

THE DEAREST PLACE ON EARTH (15)

A Mission-Minded Community

A. Introduction

1. The local church is a community of God's people.

2. What kind of community should we be?

When people look at this local church what should they see?

3. Evangelism to the local community and ministry within the local church are vital things that God has called us to do. But we should also have a concern for what happens further afield.

We are to be a mission-minded community.

B. The Hope of Missions

1. God has promised to bless all the peoples on the earth.

"The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." (Genesis 12:1-3)

2. Jesus has already purchased people from every tribe, language, people and nation with His blood.

"And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation." (Revelation 5:9)

3. People from every nation, tribe, people and language will be present in the new heavens and new earth.

"After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." (Revelation 7:9-10)

"I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendour into it." (Revelation 21:22-24)

4. Christ has people besides those already converted.

"I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd." (John 10:16)

5. The glory of God will fill the earth as the waters cover the sea.

"For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea." (Habakkuk 2:14)

"They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea." (Isaiah 11:9)

C. The Reason for Missions

1. God commands the nations to praise Him.

"Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exist because worship doesn't. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man. When this age is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. But worship abides forever." (John Piper)

"May the peoples praise you, O God; may all the peoples praise you. May the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you rule the peoples justly and guide the nations of the earth."
(Psalm 67:3-4)

"Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises. For God is the King of all the earth; sing to him a psalm of praise." (Psalm 47:6-7)

"Declare his glory among the nations, his marvellous deeds among all peoples." (Psalm 96:3)

"Praise the LORD, all you nations; extol him, all you peoples." (Psalm 117:1)

2. The desperate need for lost people to put their faith in Christ.

Hell is real.

"They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marvelled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you." (2 Thessalonians 1:9-10)

Jesus is the only Saviour.

"Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6)

"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)

Faith is necessary.

"Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him." (John 3:36)

"for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" (Romans 10:13-15)

3. God loves the world.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son,^[a] that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

We must too.

4. Jesus commands us to make disciples of all nations.

"Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20)

5. History is awaiting the fulfilment of the promise.

“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.” (Matthew 24:14)

6. The labourers are few.

“Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.” (Matthew 9:37)

1 in every 20,000 believers will ever take the gospel to those who are out of the reach of the church.

7. Global missions is tragically neglected.

2-3 billion people (6-10,000 people groups) have never heard the gospel preached in any form – they are lost and don't have any access to the gospel by which they can be found.

4000 of 6500 different languages have no portion of the Bible available to them.

250 ethnic groups with populations of more than 10,000 people do not have any Christian worker currently or planned for them.

D. The Task of Missions

1. The task of missions is to make disciples.

Not just preach the gospel.

Not just translate the Bible.

Not just converts.

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2. The task of missions is to make disciples of all nations.

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The apostle Paul understood the missionary task as reaching more and more nations for Christ than individuals for Christ.

“But now that there is no more place for me to work in these regions, and since I have been longing for many years to see you, I plan to do so when I go to Spain. I hope to visit you while passing through and to have you assist me on my journey there, after I have enjoyed your company for a while.” (Romans 15:23-24)

The task of missions is not to win as many individuals from nations that are receptive to the gospel, but to win individuals from all the nations of the world.

“A people group is reached when there is an indigenous church able to evangelise this group.”

As long as the Lord has not returned there must be more people groups to reach.

E. The Need of Missions

1. For people to be saved, Christ needs to be heard and believed in.

“for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard?” (Romans 10:13-14)

2. The need of missions is for people to preach Christ to people who have never heard of Him.

“And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!” (Romans 10:14-15)

F. The End of Missions

1. Missions will end when God says it’s over.

“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.” (Matthew 24:14)

2. God will say it’s over by sending His Son back to earth.

G. Some Encouragements for Missionsⁱ

1. “All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God’s grace in all its truth.” (Colossians 1:6)

2. From *Paul Thaxter (CMS), We want the world to know Jesus.*

In 1900 there were 9 million Christians in Africa – in 2006 there were 380 million.

There are now 352 million Christians in Asia – 8.5% of the Asian population.

China is now the largest mission sending country in the world, with 100,000 missionaries.

India is the second largest mission sending country, with 83,000 missionaries.

The church in Nepal has grown from 30,000 in 1970 to 600,000 today, and is now sending missionaries to unreached areas of Malaysia and India.

H. A Mission-Minded Community

1. Mission in the UK is fulfilling the Great Commission.

From a 1st century Jewish perspective, the world was divided into “Israel” and “the nations”.

A mission-minded community supports the church in other parts of this country.

A mission-minded community is prepared to plant new churches and revitalise dying congregations.

A mission-minded community will train up gospel workers to serve in other areas of the country.

A mission-minded community will welcome those from other countries who come to live in this country.

2. Only a local church is able to complete the work of evangelism and discipleship in a local community.

Paul left Timothy in Ephesus and Titus in Crete to complete the work he began.

A mission-minded community supports the church in other parts of the world.

A mission-minded community prays for the work of local churches especially those facing hardship and persecution.

A mission-minded community supports indigenous churches that are best placed to reach their people with the gospel (by providing financial resources including theological training for indigenous pastors).

3. "There are still billions of people who cannot be reached through friendship evangelism because none of their friends know the gospel" (David Platt).

A mission-minded community sends out missionaries to unreached people who will immerse themselves in an unfamiliar culture with the intention of establishing a local church that will plant other churches within that people group.

A mission-minded community will be concerned about translating the Bible and Christian books into new languages by supporting Bible translators.

A mission-minded community will pray Matthew 9:38.

A mission-minded community will give sacrificially for the spread of the gospel to all people.

A mission-minded community will be aware of what God is doing around the world and praise Him for it.

ⁱ Information taken from John Steven's blog Dissenting Opinion - <http://www.john-stevens.com/2012/07/expository-thoughts-colossians-1v6.html>