they are serving. I go to encourage them, and automatically represent the love of the whole congregation. It also allows me to see the work taking place, providing accountability. The opposite year, we bring all of the missionaries back to the States for a week long conference to minister to and encourage them. Also, it provides them with the opportunity to get reacquainted with the church body. Through this, the hearts of the missionary and the sending church are knit together.

A FINANCIAL PERSPECTIVE

Philippians 4:10-19

“But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last your care for me has flourished again; though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity. Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Nevertheless you have done well that you shared in my distress. Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only. For even in Thessalonica you sent aid once and again for my necessities. Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account. Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice,

well pleasing to God. And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

Did you ever wonder how finances should work in missions? The apostle Paul gives us great insight into this matter. You know this passage, you can probably quote several of the verses by heart, but did you know the context of this passage involves missions and finances? There are four things to notice:

1. *“Not that I speak in regards to need...”* Paul understood that the need was not the issue. So often we think we have to let God (and others) know about the need. God already knows what the need is, and is more than able to meet it. Too often the church presents God as being broke. He is the creator of all heaven and earth, He does not lack for anything! And He loves to take care of His kids!
2. *“I have learned... I can do all things...”* It is not a missionary’s job to stir up support that enables them to go. It is Jesus Christ who does the work. There is a danger in relying on our own efforts. We can do things in our own strength, but then we do not know if Jesus has sent us or if we have sent ourselves. If we look to Jesus to provide, and He does, then we can have the confidence that He is sending us and He will do the work through us. It’s all about Jesus!
3. *“Not that I seek...”* Here is the bottom line! Not seeking the finances, but the fruit! What fruit? The fruit that comes to those that get involved with the work that Jesus is doing. Not everyone is called to go, but everyone can be involved in God’s work by giving to those who do go. Notice though, Paul did not ask the church in Philippi to support him. Jesus had put it on their hearts to do so already. Paul merely rejoiced in the work God had done in their hearts, that they desired to be a part of God’s work.
4. *“My God shall supply all your needs...”* Here is the perspective! Paul brings it back around. It is not about the gift Paul received. He understood God would provide, that was not even in question, but Paul was blessed that the church of Philippi wanted to be a part of the work God was doing. Paul knew that God would provide not only for his need, but for all the need of the church in Philippi. Paul was not focused on his needs, he was others-centered.

When it comes to financially supporting missionaries, Paul sets a beautiful precedent: if a missionary can support themselves, then they should (**II Corinthians 12:13-18, Acts 18:1-4, Acts 20:31-35, I Thessalonians 2:6-9, II Thessalonians 3:7-9**). For that reason, the missionaries serving where they can work are not financially supported. When people go to countries where they cannot work (where they do not have the right by law to work), the church should come along side and provide for their needs so that they can spread the Gospel. As you read the Book of Acts, it seems clear God’s intent was that a local church would lay hands on, and send out those who would be accountable to, supported by, and linked with them. By fully supporting a missionary, the missionary is therefore freed up from having to raise money. If churches followed the paradigm seen in the Book of Acts, every missionary raised up and sent out of a church to another country would be supported 100% (whether it is a small church supporting one missionary or a large church supporting 100). This allows the missionary to serve without distraction. It allows them to be covered by people who are watching and praying with them. Also when (not if) there are problems (such as physical ailments, spiritual concerns, or misguided direction) the church is there to help and minister to them. Unfortunately, as we look at missions today, we often see an entirely different model. Mission boards are being set up and people are applying to be sent out. Missionary candidates go around to various churches and groups to attempt to raise enough money for support on the mission field. When they have raised the necessary amount, as determined by the mission board, they go out to the field under the covering of the board. Then, every third or fourth year, they return for a year to raise money again. There are numerous problems with this. First, there is very limited accountability, because so many churches are involved, no single church is watching over the missionary. There is also very limited interaction between the missionary and the church (other than a check that goes out once a month). Most people in the local

church do not know which missionaries are actually part of their church, and which are members of other churches. The missionaries come by every few years and give a missionary presentation, but there is little connection, family, or prayer covering. The problem is not the mission boards. They exist out of necessity because the church no longer takes its missionary responsibility seriously. But when you read the Book of Acts, you cannot help but come to the conclusion that the local church is where missions should come from. And if the Church were fulfilling her calling, there would be no need for missionaries to go around begging for money.

A C O N C L U D I N G T H O U G H T

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen.” – Matthew 28:19-20

“Go” that is often the conclusion that you hear from messages about missions. It is interesting that of the four verbs that make up the Great Commission, only one is a command. If you were to ask a group which verb they thought is the command in this sentence, go, baptize, teach, or make (disciples), most would say “go.” But the only verb that is in the command form (imperative) in the Greek is *make* disciples. The other three verbs are participles, they tell us *how* to make disciples. So what is at the heart of missions? The heart of missions is to make disciples of Jesus Christ. Who would have thought, it’s all about Jesus.

Pastor David