

A person wearing a red robe is holding a globe of the Earth. The globe is positioned in the lower half of the frame, with the person's hands visible. The background is a bright, sunlit outdoor scene with a green field and a clear sky. The text is overlaid on the image.

# Missions

## **He Rules Over the Nations**

(Ps. 22:28)

**Readings celebrating the work of  
God in and through local churches.**

Patrick J. Griffiths

# *"He Rules Over The Nations"*

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# *Preface*

## A Word of Introduction

Local Churches have received from God a sacred trust. This trust is a mission. This mission is defined for us in Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8, and 2 Timothy 2:2. This same mission is pictured for us by the early church in the activity of the apostle Paul beginning in Acts 13:1. The mission is to duplicate herself in the lives of others. Church health is not defined by numerical size or budgetary well-being, but by the degree to which they are intentionally engaging in the reproducing of local churches. Churches birth churches. God's safeguard against doctrinal defect and pastoral apathy is through the strengthening and establishing of local churches.

## What is the Purpose of this Study?

The intent of all study is to ask the hard questions and to seek Biblical answers. Parroting standard answers without learning the truth first hand will produce an anemic faith. May it please our heavenly Father to open our eyes to the magnitude of His grace so that we might understand all that we are in His Son and all that He is for us.

## *An Introduction*

The idea of missions has long lost its novelty. We speak of missions as a knowable albeit a mythological entity. Missionaries and the mission field have a mystique surrounding their presence. The intent of this short examination is to explain what constitutes biblical missions, what it looks like and how it is to be done in and through local churches. The mission of God (i.e., *Missio Deo*) is His eternal purpose *for creating* and *for creation*. God has a definable and intentional reason for creating and for creation. This definable and intentional reason is both *knowable and doable*.

The mission of God in creating and for creation is to bring Him glory. The means through which this end is achieved is in the fall of man into sin, the securing of his deliverance from sin, the gathering of His redeemed people into communities of faith, and the perpetuating of this pattern to all people groups. The resource, through which this rescue and assembly takes place is in the person and work of Jesus Christ, God incarnate, blessed forever more.

The presupposition from which this author writes is that the New Testament pattern pictures God working in and through local churches to establish local churches. God uses who He is (i.e., the church) to achieve what He wants (i.e., the mission). Such local churches are indigenous to their native culture. Although they are independent of outside cultural and geographical influences, such diversity as portrayed in the global body of Christ is embraced.

As each generation of local churches look to advance the purpose of Christ for the nations it must be understood that no one is going to ride in on a white horse and save the day (except for Jesus Christ in the last days). By looking to external agencies that operate outside the authority base of a local church to “fix her problems,” the local church has inadvertently weakening itself. It is “easy” to address problems when not having to look across the table and into the eyes of the problem. No one can teach swimming with dry trunks and no one can accurately teach church planting who has not planted themselves or is currently planting themselves inside of a fellowship and under the authority of a biblical eldership. Churches need to learn what it means to be a “Church planting church.” In the absence of reproducing churches, churches die or continue to exist in death.

These short studies are from the heart of a pastor-theologian whose singular passion is to know Jesus Christ, to celebrate the nature and power of His cross-work and to recognize who His people are because of this. There is no slight of hand or easy fix for what ails the hurting. There is no money back guarantee or full refund for dissatisfaction.

Church work is dirty work and planting churches is no less so.

Yet, let not a picture of perpetual gloom cast its dark shadow over the soul of the hungry and willing. The work of shepherding and planting churches is a glorious work because it is a pursuit that seeks to visualize the life and death of Christ among every tribe, tongue, people, and nation. It is a work that finds its sufficiency and satisfaction squarely on the person and work of Jesus Christ. It rests knowing that what He has promised will come to pass (Matt. 16; Rev. 4; 5). God is building His church and He is gathering worshippers from every tongue, tribe, people, and nation.

There is great comfort in knowing that the victory is already ours. Oh, to be sure, there are plenty of fears

from without and from within but greater is He that is in us than He that is in the world.

So as you read the various thoughts concerning missions take heart. The journey is long but certain and the goal will be attained. Embrace this moment and above all else seek Him.

## "The Mission of God in the Mission of the Local Church"

"I will give thanks to You, O LORD, among the peoples,  
And I will sing praises to You among the nations" (Ps.108:3)



Read Psalm 108

"It may sound strange, but churches must wrestle with what the Bible tells us concerning the meaning of the word **mission**."<sup>1</sup> In seeking to explain, "Missions and the Mission of the Local Church," I would like to lead with an extended quote. Notice the contrasting ideas found in "widely defined," and "more broadly mean."

A Christian mission has been **widely defined**, since the Lausanne Congress of 1974, as that which is designed "**to form a viable indigenous church-planting movement**." This definition is motivated by . . . the Great Commission. Church planting by cross-cultural missionaries leads to the establishment of self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating assemblies of believers. This is the famous "three-self" formula invented by Henry Venn of the London Church Missionary Society in the 19th century. **Cross-cultural missionaries are persons who accept church-planting duties [to] go to people outside their culture**, as Christ commanded in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). However, Christian missions can **more broadly mean** any activity in which Christians are involved for world evangelization.<sup>2</sup>

The author of this quote correctly reflects present cultural understanding of "missions." My purpose is to help us see how missions is "church planting" and not broadly defined as "any activity in which Christians are involved for world evangelization." Evangelism is an indispensable part of church planting but it is not the whole of the mission.

A primary assumption I will make is the necessary and non-dissolvable link between the mission of God and the mission of the church. The mission of God is not confined or restricted by the church, but it is inseparably linked to and through the church. Thus, God's mission is larger than the church, but the church is the church because of the mission. Thus, "the church does not have a mission, the mission has a church. Mission is the action of God in which the church shares and which belongs to the essential nature and character of the church."<sup>3</sup> You can separate the mission from the church, but you cannot separate the church from the mission. In fact, "Mission is, first of all, God's action, initiated and directed by God, in some cases over against the church."<sup>4</sup> Yet, "The primary mission of the Church and, therefore, of the churches is to proclaim the gospel of Christ and gather believers into local churches where they can be built up in the faith and made effective in service, thereby planting new congregations throughout the world."<sup>5</sup>

"To put it succinctly, God's mandate to reach the world is primarily to individual believers who together comprise local churches."<sup>6</sup> Larry Reesor goes on to say, "If the local church is to embrace the philosophy that 'missions is the mission of the church,' the pastor [elders] must be the one[s] to establish vision and direction. And if missions is to become the 'personality' of the church rather than just a church program, the pastor [elders] is the most effective one to lead the charge."<sup>7</sup>

Missions as a ministry of the local church is often looked on as a sidebar to the *real* purpose of a local church. Missions properly defined is *the mission of the local church*. Missions is not a sidebar but the actual

centerpiece activity of any biblically based local church. Missions is not a drain on real ministry. Missions **is the real ministry** of the local church. George W. Peters correctly notes how, "Missions is not an imposition upon the church for it belongs to her nature and should be as natural to her as grapes are natural to branches that abide in the vine. Missions flows from the inner constitution, character, calling and design of the church."<sup>8</sup>

Every activity when properly understood is carrying out the mission of the local church. It is only when we fragment and fracture ministries into independent and separate entities that the mission of the local church fails. When each part plays to the Master's design, then the mission of the church plays out in biblical missions.

Yet, what is the mission? As noted in the introduction, "The mission of God (i.e., *Missio Deo*) is His eternal purpose *for creating* and *for creation*. The mission of God in creating and for creation is to bring Him glory. The means through which this end is achieved is in the fall of man into sin, the securing of his deliverance from sin, the gathering of His redeemed people into communities of faith, and the perpetuating of this pattern to all people groups." Missions exists as local churches seek to proclaim and place the life and death of Jesus Christ into the culture of every tribe, tongue, people, and nation. The Mission of God gathers like-minded people into definable assemblies who are knit together around the Christ-Exalting, Word-Centered, Global-Impacting, Grace-Based message of the New Testament. The mission of God has as its sole purpose the securing and establishing of worshippers among every people group. "The mission of the Church is to expand the Church into the world by living and declaring the gospel through witnessing and disciple making among all *ta ethne* or peoples of the world. Faithful participation in this mission, by submission to the Holy Spirit, results in new churches being started among all peoples."<sup>9</sup>

Missions is the local church seeking to proclaim and place the life and death of Jesus Christ into the culture of every tribe, tongue, people, and nation.
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The mission of God is consumed with a global church affirming the truth claims of Scripture as they are revealed in and through the text of Scripture. The mission of God and the worship of God are inseparably linked in the mission of the local church. The mission of God demands our best efforts and financial wherewithal. It calls us to identify, equip, send, and support the mission of the church as it exists in those whose hearts God has turned toward Him.

Yet the mission, as it exists today, is often defined by financial support or by foreign soil, neither of which defines biblical missions. The mission of God is to be defined by activity not money and by purpose not people. A missionary is one who carries out the mission of God for the church and through the church; it is a mission defined by God and backed by His promise (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8).

Matt. 28:18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 **Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Acts 1:8 but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and **you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.**"



The mission of God for His people was determined before the very foundation of the world was poured into place. He called out from nothing a people to worship Him in an unadulterated, undiluted and undistracted manner. This much is immutable and undeniable (Eph. 1:4; 1 Pet. 1:20).

Eph. 1:4 just as **He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world**, that we would be holy and blameless before Him.

1 Pet. 1:20 **For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world**, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you

What is foreseen as the fulfilling of His purpose is incapable of being altered or diminished in any possible way. All of history is rushing toward one final moment when the pieces of life will culminate in the perfect picture of God's only begotten Son Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:10).

Eph. 1:10 with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, **the summing up of all things in Christ**, things in the heavens and things on the earth.

It is in that day that an innumerable host identified in the Revelation as "myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands" (Rev. 5:11) will say with one unified voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing" (v. 12). Oh my friends, can you not hear it? Are you not able to taste such a heavenly vision of what awaits us?

In that day no one and nothing will be absent from that immeasurable host. "Every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, [will say], 'To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.'"

This is the mission of the local church, a mission that reaches back into the timeless existence of eternity past before the very foundation of the world was poured, a mission that reaches forward into the timeless existence of eternity future where all things outside of God will affirm for only the second time the absolute sufficiency and satisfaction in all that is God. This then is the purpose of God — it is to secure for Himself worshippers from every tongue, tribe, people, and nation. **Today that mission is fulfilled when His people assemble in the countless cultures of this global community and praise His name in languages known only to Him.**

God wants you to see that everything you do and say is contributing to the fulfillment of His eternal purpose. Your giving is not wasted, your study is not wasted, your attendance is not wasted, your service in ministry is not wasted, your fellowship is not wasted, your prayers are not wasted, and a host of other seemingly disconnected events are not wasted. Each one, in ways we cannot see or even understand, is contributing to the moment of fulfillment. Somehow you are "feeding" the proclamation and placement of His people among every tribe, tongue, people, and nation.

Never look back. Stay the course and see the mighty power of God displayed in and through His church. Through heartache and hardship, He leads His people into near neighborhoods and distant lands. He is leading His people for the securing of worshippers, many of whom look just like you. Friend, never ever stop. Keep your eyes focused on the prize . . . a prize already secured and one who stands waiting for your arrival.

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<sup>1</sup> Van Sanders, "The Mission of God and the Local Church," in *Pursuing the Mission of God in Church Planting*, compiled by John M. Bailey, c2006, 13.

<sup>2</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mission\\_\(Christian\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mission_(Christian))

<sup>3</sup> Beverly Roberts Gaventa, "'You Will Be My Witnesses': Aspects of Mission in the Acts of the Apostles," *Missiology: An International Review* (Vol. X, No. 4, October, 1982), 416.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 423.

<sup>5</sup> David Hesselgrave, *Planting Churches Cross Culturally: North America and Beyond* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 20.

<sup>6</sup> Larry Reesor, "The Local Church's Role in Mission," *Mission Frontiers*, June 2000.  
<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/2000/03/reesor.htm>

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> George W. Peters, *A Biblical Theology of Missions* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1972), 200.

<sup>9</sup> Van Sanders, "The Mission of God," 15.

## *"The Churches' Witness and Her Missionaries"*

2

It is always difficult to know the intellectual starting point for anyone who reads an article of information. A common thought when speaking of missions is that missions is something that happens when geographical boundaries are crossed or cultural boundaries are crossed or when language boundaries are crossed. We also speak of missions as an activity involving the strengthening of existing local churches or the establishing of new local churches. All of these ideas are present when speaking of missions. Seldom, however, do we see what we are engaged in as a local church as being "missional." This is where I would like to draw our attention.

As a local church, we are always to be engaged in the mission of God in and through the local church. This is an unavoidable consequence of the cross. If the mission of God is the gathering of worshippers into communities of faith from every tongue, tribe, nation, and people, then each of us are witnesses of Him in our circles of influence.<sup>10</sup> When we recognize our status as Christians to be witnesses in our sphere of contacts, then we are missional.

Unfortunately, missionaries are often defined by the manner in which they secure financial assistance. How they secure financial assistance has nothing to do with whether or not they are a missionary. What they do defines them as a missionary. A common definition for the missionary reads as follows, "A Christian missionary is a person whose passion is to make the Lord Jesus known to the whole world. A true missionary is someone who will risk everything for the sake of the lost of this world."<sup>11</sup> Evangelism defines his understanding of "missionary." To make and mature disciples is at the heart of the Mission of God and thus, the mission of the church. However, it is not the completed picture.

As a local church, we are always to be engaged in the mission of God in and through the local church.

Such thinking parallels the imagery of seeing a child birthed and nurtured to maturity without ever plugging them into a family of families for community and marriage for procreative purposes. Although remaining single is the choice of some, everyone recognizes the infeasibility of such a choice for all. If humanity is to exist, it must exist in families that reproduce after their kind. The process of birth naturally pushes one into a family context. This imagery parallels that of making and maturing disciples. It is presupposed that the disciple is birthed into a family and is encouraged to duplicate their experience.

Nowhere in his definition is the local church a part of identifying, equipping, sending, or supporting the activity. What is a missionary? *Missionaries are sent by God through local churches into their immediate or removed cultural context for the purpose of preaching Christ's love by their example and (if necessary) by their words for the making and maturing of disciples in order that existing churches might be strengthened and new churches might be established.* It is for this reason the idea of being missional functions on two levels. **First**, every believer is to be a witness (and thus missional) to those they come in contact with on a daily basis. Parents are to be witnesses to their children. Children are to be witnesses to their extended family. Employees are to be witnesses to fellow employees and employers. You are a witness where you purchase food, coffee, and fuel. We are witnesses anywhere and everywhere we find ourselves. There is, however, **a second level** of missions and this is what we typically emphasize. When an individual gives themselves completely to the task of strengthening and establishing local churches and can no longer support themselves financially, then the local church identifies such an individual for the task and

sets them apart to be a “vocational” missionary.

I believe we have “muddied” the idea of missionary on two levels. **First**, we fail to see our own missional responsibility within our own immediate cultural context. The people who identify themselves as a local church are to be witnesses in their immediate community. All believers are to be witnesses in every relationship they have developed. Perhaps a way to better identify this activity is to use the word “**witness.**” **Every Christian is to be a witness for Christ, but not all witnesses will function as “career” missionaries.** Unfortunately, as Christians, we continue to surround ourselves by other Christians in our planning and local church ministry expressions. For example, I cannot be missional at my work since I work with other Christians. I can only be missional when I live my life outside the context of my vocation. As Christians, we are to be calling the unbelieving to communion with God through the cross of Jesus Christ. We should be leading and directing those who believe to the community of faith in which they are a part of. It is in this manner that we become witnesses and missional. **Second**, we fail to see the need of supporting those who have given themselves to the strengthening and establishing of local churches. We must not acquiesce to any convoluted thinking in this area.

Recently (October 2007) it was noted how Republican Vice-President Dick Cheney and Presidential Democratic hopeful Barack Obama are 8<sup>th</sup> cousins. This relationship, although humorous, means little. This is how we often look at those who are involved in Christian ministry that is called “missions” for the sake of financial support. It does not become local church focused until it is necessary or addressed. The work engaged in is necessary and profitable and Christian, but it has not completed *the circle of New Testament Missions* until it is directly tied into the strengthening and establishing of local churches. “To substitute other activities for those distinctly specified by our Lord is to attempt a ‘heart transplant’ – one that sooner or later certainly will be rejected.”<sup>12</sup>

In commenting on this present condition George W. Peters notes how, “The history of the church in missions is in the main the history of great personalities and of missionary societies. Only in exceptional cases has it been the church in missions. The present-day slogan, The Church in Mission, is a rather late by-product of Christian missions or a late awakening of the Christian conscience.”<sup>13</sup>

As a local church we must direct our energies into two very distinct activities. **First**, we must see ourselves as a witness in our cultural context whether it is at home, at work, or in living. **Second**, we must define vocational missionaries as those who are directly tied into the strengthening and establishing of local churches. Hesselgrave’s conclusion rings true, “Paul’s primary mission was accomplished when the gospel was preached, men were converted, and churches were established.”<sup>14</sup> We cannot afford to divert our corporate energy toward ministry expressions that are not directly promoting the strengthening and establishing of local churches. Although we believe such ministries are **complimentary to the mission** of the church, **we cannot permit them to replace the mission** of the church. The fault does not lie with anyone other than with the church itself. It is the local church and her leadership that have divested the church of her place and responsibilities in the mission of God and thus permitted her to drift. By the grace of God as leadership we will seek to set a true course and become a church planting church.

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<sup>10</sup> Thus all Christians are witnesses and being a witness is being missional and all Missionaries are witnesses, but not all witnesses are Missionaries. “For Luke, in the Book of Acts, “Witnessing is the prime activity of mission.” Beverly Roberts Gaventa, “‘You Will Be My Witnesses’: Aspects of Mission in the Acts of the Apostles,” *Missiology: An International Review* (Vol. X, No. 4, October, 1982), 417.

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<sup>11</sup> Keith Green, "Why You Should Go to the Mission Field," *The Last Days Newsletter* (Sept/Oct 1982, Vol. 5, No. 5), 12. See also C. Rene Padilla, "Mission is Fishing for the Kingdom," *Missiology: An International Review* (Vol. X, No. 3, July, 1982), 319-338. Padilla's entire article defines a mission that is biblical, but completely devoid of the local church. This way of thinking is all too common and highly unfortunate.

<sup>12</sup> David Hesselgrave, *Planting Churches Cross Culturally: North America and Beyond* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 26.

<sup>13</sup> Peters, *A Biblical Theology of Missions*, 214.

<sup>14</sup> Hesselgrave, *Planting Churches Cross Culturally*, 29.

## *“Making Disciples of All the Nations”*

*“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit” (Matt. 28:19).*

3

Read Matthew 28:16-20

I find verses 16 and 17 intriguing. The eleven disciples obeyed our Lord’s command and went to the place He had previously designated (v. 16). Upon arriving, they saw Him. Some of the eleven worshipped, but others doubted.

I believe it is always necessary to put the statement in its historical context. If we had experienced all that had transpired what would our response have been? We might want to believe we would have been leading the charge for obedience and waving the flag of undying loyalty, but I think we might have responded more like Peter’s denial and Thomas’s doubt.

The word for doubt is only used twice in the New Testament, here and in Matthew 14:31 where Peter, when walking on the water, “doubted.” It is not a brutal word, but a word meaning “to waver in one’s opinion.” It is in the context of belief and doubt, abandonment and hesitancy, loyalty and betrayal that our Lord then utters the next three statements. The three primary features in the three verses that follow have been the subject of many studies.

- I. **First**, the power of our Lord is highlighted (v. 18).
  - A. This power is regal (“All authority”)
  - B. This power is universal (“In heaven and on earth”)
- II. **Second**, the program of our Lord is described (v. 19).
  - A. This program is intentional (“Make disciples”)
  - B. This program is inclusive (“Of all the nations”)
- III. **Third**, the presence of our Lord is guaranteed (v. 20).
  - A. This presence is personal (“With you always”)
  - B. This presence is perpetual (“Even to the end of the age”)

His power guarantees that every resource has been made available to insure the success of the mission. His program guarantees that instruction has been given and direction is clear. We will never have to wonder if we are doing the right thing. His divine plan is very intentional – make disciples. His presence guarantees that we will never be left to feel that we have been abandoned by God. What an exciting thought!

When considering the disciple-making ministry, we have a clear direction from our Lord as to what we are to be about. Every area of ministry is to be contributing and working from this divine design. Whether it is a pre-evangelism that leads to evangelism that leads to disciple-making that leads to the planting of local churches, we are to see every piece of ministry contributing to and working from this divine design. How wonderfully simplistic this makes local church ministry! Ministry is never defined by location; it is defined only by attitude. Regardless as to where you might find yourself on the disciple-making continuum, with the proper mindset you can be a part of something that is far greater than your “piece of the pie.”

Ultimately, all ministry effort will culminate in heaven when an innumerable host from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation will gather around His throne to worship Him. I long for that day. Yet until that day we are privileged to be a part of His eternal purpose in time. In fact, "We are determined to shout the supremacy of God in all things by finding, celebrating, and declaring that He is enough in this life and in the life to come through the systematic study of the Scripture and to share this message with every tribe, tongue, people, and nation." Friends . . . rejoice.

## “Beginning From Jerusalem”

*“And that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.” (Luke 24:47)*

4

Read Luke 24:44-49

No one familiar with the Scripture can miss the necessary connection between Acts 1:8 and what is found in Luke 24. It is not merely coincidental. Luke is the author of this two volume work. The first volume is called The Gospel of Luke and the second is entitled, The Acts of the Apostles. Acts begins where Luke ends, thus the necessary connection between Luke 24:47 and Acts 1:8.

**Missions begin at home.** God has entrusted to His people the message of hope. It is a message that runs through the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms (v. 44). It is a message that can only be understood as God opens our minds (v. 45). The message is embraced as we repent of our sins and turn to the Savior (v. 47). It is this message that must **be proclaimed in His name to all the nations** (v. 47). And His people are to begin this proclamation ministry in their “Jerusalem.”

We have not, however, been left to “fend for ourselves.” We have been “clothed with power from on high” (v. 49). His authority, His power, His grace (Matt. 28:18) is sufficient for the task laid before His Church.

But what has happened? Are we “doing” enough? Have we carried out the command of the Lord to make disciples of all the nations? Do we know what He would have us do? God has entrusted to His people the ministry of disciple making. Such a ministry is to be in and through local churches for the purpose of establishing local churches. This is not a ministry we can delegate to other ministries. It is ours to carry out as a local fellowship of believers.

Everything we do and every dollar we give is to be focused on this divine mission of making disciples for the purpose of strengthening and establishing local churches. Every ministry we are engaged in as a local church fellowship has as its goal the strengthening and establishing of this local church and the multiplication of this church locally, nationally, and globally. It is only as we rally behind this divinely given mandate that we can hope to see the expansion of His work in us and through us to those around us.

God has entrusted to His people the ministry of disciple making. Such a ministry is to be in and through local churches for the purpose of establishing local churches.

If we fail to strengthen and establish our “home base,” then we are in danger of failing to establish and strengthen other churches both here and abroad. We must first strengthen the ministry of our Lord in and through our local church fellowship.

**This is my passion . . . that God would give us a place that pulsates with life that becomes for generations to come a beacon of light that pierces the darkness that radiates hope here and abroad.**

The strength of our outreach is based in and built on the strength of our home base. May God give us people whose hearts are knit together with ours in this desire to move in and through our local church family to reach deeply into our local community and continues to splash across the nation and into the world.

**Friend, we must not rest “until every remotest part becomes a Jerusalem.”**



# The Mission of God and the Mission of the Church - The Waukesha Bible Church Core Values

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*WBC is a Christ-Exalting, Word-Centered, Global-Impacting, Grace-Based fellowship.*

We believe those who are sent by Waukesha Bible Church should affirm the basic principles of her core values. As a fellowship, we celebrate the diversity of the larger body of Christ and thus seek unity through grace.

Our core values unfold what it means to live under the umbrella of a Reigning Grace. They remind us to see the shadow of the cross cast against the canvass of our lives. Our core values answer the question, "Why do we do what we do?" This is what we stand for. This is what we are about. This is what identifies us as His people in the Waukesha Community and around the World.

- Waukesha Bible Church is a Christ-Exalting fellowship

As a fellowship we are convinced that God the Father is glorified as the Son is exalted. This is the thrust of Philippians 2:9-11, "Every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord *to the glory of God the Father.*" It is the ministry of the Holy Spirit to lift high the Son of God (John 15:26; 16:14). In our worship, our passion is to put Jesus Christ center-stage. He is our reality. This is not at the exclusion of a Trinitarian centered theology, but we do believe in an ontological (i.e. essence) trinity and an economical (i.e. administration/economy) trinity. In their essence the Trinity is one, but in their economy they are distinct. Each one works according to their purpose within the Trinitarian communion.

- Waukesha Bible Church is a Word-Centered fellowship

In a world that does not believe in absolutes, we believe the Word of God, the Bible, affords us the only and final objective authority known to man (Prov. 30:5, 6; 2 Tim. 3:15-17). It is the final court of appeal, the answer to every question and the silencer of every argument (Ps. 119:105). We delight to know we have in our possession the very Words of God.

- Waukesha Bible Church is a Global-Impacting fellowship

It is a family through which God develops people in the Christian life as far as He has called them through evangelism, discipleship, and in the establishment and continuance of independent, indigenous, local churches (Matthew 28:18-20; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-11; 2 Tim. 2:2) among every tribe, tongue, people, and nations of the world.

- Waukesha Bible Church is a Grace-Based fellowship

As a Grace fellowship, we believe grace operates in the sphere of relationships. First, we make no claim of being able to merit any of God's favor (Isa. 64:6; Rom. 3:10-12; Titus 3:5). We are fully convinced that grace reigns from the inception, continuation, and culmination of the Christian life (Gal. 3:1-5). We are equally convinced that what has been received by grace cannot be retained by works. It

is impossible for us to undo by our actions what God has done through His actions. Second, grace teaches us to love without condition (Gal. 5:13, 14), accept without requirement (Eph. 4:32), forgive without limit (Matt. 18:22), and serve without reward (Luke 6:35). As a people of grace, we put understanding above accusation, forbearance above faultfinding, and Biblical unity above the demand for conformity (John 13:34, 35; Ps. 133:1-3).

# The Mission of God and the Mission of the Church ~ The Waukesha Bible Church Missions Vision for the Strengthening and Establishing of Local Churches



Missions as used in this document, and all documents of Waukesha Bible Church (hereinafter “WBC”), refers to the carrying out of the Mission of God which she believes to be the strengthening and establishing of local churches through the making and maturing of disciples by church planters and Christian workers. The vision for strengthening and establishing local churches begins with the local church, is through the local church, and ends with the local church.

WBC desires to plant churches - locally, nationally and globally - that share her core values (as stated in the preface to the WBC constitution), and that will plant other churches with similar core values.

To enable WBC to do so, and to provide a model for future church plants, WBC desires to be led by elders who share this vision, and who are willing and able to be students of the Word, men of prayer, and shepherds of the sheep, and who are enabled to do so by delegating responsibility for the administration of WBC ministries and ministry facilities to deacons (both male and female) operating under the oversight and authority of the elders.

To further enable WBC to plant other churches with similar core values, WBC desires to raise up church planters and Christian workers from within the congregation by means of an internship program and by means of church-based theological and ministry training for those who desire additional training without leaving WBC. It is the desire of WBC that all male church planters be “elder qualified” prior to being sent out.

To further enable WBC to plant other churches with similar core values, WBC desires to fund these church plants and church planters to a level significantly higher than any current church planter or Christian worker is presently being funded. In order to do this, WBC sees the need to reevaluate its existing “missionaries” as either “church planters” or “Christian workers,” and possibly, to reduce or eliminate funding to some church planters and even more Christian workers, giving priority consideration (first to church planters and then to Christian workers) to those who are from within the WBC body and who share WBC core values. “Church planters” for this purpose are defined as those who are *directly and immediately* engaged in proclaiming the gospel with the intention of making and maturing disciples and gathering them into a local church that will duplicate the church-planting process. “Christian workers” for this purpose are defined as all other workers in Christian ministries, whether in missions administration, education or support, or in other Para-church capacities, at home or abroad, who require monetary support.

“Church planters” are defined as those who are *directly and immediately* engaged in proclaiming the gospel with the intention of making and maturing disciples and gathering them into a local church that will duplicate the church-planting process.

This vision statement is neither all-inclusive, nor exclusive of any other ministry vision of WBC, now or in the future, that does not conflict with this vision statement.

## “Why Evangelism?”

*“That thy way may be known upon the earth” (Ps. 67:2a).*

Matthew 28:19 makes discipleship imperative to the Christian mission. Discipleship of the nations presupposes that the nations are non-disciples. Evangelism and discipleship are the two sides of one coin. They are inseparably linked. No ministry is completely biblical that focuses on one in the absence of the other.

Evangelism calls people to believe the person and work of Jesus Christ (Mark 16:15). Evangelism has an inherent goal of seeing sinners converted by a life changing encounter with the living Christ. Yet why is evangelism intrinsic to the Christian mission? There are two fundamental reasons as to why evangelism is inherent to the Christian faith.

First, for the proclaiming of His name among all nations. This is the general intent of evangelism. God wants and will have His name proclaimed among all the nations of the world. This is the consistent theme of the entire bible. The Psalmist notes this idea throughout.

Ps. 67:2 *That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations.*

Ps. 72:11 Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: *all nations shall serve him.*

Ps. 72:17 His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: *all nations shall call him blessed.*

Ps. 82:8 Arise, O God, judge the earth: for *thou shalt inherit all nations.*

Ps. 86:9 *All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name.*

Such an idea is present in the Abrahamic Covenant of Genesis 12.

<sup>3</sup> And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And *in you all the families of the earth will be blessed*" (Gen. 12:3).

The eternal purpose of God for the nations has always projected past His people. God’s redemptive purpose is not singular. Even those who continue in their rebellion against Him are a part of His redemptive activity. For them His redemptive activity is a confirmation of their adamant rejection of His abundant grace. God is not guilty or responsible for their just condemnation. They are guilty and will face the full wrath of rejected grace. The inclusive nature of God’s glory is noted in passages like Revelation 4 and 5.

<sup>9</sup> “And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and *purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.* <sup>10</sup> “You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.” <sup>11</sup> Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and *the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands,* <sup>12</sup> saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.” (Rev. 5:9-12).

God’s name will have reached to the furthest recesses of His creation. No stone will have been left unturned. Every crevice and crack will have heard the glory of His name. This fundamental thought

runs contrary to the idea that missions exists primarily for the conversion of the lost. Although this is a part of the mission, missions and evangelism can exist in the absence of conversions. The primary motive for missions is in the proclamation of His name among all nations. Yet there is a second reason as to why evangelism is an indispensable part of the mission.

Second, evangelism is indispensable for the securing of His people from among all nations. This is the specific intent of evangelism. God wants and will have His people secured from among all nations. God has clearly given the outcome of His eternal purpose. Revelation 4 and 5 tell us that He will have gathered worshippers from every tongue, tribe, people, and nation. This end is certain. The means to that end is a global proclamation of His name among all nations. We are a part of this eternal purpose. This is what drives us as a fellowship. Everything we do is for the fulfillment of this purpose.

God's eternal purpose for the redemption of His people will not fail. Every time we proclaim the name of Christ among the unbelieving we can be assured that His Word will not return to Him void (Isa. 55:11). His Word will always bear fruit. Belief and rejection although different responses are both the fruit of the preached Word. Some seed falls on hard soil and some on good soil; both are results of the Word being broadcasted (Mark 4:1-20). Our responsibility is to "preach the Word" (2 Tim. 4:2). His responsibility is for the outcome of the Word preached. We are to move forward in prayerful dependency on the God who bends the will of people to conform to His eternal purpose. We are to prayerfully spread the Word of God. The means God has chosen to accomplish His end is through the instrumentation of His people. May this move us never to stop taking the Word of God outward toward the immediate context of our neighbors and the remotest regions of the world. May we never stop "Until every remotest part becomes a Jerusalem" (Acts 1:8).

## “Is Discipleship the Mission of the Local Church?”



The question needs clarification only because the bottom line as to the mission of the local church, as with all of creation, is “to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever.” A means whereby this takes place in and through the church is the ministry of discipleship.

Unfortunately in our “Christian culture” the word “discipleship” carries with it the idea of “next level” Christianity, seeming to suggest that within Christianity there are those who are disciples and those who are not disciples. Yet discipleship is at the very core of what it means to be Christian.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer (February 4, 1906 – April 9, 1945) was a German Lutheran pastor, theologian and participant in the German resistance movement against Nazism. He was arrested in March 1943, imprisoned and eventually hanged [as a martyr], just before the end of the Second World War in Europe. His book, *The Cost of Discipleship*, is considered a classic within Christianity. Listen carefully to what he says as one who affirmed his love for God with his life blood.

**Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ.** It remains an abstract idea, a myth which has a place for the Fatherhood of God, but omits Christ as the living Son. ... There is trust in God, but no following of Christ. (*The Cost of Discipleship* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer 64)

Discipleship strikes at the very core of what it means to be a Christian. A Christian is a disciple of Christ, one who has become identified by Him. The command of Matthew 28:19 uses the word *matheteuo*. It can be translated to teach as well as disciple. This particular word (a verb) is only used four times in the New Testament (Matt. 13:52; 27:57; 28:19; and Acts 14:21).

The noun form of the word is used extensively throughout the four Gospels and Acts but nowhere in the rest of the New Testament. The idea of discipleship is perhaps best captured with the following definition:

A disciple is one who undertakes the discipline of his/her teacher. Disciples not only take in what they are taught and what they learn from being with the teacher, they take it into their core identity, so that it defines who they are. <http://www.spirithome.com/definit.html>

What this means biblically is defined for us by Matthew in 16:21-28.

“Then Jesus said to His disciples, **“If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me”** (Matt. 16:24).

According to Matthew 16, discipleship is neither convenient nor comfortable. Yet we have made it both. Discipleship is defined by a controlling identity. Discipleship says, “I am a Christian.” It is defined by who Christ is. Discipleship is always done in the context of a relationship. The relationship can be informal or formal, official or unofficial, stated or assumed, but it is always in a relationship. The relationship always involves at least two people. One is a teacher/student and the other is a student/teacher. I make this necessary qualifier only because every teacher should be a student and every student will teach.

Discipleship is always done in the context of a relationship.

As disciples Christians are always transmitting their faith. This transmission of faith can be intentional or unintentional but it is always being communicated. The question that confronts all of us as a fellowship is whether or not we are a disciple-making church? This automatically embraces evangelism and church planting as the two bookends to the one continuum of discipleship. All three components of evangelism, discipleship, and church planting are inseparably linked. To rip either one from the other is to kill the activity. God's design is for His work to be carried out in and through the local church who are His people.

As we think on these things may God stir within us a passion for His glory in and through His church. May we find our joy in His joy and may we not rest in the work of God until we see face-to-face the God of the work.

## “Why is Mentoring Important to the Mission of the Local Church?”

The question is legitimate, “Why should we be investing ourselves in the lives of other people?” The idea of investing in others is present across any context. The trades call it an apprenticeship. Teachers have students, parents have children, and the church has disciples. In attempting to explain the concept of discipleship one writer provides us with the following thought.

*Discipline* is derived from a Latin word which meant *to learn*. Hence also the origin of the English word *disciple* which meant *one who learns*.

Today, “discipline, or disciplinary action,” is very often defined as “an act of punishment,” and as such it very often has a negative connotation. But originally “a discipline” meant *a branch of knowledge*, and from that, a system of conduct.

It is in light of this that we believe every believer is a disciple. As such every disciple finds themselves in various relationships and within various roles. Some of those roles exist outside the context of direct local church ministry while others find themselves serving directly and fully within the context of the local church. Within the specific context of local church ministry some believe that God would have them give their entire lives to serving God by serving His church. This service or ministry is “a discipline.” It is “a branch of knowledge” that results in “a system of conduct.” It can also express itself in the areas of church planter, pastor/teacher.

The leadership believes the ministry of pastor/teacher and/or church planter is best learned in the context of local church ministry under the direction of local church leadership.

When examining God’s design for His church the intent is not implosion. The promise is for Him to “build” His church. The church of Jesus Christ is an organism that is alive and growing. His church is an exploding entity. It is always to be engaged in the reproduction of itself in the lives of others and in various cultures. The culture can be defined geographically or generational.

Because this is true the leadership of local churches is to be actively and intentionally engaged in the role of mentor/protégé, teacher/student, and pastor/intern.

Not only is the pattern of duplication biblical, it is equally the quickest way to see people reached for Christ. **No one can reach everyone, but many have the greater chance of reaching more.** This is our goal and our passion.

The church exists to shout the supremacy of God in all things by finding, celebrating, and declaring that He is enough in this life and the life to come through the systematic study of Scripture and to share this message with every tongue, tribe, people, and nation. Our mission is only possible of being fulfilled through the mentoring of the next generation of church planters.

By embracing the disciple model and investing ourselves in the lives of others we have a greater chance of duplicating our core values locally, nationally, and globally. It is my passion that the supremacy of God and the joy of who Jesus is, what He has done, and who His people are in Him will be found,



celebrated, and declared among every tongue, tribe, people, and nation. And it is to this end that I give myself and the ministries of this fellowship.

What does this demand of us? As pastors/teachers, we must be committed to teaching the Word as clearly, consistently, and continually as possible. Local churches have never been or will ever be Sunday only ministries. Discipleship can only be done in the context of relationships. We must be committed to investing time in the lives of those who will carry forth the mission of God and thus carry out the mission of the church.

This demands of us a commitment to loving without condition, accepting without requirement, forgiving without limit, and serving without reward. We must be united in this. Greater patience and a tolerance toward others must prevail. We must be committed to celebrating the tremendous diversity within our unified fellowship. Our passion for the world through mentoring can only be sustained through consistent, regular, and sacrificial giving. It will, by its very nature, force us outside our comfort zone.

Yet this is the mission of Christ and the mission of His church. We have the promise of God's power and presence to sustain us in this pursuit. The process of mentoring begins the moment someone enters our fellowship regardless of age. From the cradle to the grave we are committed to shout the supremacy of God in all things and to enable others to joy in the absolute sufficiency and satisfaction of who Jesus Christ is.

God has risen up and continues to rise up those whose hearts are knit together in this singular pursuit. How can we be involved? First, pray for God's ministry in and through the local church. Second, pray for the leadership. Third, be involved. No one can do everything, but everyone can do something. Finally, continue to give financially. God's call is for His people to give. It is as the pieces of ministry come together that we exist as the body of Christ in the community. May He grant to us a great joy in the sacrifices that await us.

## “Missionaries and the Mission of the Local Church”

*“Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers: Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their 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” (Acts 13:1-4).*

Read Acts 13:1-14:28

Missions is the movement of the local church forward and outward into its local, national, and global community. There is no part of the church that is not to be actively engaged in the proclamation of its stewardship outwardly. This short study will set forth the idea as to who inside of a local church might be identified as a missionary.

We begin with a question. **First**, is the title of “missionary” identifying an office inside of the local church or a spiritual gifting outside of an office? For example, a Pastor/Elder of a fellowship should have the spiritual gifting of teaching and shepherding. These functions might be exercised outside of the office, but all within the office have this gifting. Thus a person might be a gifted teacher and not occupy the office of Pastor/Elder (Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11). Or perhaps an individual might be a gifted discipler/counselor and not occupy the office of pastor. But there is an office or position inside of a local church fellowship that is identified by the name “Pastor/Elder.” This same idea is present for those who identify themselves as “Missionary.” Is a missionary defined by function or by position? The word “missionary” can be defined by etymology (Latin-sent one) or cultural usage (anyone engaged in Christian ministry who is supported by multiple sources) or a biblical pattern (those engaged in the planting of local churches through local churches).

**Second**, if a missionary is a label outside of the biblical record than what biblical principles can be used to identify those who might be considered missionaries? Some would suggest the idea of a missionary as someone who has been sent. This broad appeal is sustained by passages like Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47; and John 20:21. However, this appeal is made to the people of God in general and then to local churches in particular. To think that each individual is now mandated by God to go is to run counterproductive to His purpose in and through the church. The mission of God in and through local churches is the body of Christ working together for the expansion of His kingdom. Christians are built for community. Our culture runs contrary to community and celebrates individualism to the detriment of believers and churches alike.

So . . . is there any way of identifying who a missionary might be? It is here that I would make a distinction between those who are to be identified as missionaries and those who are inside of another category identified as vocational Christian workers. Almost all missionaries are vocational Christian workers, but not all vocational Christian workers are missionaries.

Missionaries are carrying out the mission of the local church of planting other local churches regardless as to geographical location or cultural expression. Vocational Christian workers are primarily inside the larger umbrella of the church universal. They are not necessarily attached to any one local church. For example, most missionary agencies are staffed by vocational Christian workers, not missionaries. Bible

Colleges and Christian Camps are staffed by vocational Christian workers, not missionaries. This runs contrary to our current evangelical mindset, but better explains how we are to view these categories from a biblical perspective.

**Third**, if missionaries are church planters then should missionaries be elder qualified? This question almost needs no response. The apparent answer should be yes. The tension comes around the issue of gender. Only men may be elders thus can only men be missionaries? I believe we have attached some kind of mystical imagery around the name missionary that has twisted our understanding of this entire issue.

For example, there are a number of single ladies who are desirous of going out from the local church fellowship and serve God. How would I view this? First, regardless as to gender each individual must be identified by the sitting Elders of that fellowship to validate their qualifications to be sent out. This approval by the leadership will eventually be affirmed by the congregation. Second, regardless as to gender each individual should go through an intentional mentoring internship. This internship can last between 18 - 24 months. It may last longer, but not less than that. Third, each individual will work with the sitting Elders to identify a potential agency that would assist the local church in supporting the sending local church through an established infrastructure, if such is necessary. Fourth, the local church will send out the individual regardless as to gender.

These ideas cause us to think through various scenarios. Here another observation can be made. First, many individuals who have grown up in our local church are presently engaged in vocational Christian ministry. They have no necessary connection to us. We neither sent them nor support them financially.

Secondly, there are others who minister in parachurch ministries that are not directly or immediately connected with the planting of local churches. Many of these individuals need financial support. Depending on various criteria when we support these individuals they are sent out but their sending is not the same as that of a church planting missionary. They are sent and supported but they are not identified as missionaries but rather as vocational Christian workers. This is true regardless as to gender.

**Finally**, there are those who are directly and immediately involved in the planting of local churches. These people can be of either gender although only the men would be identified as missionaries and the single women would be identified as vocational Christian workers. Both would be sent with the full authority of the local church to plant another local church; both would receive the full financial backing of the local church as it relates to their annual salary, but only the men would be identified as missionaries whereas the single women would be identified as vocational Christian workers. The only distinction between the two would be title and position, not function or treatment. It is the same idea behind a female staff member of a local church. She might have a gift of teaching and/or pastoring but she would not occupy the office of pastor or be called pastor.

As a local church fellowship our passion is to send out missionaries to plant churches. We are equally committed to assist those who are not going into the direct and immediate ministry of local church planting but whose ministries cultivate and promote the church universal. We believe both need the approval of the sitting Elders and both need to be affirmed by the local church fellowship. We believe both need to be mentored inside the context of a local church and we believe both need to be sent and supported.

May God sharpen our focus as we seek to carry out His mission for the local church through missions.

May He enable His people to identify those on whom the gifting of God rests for the advancement of His kingdom to every tribe, tongue, people, and nation.

# “He Rules Over the Nations”

*“For the kingdom is the LORD'S,  
And He rules over the nations” (Ps. 22:28)*



Read Psalm 22

This Psalm has three movements: verses 1-21, 22-26, and 27-31. Our focus will be on verses 27-31. It is necessary, however, to note the two preceding paragraphs within the Psalm itself. Verses 1-21 are immediately recognizable by everyone who reads the New Testament as the Psalm quoted by our Lord in Matthew 27:46, “About the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘ELI, ELI, LAMA SABACHTHANI?’ that is, ‘MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?’” This Psalm is heavily Messianic in character. Within Psalm 22:1-21 you can see the crucifixion of our Lord and the fulfillment of prophecy (vv. 1, 6, 7, 12-16, 18). From Psalm 22:1-21 we are led into verses 22-26. In verses 22-26 the sufferer of verses 1-21 testifies before his brethren in the Temple of God’s faithfulness to deliver.

He calls upon his fellow Jews to join him in praising the LORD. God does deliver the afflicted and He will satisfy them in their hunger (vv. 23, 24, 26). Both of these movements within the Psalm (i.e. the sufferings of the afflicted [vv. 1-21] and the satisfying of the delivered [vv. 22-26]) bring us to verses 27-31.

The Psalm has an ever increasing circle of inclusion. It begins with the individual in verses 1-21, then it extends to the congregation within the Temple in verses 22-26, and finally it explodes in the arena of “all the ends of the earth” in verses 27-31. It is strongly Jewish in verses 22-26 and becomes inclusive and universal in verses 27-31. Our paragraph begins with a statement of universal worship. There are two sentences in verse 27 that are in synonymous parallelism. Verse 28 provides the reason for this universal worship of the LORD, “For the kingdom is the LORD'S and He rules over the nations.”

The rule of God is marked by three qualities. **First**, the rule of God is unconditional. God does what He desires to do. There is no gap between God’s will and the exercising of power to accomplish what He wills. How this works out in and through free moral agents is beyond my ability to process, but the will of God is being fulfilled. **Second**, the rule of God is universal. There is nothing that falls outside of His rule. All things created bow before Him. **Third**, the rule of God is unveiling. Who God is finds expression in how He rules. The rule of God is just, but it is also gracious, loving, merciful, and faithful. The rule of God is not executed by a fallen despot who delights in the misery of his citizens. No, our God’s very character as a God of love and grace guarantees that in the exercising of His will we have an unending reservoir of wisdom and mercy.

The rule of God is universal. There is nothing that falls outside of His rule. All things created bow before Him.
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God does indeed rule over the nations and all things created will one day bow before him without outside coercion in humble adoration and will profess with their voices He is Lord to the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2:11, 12).

Can there be any doubt as to why He is worshipped and as to the certainty of this worship?

Verse 29 of Psalm 22 gives us the inclusive nature of the worship. No one, regardless as to financial prosperity or personal ruin will be excluded from the company of those who worship before Him.

Verses 30 and 31 give us an Old Testament equivalent to Matthew 28:18-20 and 2 Timothy 2:2. We are to teach each succeeding generation the truth about God. How significant is our baby ministry? How significant is the ministry to our children and youth? It is priceless. We are constantly endeavoring to expand our ministry to children through outreach and instruction.

It is because of the satisfaction of His labor that we can raise up our voices in unison and say, "He rules over the nations."

Notice what we are to tell our children. We are to tell our children that "He has done it." Many suggest that we are to translate this, "It is finished." In fact, this is how the Amplified Bible expands on this verse. Friends, we are to tell the next generation and even those who are yet unborn, "It is finished."

It is because of His suffering that He now rules over the nations. It is because of the satisfaction of His labor that we can raise up our voices in unison and say, "He rules over the nations." Friend, there is coming a day when "All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations will worship before You."

Today, let us praise His name and let us commit ourselves to this holy task of telling each succeeding generation that "It is finished" and that God does indeed rule over the nations!

## “How Beautiful Are the Feet of Those Who Bring Good News of Good Things”

12

*“And how shall they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written,*

**“HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GLAD TIDINGS OF GOOD THINGS!”**

*(Rom. 10:15)*

Read Romans 10:5-17

Contained within this chapter is a powerful exhortation to the people of God to take the word of God to the inhabitants of this world. The simplicity of faith is clearly noted in verses 9-13. Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved (v.13). The gospel indiscriminately applies to everyone (i.e. Jew or Gentile, male or female, bond or free) who calls on the name of the Lord. Its application is restricted only by the necessity to believe the gospel.

The questions then posed by verses 14-15a become the heart of the paragraph. You cannot call on Him, if the “Him” is an unknown (v.14). You cannot know Him, if you have never heard of Him. And no one will hear unless someone “preaches” to you who the “He” is. And no one will preach unless they are somehow sent. It is here we read with excitement the explosive statement of verse 15b, “HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!”

Why are the feet of those who bring good news of good things so beautiful? Because they bring one who has been sent and who brings with them the message of Him in whom is life from death and salvation from eternal damnation. It is for this reason that their “feet” are beautiful!

Verse 16 sadly notes how not all men everywhere have faith. Verse 17 becomes directional, “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.”

It is only as we embrace the necessity of sharing the gospel that we engage in the proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of sinners. Missions is not something done when removed from one’s cultural upbringing. Missions happens every time the word of God is expressed. Every time a word is shared, a kind deed expressed, a card sent, the gospel preached, the people gathered, bridges are being built for the proclamation of the gospel. We endeavor to broadcast the word of God as far and wide as possible in order that hearing might take place and faith might be expressed.

Missions happens every time the word of God is expressed.

How beautiful are your feet when you take with you the good news of Jesus Christ. May God raise us up as a fellowship where the gospel of good news is intentionally taken into our local, national, and global community. May we never tire in the task of making disciples of all the nations. May we not rest until He is proclaimed as reigning over the nations and may we never cease saying to all people everywhere, “It is finished!”

## “You Were Slain, and Purchased For God With Your Blood Men From Every Tribe and Tongue and People and Nation”

13

*“And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation” (Rev. 5:9).*

Read Revelation 4 and 5

There are very few chapters in the Bible that pack the emotional punch contained in chapters 4 and 5 of the book of Revelation. Every time I read it, my heart sings with joy at the culmination of God’s work and the fulfillment of His will.

God’s promise to the nations began in Genesis 12 in His making of a covenant with Abraham (12:3, “In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed”). It was confirmed in Genesis 18:18 and promised continuation through his offspring (Gen. 22:18). It was reiterated to Isaac in Genesis 26:4. Isaiah prophesied of a day wherein the nations will see the salvation of the Lord (Isa. 52:10; 61:11). Jeremiah prophesied of a day wherein the nations will see the salvation of the Lord (Jer. 3:17). Zechariah also speaks of this day (Zech. 14:16). The New Testament continues the theme of a global proclamation (Matt. 28:19; Luke 24:47), gathering (Mark 11:17), and celebration over the reign of God (Rev. 12:5; 15:4). In light of God’s redemptive purpose to be glorified among all people, everywhere, at all times our present task still lies undone. Listen carefully to the information concerning the 10/40 Window.



The 10/40 Window is a rectangular piece of geography that holds the world’s deepest spiritual and physical needs. It is a designated belt that extends from West Africa and across Asia, between 10 degrees and 40 degrees north latitude.

- 97% of people in the least evangelized countries live in the 10/40 Window.
- 2.7 Billion Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims live in the 10/40 Window.
- 82% of the poorest of the poor live in the 10/40 Window.
- The vast majority of the un-reached people of our world live inside the window.



- This specific region, also called “The Resistant Belt,” encompasses the majority of the world's Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists - billions of spiritually impoverished souls. Sixty-four countries which have been identified as the most spiritually impoverished fall within or near the boundaries of the 10/40 window.
- The “un-evangelized” are people who may have a minimal knowledge of the Gospel, but have had no valid opportunity to respond to it. Containing only one third of the earth's land area, it holds two thirds of the world’s population, nearly 4 Billion. Yet they contain 97% of the total population in all 50 of those countries.
- There are currently over 700 million adherents to Islam across Northern Africa and the Middle East, over 700 million living under Hinduism in India and Nepal, and an estimated 600 million Buddhists across East Asia and China. Even in China after nearly 50 years of Communist religious suppression, Buddhism is a predominant influence, mixed in with adherents of animism, mysticism, folklore and occult practice. By the year 2000 AD, it is anticipated that the numbers will climb to over 1 billion of both Muslims and Hindus.
- The vast majority of the world's least evangelized mega cities (those with populations in excess of one million) are within the 10/40 window. In fact, all 50 of the top 50 on this list are in the 10/40 Window.
- Over 90% of individuals living in yet un-reached ethno linguistic people groups live within the frame of the 10/40 Window. If we take seriously the need to take the Gospel to “every tribe,” we need to focus on where they live!
- Over 80% of the poorest of the poor – 2.4 billion of them equaling half of the world's population, existing on less than \$500 per year each – live within the 10/40 Window. And yet, only 8% of all Christian missionaries work among them.

<p style="text-align: center;">God is gathering worshippers from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation. He is using His church to do the gathering.</p>
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Information like this is startling and is to awake us to the great need of the un-evangelized. The pendulum of opportunity awaits at our doorstep with the children and youth of our communities and those within the 10/40 Window.

God is gathering worshippers from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation. He is using His church to do the gathering. He is using His people, He is using us, and He is using you. It is my prayer that we will become a lighthouse for the proclamation of His all-consuming sufficiency through the strengthening and establishing of this local church. It is His mission in us and through us to those around us. May He continue to knit our hearts together in this holy quest.

## “Let All Nations Call Him Blessed”

*“May his name endure forever; May his name increase  
as long as the sun shines; And let men bless themselves by him;  
Let all nations call him blessed” (Ps. 72:17).*

Read Psalm 72

Psalm 72 is classified as a royal Psalm. As such, it is Messianic. For the believer it pictures the reign of our Lord Jesus Christ. This Psalm is notably appropriate as it relates to the Lord Jesus. It is easy to hear the echo of Genesis 12:2 and 3, “And so you shall be a blessing; and in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.” The ultimate fulfiller of this promise is in and through Jesus Christ. Psalm 72 celebrates this glorious certainty.

Think about it . . . “All nations shall call Him blessed.” What a reassuring promise. All nations shall call Him happy. As we consider this Psalm, please note with me four observations.

- **First**, the statement is eternal. His name shall endure forever. There is never a time when this statement will not be true. His name is an eternal name.
- **Second**, the statement is expansive. It will increase as long as the sun shines.
- **Third**, the statement is personal. He blesses men. True joy can only be found in Him. He is the ultimate source of all contentment and peace.
- **Finally**, the statement is worshipful.

All nations will call Him blessed. “The grateful nations shall echo his benedictions, and wish him happy who has made them happy.” (Spurgeon, 3:322).

Isaac Watts was born at Southampton July 17, 1674. He is considered the father of English hymnody. One characteristic of Watts’ hymns is majesty. Watts’ most published book was his Psalms of David, first published in 1719. In his poetic paraphrases of the psalms, Watts adapted the psalms for use by the Church and made David speak “the language of a Christian.” The song, “Jesus Shall Reign” contains fourteen stanzas. Our hymnal gives us four of the majestic verses.

As we consider the theme for these days of concentrated global focus, let us have these words wash over our souls. May the song ring in our hearts and may they reverberate from our lips. Truly, Jesus Shall Reign.

### Jesus Shall Reign

Jesus shall reign  
wherever sun does His successive journeys run;  
His kingdom spread from shore to shore,  
till moons shall wax and wane no more.

To Him shall endless prayer be made,  
and endless praises crown His head;  
His name like sweet perfume

shall rise with every morning sacrifice.

People and realms of every tongue  
dwell on His love with sweetest song;  
And infant voices shall proclaim  
their early blessings on His name.

Let every creature rise  
and bring his grateful honors to our king;  
Angels descend with songs again,  
and earth repeat the loud "Amen!"

## “Let the Nations be Glad and Sing For Joy”

15

*“Let the nations be glad and sing for joy;  
For Thou wilt judge the peoples with uprightness,  
and guide the nations on the earth. Selah” (Ps. 67:4).*

Read Psalm 67

We are here for Him and we will one day be gathered to worship Him. Nothing can stop this from happening. Everything is pushing us to that end.

As we consider the idea of God’s mission in and through local churches, I would like us to step back by noting the bigger picture first. After noting the bigger picture we will consider several of the “smaller” pieces.

A psalm is a hymn of praise to God. The Book of Psalms was originally the hymn book for Israel. The Psalms are a classic example of Hebrew poetry which, unlike English poetry made of rhyme and rhythm, consists of parallel or contrasting ideas.

The Psalm we are considering in this study has been called “Israel’s Missionary Psalm, and Israel’s Millennial Prayer.” It will become evident that the climax of our present Psalm is found in verse 4.

There is an ever increasing crescendo that climaxes in an explosion of celebration and God driven declaration; LET THE NATIONS BE GLAD! There is a prophetic anticipation that forces us to live on the edge of unbridled exuberance; LET THE NATIONS BE GLAD!

Although the Psalm is used by the nation of Israel it is a celebration of what God will do among the nations of the earth and we are a part of this prophetic promise.

In verse one, a request or petition is being made to God, “God be gracious to us and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us – Selah.” Israel recognized that the good favor of God would be reflected in His face and in that face would be found grace and blessing. This is no less true for us today. Because God has caused His face to shine upon us, He is gracious and He has blessed us. There is sustenance in the presence of God. He sustains us with His presence.

Because God has caused His face to shine upon us, He is gracious and He has blessed us.

There is also this sense whereby God is working in us and through us to those around us. It is through His people that God is proclaiming and working His will for the nations. We are asking God to bless us for the sake of the nations. We beg God to bless us in our depth of Him; we beg God to bless us in numerical growth and for financial power in order that we might be used by God for the advancement of His mission to the ends of the earth. Verse one ends with this meditative footnote Selah. It sets verse one and verses 2-4 as stanzas of this hymn. As a result of God’s face shining upon us we are a blest and graced people. This blessing is defined in three ways (vv. 2-4): redemption, rejoicing, and reassurance.

There is a universal aspect to God’s redemptive activity. The knowledge of who He is will permeate the created order. The redemptive work of Christ is to be made known among all nations. The Hebrew word “nations” occurs in 58 verses in the book of Psalms. There are at least three big ideas as it relates

to the nations and our God. The nations are His inheritance (Pss. 2:8; 22:28; 82:8), they will serve Him (Pss. 18:43; 47:8; 72:11; 96:10; 113:4) and He will be worshipped by them (Pss. 22:27; 46:10; 72:17; 86:9; 117:1).

This same central truth is found throughout the New Testament and is seen with a culminating vision in Revelation 4 and 5. Read carefully Revelation 5:1-14. Verses 1-4 make clear man's inadequacy to open the book, but God is clearly able (vv. 5-14). The author speaks of His regal authority (vv. 5-7) and His redemptive activity (vv. 8-14). He has redeemed His people (v. 9), made them rulers (v. 10) and such action on His part solicits adoration on their part (vv. 11-14). Revelation 5:14 reflects and echoes Psalm 67:3 and 4. The redemptive activity of God demands a response of praise and joy.

The fourth verse contains the core of the composition, "Let the nations be glad and sing for joy."

Praise is the healthy habit of happy hearts. When the righteous Ruler reigns, there will be real rejoicings." (A.G. Clarke, *Analytical Studies in the Psalms*, 174)

In considering the thoughts contained in Psalm 67:4, John Piper of Bethlehem Baptist Church says,

"God is interested in all the peoples. He wants to draw every people into the joy of his supremacy: 'Let the nations be glad and sing for joy.' This is our understanding of finishing the great commission—not that every individual will be saved but that every people group will be penetrated with the gospel. Revelation 5:9 says that Christ 'was slain, ransomed for God with [his own] blood people from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.'"

Our mission will not be finished until all the peoples hear and the church is planted in every one. This is a huge priority among us. World history hangs on it.

God promises to "judge with uprightness and guide the nations on the earth" (v. 4b). His reassurances are to strengthen our resolve.

The last stanza of the psalm serves as a review. The faithful choir sings God's praises (v. 5 ["Let the peoples praise You, O God"]) as the earth displays His blessings (v. 6 ["The earth has yielded its produce"]). God blesses us for what purpose? So that, "all the ends of the earth may fear Him" (v. 7).

As you reflect on the many blessings you have received, remember that Jesus Christ is your blessing. All other blessings flow from knowing Him. As we acknowledge the ultimate gift of His Son in our lives may God cause us to be a blessing to the nations. May we impact our world so that "all the ends of the earth may fear Him." And may the nations be glad and sing for joy for our God reigns.

## “Why Should and How Will the Nations be Glad and Sing For Joy?”

*“Let the nations be glad and sing for joy; For Thou wilt judge the peoples with uprightness, and guide the nations on the earth. Selah” (Ps. 67:4).*

Read Psalm 67

The nations will be glad and they will sing for joy because the sacrifice of God’s Son is sufficient for the forgiving of the nation’s sins. The means God has chosen to use in the bringing of His redemptive message to the nations during this period in history is in and through His church in the establishment of churches among every tongue, tribe, people, and nations of the world.

Have you ever gone to a white elephant gift exchange party? Basically, people simply give away their unwanted “junk.” Although it is a gift, chances are you do not want it. The value of the gift is found in what is given. This is equally true concerning the work of God. The nations can be glad and sing for joy because of the value of the gift.

The nations can be glad and sing for joy because of the value of the gift.

The Father sent His Son in order to redeem His own from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation. I would like us to consider four simple reasons why the nations can be glad.

**First**, the nature of His death is sufficient to save every one, every where, at all times (1 John 2:2). The value or worth of His death is sufficiently adequate to save all that He wills to save. In the absence of His death no one can be saved. Nothing more needs to be added and nothing can be subtracted from the finished cross work of His Son.

**Second**, the power of His death is for those who believe in the provision of His Son (Rom. 10:9-13). God only saves those who believe. The cross-work is of no avail if the person does not first believe. If this is not believed, then salvation from sin and its eternal penalty is not secured.

**Third**, the target of His death is for His people who are in every tribe, tongue, people, and nation. God does not simply wish for something without rendering certain the outcome. God is not hoping for a positive outcome to His Son’s redemptive work (Acts 13:48; 2 Tim. 2:10).

**Fourth**, the outcome of His death is certain (Rev. 5:9). He will secure from among every tribe, tongue, people, and nations worshippers (Isa. 53:11). He will not be denied. Neither the apathy of His allies nor the opposition of His enemies will prevent Him from fulfilling His purpose for the Nations.

The means God has chosen to use in the bringing of His redemptive message to the nations during this period in history is in and through His church in the establishment of churches among every tongue, tribe, people, and nations of the world.

How will the nations be glad and sing for joy? The means God has chosen to use in the bringing of His redemptive message to the nations during this period in history is in and through His church in the establishment of churches among every tongue, tribe, people, and nations of the world.

Van Sanders correctly observes and concludes his discussion on, “The Mission of God and the Local Church,” with the following idea.

“A close study of Paul’s approaches to different groups clearly shows that he followed the three application levels of Christ’s Incarnation pattern. First, he witnessed and disciplined individuals. Second, he disciplined groups of new converts into maturing communities of faith just as Jesus did with His disciples. Third, he identified within the churches he started, those like himself who were called to be missionary church planters. He took them with him and disciplined them by following the Incarnation pattern. They were disciplined as witnesses and disciple makers by witnessing among unreached people and discipling the converts into transformational communities of faith.”<sup>15</sup>

What are the practical implications of this idea for us as a local church? There are five key activities we are to be engaged in as we endeavor to share Christ with the nations.

**First**, the local church is the pillar and support of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15). The church is to promote and protect the purity of the gospel.

**Second**, the local church is to identify those on whom the call of God rests for vocational / leadership ministry in, through, and for local churches (Acts 13:1-4). The leadership within a local church should be able to identify those within the fellowship on whom the call of God is resting for specific ministry tasks.

**Third**, the local church is to train her people for leadership ministry in, through, and for local churches (2 Tim. 2:2).

**Fourth**, the local church is to send out her people for leadership ministry in, through, and for local churches (Acts 13:1-4). As a sending church what are our responsibilities individually and collectively? Let me give you five practical expressions of being a sending church. I am inviting you to get involved by . . .

1. Becoming a part of a ministry prayer team.
2. Giving regularly to the mission of WBC.
3. Becoming involved in personal discipleship that intentionally trains for ministry.
4. Striving after servant leadership.
5. Engaging in church planting ministry.

**Fifth**, the local church is to manage / administrate those she sends out for vocational / leadership ministry in, through, and for local churches (Acts 14:24-27).

This principle does not negate the necessary infrastructure provided by para-church ministries as they seek to enable local churches in the mission, but no agency can fulfill the responsibility given to the local church. They can share in our desire to move forward, but they are not the local church. *Agencies function as facilitators, not substitutes.* We rejoice with what every agency seeks to do for the advancement of God’s program in and through local churches for the establishment of His Kingdom. We have no desire to replace the role of the agency as it relates to the local church. We are believing God to strengthen the relationships that exist between sending churches and enabling agencies. May God enable us to push past our issues of ease and comfort, convenience and preference and to embrace His purpose for the nations.

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<sup>15</sup> Sanders, “The Mission of God,” 22.

## *A Final Word*

Well . . . can you see it? Look past the heartache, failure, and momentary setback and see inside the shell to the very meat of God. There is a richness that is lacking in anything else but the pursuit of God in and through His church. The Scripture identifies His work as precious. He has secured for Himself a people of praise.

I hope that your thinking has been stirred, your steps strengthened, and your gaze fixed. I look forward to the ongoing advancement of His purpose in and through His people called the local church. May He continue to knit our hearts together in this holy pursuit.





*Torn  
Veil*