

WHY MISSIONS?

By

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Missions is a mindset not just trumped up emotions. It is a way of looking at life. It is a balanced world and life view. A right attitude about missions is essential to true Christianity and without a concept of world evangelism, the Christian is unbalanced and defective.

Christ is the center of Christianity, and Christ's heart beats for a lost world. Since Christ and His kingdom are at the center of a true Christian's life, then he/she should have a burning desire for world missions. An unhealthy view of missions means a distorted view of the world and the purpose for Christ's coming into this sin-cursed world.

Since missions is a mindset, then there are certain ways a Christian must think about missions to be biblical and balanced. This mindset comes only from the Bible. The Christian should have a philosophy of missions based squarely on the Scriptures, the only rule of faith and practice. There are seven principles that are fundamental to a proper mindset on global missions.

The World Desperately Needs Christ. The whole world is lost in sin (Rom. 3:23) and headed for eternal judgment (Matt. 25:46; 2 Thess. 1:8-9). If there is no understanding of the depths of peoples' sins and the certainty of hell, there is really no motivation to get the gospel to all people. If only a few really bad people will be lost or a few truly good people who have never heard the gospel will be saved, then what is the motivation to preach the gospel to all men? Why is the death of Christ necessary if some can get saved without it? Any position that cracks the door for universalism (all will be saved) destroys all motivation for the preaching of the gospel. Until a person has the solid conviction of eternal judgment for all those outside of Christ, he/she will never have Christ's view of the world.

Christ Alone Is God's Solution To The Sin Problem. God the Father sent His only begotten Son into the world to save the world, and all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ alone for salvation will be saved (Jn. 3:16-18). No man, woman, boy or girl can be saved, have eternal life and go to heaven apart from Christ (Acts 4:12; Jn. 14:6). Christ alone is the cure for a sick-sick world. Every Christian has a message that will save sinners from hell and take them to heaven. There is no other way, no other message and no other person who can save anyone except Christ. This message which has been entrusted to each Christian should be motivation enough to make sure the whole world hears the gospel and has an opportunity to be saved.

Christians Are Commanded To Take The Gospel To All Of Creation. Christians are commanded by God Himself to take the gospel to the world (Mk. 16:15) and preach repentance to all the nations (Lk. 24:47). This is called the Great Commission and is most clearly defined in the Gospel of Matthew (Matt. 28:16-20). Matthew makes it abundantly clear that the task of the church and every Christian is "to make disciples of all nations," and this is to be done by going, by water baptizing and by teaching. Unless going, baptizing and teaching are done by the church, the Great Commission is distorted. While there is always a need for going and baptizing, the greatest need on the mission field today is to teach the multiple millions of people coming to Christ. This teaching can best be accomplished by training and equipping national pastors and Christian leaders. The very fact that the Supreme Commander of the universe, King Jesus, has commanded Christians to take the gospel to all nations should be a very strong motivation for world evangelism. What blessings do Christians miss or what curses are brought on Christians if they fail to keep this one command?

Christians Have The Holy Spirit. Christ never commands the Christian to do something unless He gives the power to accomplish the task. Christ has given each Christian the Holy Spirit. He told followers of Christ that they would receive power through the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8), and clearly stated they are witnesses to the end of the earth. This is a great motivation for world evangelism. It is the Holy Spirit who

will convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment (Jn. 16:8). Christians are but instruments in God's hands. The believer's task is to declare the message to all people without exception and reservation. It is God's task to save souls as the Holy Spirit sovereignly moves on people.

People Are Saved By Faith Alone. Every human being on the face of this earth is a potential candidate for salvation. Anyone who will truly trust Christ as Savior and Lord will be saved (Acts 16:31; Rom. 10:13). No witnessing Christian should ever get hung up as to whether a person is among the elect or not. That is God's business alone and something we mere humans know nothing about. Knowing with confidence that any and all that trust Christ will be saved should motivate believers to take the gospel to all peoples, races and cultures.

God Has A Plan That Will Most Certainly Come To Pass. There are times when all Christians become discouraged in their witness for Christ. In these low times, the Christian needs to have a high view of God's sovereignty. His plan will prevail. He will be victorious. God's decree, known only to Him, includes the elect of God. They will come as the gospel is preached (Acts 18:9-10; 13:48; 2 Tim. 2:10; Jn. 10:27-28). It is as Christians get out the message of Christ that the elect come to Christ through faith (2 Thess. 2:13). The elect do not come to saving faith apart from hearing the gospel and placing faith in Christ personally. Saving faith is the human means to salvation and God's grace is the cause (Eph.2:8-9). Faith most certainly is a gift from God (Philip. 1:29), but God does not exercise that faith for the person. The needy, hungry sinner alone exercises that faith by an act of his/her will. This is a powerful motivation for world evangelism. As Christians faithfully tell the whole world about Christ and His sovereign, saving grace, some are certain to come to Christ (1 Cor. 9:22).

Christ Has Ordained The Church As The Primary Base For World Missions. God has declared in the Bible that the local church is the primary instrument through which evangelism is done. The local church is to train its people to do evangelism at home (Eph. 4:11-13). It is to send qualified people to do missions as seen in Paul and Barnabas who were sent out by the church at Antioch to reach the Gentiles for Christ (Acts 13:1-4). It is to seek to establish local churches on the mission field that can reach their communities for Christ (Acts 14:1-7; 14:20-21; 18:11; 14:21-23; 18:23). The local church is to give money to missionaries and to help further the work of Christ in the world (Philip. 4:14-17). It is through the local church that men are to be trained or approved to be trained as pastors or as missionaries (1 Tim. 4:14; 5:22; 2 Tim. 2:2). The local church also becomes the place for prayer for world evangelism (1 Tim. 2:1-2). It is a very compelling motivation to know that a local church is committed to world missions and the carrying out of the Great Commission. Without a strong commitment to world evangelism, a local church will soon lose its light and salt in the world.

What about the para-church movement; that is, the Christian organizations not directly connected with a local church or denomination? Thank God for them. They have picked up ministry where the church unfortunately has slacked off. Yet, the church will always be the primary base for all evangelistic efforts. Those in the para-church movement should have the approval of the church, and they should always operate as an arm of the local church. Para-church movements come and go in the history of the church, but the church remains generation after generation witnessing and waiting for the return of Jesus Christ.

The seven principles mentioned above give the proper biblical mindset and motivations for missions. They answer the question, "Why missions?" Any individual Christian, local church, denomination or Christian organization that believes and applies these seven principles will receive the blessing and approval of God. Those who choose not to follow these seven principles will find themselves without real spiritual purpose, self-centered, void of real spiritual power and under a curse -- "*If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned*" (Gal. 1:9).