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INCREASING PARTICIPATION IN WORLD MISSIONS AT
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF POUND, WISCONSIN

A Project
Presented to
the Faculty of
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
Jarred Lee Edgecombe
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APPROVAL SHEET

INCREASING PARTICIPATION IN WORLD MISSIONS AT
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF POUND, WISCONSIN

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I dedicate this project to my wife, Heather, who is truly one flesh with me.

I look forward to many years of serving our Savior together.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES	vii
PREFACE	viii
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
Context	1
Rationale	4
Purpose	5
Goals	6
Research Methodology	6
Definitions and Delimitations	8
Conclusion	9
2. BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL SUPPORT FOR INCREASING PARTICIPATION IN WORLD MISSIONS	10
Introduction	10
Jesus' Sent His Disciples to the Jews First, But His Concern Included the Whole World (Matt 10)	11
Jesus' Final Command: Make Disciples to the Ends of the Earth (Matt 28:18-20; Acts 1:8)	15
Missionaries Sent Out from the Church by the Holy Spirit's Direction (Acts 13-14)	27
A Partnership of Giving and Receiving (Phil 4:10-20)	32
Conclusion	37

Chapter	Page
3. METHODOLOGIES AND CASE STUDIES	39
Introduction	39
Research Question	39
Design Overview	39
Instrumentation	43
Data Analysis	46
Summary of Findings	46
Summary of Research Findings	53
Application to First Baptist Church	53
Conclusion	56
4. PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT	58
Phase 1: Preparation	58
Phase 2: Project Implementation	67
Phase 3: Follow-Up	70
Conclusion	72
5. EVALUATION OF PROJECT	73
Evaluation of the Project's Purpose	73
Evaluation of the Project's Goals	74
Strengths of the Project	77
Weaknesses of the Project	79
What I Would Do Differently	80
Theological Reflections	81
Personal Reflections	84
Conclusion	85

Appendix	Page
1. SERMON EVALUATION RUBRIC	86
2. LESSON EVALUATION RUBRIC	88
3. KNOWLEDGE ASSESSMENT SURVEY	90
4. MOBILIZATION PLAN EVALUATION	93
5. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL	95
6. SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS: A VISION FOR THE WORLD	97
7. SERMON SERIES	115
8. PANEL COVER LETTER	139
9. IDEA SHEET	140
10. FBC MISSIONS MOBILIZATION PLAN	141
11. KNOWLEDGE ASSESSMENT AND T-TEST RESULTS	143
BIBLIOGRAPHY	144

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
A1. Semi-structured interview protocol	96
A2. Responses to “I regularly make it a point to read missionary letters”	143
A3. Responses to “I can name more than five missionary families that our church supports”	143
A4. T-test: Paired two sample for means	143
A5. Responses to “I regularly communicate with certain missionaries by email or other means”	143

PREFACE

Knowing that God is pleased when his servants hone their ministry skills and strive to connect his people to his Great Commission, it was my great privilege to labor through this project. I am amazed by the grace of God in saving me. He knew that my growth in sanctification would be painfully slow, and He still offered redemption. His grace abounded more and more by allowing me the privilege of serving Him in full-time ministry. I am filled with both a sense of awe and of inadequacy.

I thank the Lord for my wife, Heather, who persevered through the early stages of my M.Div., and has been so encouraging in her support during my journey to the completion of the D.Min. She has patiently endured many years of late-night study sessions, week-long seminars, and total distraction as I read required texts. There is no other person on the face of the earth that I would rather spend time with than her.

Without the urging and encouragement of Mike McCaskill, my graduate school journey might never have happened. Words cannot describe the extent of his impact upon my spiritual life. He motivated me to sign up for my very first graduate class and has been with me during some of my darkest times.

This project would not have been possible if my parents had not forced a selfish, self-centered teenager to take his pre-med classes at a Christian college. It was there that my parents' godly influence blossomed. Their allowing me to work at a Christian camp in 1988 completely changed my life. Indeed, the tremendous financial sacrifice in sending me to a Christian college was, on their part, an investment more valuable than gold.

Finally, I thank the Lord for the congregation of First Baptist Church that has unconditionally loved their pastor and graciously allowed him to finish his theological

education. They have made a great contribution to my spiritual growth and modeled patient lovingkindness throughout this project. My prayer is that our continued partnership with one another and with the missionaries we support continues to honor and glorify the Lord for many years to come.

Jarred Edgecombe

Pound, Wisconsin

December 2016

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the Gospels, Jesus tells Christians that they are to be salt and light (Matt 5:13-16). The implication of this and other teachings in Scripture is that the gospel spreads through the immediate witness of believers in a local community. However, the Great Commission, the record of the expansion of the church in Acts, and the teachings in the epistles expand the view of the church beyond the local community. Therefore, it is important to encourage the members of First Baptist Church to actively participate in world missions.

Context

Pound, Wisconsin, was settled in the late 1880s by Prussian immigrants who fled government persecution of Baptists. Located in rural northern Wisconsin, the town currently boasts a population of 377. These immigrants consisted of both Polish and German-speaking people; many of them made up the congregation of United Baptist Church. In 1908, after almost twenty years, United Baptist Church was dissolved and two new churches were formed: one spoke Polish and the other spoke German. First Baptist Church (FBC) of Pound, Wisconsin, was formed for the Polish-speaking majority. At that time it was called “Polish Baptist Church.”

For much of the early twentieth century, Polish Baptist Church maintained a strong missionary emphasis. Because of the church’s close ties to the “homeland,” the pastor, Henry Schilke, and members took extended missionary trips. As pastor of the largest Polish-speaking Baptist congregation in North America for at least two decades, Schilke traveled extensively, speaking in other Polish Baptist Churches, taking short-term mission trips to Polish neighborhoods in Milwaukee and Chicago, and even going back to

Poland. The congregation's missionary concern took place even though the church was comprised primarily of poor dairy farmers, struggling to make ends meet.

A decline in concern for world missions began in 1948 when Schilke retired. The church renamed itself First Baptist Church and the official language in services switched to English. Initially, the church did not have a formal missions program, but over time it began to adopt the independent Baptist method of missions. In this method, missionaries sign up with sending organizations who manage their finances and legal affairs, but leave the fundraising up to the candidates. Typically, the missionary begins the support process by cold-calling churches that are already connected to the mission board and/or are recommended to the missionary candidate. The church would agree to have the missionary candidate in to speak and present their ministry, then, at some later time, vote to take the missionary on for support.

Most independent Baptist churches support a large number of missionaries for a small amount per month. In return for their support, the missionary sends a prayer letter to the churches on a quarterly basis that may or may not be read by the congregation. Often congregants never learn much about the missionaries and therefore do not pray for the missionaries as they could. This is the method adopted by FBC. When the church peaked in worship attendance of 275 in the mid-1980s, it supported approximately 30 missionary families this way. However, due to a variety of problems, the church began a slow decline to an average worship attendance of 70 in 2006. As a result, the number of supported missionaries declined to 22.

When I became the pastor in 2006, FBC supported these 22 missionaries for an average of \$79 per month. Beginning support for new missionaries was \$55 per month. Furthermore, most members could not name more than a handful of these missionaries. Any missionary they could name more than likely attended FBC while he was a student at the nearby Northland Baptist Bible College. Additionally, no mission trips had been taken by the church in more than a decade. Currently, the overall situation has improved

little. While the church has dramatically increased giving to missions and the average new missionary receives \$125 per month, all other areas of missionary support remain static.

Church members have the brand of small-town pride that is typical in rural communities. Typically, they encourage people to “buy local” instead of traveling to Green Bay to buy things. A protectionist attitude has arisen due to the fact that the school district is losing students and the community is getting smaller as young families move to the city to find better paying jobs.

One indirect result of this attitude, combined with a love for the lost, is the church’s evangelistic zeal. An average of 9 people are baptized in the church annually. The majority of the new converts are former Catholics. The church has a robust ministry to nursing homes which has also resulted in a number of converts. Members are constantly praying for the salvation of people in the community.

In addition to the protectionist attitude that pervades the community, Marinette County is one of the more impoverished counties in Wisconsin. Unemployment is high and alcoholism is a major problem. This hardscrabble existence makes people less inclined to give, as a result, generally, they do not have a spirit of generosity. Because of these community issues, residents would rather give to help local charities and needs. These problems and attitudes directly influence how church members think about partnering in world missions. For instance, in a recent prayer meeting several members asked the question, “There are so many needs in our community, why are we trying to do so much for foreign missions?”

The church also has a small Christian school (about 65 students) that struggles to meet the budget. It would be impossible to charge the amount of tuition needed to pay the bills and expect people to enroll their children. Hence the school relies on donations to stay afloat. The church is the primary donor to the school. More than 50 percent of the church’s missionary budget goes to keep the doors of the school open. Any talk of raising

missionary funding necessarily results in discussion over how much to fund the school. Several of the faculty are members of the church or are related to people in the church. Any discussion of missions leads to a discussion about the school.

Great Commission thinking seems to stop at the community level. Since arriving at the church, I have organized three mission trips. One never materialized, and the other two resulted in only 5 people going from the church. Every time a mission trip has been organized people ask, “Why even go on a mission trip?” In the ten years that I have shepherded this flock, we have only sent 2 young people into full-time Christian service and both were my own children.

Rationale

The contextual factors described affirm the need for this project. The church needs to see that it can have an expanded role in world missions. The role of the organization should be much more than just sending money abroad. For their part, the church has responded well to consistent expository preaching. When I preach, they consistently ask, “What does the Bible have to say about this?” instead of, “What is my opinion about this?” So then, the church will respond appropriately to solid biblical teaching and preaching on missions.

A key concept that needs to be taught is that, because God’s purpose is to reach the world, the church shares that responsibility. In the New Testament, churches were viewed as partners in missions. Paul viewed the Philippian church as a partner with him in ministry: “Because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now” (Phil 1:5).¹ He later rejoiced because the church has “revived your concern for me” (Phil 4:10). In Acts 13:2-3, the church at Antioch served as a sending ministry for Paul. He later returned to give report (Acts 14:27). Additionally, the church at Corinth is said to have participated in the ministry of the apostle Paul. Closer study shows that the

¹Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are from the English Standard Version.

partnership involved monetary support, prayer support, sending missionaries, and sending church members to encourage the missionary and assess their needs.

In addition to hearing expository preaching on world missions, the church needs to see the worldwide harvest field. In Scripture, God repeatedly called people to see the big picture. The sulking prophet, Jonah, was chided for his self-absorbed focus on personal comfort when in Nineveh there were “more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left” (Jonah 4:11). Jesus called his disciples to a panoramic view in John 4:35 when he said, “Lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest.” At His ascension, Jesus instructed the eleven remaining disciples to consider the whole world their responsibility (Acts 1:8). For its part, FBC will need to adopt the apostles’ passion for world missions. Because most of the church’s local ministry is driven by members seeing the opportunities first-hand, they will respond when they see global opportunities. The congregation will think more deeply about participating in world missions when they see foreign ministry opportunities and hear about their missions mandate from the Bible.

Understanding their biblical role and seeing the global harvest field is not enough. Ultimately, the church will need to develop a strategy to participate in world missions by using their unique ministry gifts, giving their finances, and laboring in prayer. For its part, the leadership will need to respond by providing avenues for the membership to be involved. At this point the creativity of the membership will be tapped and used to support their missionaries in more ways than just financial support. Finally, the church should strive to become a sending church for multiple missionaries. Since this project will address these issues, FBC must move forward with great intensity and drive.

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to develop a mission mobilization plan to increase missions’ participation of First Baptist Church in Pound, Wisconsin.

Goals

In order to accomplish this project, several goals need to be reached. As each progressive goal is accomplished, the hope is that the church membership will move toward greater participation in world missions. The goals are as follows:

1. The first goal was to develop a six-week sermon series on the biblical and theological foundations of missions.
2. The second goal was to develop a six-week curriculum that will help increase the church's knowledge of its missionaries and their corresponding fields.
3. The third goal was to increase the church's knowledge of the biblical foundations of missions and increase the knowledge of their supported missionaries and their fields.
4. The fourth goal was to develop a missions' mobilization plan to increase the membership's participation in world missions.

The completion of each goal was dependent on a defined means of measurement and a benchmark of success. The research methodology and instruments used to measure the success of each goal will be detailed in the following section.

Research Methodology

The following section will detail the methodology that will be used to accomplish and measure each goal. As stated, the first goal was to develop a six-week sermon series on the biblical and theological foundations of missions. Key passages include Matthew 10; 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; Acts 13-14; Ephesians 4:11-13; Philippians 4:10-20; and Colossians 4:7-17. Moreover, the sermons will cover Old Testament passages that show God consistently included the nations in His redemptive plan and not just Israel. Concepts covered included global missions in Scripture, the character of God as a sending God, the role of individual churches in world missions, and the mission of Christ. This goal was measured by a panel of three pastors and the deacons of First Baptist Church who used a rubric² to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, clarity, and relevance of the

²All of the research instruments used in this project were performed in compliance with and approved by the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Research Ethics Committee prior to use in the

sermon series.³ This goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of all the rubric evaluation indicators met or exceeded the sufficient level. When the initial feedback yielded less than 90 percent, the series was revised in accordance with the panel's evaluation until the criterion meets or exceeded the sufficient level.

The second goal was to develop a six-week curriculum that was designed to increase the church's knowledge of its missionaries and their corresponding fields. Each lesson highlighted a different missionary and his field, and each lesson included recent prayer letters, live interviews with the missionaries, and information about the culture and needs of the field in which they minister. The lessons were taught during the Sunday school hour and included four adult Sunday school classes. This goal was measured by a panel of leaders. The panel was made up of the FBC Christian Education Board who used a rubric⁴ to evaluate the value of the curriculum and the teaching methodology. This goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of the evaluation criterion met or exceeded the sufficient level. When any initial feedback yielded less than 90 percent, the curriculum was revised in accordance with the panel's evaluation until such time that the criterion met or exceeded the sufficient level.

The third goal was to increase the church's knowledge of the biblical foundations of missions and increase the knowledge of their supported missionaries and their fields. This goal was accomplished through the concurrent presentation of the sermon series and the curriculum. The curriculum was taught during Sunday school to all the adults in the church. It was measured by administering a pre and post-series survey employed to assess the change in members' knowledge of the biblical foundations of

ministry project.

³See appendix 1.

⁴See appendix 2.

missions, of the missionaries, and their challenges and their needs.⁵ The survey was given to thirty adult attenders who have listened to all six sermons and lessons. It was considered successfully met when the *t*-test for dependent samples demonstrates a positive statistically significant difference between the pre- and post-survey scores. The *t*-test was selected for this analysis as it compares the means of the scores from the pre-test and post-test, which measures the knowledge of the biblical foundations of missions and the knowledge of supported missionaries and fields among the select group of adults.⁶

The fourth goal was to develop a missions mobilization plan to increase the membership's participation in world missions. The plan was constructed using the input of church members.⁷ This goal was measured by a panel of leaders who will utilize a rubric⁸ to evaluate the functionality of the plan, participation level demanded by the plan, and its perceived usefulness in helping the missionaries. The goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of all the rubric evaluation indicators met or exceeded the sufficient level. If the initial feedback were to yield less than 90 percent, the plan would be revised in accordance with the panel's evaluation until such time that the criterion met or exceeded the sufficient level.

Definitions and Delimitations

The following definitions of key terms were used in the ministry project

Church. According to the *Baptist Faith and Message*,

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His

⁵See appendix 3.

⁶Neil J. Salkind, *Statistics for People Who (Think They) Hate Statistics*, 5th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2013).

⁷This panel consisted of two members from each of the following boards: deacons, trustees, and Christian Education Board. Four regularly attending adults were also selected to join this panel.

⁸See appendix 4.

laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth.⁹

For the purpose of this project, “church” refers to the group of believers meeting at First Baptist Church of Pound, Wisconsin.

Missions. Missions is “all the specific and varied ways in which the church crosses cultural boundaries to reflect the life of the triune God.”¹⁰

Supported missionaries. Supported missionaries are the missionaries that the church has voted to support both financially and in prayer. For the purposes of this project, supported missionaries are those whose names appear in the missions’ section of the church budget.

This project was limited to fifteen weeks, which included developing the sermon series, curriculum development, sermon delivery, curriculum instruction, and developing the missions mobilization plan. The curriculum was limited to six lessons involving the six selected missionaries.

Conclusion

God has commanded the church to actively work to spread the gospel in all corners of the world. It is the responsibility of individual congregations to ensure that they are obedient to the Lord in this regard. The following chapter will address the biblical and theological arguments for this project.

⁹Douglas K. Blount and Joseph D. Wooddell, eds., *The Baptist Faith and Message 2000: Critical Issues in America’s Largest Protestant Denomination* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 58. See also The Southern Baptist Convention, “The Baptist Faith & Message,” accessed February 2, 2016, <http://www.sbc.net/bfm2000>.

¹⁰Timothy C. Tennent, *Invitation to Theological Studies Series*, vol. 3, *Invitation to World Missions: A Trinitarian Missiology for the Twenty-First Century* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2010), 59.

CHAPTER 2
BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL SUPPORT FOR
INCREASING PARTICIPATION
IN WORLD MISSIONS

Introduction

It is argued in this chapter that, from the beginning, God's purpose is to make his name known in the whole world and gather a people for himself from every part of the globe. Jesus has tasked the church with this responsibility. In the Old Testament era, God made himself known to the world through his covenant nation, Israel. In the New Testament era, God works through the church to proclaim salvation to the nations. Each local church has a responsibility, not only to reach its immediate community, but also the rest of the world.

The argument moves forward on four key New Testament passages (Matt 10; Matt 28:18-20 and Acts 1:8; Acts 13-14; Phil 4:10-20) and a brief survey of the Old Testament. These four texts press the church forward to engage the nations with the truth of the gospel. The short-term mission trip in Matthew 10 is a paradigm for future missionary journeys beyond Israel. With the command to make disciples of all nations, Matthew 28 confirms this reality. Acts 1:8 provides the plan for geographical expansion of the gospel and calls disciples to depend upon the work of the Holy Spirit. Acts 13-14 demonstrates the collective work at a local church fulfilling His command to take the gospel to all nations. Finally, Philippians 4:10-20 demonstrates that Paul considered the local church a partner with him in ministry.

Jesus' Sent His Disciples to the Jews First, But His Concern Included the Whole World (Matt 10)

Matthew 10 recounts Jesus' commissioning his twelve disciples. A superficial reading of the commissioning account can lead the reader to assume that Jesus' concern focused strictly on Israel. However, a careful reading reveals that Jesus is looking ahead to more permanent missionary service by the disciples, which will encompass the Gentiles as well.

Even though Jesus initially called them to discipleship, they quickly learned that discipleship includes missionary outreach. Indeed, Eckhard Schnabel argues that Jesus called the twelve disciples with a specific goal that they would be active missionaries in the future.¹ The commissioning narrative of Matthew 10 hints at their future missionary roles by calling them both disciples (v. 1) and apostles (v. 2). Their mission is much more than following Jesus around Judea and Galilee learning (μαθητάς); they were being sent out by Jesus (ἀποστόλων). Leon Morris argues that Matthew is giving the word “apostle” a new sense of meaning: “Jesus was not simply repeating some earlier practice when he sent out his Twelve; *the twelve apostles*, sent out with Jesus' authority, represent something new in the world of religion.”² R. T. France notes that, unlike Paul and Luke who use the word to describe an office, Matthew uses it “only in a context of mission.”³

Verse 1 also states that he “gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction.” Another foreshadowing of their future apostolic mission is the fact that Christ gave them authority. Until this time in the Savior's ministry, Christ was the only one with authority to perform exorcisms and

¹Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 290.

²Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1992), 243.

³R. T. France, *Matthew*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 1 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1985), 180.

healings. Luke records that the authority transfer was effective “and they departed and went through the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere” (Luke 9:6).

The most difficult exegetical issue relates to their commissioning in verse 5 where Jesus “sent out” (ἀπέστειλεν) the twelve and instructed them to “go nowhere among the Gentiles.” The verb ἀποστέλλω (v. 5) is related to the noun ἀπόστολος (v. 2). Morris believes “it was appropriate that the ‘apostles’ should engage in ‘apostling.’”⁴ The language of the commission is the first indication that they were to be much more than simple disciples. Jesus’ ultimate goal was to send them out.

The primary interpretive difficulty lies in the phrase “Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans.” The literal translation of “Go nowhere among Gentiles” is “do not go in the way of the Gentiles” (εἰς ὁδὸν ἔθνων μὴ ἀπέλθιτε). Hagner ventures that this is “probably a Semitism meaning ‘toward the Gentiles.’”⁵ Morris says that it literally means ‘do not go the road to Gentiles.’”⁶ The restriction prohibiting entering any town of the Samaritans probably denotes the region of the Samaritans. Hagner argues, “If the Aramaic word underlying *παλιν* was *medīnā*, which can mean ‘city’ or ‘province,’ probably ‘province’ is meant.”⁷

Verse 6 makes the exclusion clear: “But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” In the Old Testament, “lost sheep” refers to all of Israel and not just a part (Ezek 34; Isa 53:6; Jer 50:6). In addition, immediately before this scene, Jesus looked out on the crowds and had compassion because “they were harassed and helpless, like sheep

⁴Morris, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, 245.

⁵Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 33a (Waco, TX: Word, 1993), 270.

⁶Morris, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, 245.

⁷Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 270.

without a shepherd” (Matt 9:36). The main implication of verses 5-6 is that the disciples are to stay in Galilee for their first missionary trip. Morris observes,

The roads to the north and east led to Gentile territory, while that to the south went to Samaria. Only Galilee was left. In due time the followers of Jesus would preach to people of any nation, but there was a proper order; here they were told to start with the Jews.⁸

It seems that Jesus issued this restriction in order to keep the covenant promises God made with Israel. D. A. Carson posits that the most important consideration of the restriction was not practical but theological:

Jesus stood at the nexus in salvation history where as a Jew and the Son of David he came in fulfillment of his people’s history as their King and Redeemer. Yet his personal claims would offend so many of his own people that he would be rejected by all but a faithful remnant. . . . His mission, as predicted, was worldwide in its ultimate aims . . . and all along he had warned that being a Jew was not enough. But his own people must not be excluded because premature offense could be taken at such broad perspectives. Therefore Jesus restricted his own ministry primarily (15:24), though not exclusively . . . to Jews.⁹

Hagner agrees,

The fact that Jesus came initially to Israel and only to Israel underlined the faithfulness of God to his covenant promises, and the continuity of his purposes, and also the truth that the church, and not the synagogue, was to be understood as the true Israel.¹⁰

Another reason for going strictly to the Jews is that, by their eventual rejection of the gospel, God will create a new covenant people encompassing both Jews and Gentiles.¹¹

The twelve are instructed to “proclaim” (κηρύσσετε) the dawn of the kingdom of God. It happens to be the same message of John the Baptist (Matt 3:2) and Jesus himself (Matt 4:17). France notes that it is simply an extension of Christ’s mission: “Their

⁸Morris, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, 245.

⁹D. A. Carson, *Matthew*, in vol. 8 of *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 244.

¹⁰Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 271.

¹¹See Rom 9:23-26; Hos 2:23; Ps 118:22; 1 Pet 1:1-10. The Jewish rejection of the gospel and the Gentile reception can be seen in Acts 13:44-48; 14:1-7; 17:1-9; 19:8-10.

mission is an extension of his, for which they are vested with his authority.”¹² Schnabel claims that “the proclamation of the kingdom of God is teaching in continuation of Jesus’ teaching.”¹³

Practically speaking, this short-term trip became a pattern for longer missions to the Gentiles in years to come. Hagner confirms this view:

It is clear in Matthew that this particularism is temporary. In addition to repeated allusions to the acceptability of Gentiles (e.g., 2:1-12; 3:9; 8:10-11; 15:21-28), there are allusions as well as clear statements about the future situation when the gospel will go to the Gentiles (e.g., 21:43; 24:14).¹⁴

By giving his authority to the apostles, Christ repeats the pattern of this commission in the Great Commission.

As he continues his instructions in Matthew 10, Jesus refers to future missionary work among the Gentiles. However, first they must be mistreated and rejected by the Jews. “Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues” (Matt 10:17). “Courts” (συνέδρια) and “synagogues” (συναγωγαῖς) refer to governing bodies in Judaism. These bodies are not the Jerusalem Sanhedrin as Hagner makes clear: “The ‘sanhedrins’ refers to local judicial bodies within Judaism, not to the Jerusalem Sanhedrin specifically.”¹⁵

In verse 18 Jesus tells them that one day they will bear witness to the Gentiles: “And you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles.” They will be dragged before “governors” (ἡγεμόνας) refers to “Roman imperial provincial officers.”¹⁶ “Kings” (βασιλεῖς) refers to puppet kings like the

¹²France, *Matthew*, 183.

¹³Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 295.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid., 277.

¹⁶Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg, and Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 188.

Herods, though they were strictly tetrarchs.¹⁷ So that the disciples understand that their mission will not just be coerced testimony to government officials, Jesus adds, “To bear witness before them and the Gentiles.” Ultimately, Jesus intended their ministry to reach beyond the border of Galilee, Judea, and Samaria. The gradual expanding scope of Jesus’ commission in verses 17 and 18 is meant to foreshadow the Great Commission.

Jesus’ Final Command: Make Disciples to the Ends of the Earth (Matt 28:18-20; Acts 1:8)

When Jesus ascended into heaven he commissioned the disciples to carry the gospel to the “ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). When one reads the Gospels, he will notice that, most of the time, Jesus stayed in Galilee and Judea and occasionally went into Samaria and the Decapolis. His commission to the disciples in Matthew 10 limited them to the “lost sheep of the house of Israel.” Now that Jesus accomplished his mission, secured redemption for the world, conquered the grave, and received his glorified resurrection body, he abolished the limitations that he previously placed on the disciples.

Jesus Defines the Authority behind, Extent of, and Process of Making Disciples

The reason those limitations were abolished was that “all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me” (Matt 28:18). It is not that Jesus could not exercise authority over the whole world; it is that he chose not to. However, that viewpoint is under debate. Morris, for example, notes,

Now he has received the fullest possible authority, for it is authority *in heaven and on earth*. He is making clear that the limitations that applied throughout the incarnation no longer apply to him. He has supreme authority throughout the universe.¹⁸

¹⁷Morris, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, 254.

¹⁸Ibid., 745-46.

However, Carson disagrees,

The authority of Jesus Messiah has already been heavily stressed in the Gospel (e.g., 7:29; 10:1, 7-8; 11:27; 22:43-44; 24:35; cf. John 17:2). Therefore it is incautious, if not altogether wrong, to claim that the Resurrection conferred on Jesus an authority incomparably greater than what he enjoyed before his crucifixion. . . . It is not Jesus' authority per se that becomes more absolute. Rather, the spheres in which he now exercises absolute authority are enlarged to include all heaven and earth.¹⁹

Hiebert notes, “The term ‘authority’ (ἐξουσία), translated both ‘power’ and ‘authority’ in English versions, denotes not merely the ability to exercise power or authority but also the freedom and right to do so.”²⁰ Jesus connects his universal authority to the commission of the disciples in verse 19: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” Because Jesus is sovereign over the whole world and is exercising all authority over it, his disciples can now make disciples of all nations with confidence.

“Make disciples” (μαθητεύσατε) is the central verb of the commission. Making disciples is the primary responsibility of the apostles. Morris notes, “In this Gospel a disciple is both a learner and a follower; a disciple takes Jesus as his teacher and learns from him, and a disciple also follows Jesus. The life of a disciple is different because of his attachment to Jesus.”²¹ Carson defines it more simply: “Disciples are those who hear, understand, and obey Jesus’ teaching.”²² Disciples then are to reproduce themselves; they are to work to become disciple-making disciples.

Even though the verb “make disciples” is imperative, in most English translations the word “go” (πορευθέντες), an aorist active participle modifying “make disciples,” looks like the main verb. The central interpretative issue with πορευθέντες

¹⁹Carson, *Matthew*, 594.

²⁰D. Edmond Hiebert, “An Expository Study of Matthew 28:16-20,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 149 (1992): 346.

²¹Morris, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, 746.

²²Carson, *Matthew*, 596.

centers around the force of the word “go.” Is the emphasis of the verse on the act of going, or is the emphasis on the act of making disciples? Cleon Rogers summarizes the debate:

There are two views which have arisen in this connection. One is an emphasis on the imperative character which has led to a strong “go” in the missionary command. The other is a reaction in which the “go” receives a secondary status even to the point of omission in translation.²³

Robert Culver believes that there is no imperatival to *πορευθέντες* and concludes, “The commission is to make disciples of men of any nation as well as all the nations. Make disciples in the particular nation among whom you dwell. You need not go somewhere else to operate on the great commission program!”²⁴ However, Carson makes the case that the imperative force is present: “Computer studies of the Greek NT have shown that although a participle dependent on an imperative normally gains imperatival force when it *precedes* the imperative.”²⁵ When one reads the rest of the New Testament, he would be hard pressed to deny its missionary nature. Therefore, “go” must have at least some missions force.

Regarding the interpretation of “go,” Blomberg wisely observes,

Too much and too little have often been made of this observation. Too much is made of it when the disciples’ “going” is overly subordinated, so that Jesus’ charge is to proselytize merely where one is. . . . Too little is made of it when all attention is centered on the command to “go,” as in countless appeals for missionary candidates, so that foreign missions are elevated to a higher status of Christian service than other forms of spiritual activity. To ‘make disciples *of all nations*’ does require many people to leave their homelands, but Jesus’ main focus remains on the task of all believers to duplicate themselves wherever they may be.²⁶

²³Cleon Rogers, “The Great Commission,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 130 (1973): 258-59.

²⁴Robert D. Culver, “What Is the Church’s Commission? Some Exegetical Issues In Matthew 28:16-20,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 125 (1968): 252.

²⁵Carson, *Matthew*, 597.

²⁶Craig Blomberg, *Matthew*, The New American Commentary, vol. 22 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1992), 431.

They were to make disciples of “all nations” (πάντα τὰ ἔθνη). There are two basic interpretations for “all nations.”²⁷ The first interprets “all nations” as an expression meaning “everybody.” The second is to interpret “all nations” as “all Gentile nations.” The *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* reviews the LXX usage of “all nations” and notes, “In Jewish usage the LXX translates the word (גוֹיִם) *gôyim* as (ἔθνη) or Gentiles.”²⁸ This consistent translation in the LXX has led some to state that Matthew, being Jewish, carried over the same meaning in his gospel.²⁹ Although Matthew wrote to Jewish people, to only use the LXX usage of the term ignores the theology of the rest of Scripture.

The experience of the apostles and the teaching of the new covenant show that πάντα τὰ ἔθνη includes the Jews. John Meier argues persuasively that Matthew used πάντα τὰ ἔθνη to include the Jews most certainly in Matthew 21:43 and 24:14 and probably several other passages.³⁰ He concludes by saying that Israel is no longer the unique chosen people of God, so in Matthew's eyes they no longer enjoy the former privileged status of the chosen people of God (21:43). But they do qualify in Matthew's vocabulary as an *ethnos* (24:7). Thus they do fall under the mandate of the risen Jesus to make disciples of *panta ta ethnē* (28:19).³¹ Carson concludes the same: “The aim of Jesus’ disciples, therefore, is to make disciples of all men everywhere, without distinction.”³²

²⁷See Carson, *Matthew*, 596.

²⁸Horst Robert Balz and Gerhard Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 382.

²⁹For a brief history of this view, see Douglas Hare and Daniel J Harrington, “Make Disciples of All Gentiles (Mt 28:19),” *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 37, no. 3 (July 1975): 359-69.

³⁰John P Meier, “Nations or Gentiles in Matthew 28:19,” *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 39, no. 1 (1977): 94-103.

³¹*Ibid.*, 102.

³²Carson, *Matthew*, 596.

John Nolland also reaches the same conclusion: “Matthew uses ἔθνη *alone* when referring to the Gentiles, but when he speaks of ‘all the ἔθνη,’ he no longer uses ἔθνη to distinguish Gentiles from Jews but rather refers to the whole of humanity.”³³

Two more present participles supplement the main verb: “baptizing” (βαπτίζοντες) and “teaching” (διδάσκοντες). Jesus told his followers to baptize in the “name” singular and not “names” of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, which is a clear Trinitarian reference. Baptism is not a means to salvation; rather, those who become disciples are to be baptized. Baptism is a public act, symbolizing prior inward baptism with Jesus Christ (Rom 6:3-4).

Finally, Jesus teaches the disciples to observe all that he commanded. For Christ, the heart of discipleship is to teach obedience. Obedience has always characterized the chosen.³⁴

It is clear from the Great Commission that the church is to carefully obey Jesus’ command to make disciples. However, making disciples is not simply getting someone to “repeat after me” in a prayer; rather, it involves getting them to count the cost of obedience to Jesus Christ.

The Witnesses Take the Gospel to the Ends of the Earth

The three Synoptic Gospels record Jesus’ commissioning the disciples to evangelize the world. Each account contains a slightly different emphasis.³⁵ Acts 1:8 completes the picture of their commissioning with Christ’s final words before his

³³John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 1266.

³⁴In a major portion of Exodus the Lord teaches Israel that the nature of their obedience proves what is in their heart. See also 1 Sam 15:22; Ezek 11:20; 36:27; John 3:36.

³⁵Matt 28:18-20 describes the process of disciple-making and the authority behind it. Mark 16:15-16 describes the fate of those who believe and those who do not. Luke 24:46-49 places the emphasis on the content of the gospel message. It is important to note that Mark 16:15-16 is part of the long ending of Mark and therefore is a questionable section of text.

ascension: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” The prologue to Acts emphasizes that the gospel will spread regardless of national, geographical, or ethnic boundaries.

Acts begins with Jesus’ final instructions to his disciples, in which he promises, “You will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now” (v. 5). Their question in verse 6, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” does not seem to be motivated by nationalism, but by their understanding of the teaching of the Old Testament. According to Andreas Köstenberger, they “would naturally have in mind the last days (Joel 2:28-32) and the messianic cleansing or restoration of Zion.”³⁶ They would have remembered the Old Testament prophecies that picture Jerusalem as the gathering place of the nations with the Messiah reigning from Zion.³⁷ However, Köstenberger observes, “There are clear Old Testament antecedents linking the restoration of Israel with witness to the nations, notably in a restoration context of Isaiah where the ministry of the Servant is to Israel (Isa 43:1-7; 49:6) and this, in turn, benefits the nations (43:8-12).”³⁸

Christ’s response to their question in verse 8 contains three elements. The first element of the promise is “you will receive power.” The qualifying clause is “when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.” David Peterson notes,

The Holy Spirit’s “coming” is not continuous but definitive (the context so delimits the aorist participle *epelthontos* to show that the meaning is temporal and punctiliar here), though clearly the Spirit is available at any time after Pentecost for those who repent and are “baptized in the name of Jesus Christ” (2:38). In the light of v. 5, this

³⁶Andreas J. Köstenberger and Peter T. O’Brien, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission*, New Studies in Biblical Theology, vol. 11 (Leicester, England: Apollos, 2001), 129.

³⁷See Isa 2:2-4; Ezek 5:5; Mic 4:1-3.

³⁸Köstenberger and O’Brien, *Salvation*, 130.

coming of the Spirit upon the apostles must be equivalent to being *baptized with the Holy Spirit*.³⁹

The word “power” (δύναμιν) is used in reference to miracles in the gospels and in Acts 2:22; 3:12; 4:7; 8:13; 10:38; 19:11, but here and in 4:33 and 6:8-10 it is specifically related to the task of being Christian witnesses. Schnabel notes the implication of their receiving the power of the Holy Spirit: “In other words, Jesus continues his divine mission by the Spirit through the mission of the apostles, who do God’s work until he, Jesus returns.”⁴⁰

The second element of the promise is “you will be my witnesses” (ὕμᾱς καὶ ἔσεσθέ μου μάρτυρες). John Polhill asserts, “The future tense here has an imperatival sense: ‘you *will* [must] receive power’; ‘you *will* be my witnesses.’”⁴¹ As previously noted, the term “witnesses” finds a close parallel with Isaiah 43:10 that envisions the renewed people of God witnessing to the entire world in the new age. In Acts, “witness” almost always describes the twelve disciples (1:8, 22; 2:32; 3:15; 5:32; 10:39, 41; 13:31). Darrell Bock emphasizes the importance of the term “witness” by stating that it “is a key term in Acts for those who experienced Jesus and saw him in a resurrection appearance. This experience means that they can testify directly to what God did through Jesus.”⁴² Schnabel notes the importance of the word “my”: “The personal pronoun μου (*mou*) is emphasized by virtue of being placed first: the disciples will not testify to their own experiences; they testify to the resurrection of Jesus, who died as Israel’s Messiah for the

³⁹David Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 110.

⁴⁰Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 371.

⁴¹John B. Polhill, *Acts*, The New American Commentary, vol. 26 (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 86.

⁴²Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 64.

atonement of sins.”⁴³ The pattern is the same for Christ’s disciples today; a disciple “must” be a witness who goes about testifying directly to what God did in him through Jesus Christ.

The third element of the promise explains the sphere of their witness: “in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” The gospel will spread gradually beginning in Jerusalem and go “to the end of the earth,” but how far is that? There are no less than six theories about the meaning of “to the end of the earth” (ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς).⁴⁴ That the phrase is rooted in the Old Testament is unmistakable (Isa 48:20; 49:6; Jer 10:13). However, scholars debate whether Luke 24:47 or Isaiah 49:6 should control the interpretation of Acts 1:8. Commentators who argue that the LXX translation of Isaiah 49:6 should control the interpretation of Acts 1:8, argue that ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς is ethnic in force and refers exclusively to Gentiles.⁴⁵ Beale and Carson agree that Isaiah 49:6 must serve as the background to Acts 1:8, but they conclude, “This background is important, then, as confirming that the scope of the mission is to the Gentiles throughout the world, and not simply to the Jews.”⁴⁶

Thomas Moore argues that it is better to interpret Acts 1:8 in light of Luke 24:47:

What we are arguing at this point is that from a literary perspective Acts 1:8 presupposes Luke 24:47. In other words, the phrase *heōs eschatou tēs gēs* (Acts 1:8) in the progress of the narrative alludes back to Luke 24:47 and serves as a functional equivalent, conceptually speaking, and as a stylistic variant of *eis panta ta ethnē*

⁴³Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 371.

⁴⁴For a summary, see Thomas S. Moore, “To the End of the Earth:” The Geographic and Ethnic Universalism of Acts 1:8 in Light of Isaianic Influence on Luke,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 40, no. 3 (September 1997): 389-99. Also, Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 372-76.

⁴⁵David W. Pao, “Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus,” *WUNT* 2, vol. 130 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 94.

⁴⁶G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson, eds., *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 528.

(Luke 24:47). This means that the geographical and ethnic significance of Acts 1:8 should be determined with input from Luke 24:47.⁴⁷

Luke 24:46-47 recounts Jesus words to the disciples before they went out to the Mount of Olives for his ascension: “And said to them, ‘Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.’” Here Jesus taught that the gospel should be proclaimed to πάντα τὰ ἔθνη beginning from Jerusalem, meaning that the Jews should have the gospel preached to them also and not Gentiles exclusively. Since Acts explicitly refers back to Luke, it would necessarily imply that the scope of Acts 1:8 includes the Jews as well as the Gentiles. Moore reached the following conclusion:

This means that *heōs eschatou tēs gēs* from an ethnic standpoint does not signify Gentiles only to the exclusion of the Jewish people. It signifies the expansion of the gospel into the Gentile world without implying a final withdrawal of the gospel from the Jews. The ethnic significance is one of widening the scope of salvation, not of ethnic replacement. “To the end of the earth” denotes both geographical and ethnic universalism.⁴⁸

Schnabel, on the other hand, says that “‘to the end of the earth’ has first of all a geographical meaning: ‘Jerusalem,’ ‘Judea’ and ‘Samaria’ are all geographical terms, which indicates that the phrase ‘end of the earth’ should be taken as such as well.”⁴⁹

Whether it is ethnic or geographical in force, “to the end of the earth” includes Jews and Gentiles.

The apostles were commissioned to take the gospel to the edges of the known world, and every ethnicity encompassed by Jesus’ charge. Since the apostles are the foundation of the church (Eph 2:20), the church’s mission remains no different. Bock explains clearly the nature of that mission: “The priority for the church until Jesus returns, a

⁴⁷Moore, “To the End of the Earth,” 396.

⁴⁸Ibid., 398.

⁴⁹Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 372.

mission of which the community must never lose sight, is to witness to Jesus to the end of the earth. The church exists, in major part, to extend the apostolic witness to Jesus everywhere.”⁵⁰

The Great Commission Is Not a New Mission

It would seem to the casual reader that God shows concern for the nations only after the Great Commission. For the average lay person reading the Old Testament the words of J. H. Bavinck hold true: “At first sight the Old Testament appears to offer little basis for the idea of missions. The entire pagan world is portrayed more as a constant threat and temptation to Israel than as an area in which God will reveal his salvation.”⁵¹ This section will argue that God always had concern for the nations, therefore the Great Commission is just extending his concern past the ascension. Several significant Old Testament truths help argue that case.

First, God created mankind to fill the earth and have dominion over it as a coregent: “and God blessed them. And God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth’” (Gen 1:28). Man was to fill the earth and rule the earth.⁵² God’s plan then, was to fill the earth with people who know him. Charles Scobie summarizes the passage:

It is particularly significant that the story of Abraham was thus from the beginning directed towards universal salvation. It was to give its true meaning to the call of

⁵⁰Bock, *Acts*, 66.

⁵¹J. H. Bavinck, quoted in Köstenberger and O’Brien, *Salvation*, 25.

⁵²James M. Hamilton, *God’s Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 73. Hamilton submits, “The charge to Adam to fill the earth and subdue it (Gen. 1:28) is a priestly charge to expand the borders of Eden so that God’s habitable dwelling will be the whole earth.”

Abraham and the choice of Israel, which can only be understood as part of the complete plan intended by Yahweh: the salvation of all.⁵³

Comparing Genesis 1-2 to Revelation 14:6, Köstenberger concludes, “This theme of God's saving purposes reaching the ends of the earth forms a grand envelope that contains the entire story of Scripture.”⁵⁴

The second truth is that the call of Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3 makes explicit God's desire for the nations to know him:

Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

Before the call of Abram, Genesis 1-11 describes humanity moving further away from Eden and, by extension, further from God. Compared to the first eleven chapters, Gen 12:1-3 represents a significant change in character. The word “bless” (ברך) occurs five times in three verses, conversely, the word “curse” was used five times in chapters 3-11.⁵⁵ The blessing of Genesis 12:1-3 encompasses the whole of humanity. The way that the nations are to be blessed is that they “are to be brought into direct contact with Israel as Abrahamic people.”⁵⁶

Third, the redemption of Israel out of Egypt and the giving of the Law served to show the Lord (יהוה) to the world. In the first fifteen chapters of Exodus, the Lord reveals himself to Israel and Egypt in a way that he did not to the patriarchs. In reality, Israel did not know God. This fact caused H. H. Rowley to call Moses the first missionary in the Bible: “We may also observe that Moses was the first missionary of

⁵³Charles H. H. Scobie, “Israel and the Nations: An Essay in Biblical Theology,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 43, no. 2 (November 1992): 286.

⁵⁴Köstenberger and O'Brien, *Salvation*, 26.

⁵⁵Gen 3:14, 17; 4:11; 5:29; 9:25.

⁵⁶William J. Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation: An Old Testament Covenant Theology* (Milton Keynes, England: Paternoster, 2013), 76.

whom we have any knowledge.”⁵⁷ Ross Blackburn summarizes, “The name that was unknown to the patriarchs, then, was not the label, but rather the character of the Lord as the supreme redeemer.”⁵⁸ Moses, then, was commissioned to bring God’s name to Israel.

The redemption of Israel showed God’s concern included non-Israelites, for example, when the Lord related Passover regulations to Moses, he made provision for the “stranger” that “sojourn’s” with Israel (12:48).⁵⁹ In addition, when Israel left Egypt, “a mixed multitude went up with them” (Exod 12:38). Finally, the Lord told Israel that they were to be a testimony to the nations: “Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine” (Exod 19:5). According to the *Lexham Theological Wordbook*, the word “peoples” (גוֹיִם) denotes “a people group sharing a common ancestry and/or sociopolitical identity. . . . This is the other main word used in the OT to describe people groups.”⁶⁰ Blackburn concludes, “The Lord’s commitment to be known as God throughout the earth is the motivation behind everything he does in Exodus.”⁶¹

Fourth, in the prophets, God promised that Jerusalem would become a gathering place for the nations. The most explicit promise is that there will be an ingathering of Gentiles into Jerusalem (Isa 2:2-4; 60-62; Mic 4:1-5; Ps 36: 8-9). In these passages the nations will “flow” into Jerusalem (Isa 2:2). They will want to be taught about the ways of the Lord (Isa 2:3; Mic 4:2). The result is that they will be “walking in

⁵⁷H. H. Rowley, *The Missionary Message of the Old Testament* (London: Carey, 1944), 15.

⁵⁸W. Ross Blackburn, *The God Who Makes Himself Known: The Missionary Heart of the Book of Exodus*, New Studies in Biblical Theology, vol. 28 (Downers Grove, IL: Apollos, 2012), 60.

⁵⁹The “stranger” who chose to be in the congregation was to be given the same concern as an Israelite (Exod 22:21).

⁶⁰Matthew Minard, “Gentiles,” in *Lexham Theological Wordbook*, ed. Douglas Mangum et al., Lexham Bible Reference Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2014).

⁶¹Blackburn, *The God Who Makes Himself Known*, 209.

his paths” (Mic 4:2). In other places God promises that Jerusalem will be the center of a new creation (Isa 35:1-10; 65:17-18).

Finally, in the last chapter of Isaiah the Lord expresses that the reason for the ingathering of nations is so that he can send them out:

For I know their works and their thoughts, and the time is coming to gather all nations and tongues. And they shall come and shall see my glory, and I will set a sign among them. And from them I will send survivors to the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, who draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands far away, that have not heard my fame or seen my glory. And they shall declare my glory among the nations. (Isa 66:18-19)

The Lord’s goal in sending out the nations is so that they will declare his glory.

Köstenberger notes that the list of nations represents the furthest regions of the known world in Isaiah’s time.⁶²

God’s concern for the nations did not begin with the Great Commission. Rather, with the ushering in of the new covenant, the ascended Lord uses his new covenant people to “declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples (Ps 96:3).

Missionaries Sent Out from the Church by the Holy Spirit’s Direction (Acts 13-14)

The book of Acts chronicles the growth of the church and spread of the gospel into every region of the known world. While the first twelve chapters recount the organic expansion of the church, chapter 13 marks the beginning of purposeful evangelism of the Gentiles. Darrel Bock describes chapters 13-14 as “the end of spontaneous ministry to Gentiles. Now this Gentile outreach is planned and directed by God in a fuller, more intentional manner.”⁶³ Specifically, the local church of Antioch will plan and direct the outreach to the Gentiles.

⁶²Köstenberger and O’Brien, *Salvation*, 52.

⁶³Bock, *Acts*, 438.

The church at Antioch was founded as a result of the gospel explosion in Judea and Galilee and the ensuing persecution of the church in these regions (Acts 11:19-26).

The importance of the church at Antioch cannot be overstated. According to Bock,

The church in Antioch was the primary church God used to send, support and supervise the church planting efforts of Paul and Barnabas in the first century. It is the example of this church that provides a model of what missions looks like from a local church perspective.⁶⁴

I. Howard Marshall describes the pivotal importance of the narrative:

The importance of the present narrative is that it describes the first piece of planned “overseas mission” carried out by representatives of a particular church, rather than by solitary individuals, and begun by a deliberate church decision, inspired by the Spirit, rather than somewhat more casually as a result of persecution. Luke thus describes in solemn detail how the missionaries were appointed at a church meeting under the guidance of the Spirit. He is well aware that he is describing a crucial event in the history of the church.⁶⁵

It did not take long for God to direct this fledgling church to send missionaries out from the assembly. Acts 13:1 sets the stage for the entire narrative by describing the makeup of the congregation: “Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.” Many of the names are Greek, which seems to indicate that the people are from different regions of the empire and shows that God gifted the church without regard to ethnic distinctions.⁶⁶

Acts 13:2 provides the setting for the missionary call, “While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’” Polhill observes that “they” likely refers to the whole congregation of the Antioch church.⁶⁷ The congregation gathered for worship

⁶⁴Bock, *Acts*, 438.

⁶⁵I. Howard Marshall, *Acts: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 5 (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2008), 227-28.

⁶⁶Bock, *Acts*, 439.

⁶⁷Polhill, *Acts*, 289.

(λειτουργούντων). According to *Analytical Lexicon*, λειτουργέω is a general word for “a public service performed by an individual; in the NT of religious service.”⁶⁸ Outside of the New Testament, λειτουργέω is a very broad word describing service rendered on behalf of the state.⁶⁹ Many commentators believe that they were praying, which makes sense considering that verse 3 mentions prayer.⁷⁰

In addition to worship, they were also “fasting.” Curtis C. Mitchell notes, “This combination of fasting and prayer was common in Judaism, but in New Testament times the two seldom occurred together among Christians.”⁷¹ While prayer is commanded in the New Testament, fasting is not.⁷² No one knows for sure why they were fasting, but Marshall suggests, “Here it marks out the special significance of the occasion, when the church felt it necessary to lay aside even the demands of hunger in order to concentrate on serving God and receiving his guidance.”⁷³

While they worshipped and fasted, the Spirit called for them to set apart (ἀφορίσατε) Barnabas and Saul. “Set apart” (ἀφορίζω) means to “to set aside a person for a particular task or function.”⁷⁴ How the Spirit told them to set apart Saul and Barnabas is not known. It could have been through a prophet speaking in their midst or through a conviction about God’s will, given to them in the situation. Regardless of how they were

⁶⁸Friberg, Friberg, and Miller, *Analytical Lexicon*, 245.

⁶⁹J. P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, 2nd ed. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1989), 1:532.

⁷⁰See Peterson, *Acts*, 275; Bock, *Acts*, 439; and Marshall, *Acts*, 229.

⁷¹Curtis C. Mitchell, “The Practice of Fasting in the New Testament,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 147 (1990): 464.

⁷²In Matt 6:15 Jesus expected that fasting would accompany prayer, when he said, “And when you fast.”

⁷³Marshall, *Acts*, 229.

⁷⁴Louw and Nida, *Lexicon*, 482.

told, as the church was worshiping, the Spirit set men apart, and the men were commissioned: “Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off” (Acts 13:3).

Since the church occupies the central place in all that Christ continues to do,⁷⁵ one can conclude that the church should be central in the sending of missionaries. This sending begins by the church recognizing God’s gifting in the candidates. Peterson notes,

Effective Christian leaders will likewise see the need to discern God’s gifting for ministry in others, to support (and where necessary train) those whom God is leading to local ministry or mission elsewhere, and to affirm them by acts of ordination or commissioning.⁷⁶

In his comments on this passage, David Doran calls the church the “mediating agent” in sending missionaries:

God is certainly the ultimate Agent in the sending process, but He works through the local church. In this sense, the local church serves as a mediating agent in the sending process. In other words, it is the church that confirms the call of God and consecrates missionaries for their task.⁷⁷

When the candidate actively ministers in the congregation, the church discerns his gifting and oversees his training and commissioning in the context of ongoing ministry. Bock notes this process when he observes,

These two are an integral part of the community, having ministered there for at least a year. Those sent are qualified to plant new works on the basis of their previous contribution to the church. God’s leading takes place here in the context of worship and fasting.⁷⁸

Paul and Barnabas embarked on their missionary journey. When the journey concluded, they “sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God

⁷⁵See Matt 16:18; Eph 1:22; 3:10; Rev 19:7; 21:2, 9.

⁷⁶Peterson, *Acts*, 376.

⁷⁷David M. Doran and Pearson Johnson, *For the Sake of His Name: Challenging a New Generation for World Missions* (Allen Park, MI: Student Global Impact, 2002), 164.

⁷⁸Bock, *Acts*, 439.

for the work that they had fulfilled” (14:26). Since they had been set apart by the church at Antioch, it was to the Antioch church that they gave their report.

The language of verse 26 helps emphasize the importance of the commissioning in Acts 13:2. Paul and Barnabas “had been commended to the grace of God.” “Commended” (*παραδεδομένοι*) means to “hand over to or to convey something to someone, particularly a right or an authority.”⁷⁹ They had embarked on no haphazard journey for Luke said, they “fulfilled” their work, which “suggests a very specific plan for the first missionary journey.”⁸⁰

At their sending church they “declared all that God has done with them, and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles” (14:27). The word “declare” (*ἀναγγέλλω*) means “to provide information, with the possible implication of considerable detail—‘to announce, to inform.’”⁸¹ The furloughed missionaries gave account in great detail, which makes sense from the standpoint that Barnabas and Paul were sent as ministers of the Antioch church. F. F. Bruce comments, “It [the church in Antioch] shared in the responsibility and the glory of their service, for it was with its blessing and fellowship that they had set out on their campaign of more extended Gentile evangelization.”⁸² Bock maintains that the tight accountability benefits both parties: “Missionaries are also not to be sent, gone, and forgotten; a line of communication is to remain so that both communities can be connected and blessed by seeing how God is working and binding them together.”⁸³ The numerous NT references to the close-knit

⁷⁹Louw and Nida, *Lexicon*, 566.

⁸⁰Peterson, *Acts*, 415.

⁸¹Louw and Nida, *Lexicon*, 410.

⁸²Bruce, *Acts*, 281.

⁸³Bock, *Acts*, 484.

nature of the church⁸⁴ reinforce the need for the apostles to give account to their home church.

Antioch serves as a pattern for the church today. John Polhill agrees,

Antioch established a pattern which is still followed today. For instance, Acts 13:3 portrays not an ordination but a missionary commissioning service. The reference to God's Spirit sending the missionaries forth (Acts 13:4) and God's grace in leading them to fulfill their work (Acts 14:26) forms an *inclusio* or frame around the whole mission of Paul and Barnabas, a mission which begins and ends in Antioch. Like missionaries today, on returning home the two gave their mission report of how God had blessed their work (Acts 14:27).⁸⁵

If Paul's first missionary journey serves as a pattern for the church today, then from Acts 13-14 one can conclude that the local church is responsible to send out missionaries (13:1-3), pray for missionaries (13:2-3), supervise missionaries (14:26-28), and share in the glory of missionary service (14:26-28).

A Partnership of Giving and Receiving (Phil 4:10-20)

In Philippians 4:10-20, Paul expresses his thanks to the church for caring for him. He characterizes their relationship to him in terms of "partnership" and "sharing." By examining this passage and observing Paul's use of the language of sharing in Philippians,⁸⁶ it is clear that Paul considered local church involvement in his ministry to encompass more than just sending money.

In this last section of his letter, Paul thanked the church for their gift sent through Epaphroditus. It could best be described as a muted thanks. Gerald Hawthorne argues that this section constitutes a "thankless thanks;" that is, "He admits that he is very glad *in the Lord* that they once again were able to show their concern for him, but he never

⁸⁴Many times Paul calls the church a body (Rom 12:4-8; 1 Cor 12:12-31; Eph 4:25). Other places speak of the church as a building (1 Cor 3:16-17; Eph 2:19-22; 1 Pet 2:4-8). In these passages, part of the emphasis is the close-knit nature of the church.

⁸⁵John B. Polhill, "Antioch's Contribution to Christianity," *Faith and Mission* 18, no. 1 (Fall 2000): 14.

⁸⁶See Phil 1:5, 7; 2:1; 3:10; 4:14-15.

praises them for the tangible nature of their concern.”⁸⁷ Scholars propose several reasons for Paul’s muted expression of thanks. For example, some argue that “an expression of effusive thanks for this benefaction would have placed Paul in the embarrassing position of having to acknowledge either a dependency on the patronage of the Philippian church, or else an obligation to reciprocate.”⁸⁸ Some see it “as the clearing up of a resentment on the part of the Philippians caused by something Paul had said in a hypothetical first letter of thanks to the church.”⁸⁹ Others speculate that the restrained “thank you” can be ascribed to the long delay of their gift (4:10). However, the most natural reading is that the uneasiness results from a conflict between his desire to express sincere appreciation and to show himself to be above questions of money. Whatever the reason, Philippians 4:10-20 is very important to the relationship between Paul and the Philippian church.

Paul begins the epilogue by expressing joy in the Lord over their gift: “I rejoiced in the Lord greatly.” His joy was exuberant because he rejoiced “greatly.” This is the only time that the adverb “greatly” (*μεγάλως*) is used in the New Testament. Hawthorne states that “its very uniqueness intensifies what he is saying about the depth of his feelings at this point.”⁹⁰ Markus Bockmuehl characterizes Paul’s attitude concerning the gift as indulging in exuberant joy.⁹¹

“You have revived your concern for me” emphasizes Paul’s joy over their gift. The word “have revived” (*ἀνεθάλετε*) means to “bloom again.” G. Walter Hansen states

⁸⁷Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 43 (Waco, TX: Word, 1983), 195.

⁸⁸Markus Bockmuehl, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, Black’s New Testament Commentary (London: Continuum, 1997), 256.

⁸⁹Ralph P. Martin, *Philippians*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 11 (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity, 2008), 180.

⁹⁰Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 196.

⁹¹Bockmuehl, *Philippians*, 259.

that the verb paints “a botanical image of a plant blooming again after a period of dormancy. If it is used intransitively, it would be translated, ‘you blossomed again;’ if it is used transitively here, it means ‘you revived your care for me.’”⁹² Hawthorne goes so far to say,

The verb translated “renewed” (ἀνεθάλατε) is a highly metaphorical word, filled with poetic boldness, beautiful in its idea, chosen no doubt to convey affectionate understanding. . . . To translate it as “renew,” or “revive,” or “show” is almost to mistranslate it.⁹³

The word “concern” (φρονεῖν) literally means “to think, have an opinion, have understanding.”⁹⁴ It means that one has an active interest in the affairs of another. Paul uses the word ten times in Philippians. The highly relational nature of the word comes to light in 1:7 as Paul says, “It is right for me to feel this way about you all.” In verse 2:2 he encourages harmony in the church “by being of the same mind . . . being . . . of one mind.” In 3:15 he encourages the mature to “think this way.” Later, he encouraged Euodia and Syntyche to “agree in the Lord” (4:2). Hansen states, “All of these uses of the word point to the crucial importance of having the *attitude of mind* that builds relationships.”⁹⁵

Nevertheless, the adverbial phrase “now at length” presents problems, because it may convey the idea that Paul is rebuking the Philippian church for their lack of concern. However, rebuke cannot be his motive, because Paul explained the reason for the delay, “you had no opportunity” (v. 10). The verb “had no opportunity” (ἤκαίρεισθε) is in the imperfect tense; causing Bockmuehl to observe, “The imperfect tense of both Greek verbs in this clause indicates both ongoing concern and ongoing inability to express it.”⁹⁶ The most logical reason for the delay and their inability to help is Paul’s incarceration.

⁹²G. Walter Hansen, *The Letter to the Philippians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 306.

⁹³Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 197.

⁹⁴Friberg, Friberg, and Miller, *Analytical Lexicon*, 402.

⁹⁵Hansen, *Philippians*, 307.

⁹⁶Bockmuehl, *Philippians*, 260.

Paul does not indicate that their lack of care created any undue hardship in his life, for in verses 11-13 he told them that he knew how to be content in any situation. He ends the section asserting, “I can do all things through him who strengthens me.”

In verse 14, Paul returns to the earlier train of thought: “Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble.” With the word *πλὴν*, which can be translated “but,” “even so,” “nevertheless,” or “all the same,” he returns to the task of affirming them for their personal care and concern. He affirmed that it was “kind of you to share in my trouble.” “Kind of you” translates one word (*καλῶς*), which “most often designates the suitability or appropriateness of an action or a state of affairs.”⁹⁷ Louw and Nida state that oftentimes it pertains “to a positive moral quality, with the implication of being favorably valued— ‘good, fine, praiseworthy.’”⁹⁸

Sharing in Paul’s affliction was their praiseworthy action. The participle “share” (*συγκοινωνήσαντές*) means “to participate with, to be in partnership with.”⁹⁹ Literally, it means to “have *koinōnia* (fellowship) with me.” Throughout the letter, Paul continually emphasized their partnership with him. They shared in his activity of advancing the gospel (1:5, 7; 4:15), common life in the Spirit (2:1), and the sufferings of Christ (3:10; 4:14). Paul viewed their partnership comprehensively; they shared in all aspects of his ministry.

In verse 14, Paul commends them specifically for sharing in his “trouble” (*θλίψις*). BAGD says that *θλίψις* is “distress that is brought about by outward circumstances.”¹⁰⁰ It means trouble of any kind, but sometimes in eschatological

⁹⁷Balz and Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary*, 246.

⁹⁸Louw and Nida, *Lexicon*, 741.

⁹⁹*Ibid.*, 445.

¹⁰⁰Frederick W. Danker, Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. [BAGD] (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 362.

literature it means tribulation (Matt 24:21; Rev 7:14). However, Richard Melick believes that it had a deeper significance for Paul. In Col 1:24 he spoke of suffering the “tribulations of the Christ” (the same Greek word), so that his difficulties in spreading the gospel actually related to the Messiah.¹⁰¹ Most likely the trouble Paul refers to is his current imprisonment.

Further clarifying their ministry relationship, Paul said in verse 15, “And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only.” They were the only church who entered into a partnership (ἐκοινωνήσεν) with Paul from the “beginning of the gospel.” What does Paul mean? Most likely Paul did not mean from the beginning of his gospel ministry. Most likely he meant the beginning of gospel ministry from the Philippian standpoint.

Another time marker Paul gives is “when I left Macedonia.” He went to Macedonia during his second missionary journey. The time right after Macedonia included the difficult ministry in Corinth. He even alluded to the Philippian church when talking to the Corinthians:

I robbed other churches by accepting support from them in order to serve you. And when I was with you and was in need, I did not burden anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied my need. So I refrained and will refrain from burdening you in any way. (2 Cor 11:8-9)

Paul explains the exact nature of their partnership by using a Hellenistic commercial phrase “λόγον δόσεως καὶ λήμψεως.” According to Bockmuehl, it is “a Hellenistic commercial term used of the accounting of payments and receipts.”¹⁰² Paul seems to teach that the other churches only exercised a one-way relationship with Paul in the gospel; they only received it.

¹⁰¹Richard R. Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, New American Commentary, vol. 32 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1991), 155.

¹⁰²Bockmuehl, *Philippians*, 263.

In verse 16, Paul further recounts their generosity by pointing to their support when he went to Thessalonica. At this point the Philippian church was very young, because he went to Thessalonica after being asked to leave Philippi.¹⁰³ Verse 17 gives a further reason for Paul's commendation: he wanted them to receive a spiritual blessing. "Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit." Paul reassures them that he does not want the partnership strictly for financial gain, but rather for their good. The term "fruit" (*καρπὸν*) literally means "fruit, produce."¹⁰⁴ Hansen indicates that he has spiritual fruit in mind:

By combining this term with the financial sense of *account*, Paul speaks in the language of an investments manager: he desires continuously increasing profits, daily compounding interest, and accumulating dividends for the Philippians' account. . . . When he anticipates the prospect of *fruitful labor* (1:22), he must be expecting that his work will produce Christ-likeness in his followers. In the context of his entire letter the term "fruit" points to "the blessing which is continually accruing to faithful ministry in the rich development of Christian character. Every act of Christian ministry develops and enriches him who performs it."¹⁰⁵

Paul views the local church at Philippi as his partner. They did more than just send money. They encouraged him by sending Epaphroditus to give their financial gift and to minister to him while he was in prison, had the same ministry mindset as he did and were actively involved in his affairs, shared in his affliction, advanced the gospel with him, and shared common life in the Spirit.

Conclusion

Since the beginning, God planned for all the world to know him. He entered into a covenant with Abraham and his descendants so that they would know his name and all the nations would know that God is the one true God. When he gave the law, God provided for other nations to join Israel in knowing him. After the incarnation of Christ,

¹⁰³See Acts 16:35-17:1.

¹⁰⁴BAGD, 404.

¹⁰⁵Hansen, *Philippians*, 321-22.

the gospel message no longer called on people to come to Jerusalem for salvation, but now his disciples “go out from Jerusalem, taking the gospel to all people in the whole world.”¹⁰⁶ The local church is responsible to commission, send, support, and supervise missionaries. The church should consider itself a partner with the missionary, knowing that it is “a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God” (Phil 4:18).

¹⁰⁶Eric E. Wright, *A Practical Theology of Missions: Dispelling the Mystery, Recovering the Passion* (Leominster, UK: Day One, 2010), 66.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGIES AND CASE STUDIES

Introduction

First Baptist Church seeks to be a missions-minded church. In order to become more involved in world missions, the church needs to learn essential practices of highly involved churches. Therefore, a multiple case study was conducted on two exemplar churches to learn better ways for FBC to be involved in missions. The multiple case study examined how the churches enlisted essential practices that were gleaned from a prior literature review.

Research Question

The following research question was addressed in this qualitative study: “What essential practices do churches need in order to increase participation in world missions?”

Design Overview

For the research question to be answered appropriately, one must choose the method of research that best answers it. John Creswell states that the “choice of methods by a researcher turns on whether the intent is to specify the type of information to be collected in advance of the study or to allow it to emerge from participants in the project.”¹ For this particular study, the information (essential practices) was expected to emerge from the study. As defined by Creswell, there are three general approaches to research:

¹John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Method Approaches*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2003), 17.

quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods.² Quantitative researchers “use numbers, usually in the form of statistics, to explain phenomena,”³ qualitative researchers use “words to describe trends or patterns in research settings,”⁴ and mixed-methods research captures both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Since the research question aims to find patterns or trends, a qualitative, multiple case study will be used to answer the research question.

Qualitative Design

This qualitative, multiple case study sought to identify essential practices that churches need to employ to maximize membership participation in world missions. Some advantages of the qualitative approach are that it allows the researcher to “build a complex, holistic picture, report detailed views of informants, and conduct the study in a natural setting.”⁵ Qualitative research provides the researcher with an understanding of the viewpoint and the perspectives of the participant on the topic. This is an appropriate methodology when the literature has limited data on a certain topic. The qualitative case study is used because it includes “detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context.”⁶ According to Michael Davis, “A qualitative design is appropriate for identifying best practices in any new or un-experienced situation.”⁷

²Creswell, *Research Design*, 18.

³Dawson R. Hancock and Bob Algozzine, *Doing Case Study Research: A Practical Guide for Beginning Researchers* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2011), 5.

⁴Ibid.

⁵John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Traditions* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1998), 15.

⁶Ibid., 61.

⁷Michael Larry Davis, “Intentional Practice of Shared Leadership in the Marketplace by Christian Leaders: A Multi-Case Study” (Ed.D. thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015), 54.

Case Study Method

Case studies are often used to research topics such as “individuals, events, or groups.”⁸ Case studies “are intensive analyses and descriptions of a single unit or system bounded by space and time,”⁹ therefore they are different from other types of qualitative research.

The following case study is bounded to two churches. The two sites were identified for the study by surveying professors of missions in Bible colleges and independent mission organizations.¹⁰ The identified churches received invitations to participate in the study, and both were willing to participate. The cases were selected using the following criteria:

1. Distinctive aspects of their missions programs could be used by other churches.
2. They had a clear, purposeful strategy in their missions outreach.
3. Their strategy was clearly implemented and adhered to.

Case Descriptions

The two churches chosen for this case study are Countryside Baptist Church in Olathe, Kansas, and Inter-City Baptist Church in Allen Park, Michigan.

Countryside Baptist Church was planted by Mike Summers in November 1990.¹¹ Within four years, Countryside sent their first missionaries, Roger and Crystal Johansen, to Brazil. Of all the churches screened for case study, Countryside most rigidly follows patterns of Scripture. For example, much like the church of Antioch (Acts 13:1-3), Countryside only sends their own church members to the mission field. They do not accept people into their membership with the express purpose of sending them to the field.

⁸Hancock and Algozzine, *Doing Case Study Research*, 10.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰I asked several professors who formerly taught at Northland International University, as well as a former president of Baptist World Mission.

¹¹Most of this information came from an interview with Mike Summers, but some also came from the church website. Countryside, accessed June 9, 2016, <http://cside.org/Default.aspx>.

Each missionary has been a longtime member. Just as Paul and Barnabas were in spiritual leadership at the Antioch church, each missionary at Countryside has served at least three years as an elder in the church. Also, the church models the pattern of accountability in Acts 14:26-28, where Paul and Barnabas came back to give account to the Antioch church. Countryside accomplishes this through virtual staff meetings between the missionaries and the executive pastor each Tuesday morning.

At the time of this study, three of the eight staff pastors are either missionaries on the foreign field or church planters. In addition, four more member families are preparing for the mission field. The church is preparing two of the families to be sent to restricted access Muslim countries. Summers said that their ten-year plan is to have four more families on the mission field. The church is not large. Sunday worship attendance fluctuates between 420 and 500. That the church plans to add so many staff missionaries is remarkable.

When asked about the missions participation rate of the congregation, Summers said that approximately 85 percent of their congregation is involved in missions.¹² When asked to what he attributed the high participation rate, he replied, “We don’t see missions as something separate from church ministry, we see missions as the mission of our church.” He went on to explain that they see everything as connected to missions: “Missions permeates everything we do.” While many church websites publish the kind of missions work they do, Countryside publishes the complete philosophy of missions on their website.¹³

Inter-City Baptist Church was founded in 1950. Dave Doran has been the senior pastor of Inter-City since 1989. Situated on the border of Detroit and Allen Park, the church’s attendance has matched the population loss of Detroit. At the time of this

¹²The 85 percent figure consists of missions trips, regular communication with missionaries, and small group prayer dedicated specifically to missions.

¹³Countryside, “Global Missions,” accessed July 3, 2016, <http://cside.org/missions.aspx>.

study, worship attendance was down to 600. Doran is committed to keeping the church at its current location, despite the challenges. The attendance decline puts additional strain on the ministry because it has a Christian school, a seminary, and its own mission board, Grace Baptist Mission.¹⁴ Doran is the president of and teaches in the church's seminary, Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary.¹⁵

Being dissatisfied with the pervasive missions mindset, Doran sought to change the missions philosophy of the church and increase their global activity. Doran realized that they had made assumptions about missions and how it fits into the broader purposes of the church. It was during the transition that Grace Baptist Mission was founded. Inter-City is unique in that the church has seen young people grow up in the church, attend the seminary, and go to the mission field through Grace Baptist Mission.

Instrumentation

Data gathering for this study included semi-structured interviews with select pastors and analysis of organizational documents. All interview questions, observation protocols, and analysis methods were approved by the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary ethics committee.

Interview

Using the approved interview protocol, I interviewed the senior pastors as well as the Assistant Director of missions at Inter-City Baptist Church.¹⁶ I crafted questions from the results of a literature review based upon the research question.

¹⁴Inner-City Baptist Church, "Grace Baptist Mission," accessed June 9, 2016, <http://www.intercity.org/3-4.asp>.

¹⁵Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary, accessed June 9, 2016, <http://www.dbts.edu/>.

¹⁶See appendix 1.

Select interview questions sought to gauge how the churches nurtured a Great Commission vision. Since “missions is the central facet of biblical revelation,”¹⁷ it stands to reason that it will be confirmed through expository preaching. Eric Wright argues that expository preaching will bring out the vision of God in missions: “Unless the pastor deliberately avoids certain Scriptures, a careful attention to the message of the Bible will underline God’s missionary vision.”¹⁸

The interview questions also sought to understand how the churches kept the membership mindful of missionaries and their fields. Healthy churches are missions-minded churches and foster a missionary vision. Wright explains, “Encouraging missionary vision requires regular exposure to missionaries.”¹⁹ Zane Pratt echoes Wright, but in the negative: “You should not ignore the missionary imperative.”²⁰ Tom Ascol writes that incorporating books such as *Operation World*²¹ has “sensitized our members to people and places that they might otherwise ignore.”²²

Missions-minded churches designate a significant portion of their budget to missions. Ascol asserts that working to increase the amount of money that the church allocates to missions “cultivates a missions culture.”²³ David Platt and Paul Akin

¹⁷Eric E. Wright, *A Practical Theology of Missions: Dispelling the Mystery, Recovering the Passion* (Leominster, UK: Day One, 2010), 227.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Zane Pratt, “7 Things Your Church Should Not Do,” *9Marks Journal* (Fall 2015): 33, accessed June 9, 2016, <https://9marks.org/journal/missions-adding-wisdom-to-zeal>.

²¹Jason Mandryk, *Operation World*, 7th ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2010). Operation World also has an informative website that is updated regularly, Operation World, accessed June 9, 2016, <http://www.operationworld.org/>.

²²Tom Ascol, “Cultivating a Culture of Missions in a Small Church,” *9Marks*, accessed June 6, 2016, <https://9marks.org/article/cultivating-culture-missions-small-church/>.

²³Ibid.

encourage churches to give sacrificially. They say, “Sacrificial giving to global missions enables the whole church to be involved. Children, youth, adults, and senior adults can all contribute together for the spread of the gospel.”²⁴

Other questions focused on understanding how the churches utilized prayer to enhance their missions focus. Churches that have high missions participation rates allocate significant prayer for missions. In addressing the need of churches to pray corporately for missionaries, Doran contends, “Missions cannot be properly addressed apart from the context of the local church. Individual believers engage in missions, but I would contend that they must do so in connection with the local church.”²⁵ Wright echoes the importance of praying for missionaries: “Both sending churches and missionaries are responsible to maintain vigorous intercession. Missionary work, as well as church work, is the special target of the enemy.”²⁶

Lastly, the interview gleaned how well the churches communicate with missionaries. Regarding missionaries, Neal Pirolo writes, “To the extent the communication, prayer, and financial support was strong from their sending church—to that extent their ministry was strong.”²⁷ Missionaries who regularly communicate with churches also see stronger financial support. Jo Anne Dennett writes, “My experience in serving on mission councils has impressed on me the direct link between missionaries’ support and their correspondence with home churches.”²⁸

²⁴David Platt and Paul Akin, “5 Ways Your Church Can Get Involved in Global Missions Starting Tomorrow,” *9Marks Journal* (Fall 2015): 48, accessed June 9, 2016, <https://9marks.org/journal/missions-adding-wisdom-to-zeal>.

²⁵David M. Doran and Pearson Johnson, *For the Sake of His Name: Challenging a New Generation for World Missions* (Allen Park, MI: Student Global Impact, 2002), 156.

²⁶Wright, *A Practical Theology of Missions*, 230.

²⁷Neal Pirolo, *Serving as Senders* (San Diego: Emmaus Road, 1991), 120-21.

²⁸Jo Anne Dennett, *Thriving in Another Culture: A Handbook for Cross-Cultural Missions* (Melbourne: Acorn, 1998), 85, quoted in Wright, *A Practical Theology of Missions*, 231.

Documentation

This project sought all documentation that the churches could provide, including missions purpose statements, missions committee purpose documents, strategic planning documents, missions policies, and all documents that guide the selection and supervision of missionaries. The purpose of document collection was to corroborate the information provided by the pastors with the documented application of their ideas.

Data Analysis

After document collection and interviews, the data was analyzed for information relevant to the study. Yin describes data analysis as “examining, categorizing, tabulating, testing, or otherwise recombining evidence, to produce empirically based findings.”²⁹

According to Creswell, there are six steps to data analysis: (1) organize and prepare the data for analysis, (2) obtain a general sense of the information and its overall meaning, (3) begin the coding process, (4) generate a description, (5) advance how the description and themes will be represented, and (6) interpret the data.³⁰

After I interviewed the subjects and collected the documents, I read the data to get a general sense of what it said. I listed the topics and clustered them according to similar themes, as suggested by Creswell.³¹ Lastly, I turned all the topic clusters into categories. These categories confirmed the suggested essential practices as identified by the literature review.

Summary of Findings

The research question examined the essential practices of missions-minded churches. This qualitative, multiple case study sought to understand how the essential

²⁹Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 5th ed. (Los Angeles: Sage, 2014), 132.

³⁰Creswell, *Research Design*, 191-95.

³¹*Ibid.*, 192.

practices were implemented in the churches. I will review the findings in conjunction with the research question and specifically look for practices that are transferable to the ministry context of FBC.

Established Essential Practices

The review of literature produced five essential practices of missions-minded churches. Additionally, the qualitative case study produced one more practice that was unique to these churches, and also transferable to FBC.

Essential practice 1: Preaching on missions. Churches with increased participation in world missions teach and preach missions as a central theme of biblical revelation. Both churches strived to bring the Great Commission into focus through preaching. They established that focus in two ways. First, they set aside time to specifically preach on the Great Commission and missions. Summers said, “Every year we revisit our purpose and mission, and how it works out in our programs and budgets.” Doran agreed: “Our entire focus is a Great Commission mindset, but we set aside certain times to make clear what our mission is and our place in God’s global program.”

The second method they used to focus on missions was through their regular preaching. Both pastors chose to preach through books expositionally, and they made application to missions and evangelism where appropriate. Summers explained, “I see missions application as I preach through books. When you think about it, Paul wrote to churches that he planted. In a sense, missions runs through each book that he wrote.” Doran said it a little differently: “I tend to focus on the primary teaching of a passage, and do not make much extended application to missions. Missions is not a program of the church, missions is what the church is supposed to do.”

Both of these churches regularly preach and teach missions and evangelism as a central tenet of biblical revelation. Because missions is a central part of biblical revelation, they view it as central to everything they do as churches. Summers summarized

their thinking: “Everything we do we see as connected to missions. It is not a tack-on ministry. Missions permeates everything we do.”

Essential practice 2: Fostering a missionary vision. Churches with increased participation in world missions foster a missionary vision in the membership. Every church ministers in a unique context, with a unique set of challenges, and a unique method of ministry, so how one church successfully fosters a missionary vision may not work for another. The two case study churches make this reality apparent.

Because every missionary that Countryside Bible Church supports comes from their church, they find it very easy to foster a vision for the mission field. Basically, the church members’ friends are on the mission field. They have a wall of large display cases with information and pictures of their missionaries and families. Once a year they bring their missionaries home for a missions conference. Also, in order to challenge their congregation to think globally, they bring in one missionary whom they do not support to speak at their missions conference.

Another way that they foster a missionary vision is with a monthly newsletter called “News and Needs.” It contains condensed summaries of their foreign ministries. Small groups that meet on Sunday evenings pray for specific needs the missionaries request, and the groups also communicate with them through Skype. Every year the church takes three organized group mission trips for varying age groups and for varying purposes, including medical trips, work trips, graduating seniors’ trips, kids’ ministry trips, etc. Additionally, an average of ten trips are made by individuals or families and they report back to the church on what happened during their trip. Summers said a recent survey showed that a full 60 percent of their membership had been to the mission field.

Inter-City Baptist goes about missions in a very different manner; as a result, they use different means to foster a missionary vision. They do not have an annual missions conference, however, since they have a good number of college and seminary

students attending the church, they have an annual student “Global Impact” conference, which is geared primarily for high school and college students.

Inter-City is the sending church for a good number of missionaries, as a result, missionaries regularly arrive to give field reports. Doran stated that, already in 2016, they have had missionaries from China, Turkey, East Africa, the Dominican Republic, and Spain. He characterizes their exposure to the mission field as scattered throughout the year, instead of one big conference. They do take time to draw attention to specific missionaries and fields. For instance, they email a weekly “Missions Digest.”

Inter-City organizes regular “ministry trips.” They do not call them missions trips because, as Doran put it, “You can’t do missions in a week or two.” Every summer the church sends three groups on ministry trips. In the summer of 2016, three teams went to China, Zambia, and Tanzania. Additionally, they send pastoral staff every year to visit the field. “Our goal is to have a pastoral connection to the people that we have sent to the field, on the field,” said Doran.

Essential practice 3: Budgeting for missions. Churches with increased participation in world missions allocate a significant portion of the church budget to missions. Since both case study churches claimed that missions is part of everything they do, their budgets reflected that reality. The two churches were relatively even when comparing the percentage of total budget earmarked for missions. In terms of total percentage, Countryside allocated 28.5 percent of their total budget compared to 22.9 percent for Inter-City. In terms of total funds going to missions, the churches could not have been more different. Even though Inter-City was only one-third larger than Countryside, their missions budget was four times higher: \$1,030,310 compared to \$260,219.

Not only do they have starkly different budget amounts, but the breakdown of their budgets is very different. Each is itemized to reflect differing philosophies of missions. Since Countryside has three staff missionaries, their missions budget was

itemized in the same manner as the other parts of the budget. Their allocations include lines for salary and housing, IRAs, medical expenses, vehicle expenses, and field ministry expense. Also included in the budget is money for on-site missions interns, as well as a line for “development and encouragement” which pays for a pastoral visit to each field each year.

Inter-City’s budget reflects the more traditional missions budget of an independent Baptist church. Theirs encompasses seventy-two lines, and they support forty-three missionary families. The budget is complicated. It contains a baseline that is needed for monthly missionary support. For example, every missionary sent from Inter-City is supported for \$1,000 per month. Twelve of the forty-three missionary families are sent from their church. The other thirty-one missionaries are supported for various monthly amounts. This baseline is only a small portion (\$263,184) of their total missions budget. The rest of their expenditures are called “special gifts.” A special gift can be for anything from helping to buy an orphanage, a vehicle, buying Bibles, airfares, or purchasing land for a Bible Institute. All of these gifts benefit the ministries they already support. Doran said that much of their missions budget is unallocated until special needs arise, but a good percentage of the income comes from love offerings, Christmas offerings, and special one-time gifts. An example of a special gift is \$111,542 that went to an orphanage in Tanzania.

Another difference between the two churches is how they budget for the new fiscal year. Countryside budgets for the new fiscal year by finding a baseline of missionary needs (salary, housing, and ministry needs). Their budgeting process is pretty straightforward; Summers talks to the missionaries and asks what their needs are and what expenses they foresee. Inter-City is less straightforward; Doran simply said, “We try to keep growing the budget as we move forward.” Inter-City has a number of men getting ready for the mission field, so that influences their budget as well.

Churches are at liberty to budget any way that accomplishes their purpose. Churches that have high missions participation rates also dedicate a significant portion of their budget to missions regardless of how that budget is structured.

Essential practice 4: Praying for missionaries. Churches with increased participation in world missions spend significant time in prayer for missions. Both churches intentionally make missionary prayer part of their weekly gatherings. Countryside boasts a high percentage of people praying. Every week each small group gets a memo telling of the prayer needs of both the church and foreign ministries. Additionally, monthly lay leadership meetings include extended prayer times for the missionaries. Further, each member who signs up for the monthly newsletter, “News and Needs,” receives the same prayer requests. Summers was careful to explain the prayer strategy of the church: “We don’t want to elevate missions to seem like it is different from anything else we do in the church. We pray for missions just like we pray for VBS or our Christmas outreach.”

Inter-City plans corporate prayer for missions in two services. First, in each Wednesday night prayer meeting they highlight one missionary family and pray for them. Second, in the Sunday evening service they usually have one or two missionary requests embedded in the congregational prayer time. As mentioned, the church sends a weekly “Missions Digest” that contains prayer requests. He encourages congregants to communicate with whichever missionary was the subject of prayer.

A culture of prayer pervades gospel ministry. Jesus prayed regularly before key times in his ministry. He also taught people to pray for the harvest fields. Churches that have a high missions participation rate spend significant congregational resources on missionary prayer.

Essential practice 5: Communication with missionaries. Churches with increased participation in world missions regularly communicate with their missionaries.

Communication is a challenging aspect of ministry. Not every church has good communication, and it is certain that not every missionary does. The two churches in the case study once again illustrate that an essential practice can be carried out in dramatically different ways.

Inter-City has two staff members dedicated to missions. One is the director of Grace Baptist Mission. The second is the pastor of missions mobilization. Because they have a mission board, the director is in constant communication with the missionaries. Doran also directs his pastoral staff to regularly communicate with them as well. However, when it comes to congregational involvement, he is much less structured. He said, “We tell our congregation, ‘I’m sure that the missionaries would like to hear from you. If you are on a mailing list, let the missionary know it.’”

By contrast, the communication with missionaries at Countryside is more organic. Summers said, “Almost all of the people know our missionaries because they spent at least three years as a paid elder in the church. So the communication just happens naturally.” However, he does not leave all communication to natural networks. Each missionary has a staff meeting on Tuesdays. “They’re a regular staff member,” he said.

Unique Essential Practice: Carefully Crafted Philosophy of Missions

The qualitative case study unearthed one essential practice that was not enumerated in literature. Both churches practice carefully crafted philosophies of missions, and both are attentive to ensure that their policies follow their philosophy.

Countryside has an eleven-page philosophy of missions. After a brief introduction and definition of terms, the paper is divided into two major sections: the foundational principles that support missions and the guiding policies that direct missions. It enumerates four foundational principles, and the policy section explains how each principle is to be put into practice. Much of their philosophy is taken from Acts 13-14, where the Antioch church sends out Paul and Barnabas. The most striking feature of their

philosophy of missions is how closely they model Acts 13-14. The consistency with which the church implemented their philosophy of missions is remarkable.

Like Countryside, Inter-City enumerated four guiding principles in their missions philosophy.³² Unlike Countryside, the execution of that philosophy is not as straightforward. Two factors complicate Inter-City's execution of the policy. First, the mission board is a ministry of the church. Second, part of their missionaries are under the mission board and part of them are not. Instead of a simple policy section guiding how they applied the principles, they had a series of documents that spelled out how the church implements the philosophy. A partial document list includes: Preparation and Entry Plan for Missionaries, Policies and Procedures Manual, Inter-City Missionary Candidate Questionnaire, and a Pre-Field Ministry Document. Just like Countryside, they were consistent in their implementation of their missions philosophy.

Summary of Research Findings

This study sought to identify essential practices of churches with high involvement in world missions. Research indicates that churches with high missions involvement implement standard practices as identified through literature review. However, the data also identified one more practice that was unique to these two sites. There may have been more practices that were unique to each church, but they should not be identified as essential practices since they were not practiced by both churches.

Application to First Baptist Church

The literature review and case studies highlighted the essential practices of churches with high membership involvement in missions. However, one of the purposes of this project was to apply those essential practices to FBC. The case studies

³²The philosophy of missions for Inter-City can be found at the Inter-City Baptist Church, <http://www.intercity.org/3-4.asp>.

demonstrated how those principles could be transferred to this congregation. The following section highlights some methods that will help FBC apply those practices.

Essential Practice 1

Churches with increased participation in world missions teach and preach missions as a central theme of biblical revelation. Like the two case study churches, FBC sets aside time every year to revisit its purpose and mission. They differ from FBC by placing greater emphasis on missions during these times. In order to execute this essential practice, we added a sermon on missions to the annual state-of-the-church series. Second, during sermon preparation, I looked for more ways to make secondary application to missions from the text.

Essential Practice 2

Churches with increased participation in world missions foster a missionary vision within the church. While FBC has improved membership exposure to missions, the primary means consists of handing out missionary prayer letters at the Wednesday evening prayer meeting. Since only a small percentage of the church attends prayer meeting, the majority of attendees do not receive the letters. During the project, four of the Sunday school lessons involved Skyping the missionary or watching a DVD that the missionary produced. Many people commented how these made the missionaries and their respective ministries more real. To continue this type of exposure, I suggest that we Skype a different missionary every other month. It could be done by having combined Sunday school or by setting aside fifteen minutes of the worship service for the conversation.

In the past, the secretary assembled packets that contained copies of the monthly prayer letters. It got to the point that only two or three packets were taken each month. It would make more sense to create a “Missions Digest” email newsletter. I

considered this idea in the past, but because I would be the one to create the newsletter, it has not been done.

The church currently takes one missions trip every other year. We always go to Poland because it is easy to visit the two missionary families there and because our church has Polish roots. I take missions trips separately from the church, but not frequently enough. Therefore I plan to make trips more often in the future. The youth pastor aims to take a teen missions trip in the next year. These trips will increase our on-field missions exposure.

Essential Practice 3

Churches with increased participation in world missions allocate a significant portion of the church budget to missions. This is one area in which FBC excels. The missions budget is 27 percent of the total budget. In addition, we designate our entire offering on Easter Sunday to missions. Everything that comes in that day goes directly to the missionaries that the church supports. It is usually the second highest offering of the year, and equals a 25 percent bonus over and above the missions budget.

Some restructuring would enhance the missions budget. Primarily, the church needs to add a section for special projects that could be used at the church's discretion to help missionaries with special needs that arise. For example, on a number of occasions missionaries have had a great opportunity arise that required extra funds. A discretionary fund would be perfect in such a situation.

Essential Practice 4

Churches with increased participation in world missions spend significant time in prayer for missions. FBC also excels at praying for missionaries. Already, we have an extended prayer time for missions during the Wednesday evening prayer service. The deacons' meeting always includes a review of prayer letters and prayer for missionaries. The church could enact one change, which would be to pray for a missionary during the

morning service. Another idea is to have a “missionary of the month” that the church could pray for in each Sunday school class and in the youth group meetings.

Essential Practice 5

Churches with increased participation in world missions regularly communicate with their missionaries. My current practice, when I get an email prayer letter from a missionary, is to immediately respond to the email. Several missionaries have expressed their thanks over the consistent, rapid response. Yet, more can be done. One of the changes mentioned previously would be applicable here: Skyping missionaries on Sunday mornings.

For years, an elderly lady in our church, Alma Salesky, has hand-written letters that she includes in birthday cards mailed to the missionaries. These letters include updates as to how FBC is doing. Every missionary that visits the church wants to immediately see Alma. Unfortunately, she has developed dementia, therefore, the church needs to find a person willing to maintain this ministry in Alma’s place. It may be more effective to appoint several members to communicate with specific families and cultivate a relationship by asking them to correspond at least once a quarter. Missions trips have been helpful to foster those relationships. A number of our members who have been on a missions trip, now communicate with those missionaries on Facebook.

Unique Essential Practice

One essential practice that FBC does not perform is following a carefully crafted philosophy of missions; we do not have one. This is something that our leadership will be working on in the next year. Fortunately, we are in the beginning stages of rewriting our church constitution. This will be the opportune time to insert a philosophy of missions. The leadership will be guided to think through the passages covered in the biblical theology of chapter 2 of this project.

Conclusion

The literature review and qualitative multiple case study revealed the essential practices of churches with increased participation in world missions. The application of these practices to FBC have been noted. Consequently, a project designed to apply these essential practices to FBC will result in greater participation in global missions. The next chapter describes that project in detail.

CHAPTER 4

PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT

In order to increase missions participation at FBC, a fifteen-week project was implemented. The project unfolded in three phases: the preparation period of seven weeks, the implementation period of six weeks, and the follow-up period of two weeks. The preparation period involved giving a Knowledge Assessment Survey¹ as a pre-test and preparing Sunday school lessons² and sermons.³ The implementation period involved preaching the sermon series and teaching the lessons. The follow-up phase involved giving the Knowledge Assessment Survey as a post-test and utilizing a *t*-test for dependent samples to measure the effectiveness of the sermons and lessons. Also, a panel was gathered to develop a missions mobilization plan for the church.

Phase 1: Preparation

The first goal of this project was to develop a six week sermon series on the biblical and theological foundations of missions.

Week 1: Knowledge Assessment

A Knowledge Assessment Survey, which employed a six-level Likert scale was the primary instrument. For the purposes of the project, all adult Sunday school classes and the teen department combined to take the survey. Out of that group, thirty people were chosen as the survey group. The survey group included a wide sample of ages,

¹See appendix 3.

²See appendix 6.

³See appendix 7.

education level, length of salvation, and church membership. Someone from every age group took the survey from twelve years old to senior citizens. The Christian experience of the survey group varied widely as well—some subjects had only been saved two years and some were Bible college graduates; others had been Christians for over forty years. Each person was given the low risk informed consent statement in accordance with the Assessment of Risk to Human Subjects in Research protocol. The survey group agreed to listen to every sermon and every Sunday school lesson in the project before taking the post-survey.

For the biblical knowledge portion of the survey, each question was designed to measure comprehension of key biblical ideas relating to missions, as well as knowledge of the church's responsibility to missionaries. This portion of the survey consisted of eight questions. The content of the questions ranged from knowledge of the Abrahamic covenant to Paul's attitude toward supporting churches.

The second section of the survey measured how much the survey group knew about the church's missionaries and how to support them. Some questions were designed to test the overall knowledge of the subjects, such as how many and where the missionaries are located. Other questions were designed to assess knowledge of cultural and religious barriers, tested how well the participants understood basic missionary life, and asked about the participants' level of interaction with missionaries.

In week 1, a survey was distributed during Sunday school. Four adult Sunday school classes and all the teenagers were present to take the survey. The session began with an explanation that the survey was for the project, so they needed to think through each answer and not look on another person's survey. The survey took approximately twenty minutes to administer. The website administrator was asked to have the sermons and lessons placed on the church's website.⁴ The lessons and sermons were uploaded

⁴The sermons can be accessed at First Baptist Church, "Sermons," accessed August 15, 2016, <http://firstbaptistpound.net/sermons>. The lessons are located at First Baptist Church, "Missionary Sunday

every Tuesday morning. In case someone missed a lesson or a sermon, they were told that they could access them on the website.

Sermon and Sunday School Lesson Preparation

The goal of the sermon series was to present a brief biblical theology of missions. Six weeks is not enough time for a comprehensive treatment of missions, thus two additional sub-goals were developed. The first sub-goal was to show that salvation was not offered exclusively to Israel during the Old Testament period, and the second was to quickly move to passages that highlight the church's responsibility in world missions. Each passage was chosen to help develop the biblical theology. One sermon was written each week.

Lessons were written at the same time that the sermons were prepared. One lesson was written each week. The purpose of the six lessons was to highlight the ministry of one missionary and his field each week. Some of the purposes of these lessons included learning about the missionary and his family, their field, the cultural and theological barriers faced by the missionary, and a better understanding of how the church can pray for the missionaries.

Several factors were considered when choosing missionaries. The first was to acquire as much field diversity as possible. The six chosen missionaries served in Asia, South America, Europe, and North America. In addition to diversity of fields, there were three other criteria used to choose missionaries: those who communicated regularly, responded to communication quickly, and had not visited FBC in a while.

For each lesson field research was performed. The primary source was *Operation World*,⁵ which gives a brief summary of the field demographics and a

School Lessons," accessed August 15, 2016, <http://firstbaptistpound.net/sunday-school-teachings>.

⁵Jason Mandryk, *Operation World*, 7th ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2010).

thorough summary of religious beliefs. *Operation World* has a prayer guide for each country, which was helpful. The major weakness of the book was that it used data from 2010. Six years does not seem very long until one considers the massive changes in Europe in recent years. These changes rendered some information from *Operation World* obsolete, so additional research was completed and missionaries were questioned for more accurate information.

To gather information regarding the histories and backgrounds of those missionaries, all their past prayer letters and deputation packets were read.⁶ In the event that some important questions were not answered through prayer letters, then the missionaries were questioned via email. If their city had a webpage or Wikipedia entry, then those were consulted.

Each lesson had basically the same outline: an overview of the country, an overview of the specific field (city), a brief biography of the missionary family, a ministry update, and prayer requests from the missionaries. After the preliminary lesson was written, it was sent to the missionary for review and any necessary corrections were made. Once the basic lessons had taken shape, certain missionaries were chosen to communicate via Skype. Four missionaries were available to Skype and the one in North America was to send a DVD since his worship service occurred at the same time as FBC.

Week 2

The primary objective of the first sermon, “God Makes His Name Known,” was to counter the argument that salvation was offered to Gentiles only after the Ascension. Four primary concepts sustained the argument. First, God’s purpose was to make earth his dwelling so that all men may know his name (Gen 1, 2). Second, God

⁶Missionaries used to send out deputation packets, which contained background information, such as call to the ministry, salvation testimony, where they grew up, and education background. There was also information about the mission board they were under and information about the field they were hoping to go to. All of this is done electronically now.

would bless all the families of the earth through his covenant recipient, Abraham (Gen 12:1-3). Third, the Exodus served to teach the nations God's name. This teaching was accomplished by incorporating those people into Israel's worship (Exod 3:13-15; 12:38, 48). Finally, the Old Testament prophets envisioned a future where the nations would come to Jerusalem to worship God then go out and declare his glory (Mic 4:1-2; Isa 66:18-19).

The first Sunday school lesson was about Lance (Bud) Rader, who is the longest serving missionary that FBC supports. He has been in Bolivia for thirty-four years. Three of his six children live in Bolivia as missionaries. He could not Skype because his internet connection was slow and unreliable. Even though he had the most obstacles to overcome in order to communicate (for years he had to put email on a thumb drive and take it into town for a friend to send), he was the best and most prompt communicator of FBC's missionaries. Because of these two factors, an interview was conducted via email and read to the congregation. The six interview questions and Bud's answers were in the Sunday school lesson.⁷

Week 3

The second sermon, focusing on Matthew 10, argued that the short-term missions trip on which Jesus sent the disciples looked forward to the disciples' world-wide ministry. Three arguments moved the sermon forward. First, Jesus' purpose in sending the disciples out was to train them (10:1-2). Jesus' greatest lesson was that, when they go, they go with Christ's authority (Matt 10:1; Luke 9:6). Second, Jesus issued a temporary restriction that was practical and fulfilled prophecy and theology. Since the trip was temporary, it was natural to keep the disciples close in Galilee. However, the Old Testament taught that Israel would reject Christ (Ps 118:22). Paul showed that Israel's

⁷See appendix 6.

rejection of Jesus brought salvation to the Gentiles (Acts 13:44-48). Finally, Jesus was looking forward to a time when the Gentiles would receive the gospel as well (10:17-18).

The second Sunday school lesson focused on Matt and Marla Hanna, who are missionaries to Kaohsiung, Taiwan. They were chosen because Marla is the sister of one of FBC's longtime church members, and Matt quickly responds to communication. These veteran missionaries have been in Taiwan since 1987. After the lesson was assembled, it was emailed to Matt in order for him to make suggestions. After the suggested changes were made, a Skype session was scheduled. Matt is very organized and detail oriented, so the lesson plan was laid out very well.

Week 4

The third message focused on the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20. This sermon began the shift away from God's desire for the world to be saved, and to the church's role in evangelism. The main argument of the sermon was that the church's primary responsibility is to create disciple-making disciples. The argument was sustained by the fact that "make disciples" is the primary verb of the Great Commission. Just as Jesus did in the disciples' short-term missions trip, He gave His authority to them for worldwide ministry. However, that authority is not bound to a small group of apostles—rather, it is extended to all believers. Finally, the scope of disciple-making encompasses the whole world.

The third Sunday school lesson covered Daniel and Sharon Pero, who are veteran missionaries to Bray, Republic of Ireland. Ireland is a difficult mission field that has changed rapidly in the last two decades. The work is difficult and the spiritual condition of Ireland is dark. By contrast, Daniel and Sharon have bubbly and upbeat personalities. One goal of the interview was to show the congregation how one can minister in difficult situations and still have the joy of the Lord. After he reviewed the lesson, Daniel suggested several changes to the portion of the lesson about Ireland. He

said that Ireland has undergone rapid changes in the last three years. After being told that FBC wanted to pray for them—he sent me a long list of requests.

Week 5

Acts 1:8 is the next passage for which a sermon was prepared. In reality, it is an extension of the Great Commission. Whereas the Great Commission emphasized the primary responsibility of the disciples, this passage emphasizes the power behind the gospel declaration. Three arguments were made from this passage. First, power from on high is essential for world evangelism. When the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles, they received the power via the authority of Christ (this was shown in the two previous sermons). The rest of the New Testament shows that this power is rooted in the gospel declaration (Acts 4:33; Rom 1:16; 1 Cor 1:18, 23-24). Second, God uses people to be witnesses to the power of Jesus and his gospel to accomplish world evangelism. And third, the gospel will spread systematically, beginning at Jerusalem.

There were two primary goals associated with the lesson on Kris and Mariola Kolt, missionaries to Katowice, Poland. The first goal was for people to hear their story. Both of them fled communist Poland when they turned eighteen, and immigrated to Canada. They met when they were in their forties and were both saved about the same time. They almost immediately sensed the call of God to go back to Poland. The second goal was for people to see how unique Kris is. He is the prototypical entrepreneur. Because he amassed great wealth before going to Poland, he had the luxury to think big. He has started a number of private preschools, which are unheard of in Poland, and wants to use them as feeders into a Christian school that he plans to start. Almost all the families sending their children to the school are not Christians, so he has many gospel opportunities. In addition, he is planting a church and is looking for an American missionary to come work the church plant. He also runs several large camps during the summer. Lastly, because Polish people want their children to learn English, he uses

American and Canadian college graduates in as many teaching positions as possible. The Q&A session was tailored to allow Kris to recruit people for missions trips to Poland.

Week 6

The fifth message focused on the church at Antioch sending out Paul and Barnabas on a mission trip (Acts 13-14). This passage documents the responsibility the sending church has to the missionary and the missionary's responsibility to the church. It was argued that the church is to select and send its own missionaries (13:1-3). The missionaries were to be proven through ministering alongside the church as elders. They were to evidence the calling of God on their lives. Second, the church has the responsibility to supervise its missionaries (14:26-28). Finally, the missionaries are responsible to give account to their sending church.

Roberto and Jennifer Ramos are missionaries to the Hispanic-speaking people of Marietta, Georgia. Jennifer grew up in our community and Roberto went to college nearby, so almost everybody knows them. Since Roberto and Jennifer reside in the States, there were several phone conversations with them prior to the lesson. Because most of his church consists of illegal immigrants, he is presented with unique ministry challenges. The first is that most of his church does not drive because they are afraid of getting pulled over. The second challenge is that when people get saved, eventually the Holy Spirit convicts them about going back to Mexico and coming back as a legal immigrant. The questions and answers were crafted to bring out those challenges. The church could not Skype them because their services are at the same time as ours.

Week 7

The sixth message encouraged the church to consider themselves partners in ministry with missionaries. This sermon pushed back against the common idea of Christians who think of themselves as a support team for the missionary who is doing the work. The basis of this argument was Philippians 4:10-20, where Paul explains his

partnership with the church at Philippi. The first argument was that the Philippians had the attitude of partners (4:10). Second, as missionary partners they shared in the missionary's trials (4:14). Third, as missionary partners they shared the financial burdens of the ministry.

The Sunday school lesson for this week included Dave and Cyndi Mumford, missionaries to Angers, France. In recent years, the migration of Muslims into France has changed the country. This was another lesson for which *Operation World* was not helpful, so Dave communicated through email quite often in order to get the lesson correct. The church does not know the Mumfords very well, so many pictures were collected; as well as, information on the family. A big issue plaguing their church is that they need a French national pastor who could lead the church. Dave is going to have to make a decision about the future of the church. In the course of our conversations, Dave let me know that he was taking a short furlough and would like to visit the church, on what happened to be the last week of the series. This visit occurred August 7, 2016. The lessons were quickly reordered and plans were made for the family to be with the church during Sunday school.

Concluding Remarks

The sermons were evaluated by a panel of three pastors and the FBC deacon board. Rather than give them a packet of six sermons to review, I sent a sermon each week as it was written. The pastors were asked if they preferred paper or electronic means of reading and evaluating. Two pastors chose electronic and one chose paper. The one that chose paper also received an envelope with self-addressed, stamped envelopes. The deacons were given a packet each Sunday that was to be returned the next week. Everyone's packet contained one sermon and one sermon evaluation rubric.⁸

The lesson preparation was complicated to say the least. Several complicating factors included scheduling the lessons so that the missionaries could Skype, trying to

⁸See appendix 1.

juggle six lessons with all the emails and phone conversations, reordering the lessons when Dave Mumford agreed to come to Pound, and figuring out how to present each lesson in such a way as to bring out unique challenges. The reality is that even though the lesson preparation schedule planned one week for each lesson, the average preparation time for each lesson was approximately three weeks. Thankfully, everything came together roughly as envisioned. The next challenge was to implement the project.

Phase 2: Project Implementation

There were two goals of the implementation phase of the project. The first goal attempted to increase congregational knowledge of our missionaries and their respective fields by teaching a six-week series of Sunday school lessons. The second goal endeavored to teach the congregation what the Bible says about missions by preaching a six-week sermon series.

Week 8

Week 8 began the actual implementation of the project. The first Sunday school lesson was about Bud and Karen Rader in Bolivia. Each person in Sunday school was given an outline with fill-in-the-blanks, the last four email prayer letters (Bud emails them each week). In addition, PowerPoint slides were prepared to augment teaching. The last ten minutes we prayed for the Raders and Bolivia. At the close of the lesson, the class was given prayer letters from Matt and Marla Hanna. This was to prepare people for the next week. The sermon was “God Makes His Name Known,” which covered the Old Testament. PowerPoint slides were included with this sermon.

Week 9

Matt and Marla Hanna were the highlighted missionaries for week 9. The goal for the Skype interview was to allow the personality of each missionary to come out. On Sunday of week 9, everyone received Matt’s latest prayer letter, an outline, and the prayer letters for the next week’s missionary. Approximately fifteen minutes were

allotted to introduce Taiwan and the Hannas, then a twenty-minute Skype interview was conducted. After the pre-arranged interview questions were finished, the floor was opened to questions. We closed Sunday school by praying for the Hannas and Taiwan. During the worship service, the sermon was preached from Matthew 10 on Jesus commissioning the disciples for a short-term mission trip. This week, as every week, PowerPoint slides were created for the sermon.

Week 10

For the lesson on Ireland, with Daniel and Sharon Pero, each person received an outline with fill-in-the-blanks and the Pero's latest prayer letters. I prepared PowerPoint slides to help with the lesson. The lesson began by presenting Ireland and introducing the Peros, which took about fifteen minutes. The next phase was a Skype interview with the Peros. We went through the list of questions that I had emailed to them, then opened the floor to questions. Daniel has a quick wit and made people comfortable quickly, so there were many questions. Again, we ended the lesson with a time of prayer for the Peros and Ireland. The sermon for the worship service was on the Great Commission. I placed special emphasis on the command to make disciples and Jesus' promise of authority.

Week 11

For this week, the lesson was on very familiar topics: Poland and the Kolts. Each person received a lesson handout with fill-in-the-blanks. The lesson began by rehearsing the unique story of Kris and Mariola. After fifteen minutes, a Skype interview was conducted with them. After going through the pre-arranged interview questions, the floor was opened to questions. Because many members know the Kolts, the congregation asked questions past the planned cutoff time. During the interview, Mariola told the church that several of the Polish people that our mission team met last summer in camp had expected to see our mission team in camp this year. They were disappointed that we

were not there. This statement impacted people who had never been to Poland. The church may have enough volunteers to send two teams next year. The text for the morning sermon was Acts 1:8. Two emphases were the nature of the power that the disciples were to receive and the gradual expansion of the gospel through the known world.

Week 12

Roberto Ramos was to send a DVD for this week's Sunday school lesson, but unfortunately he was not able to do so. Therefore an interview-style lesson was quickly prepared. Roberto's salvation testimony was rehearsed as well as his call to the ministry. Finally the church covered the three ministries that Roberto and Jennifer have shared in and/or started. After this introduction, the interview questions were covered. Because our people see the Ramos's frequently, there were very few questions. However, in the course of conversation, our church learned that they are in need of an English service. The reason is that many immigrants now have children who are more comfortable with English. Sunday school closed early after spending time in prayer for the family. The sermon in the worship service was on the commissioning of Paul and Barnabas in Acts 13-14. This passage gives a pattern for local church missions. Care was taken during the sermon to compare the independent Baptist style of missions support to the pattern described in the passage.

Week 13

Dave Mumford was originally scheduled to Skype with the church on week 9, but because his family planned to come to the states, he offered to come to FBC on August 7. Since, that was the last week of the missionary lesson series, the original lesson plan was modified. The first fifteen minutes were spent introducing people to the cultural and religious atmosphere in France, as well as, introducing Angers, the city in which the Mumford family ministers. During the next ten minutes, Dave was led through the pre-

arranged Q&A session. The last part of Sunday school was opened to questions from the audience.

The final sermon was preached during the worship service. Philippians 4:10-20 shows that Paul viewed his supporting churches as partners in ministry. The message was designed to counter the common thinking that missionaries are on the frontline doing ministry and the churches are just the support troops. This message, more than others, challenged the assembly that they are vital to the success of the missionaries that they support. In addition, they were challenged to be creative in partnering with foreign missionaries. Finally, the church was reminded that God considers their giving an offering to Him; this pleases Him and He will reward them accordingly.

Week 13 wrapped-up the implementation phase of the project. Already the church was giving more to missions. The love offering for Dave and Cyndi Mumford was much larger than the average missionary love offering. People were talking more about mission trips and communicating with missionaries than previously.

Phase 3: Follow-Up

The follow-up phase of the project was designed to test the effectiveness of phase 2 through two means. First, the Knowledge Assessment Survey was given as a post-survey. Second, a panel was convened to develop a missions mobilization plan. Finally, an assessment was given to evaluate the plan.

Week 14

The same Knowledge Assessment Survey given in week 1 was given during Sunday school this week. Each person was given the low risk informed consent statement in accordance with the Assessment of Risk to Human Subjects in Research protocol. Although everyone who attended Sunday school completed the survey, a control group of thirty people who had heard every sermon and lesson was targeted. Since the Knowledge

Assessment was scheduled during the height of vacation season, several members of the control group had to complete their surveys at alternate times.

When the surveys were finished, everyone was given an outline of the six essential practices of highly missions-oriented churches. They were taught a brief overview of the six essential practices and were given examples of each practice, along with suggested changes that the church could enact. The purpose for teaching this lesson was to provide seed ideas for the panel scheduled to meet the following week. The membership was challenged to look for ways to get involved in world missions on their own.

During the week following the Knowledge Assessment, the surveys were analyzed and the *t*-test for dependent samples was performed.

Week 15

The final week of the project involved gathering a panel to write a missions mobilization plan. Originally the panel was to be made of members from four boards: deacon, trustee, Christian education, and deaconess. However, because so many people were on vacation, the panel could not be assembled from people currently serving on the four boards. To make up the deficit, three people were recruited. One person from each the Christian education and deacon boards and a third person was recruited from the music committee.

The panel agreed to meet on last Sunday of the project. In order to facilitate the meeting, packets were mailed to them that contained a cover letter thanking them for their participation and an outline of the goals of the meeting.⁹ The second document was an idea sheet that included the six essential practices outlined in chapter 3 and potential

⁹See appendix 8.

applications to FBC.¹⁰ The third document was the Mobilization Plan Evaluation,¹¹ which outlined the criteria to be used to judge the plan.

The day that the panel met, only seven were able to attend—one person developed the flu. The panel wrote down ideas and discussed them. It was agreed that we should write out a mobilization plan for evaluation and approval.¹² After the meeting, the written plan was emailed to the panel. The panel read it, filled out the Mobilization Plan Evaluation, and sent it back to me to include in the project.

Conclusion

The implementation of this ministry project has been a worthwhile and stretching experience. Developing and teaching on the church's role in missions and highlighting the missionaries we support has been beneficial for our membership. The theology of missions can benefit any church, so the principles are transferable to any church body. The six essential practices of missions-minded churches by their nature have proven to be applicable and can be implemented by any church regardless of their size. However, no matter how well a project is executed, a thorough evaluation will increase its value. The final chapter includes an evaluation of the project and personal reflections.

¹⁰See appendix 9.

¹¹See appendix 4.

¹²See appendix 10.

CHAPTER 5

EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

The evaluation of this ministry project, which included developing a Mission Mobilization Plan at First Baptist Church, provides helpful insights for improving the project and incorporating the plan in the church. To this end, this chapter presents an evaluation of the purpose and goals of the project. Additionally, the strengths and weaknesses of the project are discussed, as well as aspects of the project that could have been done differently. Finally, I reflect upon the theological foundation of the project and provide personal reflections and a brief conclusion.

Evaluation of the Project's Purpose

The stated purpose of the project was to develop a mission mobilization plan to increase missions' participation at First Baptist Church. The fact that few members demonstrated a real concern for missions and many revealed a deficient understanding of the Bible's teaching on missions provided the impetus to pursue this project. Furthermore, the amount of work it would take to change people's knowledge of and desire for missions required a project of this size and scope.

The project was successful in increasing the members' overall knowledge of missions. The data collected from the pre and post-course surveys demonstrated an increase in their knowledge. The mean score of the participants increased from 97.7 on the pre-survey to 110.6 on the post-survey.¹ These positive results not only indicate noticeable growth in knowledge, but demonstrate the definite need for the curriculum.

¹See table A4 in appendix 11.

The project served to increase the membership’s interest in missions and missionaries. The data from the pre and the post-course surveys revealed a 9 percent increase in strength of positive response to the statement, “I regularly make it a point to read missionary letters.”² Out of 31 respondents, 20 responded positively on the pre-survey, and 23 responded positively on the post-survey. Additionally, there was a 22.5 percent increase in positive response to the statement, “I can name more than five missionary families that our church supports.”³ Out of 31 respondents, the number who responded positively increase from 20 to 27. These two facts indicate that people were already showing initiative with regard to missions.

Incidental evidence indicated that people were thinking seriously about missions and how they could participate. Initial interest in the summer 2017 ministry trip to Poland has tripled. Also, since publishing a list of missionary addresses and emails, there has been an increase in communication with the missionaries. Furthermore, four weeks into the project there was a noticeable increase in special missions giving. Although it is too early to know if this evidence is indicative of a long-term trend, it provides early indications of the project’s overall effectiveness.

Evaluation of the Project’s Goals

The project set out to accomplish four goals. These goals were effectively measured through the employment of evaluation tools that provided data showing that the project was successful overall. Although the final goal, the mobilization plan, is still in the planning phase and is expected to be successful when fully implemented.

²See table A2.

³See table A3.

The first goal was to develop a six-week sermon series on the biblical and theological foundations of missions.⁴ This goal was measured by a panel consisting of three pastors and the deacon board who used a rubric to evaluate the individual sermons.⁵ The rubric scale for each category was between 1 to 4 points, with 4 being the highest score. There was an additional column for comments related to each category. The panel evaluated seven categories that rated the sermon's faithfulness to the text, its clarity, and relevance. The goal was to have a minimum of 90 percent of all the rubric evaluation indicators meet or exceed the sufficient (marked 3 or 4 on the scale) level. All the sermons reached the 90 percent sufficient level except for sermon 2 on Matthew 10. After it was rewritten and given to the panel, it reached the 90 percent sufficient goal. Their comments proved helpful and some were incorporated when the sermons were revised for preaching. Upon receipt of the completed rubrics, 100 percent of the indicators were marked at the sufficient or above level, thus meeting the established benchmark for success. Therefore, the goal of creating a sermon series was met.

The second goal was to develop a six-week curriculum in order to increase the church's knowledge of their missionaries and the respective fields. This goal was measured by the Christian Education Board using a rubric to evaluate individual lessons. The board evaluated six categories that primarily measured how effectively the lesson communicated certain types of information, such as missionary background, field information, cultural barriers and religious barriers the missionaries face, and an evaluation of teaching methods. The goal was to have a minimum of 90 percent of all the rubric evaluation indicators meet or exceed the sufficient (marked 3 or 4 on the scale) level.⁶ This proved more difficult than expected. Several board members are professional educators who

⁴See appendix 7.

⁵See appendix 1.

⁶See appendix 2.

tended to evaluate the intricacies of lesson planning, instead of the categories on the rubric. Lesson 5 on Roberto Ramos did not reach the 90 percent sufficient threshold in the initial lesson plan, and had to be rewritten because of the DVD interview. Two reviewers thought that the interview did not address the cultural and religious barriers well enough. After rewriting the lesson, it reached the 90 percent sufficient threshold. Some of the members of the Board are very creative and made good suggestions for how the lessons could be improved. Many of those suggestions were implemented during the lesson series. Upon receipt of the completed rubrics, 100 percent of the indicators were marked at the sufficient or above level thus meeting the established benchmark for success. Therefore, the goal of creating a lesson series was successful.

The third goal was to increase the church's knowledge of the biblical foundations of missions and increase the knowledge of their supported missionaries and fields. To meet this goal, I preached the six sermons and taught the six lessons on six consecutive Sundays. This goal was measured by administering pre and post-course surveys. The pre-survey was administered on June 26, 2016, and the post-survey was administered on August 14, 2016. Although everyone who attended Sunday school those mornings took the surveys, 31 members served as the control group. They listened to all the sermons and lessons in between the two surveys. A *t*-test for dependent samples was used to determine if there had been a positive, significant, statistical difference between the pre-course survey and the post-course survey. The survey was designed to answer the question, "Did the participants' knowledge of the biblical foundations of missions and our missionaries increase?" The sermon and lesson series made a statistically significant difference resulting in an increase of their knowledge ($t_{(30)} = 6.7008, p < .0000002$). The results of the *t*-test revealed that the participants' knowledge of the biblical foundations of missions and our missionaries had increased as a result of the training.⁷ Therefore, the

⁷See table A4 in appendix 11.

goal of increasing knowledge was met according to the measurements used in this project.

The fourth goal was to develop a Missions Mobilization Plan to increase the membership's participation in world missions. The mobilization plan was crafted by a panel recruited from four church boards. It convened on the last Sunday of the project. The fourth goal was measured by the panel using a rubric assessing the effectiveness of the plan in three areas: functionality of the plan, participation levels by the membership, and future potential of the plan.⁸ The rubric scale for each category was between 1 to 4 points, with 4 being the highest score. The goal was to have a minimum of 90 percent of all the rubric evaluation indicators meet or exceed the sufficient (marked 3 or 4 on the scale) level. Upon receipt of the completed rubrics, 100 percent of the indicators were marked at the sufficient or above level, thus meeting the established benchmark for success. The goal of creating a Missions' Mobilization Plan was met.

Strengths of the Project

The strengths of this project are represented by several objective and subjective observations. Objectively, the members' knowledge of many concepts related to missions increased. Second, the missions mobilization plan, if executed well, will result in greater participation in missions. Subjectively, the project created more interest in missions.

The single most difficult hurdle in motivating people to be more involved in missions was tying the Bible's teaching about missions to the church's current practice. Determining the best process to overcome apathy toward missions and the congregation's natural community-centric thinking was daunting. The project forced me to craft a process to overcome these hurdles. After the project, the pre and post-course surveys showed significant increase in biblical literacy in regard to missions. In fact, on the post-survey several people perfectly answered all questions concerning the Bible's teaching on

⁸See appendix 4.

missions. So, the first strength of the project was that it greatly increased peoples' knowledge of missions. As a result, it positively changed members' opinions about missions.

Second, the church now has a group of people who want to see the church increase its involvement in missions. That group, the Missions Mobilization panel, will be instrumental in affecting long-term change. Four of the seven evaluators expressed concern that the people recruited as missionary attachés be held accountable. In an email, one panel member stated, "There needs to be some plan to ensure that the process is not just for a short time." Another wanted long-term change: "One person can't and shouldn't do it all. Responsibilities need to be spread around." As soon as this project is submitted, attachés will be recruited, and panel members will be asked to help hold them accountable.

A third strength of the project is that it created more interest in missions. My wife is a local librarian and several members who have visited the library commented on how they really enjoyed the missions teaching. The Skype interviews, more than anything else, helped our church family. One member said, "The Skype interviews were amazing. The missionary went from being a two-dimensional person on a piece of paper to someone that I can now place a face and personality to their name." People have asked about the six other missionaries that we support. While these examples are little more than anecdotal, they are an indication of greater interest in missions.

A fourth strength of the project is that people are already taking initiative to communicate with missionaries. The Knowledge Assessment Survey had one statement designed to gauge participation and showed that people were changing behavior slightly as there was an uptick in the number of people who responded positively to the statement, "I regularly communicate with certain missionaries by email or other means."⁹

⁹See table A5 in appendix 11.

Weaknesses of the Project

Identifying the weaknesses of a project serves to present the best opportunities for improvement. An evaluation of this project revealed weaknesses in the following areas: a need to reorder the event-line of the project, acquiring too small a sample size, the need to give a better explanation to the Christian Education Board, and lengthen the project by one week.

First, this project would have benefitted from reordering the timeline. The Knowledge Assessment Survey was created during week 1, but it was not administered until week 7. By this time, the Christian Education Board and the Deacon Board were already evaluating sermons and lessons, so it effectively meant that a large group of people could not participate in the control group. Since they already saw the lessons and sermons, their participation would have skewed the survey results. That was unfortunate because many of them are the most faithful members of the church, and almost half of them were Bible college graduates.

Second, the project would have been stronger with a larger sample for the Knowledge Assessment Survey. There were 31 individuals in the final sample group. With an average Sunday morning attendance of 160 and an average Sunday school class size of about 100 during the project, the project would have benefitted from a larger sampling. Because the sample was small and several leaders could not be in the sample group, the sample included people from whole families. Having a larger sample would have allowed for more diversity.

Third, the Christian Education Board needed more instruction concerning how to evaluate the lessons. Even though every lesson was accompanied with a lesson evaluation rubric,¹⁰ a few struggled to grade according to the rubric. Some of the comments that explained their scores included criteria that was not part of the rubric.

¹⁰See appendix 2.

Finally, the project should have been lengthened by one week. The panel that designed the Mission Mobilization Plan needed more time to nurture their ideas. They came to the panel meeting and presented wonderful ideas and showed excitement about global missions. When they met, it became apparent that one more meeting would have been helpful to thoroughly flesh out the Mobilization Plan. The ideal would have been to meet two Sundays in a row for one hour, and communicate via email in between panel meetings.

What I Would Do Differently

While I was satisfied with the project overall, I would make at least three changes to the project; two of them have to do with time and the third with the case study. I would change the timing of the project so as not to be in competition with summer vacation, I would lengthen the project by one week, and I would add one more church to the case study.

First Baptist Church's attendance drops more during the summer than any church I have attended. Everyone in attendance in Sunday school completed the pre and post-course surveys on the weeks they were provided. On the post-course survey, each person noted how many lessons out of six they missed. Of the almost 70 people who were not in the control group, 3 people missed 5 lessons, 9 people missed 4 lessons and 8 people missed 3 lessons. A large number missed 2 lessons. Implementing the project during the summer impacted the project in two major ways. First, it limited the number of people who could participate in the control group of the Knowledge Assessment Survey. Many who received personal invitations to be in the control group declined because they would be unavailable for so many weekends. Second, it meant that a large percentage of members missed multiple lessons and sermons. It would have been better to move the project to either the fall or the spring when attendance is less sporadic.

Because the panel that wrote the Mission Mobilization Plan needed more time, there should have been one week added to the project. Ideally, the panel needed meet the

first week and outline ideas for the plan, then reconvene for the second week to finalize it. They would have felt less deadline pressured and it would have allowed time for their ideas to mature. I kept in open communication with the panel for a few weeks following the official end of the project.

The last change I would make involves the case study. I should have performed the case study with at least three churches. The two churches involved in the case study were very different from First Baptist Church. Both were much larger. Countryside Bible Church was planted with the intention of using only in-house missionaries. Pastor Summers said that he had never encountered a church with an existing missions program that found a way to switch over to completely in-house missionaries. Inter-City Baptist Church had its own mission board and operated on a much larger scale than FBC will ever operate. Ideally, the case study should have involved a third church with average attendance less than 250. Performing a case study on two vastly different churches: one with a completely different model, and the other with a completely larger scale of missions, yielded many ideas. A third church closer to the size of FBC would have surely yielded even more ideas to stoke the creativity of the mobilization panel.

Theological Reflections

Doctor of Ministry projects are designed to refine the pastor's theological toolbox because he will learn more about Scripture, God, and his church. This project was no exception. Several theological concepts were personally reinforced through this project. In addition, new connections were made between theology and practice.

First, new connections were made between the tabernacle/temple blueprint, the Garden of Eden, and heaven. I have led multiple trips to Israel; our Jewish Christian guide, Arie Bar David, always tells us that the Hebrew Bible is picturesque. Several times he told our group that the temple and tabernacle were cosmic blueprints. This project increased my understanding of what Arie meant, and it helped to solidify those connections. God

originally intended the Garden of Eden to be a temple and place of worship, and He intended for Adam to be his priest. Adam was to “work and keep” the Garden just like the Levitical priests were to “keep” and “minister” in the tabernacle (Gen 2:15; Num 3:7-8; 18:5-6). The idea that Adam’s gardening was a priestly function helps me to disciple men in our church. Some of them tell me that they struggle with their jobs because they feel that all they do is “secular” work and have no time for “spiritual” work. It helps to point to Genesis and show them that Adam’s gardening was considered a priestly function.

When the Jews say that the tabernacle/temple are cosmic blueprints, they speak to the similarities with Garden of Eden. Both the Garden and the Temple are entered from the east. Both had water flowing from them. Both were guarded by cherubim. The almond blossoms in the golden lampstand are reminiscent of the tree of life. In other places, Scripture notes that Heaven has a river of water of life, a tree of life, cherubim flying around the throne (Isa 6:1-6; Ezek 47:1-12; Zech 14:8; Rev 4:7-9; 22:1-2). The tabernacle is a copy of cosmic realities.

Additionally, God intended for the Garden of Eden to be a place of worship, and he intended that the whole world would know His Name. After the Fall, the name of God was known only to a few. God called Abram out of idolatry and he came to know his Name (Gen 12:1-3). Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt so that Israel and Egypt would know His Name (Exod 3:13-15; 6:3; 9:16). In the New Testament, Paul teaches that “whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved” (Acts 2:21; Rom 10:13). Christians are to gather in Jesus’ name (Matt 18:20), disciples are made and baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt 28:19), and believers bear the name of the Lord Jesus every place that they go (Acts 11:26). God attaches great importance to His Name.

Third, people from churches around the world are gospel partners. Most people relate Paul’s teaching on the gifts to individual churches. However, in Romans 12, Paul

likened people's giftedness to parts of a body: "For as in one body we have many members" (v. 4). Here he emphasizes the close knit nature of the church. He says something stunning: "So we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another" (v. 5). He said this to the Church of Rome—a church that he had never laid eyes on. He truly considered spiritual partnerships and spiritual closeness to involve more than just one local church body. Later, in Phil 4, when Paul was writing his closing comments, he thanked the Philippian church for their gifts. He truly considered this church to be partners with him. He wanted them to be of the same mind as he was (Phil 2:2, 5). The Philippian church shared in his trouble (Phil 4:14-16). Paul considered himself a partner with all the churches he planted as well as the ones that he wrote to. He understood clearly that Christ is the vine and the church is the branches. Denominationalism, competition, shallow teaching, and western individualism have done much to obscure the true closeness that Christians have with other members of the body, whether they are in Pound, Wisconsin, or Angers, France.

Finally, my understanding of the nature of authority was enhanced. When Jesus sent the Twelve out on the short-term mission trip in Matthew 10, He gave them authority over unclean spirits and to heal diseases (v. 1). Luke 9:6 records the very real results of their being given authority: "And they departed and went through the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere." Jesus was demonstrating that when he grants authority, he also gives power. Therefore, when the disciples were granted Jesus' authority in the Great Commission, they were granted divine power with it. What is that power? The Lord's power is granted through the simple gospel of Jesus Christ (Rom 1:16; 1 Cor 1:18, 23-24). At a time when many churches are swept away with extreme pragmatism, it is refreshing to remember that God's power lies in the gospel and not in human ingenuity.

Personal Reflections

I graduated from Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary in 2002. It was an experience that stretched me. Once again, I learned through this project that I can be stretched far more than I was allowing myself to be stretched. Several areas in this project helped further develop me. The first area was time management. I had to discipline my schedule more than I was accustomed. I cut out things that were good, but not necessarily the best. Second, the project stretched me to learn a new skill. I found the memo in the PDS Writing Handbook that said chapter 3 “is often the most difficult chapter to outline” to be true. I struggled more with chapter 3 than any other. However, I learned a new skill: how to perform case studies. The project also stretched me to discipline my thinking and learn to put my thoughts into words.

Second, the project fueled my passion for missions and gave me organized thoughts concerning missions. I have always been passionate about missions, but the project helped me organize my thoughts and philosophy into coherent ideas. It gave me a philosophical grid through which I can think about missions for the next twenty or twenty-five years of ministry. Before the project, I felt as if I had a cluster of haphazard thoughts about missions that were somehow connected, but I could only articulate random ideas. Before the project, I wanted to know how our church was doing in comparison to other churches in missions. Now I can confidently analyze and adjust the church’s missions program according to an organized grid.

Third, this project taught me how to initiate change in the church. First Baptist Church desperately needs to update the constitution and bylaws and restructure the leadership. The project gave me the necessary tools to affect that change. The church is healthier than it has been for more than two decades; people are growing in the Lord, they listen to Scripture and are willing to change, they are evangelistic, and they are loving. All this has been God’s work. My only contribution is to preach and disciple his flock. Now is the time to lead the congregation to changes that can result in greater evangelism and greater discipleship.

Finally, I am reminded that I am a clay pot that God can replace very easily. We all like to think that we are irreplaceable and that no one is as qualified as we are to do the work we are performing. Jesus promised to build His church, and He uses human instruments. Even though He can easily replace me, I know my ministry skills have been tuned, and I hope that I am a more useful instrument in the Redeemer's hands.

Conclusion

Many have probably said this at the completion of their projects: Time will tell the lasting impact of this project in the ministry of First Baptist Church. Before this project, there was a need for the membership to have a heart for missions. In fact, I do not know if I read it somewhere, or if it is original with me, but I continually said, "God has a heart for missions. If you don't have a heart for missions, you don't have God's heart." This project served to align the hearts of the members of First Baptist Church to God's heart. It strengthened their understanding of the biblical foundations of missions. Additionally, it increased their knowledge of our missionaries and their fields. This project presented a clear purpose and measurable goals, and by those measurements, it was a success. However, the truth is that the end of this project is actually a beginning. The Mobilization Plan will take many months to completely implement and by that time my prayer is that God will make First Baptist Church a sending church for many missionaries in the future.

APPENDIX 1

SERMON EVALUATION RUBRIC

The Sermon Evaluation Rubric was designed to give the evaluators standardized criteria with which to evaluate each sermon. For each sermon to pass the evaluation, 90 percent of criteria needed to be marked at least sufficient or higher. Any sermon that did not reach the 90 percent benchmark was to be rewritten until it surpassed that benchmark.

Name of Evaluator _____ Date _____

Sermon 1 Evaluation					
1=insufficient 2=requires attention 3=sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
Please evaluate the faithfulness to the text.					
This sermon is faithful to the Bible's teaching on missions.					
This sermon is theologically sound.					
This sermon properly applies Scripture.					
Please evaluate the clarity of the sermon.					
The thesis of the sermon is clearly stated.					
The points of the sermon clearly support the thesis.					
Overall, the sermon is clearly presented					
Please evaluate the relevance of the sermon					
The sermon is relevant to the issue of local church and missions.					

APPENDIX 2

LESSON EVALUATION RUBRIC

The Lesson Evaluation Rubric was designed to give the evaluators standardized criteria to evaluate each lesson. For each lesson to pass the evaluation, 90 percent of criteria needed to be marked at least sufficient or higher. Any lesson that did not reach the 90 percent benchmark was to be rewritten until it surpassed that benchmark.

Name of Evaluator _____ Date _____

Lesson One Evaluation					
1=insufficient 2=requires attention 3=sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
This lesson plan provides adequate information regarding the missionary.					
This lesson plan provides adequate information about his field.					
This lesson plan provides adequate information about the difficulties faced by the missionary.					
This lesson plan provides adequate information about the cultural barriers faced by the missionary.					
This lesson plan provides adequate information about the religious barriers faced by the missionary.					
This lesson plan uses a variety of methods that engages the learner.					

APPENDIX 3

KNOWLEDGE ASSESSMENT SURVEY

The Knowledge Assessment Survey was designed to measure congregational knowledge in two areas: First, the bible's teaching on missions, and second, their knowledge of the missionaries that the church supports. It was also designed to measure the effectiveness of the project. The survey was administered before the project and after the project and the mean scores were compared.

KNOWLEDGE ASSESSMENT SURVEY

Directions: Please mark your agreement with the statements based on the following scale:

SD = strongly disagree

D = disagree

DS = disagree somewhat

AS = agree somewhat

A = agree

SA = strongly agree

- | | | | | | | | |
|-----|--|----|---|----|----|---|----|
| 1. | The Abrahamic covenant (the covenant God made with Abraham) promised salvation only to the Israelites. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 2. | In Matthew 10 when Jesus sent the disciples out to “the lost sheep of the house of Israel,” the disciples were commanded only to bear witness to the children of Israel. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 3. | According to the OT Law only the Children of Israel could be saved. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 4. | When Jesus gave the Great Commission in Mathew 28:19-20, it was only for Jewish people. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 5. | In the NT, the church never commissioned new missionaries. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 6. | When Paul and Barnabas went on their missionary journeys, they never gave account to the churches. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 7. | Paul never considered the churches he planted to be partners in his mission work. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 8. | First Baptist Church supports more than twenty missionary families. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 9. | First Baptist Church does not support missionaries based in North America. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 10. | First Baptist Church supports more missionaries in Africa than South America. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 11. | Language is the most difficult barrier that missionaries face. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 12. | Sending money and praying are the only two ways to help missionaries. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |

- | | | | | | | |
|---|----|---|----|----|---|----|
| 13. When you have not met a missionary, there is nothing that you can do to help them. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 14. Short-term mission trips do not make good use of money or time. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 15. Most of the missionaries supported by our church minister in primitive conditions. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 16. The average time between furloughs for our missionaries is five years. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 17. Missionary children miss the United States. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 18. Most missionaries have more than enough financial support. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 19. I can name more than five missionary families that our church supports. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 20. In the last three months, I have learned of a particular need of one of our missionaries. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 21. I regularly make it a point to read missionary letters. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 22. I regularly communicate with certain missionaries by email or other means. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |

APPENDIX 4

MOBILIZATION PLAN EVALUATION

The Mobilization Plan Evaluation was a rubric designed to give the panel standardized criteria with which to evaluate the Mobilization Plan. Each criterion had to be graded sufficient or higher by 90% of the evaluators or else it would need to be rewritten.

Name of Evaluator _____ Date _____

Mobilization Plan Evaluation					
1=insufficient 2=requires attention 3=sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
Please evaluate the functionality of the plan					
This plan fits the gifting of our church.					
This plan is achievable by our church.					
This plan will be practical for our church.					
Please evaluate the participation level of this plan					
By implementing this plan more attenders will participate in world missions.					
This plan allows for sustained participation in world missions.					
Please evaluate the potential of this plan					
Participants will aid world missions efforts.					
Participants will see this as valuable ministry (it won't waste time)					
Participants will learn about missions by participating in this plan.					
This plan has potential for our church to become a missionary sending church.					

APPENDIX 5

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

The Semi-Structured Interview Protocol was designed to be used in the case study research. The questions corresponded to the five essential practices of churches with high missions participation rates, as they were gleaned from literature. The interviewees were asked the questions, and their answers confirmed the results of the literature review. Additionally, each church was evaluated to see how they executed each essential practices.

Table A1. Semi-structured interview protocol

Essential Practices	Interview Questions
Missions taught as a central tenet of biblical revelation	1. Do you regularly set aside time to preach on missions
	2. So you regularly look for missions applications in sermons
Foster a missionary vision within the church	3. Do you have special times when missions are emphasized? Such as missions conferences or special speakers
	4. What steps do you take to draw attention to missions and missionaries
	5. Does your church take missions trips to your missionaries? If so, how often do you plan trips?
Significant portion of the church budget is dedicated to missions	6. How do you decide the amount of your missions budget
	7. Do you seek to increase the percentage of your budget that goes to missions
Utilize a significant prayer for missions	8. Does your church regularly pray for missionaries? If so, do you have a regular prayer plan?
Regular communication with missionaries	9. Do you (your church) regularly communicate with your missionaries? If so, do you have a communication plan?

APPENDIX 6

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS: A VISION FOR THE WORLD

Dave Mumford: Angers, France

France is the largest Western European country. It boasts a population of about 66 million people. France is known for its food, fashion, art, and chateaux. French people take enormous pride in their food. Visitors to France say it doesn't matter where you stop you will get a good meal. It is a beautiful country with ancient castles, beautiful countryside, and charming villages. It is the tourist destination. 85 million people visit France every year.

Since WW II France has seen a massive decline in the numbers of religious people. It used to be primarily a Catholic country now a full 35% of the country is non-religious. Another quickly growing religious group is Muslim. Muslims probably now make up around 10% of the population. Evangelicals make up less than 1% of the population. "Evangelicals" is a term that includes charismatics as well as Baptists and other groups. Some of the evangelical population in France subscribes to prosperity gospel teaching.



Angers is located about 185 miles southwest of Paris about halfway between Paris and the Atlantic Ocean. It has a long and storied history with old streets and medieval castles. It currently has a population between 160,000 – 250,000 in the metro area. It has a large percentage of people under 30 because it has several large universities. The region is known for growing fruit trees (if anyone has heard of "Anjou" pears), plants and flowers, some light industry and tourism, and of late a little technology. Most people are fairly secular but there are some devout Catholics and of course a percentage (perhaps 5-10%) of Muslim believers, who would be more or less committed. There are about 4-5 evangelical churches in the city.

The Mumfords

Dave and Cyndi Mumford are our missionaries to Angers. They have been in France for over 19 years; 18 of those years have been in Angers. They have been married for 27 years. Two of their daughters live in the States. One is married and the other is attending Bible College and is going to China this summer. The third, Marielle, is still in France. Their church has between 25-40 people.



Their church is called “Angers Baptist Center.” It is not an officially registered “church” by the government. They do have a Bible study, a Sunday service and children’s Bible club in the town Le Flèche once a month. They also volunteer in a local food pantry. This nets some contacts for them to give the gospel.

Good News

Evangelical Christianity has grown over the last 50 years despite the secularization of society, religious indifference and decline in church involvement. In 1960 evangelicals numbered 180,000; by 2010 there were 600,000.

Obstacles

One of the greatest needs in French Evangelical churches is the need for French pastors. This is a consistent request of Dave Mumford for their own church. Here is an excerpt from a recent prayer letter:

As mentioned in our prayer requests, it would be great if a godly man from France (or at least a native, French-speaking individual) would soon be led to direct this ministry in Angers. It would appear that a French pastor would be better qualified to take the church to the next level. However, there are not many candidates (at all), and choosing to be a pastor (or missionary) in France comes with quite a bit of sacrifice. Churches are small, and not everyone understands the need to be generous. Here are some examples:

Jamel is a full-time junior high teacher and co-pastors a church a few hours north of Angers...Another man in southern France works full-time as an electrician and also pastors a congregation...A friend of ours in Paris receives no salary at this point from the modest-sized church where he ministers (although the congregation does provide rent-free housing). Consequently, his wife works, and he attempts to make ends meet via web design and publishing.

Interview Questions

- Where did you grow up?
- Where did you go to college?
- Tell us about your missionary call.
- What do you like and dislike about France?
- What does a typical church service look like?
- What are the recent blessings?
- Why should teens consider France as a mission field? (We will have teens in the auditorium).

How to Pray for France

1. Pray for the removal of spiritual strongholds:

France's religious history is stained with violence – 16th century religious wars claimed 200,000 lives, persecution of Huguenots in the 17th century, The French Revolution in 18th-19th centuries all contributed to hinder acceptance of the gospel.

Widespread involvement with occult practices – There are more people earning a living in occult practices than there are registered doctors, and 10 times more than evangelical pastors and missionaries. The vacuum created by secularism has been filled with witchcraft and esotericism, since most French have no meaningful contact with dynamic Christian faith.

2. Pray for the evangelical church:

The evangelical church is small (less than 1%) of the population.

Pray that the public perception of evangelical will change. Most French people view the evangelical message as an alien message from American right wing groups.

Pray for physical and human resources. In France having a physical building gives a church credibility. Pioneer churches face two challenges: hiring a pastor and finding a building.

3. Islam is now the second religion in France: Not only are immigrants flooding France, but their birthrates are higher.

Pray for Christian ministry to Muslims.

How to Pray for the Mumfords

1. Pray that their church can get a French pastor.
2. Pray for people in the church to step up and take leadership roles.
3. Pray for continued evangelistic opportunities.
4. Pray for wisdom as their parents are getting older and they must balance ministry and family needs.
5. Pray for their children as they are at the age of transition (college/newly married).



Lance (Bud) Rader: Vallegrande Bolivia

Bolivia is one of only two landlocked South American Republics (Paraguay is the other). There are two dominant geographical and climatic regions in Bolivia. The first is the Andean high plateau in the southwest, and the tropical lowlands (Amazon) in the north and east. It has a population of approximately 10 million. The official language is Spanish. It won its independence from Spain in 1825, but since then has had over 200 successful coups or revolutions; holding back any significant progress.



During the early and mid-twentieth century, Bolivia was one of South America's richest areas. But a collapse in silver, tin, and cotton prices in the 1980's led to economic disaster. In the last twenty years, government reforms have slowly turned the economy so that there is some economic growth. It has the second largest natural gas supply in South America. Around 70% of the population is mired in poverty. Growing coca for the manufacture of cocaine is much more profitable than growing other agricultural products.

Although 78% of the population identify as Roman Catholic and 90% identify as Christian of some sort, the vast majority of Bolivians are syncretistic. Syncretism is the mixing of native religion with Christianity.

Obstacles

- Literacy rate – officially Bolivia has a literacy rate of 50%, but functionally it is much lower than that. Here is how Bud Rader characterizes it, “Comprehension of what is read is still lacking. For the most part those who are lacking in education seem almost too ready to accept what they regard as one of higher education has to say. Hence, the cults often find a ready audience and this leads to Theological error.”
- Charismatic Theology – In the last 20 years Charismatic theology has exploded. Lance said that his experience is that Charismatics follow them around and seek to convert people they have evangelized. Latins are very emotional, so they incline towards emotion-based worship experience.
- Poverty – officially the poverty rate is 70% with 50% of those living in abject poverty (> \$1.25/day). Lance says that in some of the areas he works in the poverty rate is 100%.

The Raders

Our missionaries in Bolivia are Lance and Karen Rader. They have been on the field for nearly 34 years. They have six children. Three of their children along with their families are missionaries in Bolivia. They are in the middle of obtaining dual citizenship (USA/Bolivia). Their plans are to minister in Bolivia until they die.

They have several ministries including:

- Maranatha Baptist Church – a church founded over 30 years ago and a large number of church plants. Other churches they are involved in include: Maranatha Baptist Church of Postrervalle, Christian Baptist Church of Vilcas, Independent Baptist Church of Vallegrande, New Dawn Baptist Church of Astilleros, Fortress Baptist Church of Pucara and El Oro Baptist Church (this is a Quechua Indian church).
- Casa Mia – an orphanage for abandoned children that currently has 10 children, but once approved by the government they will expand to 30-35. Casa Mia is primarily for abandoned siblings as we are trying to keep their family together as much as possible.
- Independent Baptist Bible Institute of Discipleship – it has nine fulltime students and two part time. It is more than just classroom they travel, minister and work together. The aim is to help prepare them for the ministry by addressing multiple areas of their lives.
- Other church plants and plans include (Copied from an email from Bud): 1. A new plant in Mataral (2 years old and struggling). 2. We have several preaching points (settlements that hold services when we are there). 3. We are praying about starting church plants soon in 1 or more of the following: Comarapa (village of 5000), Villa Serrano (village of 3500), El Trigal (village of 1000) and Guadalupe (village of 700).
- They run a small dairy farm that helps to support Casa Mia and the Bible Institute and is self-sustaining.
- Other things that Lance does (In his words): 1. I direct Baptist Pioneer Mission. Technology allows me to do this from the field. 2. We are phasing out the aviation ministry (we think). 3. We help direct a few Bible camps. 4. We have recently begun a ministry to university aged young people. 5. The past few years has found us preaching and teaching many Bible conferences of one nature or another (mostly in Bolivia). 6. We conduct the TROTT program on a needs be basis (see www.baptistpioneermission.org and go to T.R.O.T.T. link).

Interview Questions:

1. How did you come to be a missionary in Bolivia? How did you choose it?

The Lord had recently shown me that I was to serve Him in foreign missions. I did not know where but had been praying for a specific answer. I was a camp counselor for senior week camp at Northland at the time. The missionary speaker was Jim Morgenroth. Thursday during the Missionary Hour he showed slides. As I sat with my campers I simply prayed, “The there is a need for the Gospel in Bolivia. Would you let me serve You in Bolivia?” From that time I began pursuing Bolivia as a field of service trusting God to close the door if He willed something else for me. He left the door open. It remains open to this day so here we are nearly 34 years later. No regrets. What a great God we serve!!!

2. What made you decide to seek dual citizenship and live the rest of your life in Bolivia?

We love Bolivia and we certainly love the United States, however, we love God more. Our reasons for seeking dual citizenship are purely practical. A. Dual citizenship should make our life in Bolivia a little less complicated. B. Provide us with easier access into the MercoSur countries (most South American countries). C. It will help us with our relationship with the government which is very unfriendly to the US. D. It says something positive to the Bolivians (this has already been a help). Karen and I are committed to serving the Lord in Bolivia for the rest of our lives, however, we know he may have other plans in the future. We hope not.

3. What makes your children want to return and be missionaries to Bolivia?

Karen and I have always tried to be positive about the ministry. Our children were aware of the problems and pressures but we wanted them to know we love the Lord, we love where He has placed us, we love the Bolivian people and we are content to serve Him here. We tried to include the kids in ministry. By God's grace we believe this has had a positive influence on our children. Of course, there are countless invisible things that God is busy doing in their lives. We are blessed to have several of our kids serving the Lord in Bolivia.

4. What is the best thing about being a missionary to Bolivia?

This is tough. It is hard to come up with one single thing. I will answer this from a human perspective. A simpler sort of back to basics lifestyle is near the top. Every missionary is different but I would say one of the things that is really neat is that we are never bored. We live adventures so routinely that they seem normal to us and not out of the ordinary. Besides sharing the Gospel, discipling and establishing churches we have been privileged to help people in other ways such as saving lives with Karen's medical knowledge or medical runs with the plane, rescuing abandoned children and providing them with a home, improving farming methods for area farmers, spotting forest fires and relief flights for the government, and exploratory with the Royal Geographic Society of England. One of the greatest things of all is seeing a man or woman living in a hopeless situation come to Christ, follow Him vigorously and witness the transformation that only God can produce in a life.

5. What would you say to young people to encourage them into missions?

I often counsel young people, including our children, that when you consider what your life's work will be at least give serving Christ on the mission field the same chance and consideration you give any other opportunity. The challenges of serving the Lord overseas in selfless endeavor is fraught with danger and opportunities but what a privilege it is to follow the Lord in such a way. You will never regret full time mission ministry if that is what God has for you. Give it an honest try if God closes the door so be it but if He leaves it open then.....well, congratulations!!!

How to Pray for Bolivia

1. *Paganism* - Pray that the church will wake up to the enemy's deep-seated influence on the pagan culture.
2. *Leadership training* – Bolivia desperately needs trained national pastors and pastors' wives. Only a tiny fraction of pastors have formal theological training.
3. *Charismatic theology* – pray that God will minimize the influence of Charismatic theology in Bolivia.

How to Pray for the Raders

1. That Casa Mia will receive the proper government permits.
2. The sale of their airplane.
3. That the Bible institute will continue training pastors and add to their numbers.
4. That the Lord will allow them to plant churches in the villages mentioned previously.



Matt Hanna: Kaohsiung, Taiwan

Taiwan is an island about 100 miles off the coast of mainland China. From 1895 -1945 Japan ruled Taiwan. At the end of WW II it was given to China. Four years later in 1949 mainland China fell to the Communists. Many of the people who were against the Communist government fled to Taiwan. As a result there is a complicated and uneasy relationship between Taiwan and the Mainland. Many Taiwanese think of themselves as Taiwanese first and Chinese second or not at all. Even though it is part of the People's Republic of China Taiwan is a democracy with its own constitution, independently elected president and armed forces.



Taiwan is the 2nd most densely populated country in the world with a population of 24 million. The constitution protects people's freedom of religion. The majority of the population (60%) practices a Chinese blend of Buddhism, Taoism, and Taiwanese folk religion.

Recently, pure Buddhism is grown in influence and numbers (28%). Evangelicals make up only 3% of the population. Taiwanese folk religion believes that there is a host of gods arranged in a heavenly hierarchy similar to ancient Chinese court. Practitioners worship ancestors and consult mediums, fortune tellers and make offerings to ghosts.



About Kaohsiung

Kaohsiung City is located on the southern end of Kaohsiung County and is the second most populous city in Taiwan boasting a population of almost 3 million. It has the largest natural harbor in Taiwan and has become an industrial and transportation hub.

The Hannas

Matt and Marla Hanna have been missionaries to Taiwan since 1987. They have three children: Luke, Elizabeth, and Rose. Luke graduated from college and lives in Greenville, SC. Beth is has one semester at BJU and plans to go to medical school. Her ultimate goal is medical missions. Rose just graduated from BJU and is seeking employment.



Their current church, Cornerstone Baptist Church is eleven years old. Before planting Cornerstone Matt pastored Freedom Baptist Church and had the blessed privilege of turning it over to a national pastor. Prior to that, they were involved with Grace Baptist Church.

They recently moved the church to a new building about five blocks from their former church. In addition to church planting and pastoring a church Matt teaches classes in the 2T training ministry with another missionary that we support, Eddie Wong. He also teaches in a local Bible institute.

Matt describes their biggest struggle on the mission field as: Chinese culture is so different from our Western culture, that we still struggle trying to bridge the gap with culturally relevant ministry. Even after 25 years in Taiwan, we are still learning about the way people think, what their values are, and how to reach out to them personally. We've learned a lot, but are constantly reminded how much we still don't understand.

Having been there a long time, Matt described the changes in Taiwanese culture over the years this way: One important way that we have changed the way we minister is that we no longer use English Language teaching as an outreach tool. We taught English for about 10 years as a tool to make contacts and give the gospel, but we finally gave that up. We felt that there were better ways for us to use our time.

Culture in Taiwan has changed, just as it has in the US. Technology, computers, and social media have changed a lot about the way people relate to one another (or not!), spend their time, and understand their world.

One positive change in culture is that people are more open to consider Christianity, because the traditional religious values are weakening. People are becoming much more "secular" and modern in their outlook on life. That has good and bad. Giving up Buddhism doesn't make one a Christian. Often it only means that they have become more atheistic and materialistic.

Skype Questions

- Tell us about your call to missions, where you and Marla grew up, and a little about your education
- What do you enjoy about Taiwan? What do you not enjoy about Taiwan?
- What do you find rewarding as a missionary? (I want to motivate younger people to consider missions)
- Describe your ministry situation with the new couple coming in to help.
- If you feel the liberty, go ahead and tell us about your change in position and what it entails.

Challenges Faced by the Church

1. *Spiritual opposition to the gospel* – powerful opposition from non-Christian religions makes breaking away from one's past a real challenge.
2. *Materialism* – many Taiwanese are focused on their career, on their children's education, and on how to live the most affluent life possible.
3. *Low levels of commitment and sanctification* – only a minority of converts become disciples deeply engaged in the life of the local congregation. The dropout rate is significant.
4. *Lack of pastors*

How to Pray for Taiwan

1. *Taiwan is in the grip of Buddhism and folk religion* – as noted above, over 90% of Taiwanese see themselves practicing somewhere on the spectrum of Buddhism, Confucianism, or Taoism.
2. *Taiwan is open politically but closed spiritually* – Visitors from mainland China often comment on the spiritual darkness and the hardness of people's hearts in Taiwan. Ministry in Taiwan is difficult and fruit is hard won.
3. *A decline in the numbers of missionaries* – in the last 20 years there has been a marked decline in missionaries to Taiwan; more than any other country in Asia.

How to Pray for the Hannas

1. Pray that God will raise up leaders in the church who are committed to Christ.
2. Their church is hosting youth camp this summer, please pray that all the preparation and planning will go well.
3. Pray that they will be able to complete the process of registering their church.

Roberto Ramos: Spanish Speaking Marietta, GA

Roberto and Jennifer Ramos are our missionaries to the Hispanics of Marietta, GA. They have five children: Rebekah, Daniel, David, William, and Johnathan.

Roberto was born and raised in Mexico. He was saved in the summer of 1985 while visiting family in San Diego, CA. He went to college in Mexico and graduated with a BS in Business Administration. After graduating, he went on to Northland Baptist Bible College. He met Jennifer Baker (from Pound, WI) while at Northland and they got married.

God called them to San Luis Potosi, Mexico where they served for a little more than four years in Iglesia Bíblica Bautista de San Luis Potosí under the leadership of Pastor Luis Ramos Cisneros. Roberto worked in the youth ministry, helped start a Christian school, and served in the Children Church Bible Institute.



In 1997 they started Antioch Baptist Church in Mexico City. There they started a Christian school, established a printing ministry, and started another church in the town of Atizapan de Zaragoza. After eleven years of ministry they felt the Lord's call for them to come to the US to minister to the Hispanics of Marietta, GA.

In January 2009 Roberto became the pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church, within a few months he began a Bible institute. They have a mission church, Emmanuel Baptist Church in Spartanburg, SC.

Interview

1. Tell us about your conversion and how you met Jennifer.

I was saved in the summer of 1985. It happened while visiting my uncle in California. While sitting at the dining room table, he opened the Scriptures and shared with me the Gospel. I had never heard the wonderful story of God's love for me on the cross. That day, I believed in the Lord Jesus Christ as my personal Savior.

The Lord called me to the ministry in March of 1990. A year before my calling, I had a time of total dedication to the Lord.

I met Jennifer at NBBC in January of 1990. We met at the tubing hill during free time at the time of the Heart conference. We got acquainted a little bit then. Later on, the Lord confirmed to me that she was His perfect will for my life. She had a heart for the Lord and a desire to serve him in the mission field.

2. Tell us about your family (a little about your children).

I have five children, Rebekah, Daniel, David, William and Jonathan. They all were born in Mexico. Four of them speak Spanish fluently, the youngest one can understand it, but cannot speak it as well as the rest. They are all good children and love the Lord. I believe they are all saved. David, William and Jonathan serve in the audio ministry in the church. Daniel is specially involved in the missions ministry and loves to support the church financially. Rebekah loves to work in the

children's ministries. She also just got engaged last month, and we are tentatively planning the wedding for December 2016.

3. Tell us what is happening (I'm thinking about the need for an English service, the mission church in South Carolina, etc.).

English Service:

I see a need for an English service so that we can best minister to the whole family. The parents don't know English well enough to feel comfortable in an all-English church, but the children prefer to speak English. They communicate better in English. So for this reason, I am planning in the future to offer an English service for those who would rather attend one. I am interested in reaching all creatures, no matter what their language. I want to reach them with the gospel and fulfill the great commission.



Spartanburg Mission:

The mission was born as an answer to prayer to offer a venue of service for the Bible Institute students. They are advancing in their studies and are to the point of needing to put what they have learned into practice. The mission is supposed to mirror the mother church's emphasis, doctrine and practices. The mission is currently running around 20 people every Sunday. We only have Sunday Morning services and I am beginning to pray to the Lord for a pastor for the work.

4. How has the church changed since coming to Marietta?
 - a. The church has grown spiritually:

The members have grown spiritually as individuals. The Bible Institute, the outreach ministries, and their faithfulness to the church services have had an important role in their growth. They also are learning to apply the Word of God to their daily decisions and trials. They are more faithful in giving of their time, talents and gifts to the work of the Lord than ever before.

- b. Financial improvements have also occurred in our church since I arrived.

When I became the pastor in February of 2009 the church's tithes and offering were barely enough for the church to subsist. Then, they could not pay their pastor a full salary. Now the church has grown in faith and in heart to give to the Lord. Presently the church is giving enough to support their pastor's basic needs and also giving offerings to 29 missionaries, and the mission work in Spartanburg. It is also our plan to take on five more missionaries on support. I praise the Lord for a giving church. They are

learning and understanding their responsibility towards the work of the Lord on earth.

- c. It has improved in their outreach.

In the present, we have a missions program; Children outreach every summer and a family inclusive evangelistic ministry.

- 5. What are the main cultural barriers that you face in the ministry?
 - a. The culture of the end justifies the means.
 - b. The culture of mediocrity.
 - c. The culture of “tomorrow”.
 - d. The culture of deceit.
- 6. What are the primary religious barriers that you face?

Catholicism

- 7. Has the government's change on immigration affected your ministry? (I remember you telling me one time that they don't drive for fear of deportation).
 - a. Yes. A good number of the church members are undocumented. They constantly live in fear of being stopped by a police officer, and be taken to jail for driving without a license. Then, while they are in detention, immigration officers could start a deportation process.
 - b. They live here, but they feel like they don't belong in this country because they don't have papers. Their undocumented status keeps them from learning patriotism and appreciating our authorities. This is an ongoing battle between bad attitudes and feelings. By God's grace, the brethren are overcoming the status quo and becoming involved in this country's well-being and prosperity.
- 8. What are your future plans?
 - a. Short term: To continue to help the church to grow in faith and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Help the brethren to become more active in the work of the Lord. To minister to my children during the challenging teen age years. To continue working as a team with my family, and to serve the Lord effectively.
 - b. Mid-term:
To develop a growing Bible Institute to help, not just church members, but also people from other churches who are called to serve the Lord full time.
 - c. Long term:
To minister so that we can have a healthy, growing church to reach the community effectively. I would love to have a radio ministry, a children's home, a school, and a great outreach to tell people about the saving power of the gospel.

Daniel and Sharon Pero Bray, Republic of Ireland

When you think of Ireland, you think of leprechauns, rainbows, and shamrocks. The country has a storied history, first being mentioned in the second century by Ptolemy, who called it “Little Britain.” And the island beside it was known as Great Britain. The first Christians probably came with the Roman soldiers in the second century. By 432 AD St. Patrick came to minister to the Irish who “already believed in Christ.”

Ireland was invaded many different times by many different peoples. Including the Romans, Vikings, Celts, Normans, English, and the French. In the 16th century Henry VIII, King of England created the Kingdom of Ireland. Eventually the kingdom united with Great Britain. After being under British rule for 700 years, Ireland became independent in 1921.

Today Ireland ranks as one of the wealthiest countries in the world. Dairy farming and tourism used to be the most important component to the economy, but now Ireland is known for its high-tech industry.

The good news religiously is that the Catholic Church that used to have massive influence on the culture of Ireland has largely waned. New fellowships are forming rapidly, unfortunately many of this are charismatic or Pentecostal.



The Peros

The Peros arrived in Ireland in 2001. They have three boys: Caleb, Joshua, and Josiah. They have settled in Bray, which is in County Wicklow, Ireland. Daniel and Sharon have three children. Caleb is 27 married with one boy, and lives in Traverse City Michigan and are part of a church plant. Joshua is 24 and lives in Michigan. Josiah is 23 and married. He and his wife live in Florida.



Their church is Calvary Baptist Church and I am going to quote Daniel to give you a flavor of the ministry:

“Though our church here is called Calvary, we often joke that it should be named 'Revolving Door Baptist Church'; as the comings and goings of people are so frequent and varied! We came to be co-workers with another older couple in 2001. In 2007, our co-workers left the field and we were 'it! So we have now been in Ireland at Calvary for almost 15 years! In our 15 years, we have seen MANY people come and go

through our church. In being somewhat close to Dublin, Bray is a very cosmopolitan town; therefore, she gets many foreign peoples coming to and through her for language learning and employment. Within our little church (20 being a well-attended service), we have been privileged over the years to minister the Gospel and disciple peoples from Northern Ireland, Botswana, South Africa, Nigeria, DEAF from Nigeria, Namibia, Sweden, Australia, Malaysia, Philippines, Brazil, Mexico, Germany, England, Lithuania, Croatia, Hungary, Romania, Uzbekistan, Bangladesh, Mauritius, Syria, and even some Irish! (Not at all sure that list is exhaustive!). And on the streets we've had opportunity to meet and witness to someone from Outer Mongolia (for real!) and Mauritania, Egypt, etc.

Whereas the Irish are a 'cooler' people group and extremely skeptical, making it difficult to make QUICK in roads for Christ; some of these other people groups are VERY warm and happy to come to church and hear more about the Lord! Whether folks have attended one of our 3 weekly services, or a Ladies' Bible Study, or Men's Discipleship, or our Ladies' Fall GetAway, or Bible Camps/Retreats, they have surely had opportunity to either hear the Gospel or 'grow thereby' while living, learning, working near Calvary. We have certainly been BLESSED to share the Gospel 'around the corner, around the WORLD', in serving in this very Cosmopolitan place!"

Skype Interview Questions

- You already had a family before your ministry call, tell us about your call to the missions. What made you choose Ireland?
- Tell us a little bit about Bray.
- Tell us about the cultural barriers that you face.
- What is the biggest barrier to Christianity in Ireland?
- What do you love about Ireland?
- What is the most rewarding part of missions?
- How would you encourage a young person to go into missions?

How to Pray for Ireland

1. **Rapid transformation** – Ireland is a country of rapid transformation that gives rise to tension. There is a new affluence arise in the nation, but it only has benefited a few. Pray that as the country changes rapidly, new gospel inroad will be laid.
2. **Pray for the immigrants coming in** – 90% of Ireland's population growth is from immigration. As people from all over the world come to Ireland, it becomes a diverse mission field.
3. **Pray for the young people of Ireland** – by European standards, Ireland has a very young population. 21% of the population is under the age of 15. With the rise of such a young population comes a rapid increase in serious social issues: alcoholism, suicide, broken families, alternative lifestyles, and post-Christian attitudes.

How to Pray for the Peros

- Receptive hearts and salvation of SOULS in Ireland!
- MEN! We need Godly, teachable, responsible men to help in the work here! (And eventually take it over!)
- Families! Who know the Lord or come to the Lord and will join the church and be involved.
- Wes: to grow in the Lord via discipleship and move forward in the Truth of God's Word.
- Sharon: in her Ladies' Bible Studies and in planning/speaking for our church's Ladies' Fall GetAway (Nov. 3-5 this year).

- Us! To be faithful regardless of what we see (or don't see!) happening in the Lord's work here and in this country!
- Our visa to be renewed! (It expired on May 7; we reapplied for its renewal on April 5. Still awaiting word).
- Me: to know God's leading in prep for messages.
- RU men to grow in the Lord, be discipled, and delve into the Bible-preaching churches here on the Island!
- Our middle son, Joshua, to find new employment soon along with good church/housing . . . all of God's choice!
- Musical group coming to minister first week of August. Pray for God's wisdom and help in logistics and for good attendance at our church's concert!
- New in-roads with Irish people

Kris and Mariola Kolt, Katowice, Poland

Poland is a land of rapid change. Since the fall of the iron curtain, Poland has been transformed from a communist country with a poor infrastructure to an economic powerhouse. Every time I visit Poland, more change is evident.

To understand Poland, you must understand its history. Poland acquired a national identity in 1569. But, it has been weakened, divided, and occupied by many nations since then. One quarter of the population died in World War II. Communist rule was imposed in 1945, but the nation suffered under poverty the whole time. Prior to Communist rule, the country had an agricultural economy. Communist rule added heavy industry. Since Communism fell in 1989 Poland's economy has experienced a boom.

It currently has a population of about 38 million.

All religions have equal rights before the law, but the Roman Catholic Church exercises its traditional pride of place in Polish society. More recently there has been more widespread disillusionment with the church. In the last decade regular attendance to the Catholic Church has declined by 50%. Even so evangelicals tend to be categorized by the more establish denominations as sectarian. Most experts assert that there are less than 100,000 believers in Poland. Of them there are only about 5,000 Baptists. Poland is the least Christian nation that we have studied thus far.



Kris and Mariola Kolt

Kris and Mariola Kolt grew up in Communist Poland. Around 1980 Kris emigrated to Canada, not knowing a single word of English. Mariola emigrated within a few years as well. Kris, got a college degree and eventually became an executive at a large insurance company. It was during this time that he trusted Christ. After becoming a Christian, he met Mariola. Sometime after they met, Mariola became a Christian. They surrendered to the mission field in Poland and packed up and left Edmonton for Northland.

They now serve as missionaries in Katowice, PL. It is the biggest city in Poland with over 2.7 million inhabitants. It is a large coal and steel center, but also is a large business center.

Kris has an entrepreneurial spirit with a good mind for business. The primary ministry that Kris and Mariola have set up is a Christian preschool called “genesis.” Almost all the families that send their kids to the school are unsaved, so they use this as an opportunity to give the gospel to the families. The daycare is especially in demand because Kris and Mariola bring Americans to work in it and teach the children English. Eventually, they would like to have a K-12 Christian day school.



In addition they have a Bible study meeting in their house that will eventually become a church plant.

Every summer they put on two camps, called “Camp Genesis.” The first is a regular Bible camp, and after a week break they

host an English camp. They welcome any American to come to it, because the children love having Americans around.

Skype Interview Questions

- Briefly describe the events that you plan in the summer and how they went.
- Tell us how the preschool is going and what your future plans are.
- Tell us how the church plant is going.
- Could you describe how that you use American college graduates to teach English in preschool?
- What do you think are the main cultural barriers to the gospel in Poland?
- What do you think are the main religious barriers to the gospel in Poland?

How to Pray for Poland

1. Younger generation caught up in secular materialism

But it is an elusive dream. People in rural areas are still mired in poverty.

2. Cults are gaining popularity

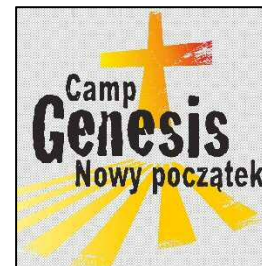
Jehovah's Witnesses outnumber evangelicals 2-1.

3. Bible training for church leaders

There is a shortfall of students studying for the ministry in Poland. Well-trained, experienced pastors are in short supply.

4. Gospel witness

90% of municipalities have no evangelical church. There are more evangelicals in Saudi Arabia than Poland.



How to pray for the Kolts

1. World Youth Days

We will be in Krakow this Sunday Evangelizing with few other churches during World Youth Days. They are expecting 1.5 million people to show up. We will be passing tracts on the streets and train stations Sunday through Wednesday. Please pray for courage and wisdom.

2. 4th Preschool class

We are expanding our preschool to a 4th classroom, we are hiring additional teachers. Please pray that we will be ready for Sept 1.

3. A Second Preschool

We would like to open another preschool in a church about 1 hour away, I have meeting with church members on July 28. Please pray for unity and wisdom. I hope to open new preschool in 1st qtr of 2017.

APPENDIX 7

SERMON SERIES

A Theology of Missions: God Makes His Name Known

We are embarking on a six week series of sermons laying out what the Bible says about world missions. The goal is to show you that the Bible has much more to say about world evangelism and Christian missions than you may first think. Many Christians don't understand the storyline of the Bible. They don't understand how the OT fits with the NT. They ask questions, "Why is the OT so different?" Or they believe in the "angry God of the OT" and the "loving, merciful Jesus of the NT." But if the Bible is authored by God, then the Bible must have a unified message from OT to NT. If that is true, then God concern for all mankind should be present in the Old and New Testaments. Let's see what we can find.

I. God's Concern for the Nations in the Creation (Gen 1-2)

Gen. 1:1 says, "*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*" The pinnacle of the creation week was day six when God created man. Genesis 1:27 "*So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.*" Notice that they are created in God's image. The word "image" means *something that is a likeness or representation resembling something or someone*. Man was created to be in the likeness of God. Not only that but man's commission quickly followed in verse 28, "*And God blessed them. And God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.'*" In order to have dominion over every living thing that moves, one must reside where they do. So man, in essence, was to carry God's name over all the earth.

Most people think only about creation when they think of the first two chapters of Genesis. But the Jews view it much differently. Look at verse 28 again. The command to "*fill the earth and subdue it*" is a priestly charge. God wanted man to expand the borders of Eden so that God's dwelling would be the whole earth. In fact I want to give you a fascinating insight. Turn to Gen 2:15. "*The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.*" Adam's job was: "*working and keeping*". The only other times that these verbs are used together in the Pentateuch is to describe the "working and keeping" of the tabernacle. The Jews rightly understood that the tabernacle was a copy of the first "tabernacle" which is Eden. "*They shall keep guard over him and over the whole congregation before the tent of meeting, as they minister at the tabernacle. They shall guard all the furnishings of the tent of meeting, and keep guard over the people of Israel as they minister at the tabernacle.*" (Numbers 3:7-8)

“And you shall keep guard over the sanctuary and over the altar, that there may never again be wrath on the people of Israel. And behold, I have taken your brothers the Levites from among the people of Israel. They are a gift to you, given to the Lord, to do the service of the tent of meeting.” (Numbers 18:5–6)

The Garden of Eden was to be God’s first earthly dwelling and the tabernacle and temple were copies of the Garden. The tree of life is matched by the lampstand with its branches and blossoms. The cherubim woven into the wall hangings and overhanging the ark are reminiscent of the cherubim bearing the flaming sword at the Garden’s entrance. Both the Garden of Eden and the tabernacle/temple are entered from the East. Adam was to work and keep the garden as the priests are to work and keep the tabernacle. And I could go on and on.

However, the perfect environment of Genesis 1-2 quickly dissolves. This perfection and paradise won’t be seen again until Revelation 21-22. Genesis 3 describes the transition from innocence to guilt. The whole story of humankind is disastrously affected by the consequences of his disobedience to God. Man quickly moves away from God. The rest of the OT can seem to be very confusing with laws and wars and everyone seems against Israel.

The theologian J. H. Bavinck summed up what most people think, “At first sight the Old Testament appears to offer little basis for the idea of missions. The entire pagan world is portrayed more as a constant threat and temptation to Israel than as an area in which God will reveal his salvation.” But as we’ll see, there is much more...

II. God’s Concern for the Nations Through Abraham (Gen 12:3)

Gen. 12:1-3 records the call of Abraham. “Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”” (Genesis 12:1–3)

In Genesis 3-11 man is moving further away from Eden, and by extension, further from God. In these chapters the word curse is used five times. Suddenly in Genesis 12:1-3 there is significant change. The word “bless” is used five times in three verses. It is significant to see how the families of the earth are to be blessed. They are blessed by being brought into direct contact with Israel as Abraham’s descendants. How are they to be brought into contact with Abraham? Is it Abraham’s responsibility to reach out to them? The answer is “no.” But God reinforced in this promise, his concern for the whole world.

The rest of the OT will demonstrate that the peoples of the world find blessing by coming to Abraham’s descendants, rather than by Israel’s outreach.

III. God's Concern for the Nations is Evidenced in the Redemption of Israel from Egypt

Another evidence of God's concern can be seen in the redemption of Israel out of Egypt. Also, we meet the first missionary in the Bible, Moses. Moses was commissioned to go to the Children of Israel and help them to know the Lord, "*I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the Lord your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.*" (Exodus 6:7)

A. Israel knew the Lord in a Way the Patriarchs Never Did

They got to know the Lord in a way that the patriarchs never did. Do you remember the conversation between Moses and God at the burning bush? "*Then Moses said to God, 'If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?'*" God said to Moses, "*I am who I am.*" And he said, "*Say this to the people of Israel, 'I am has sent me to you.'*" God also said to Moses, "*Say this to the people of Israel, 'The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.*" (Exodus 3:13–15)

The name the Lord gave Moses was more of a description of His character. One man said, "The name that was unknown to the patriarchs, then, was not the label, but rather the character of the Lord as the supreme redeemer."

B. Non-Israelites who feared God went with Israel

God told Moses, "The Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring out the people of Israel from among them." (Exodus 7:5) When they left Egypt Ex 12:38 says, "A mixed multitude also went up with them, and very much livestock, both flocks and herds." Later God, allowed them to join with Israel in worship, verse 48, "If a stranger shall sojourn with you and would keep the Passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised. Then he may come near and keep it; he shall be as a native of the land. But no uncircumcised person shall eat of it." (Exodus 12:48)

Once again God's concern was not just for Israel.

IV. Israel Related to the Nations in two Ways

A. Incorporation

I have already noted how that provision was made in the Law for strangers. There were several examples of incorporation.

1. Rahab and her family (Josh 6:25)

"But Rahab the prostitute and her father's household and all who belonged to her, Joshua saved alive. And she has lived in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho." God gave this Canaanite woman a special place so that she was mentioned in the hall of faith in Hebrews 11 and James uses her as an example of saving faith and works in James 2.

2. Ruth the Moabite (Ruth 4:13-22)

Ruth was a Moabite. Deut. 23.3 forbids the marrying of Moabites, "'No Ammonite or Moabite may enter the assembly of the Lord. Even to the tenth generation, none of them may enter the assembly of the Lord

forever,” God is obviously using poetic language to describe the curse on Moab, because Ruth was the grandmother of David the king and she is mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus in Matt. 1:5. There are other examples such as Uriah the Hittite, but you get the point.

B. A future ingathering of the nations to Jerusalem

The second way that Israel related to the nations is in prophecies that Jerusalem would become a gathering place for the nations. The prophetic books promise that in the future, Jerusalem will become place of a large ingathering of Gentiles.

3. Nations will “flow” into Jerusalem

Micah 4 says that people will “flow” into Jerusalem. “It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and it shall be lifted up above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it, and many nations shall come, and say: “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob,” Notice the result of their flowing into Jerusalem, “that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths (Micah 4:1–2)

“It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it,” (Isaiah 2:2)

4. The gathered nations shall go out (Isaiah 66:18-19)

Isaiah 66:18-19 give the reason for the gathering of nations in Jerusalem, “For I know their works and their thoughts, and the time is coming to gather all nations and tongues. And they shall come and shall see my glory, and I will set a sign among them. And from them I will send survivors to the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, who draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands far away, that have not heard my fame or seen my glory. **And they shall declare my glory among the nations.**” God’s plan from the beginning of time is that redeemed Gentiles will go out and declare the glory of the Lord to the world. The list of nations in these verses represents the furthest regions of the known world in Isaiah’s time.

V. What about Jonah?

I know some probably expected me to skip right past Jonah as an example of an OT missionary, but is that what Jonah is really about. Is Jonah written to encourage Israel to “embrace her task of proclaiming the true God to the nations”? When you carefully read the book, you see an emphasis on mercy and repentance. The purpose of the book is not to send Israel out to the mission field, but rather teach Israel that the Lord’s kindness is extended to pagan outsiders. His salvation reaches to the ends of the earth, because ultimately his saving concerns are for the world. Which is a theme of the entire OT.

A Short-Term Missions Trip

Mathew 10

God has a heart for missions and evangelism, if you don't then you don't have God's heart.

We're in a series of messages covering the Bible's teaching on missions. Last week we saw that, from the very beginning, God's desire was that all the nations know his name. We saw this in several ways: We saw this in the fact that the Eden was to be temple. It was evidenced in Genesis 12:3 when God told Abram, "*in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.*" The children of Israel were brought out of Egypt so that the "*nations may know that I am the Lord.*"

Provision was made to incorporate the "*strangers*" that chose to dwell with Israel and worship their God. Finally, it was shown in the OT prophets who envisioned Jerusalem as a gathering place for the nations who after gathering in Jerusalem, "*shall declare my glory among the nations.*"

Today we are going to look at a short-term missions trip that Jesus sent the disciples on and see if we can determine if Jesus was only concerned with Israel; or was He concerned for the Gentiles as well?

"And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction. The names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him. These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, "Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And proclaim as you go, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying; give without pay. Acquire no gold or silver or copper for your belts, no bag for your journey, or two tunics or sandals or a staff, for the laborer deserves his food. And whatever town or village you enter, find out who is worthy in it and stay there until you depart. As you enter the house, greet it. And if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it, but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town. Truly, I say to you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town." (Matthew 10:1-15)

At this time the disciples are in full training mode. Jesus has called them, and now He's in the middle of training them. In the following verses, we'll see that while the short-term missions trip was limited to Israel, Christ's ultimate goal was to send them to the whole world. We will also take away some spiritual principles that apply to us. The disciples were rehearsing as ambassadors for Jesus.

I. The Rehearsal Required Trained Ambassadors (1-2)

This passage specifically addresses the twelve disciples and Jesus instructions to them for a short-term missions trip. But this trip is a training mission. Getting them ready for bigger things. **ILL:** When learning a new skill, many times we practice those skills in an abbreviated manner to get us used to the skill. Every two years on the

rescue squad we have to renew our CPR certification. When we practice our technique we don't do it for the whole 30 minutes that it would take to get the hospital. That would be brutal. Instead we practice for a couple round and we're done. Likewise, Jesus was sending the disciples out to practice what one day would become their fulltime occupation. There are some important lessons for us in this passage. Notice the first phrase in verse one.

“And he called to him his twelve disciples”

A. Ambassadors are disciples (1)

The literal definition of “disciple” is learner; one who follows a teacher and learns his wisdom. The goal of the training of the twelve was for them to become like Jesus. Luke 6:40 says, *“A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher.”* Many people had disciples back in Jesus' day. John the Baptist had disciples, *“Now a discussion arose between some of John's disciples and a Jew over purification.”* (John 3:25) The religious leaders considered themselves disciples of Moses, *“And they reviled him, saying, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses.”* (John 9:28)

You may be saying, “Yeah, but these were special individuals. I'm just a regular Christian.” That is true. They were special, but over time, in the NT “disciple” became the name of anyone who followed Jesus. Two passages in Acts show us this, *“and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians.”* (Acts 11:26) *“And it happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the inland country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples.”* (Acts 19:1)

So, Christian and disciple are used interchangeably. If you are a Christian then you are a disciple.

B. Ambassadors are “apostles” (2)

In verse two Matthew says, *“The names of the twelve apostles are these:”* Matthew intentionally changed the name he used for them. When Matthew calls the disciples “apostles” in verse two he is not calling attention to their title so much as he is emphasizing their mission. It is Paul and Luke who use “apostle” as a title. Matthew only uses the term to describe their mission. The disciples are sent out to give a message. What is an apostle? The word “apostle” means one who is sent out. Usually they are sent out as messengers or ambassadors.

As we will see in the future, we have a commission as well. God's purpose for us is not to remain cloistered in a group with no contact with the outside world. Rather we are commissioned to be salt and light. We are leaven.

So disciples are “sent ones.” But what is the message? The disciples' message is found in verse 7. *“And proclaim as you go, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’”* Their message was to testify about the person of and future work of Jesus Christ. Our message, on the other hand, is “Christ died for our sins.”

In the words of Warren Weirsbe, “The King has come; He has already suffered, died, and risen from the dead. Now He offers His salvation to all who will believe.”

Disciples are sent out, but by who’s authority?

C. **Ambassadors have the King’s Authority. (1)**

Verse one. “*And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits.*” Ok, up until this time who was the only one who had authority over exorcisms and healings? Jesus. Now notice this, the authority produced results. It was effectively transferred to the disciples. In Luke 9:6 Luke records the same event and he notes, “*And they departed and went through the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.*” The healings and exorcisms authenticated their message.

Why is this so encouraging? Because later in Matthew there is another commissioning. Matthew 28:18, “*And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,”*” Jesus connects the commissioning of the disciples to evangelize the world with his authority. In this passage, their commission is our commission. We go out in the authority of Jesus Christ, when we proclaim the gospel. What authenticates our message? The work of the Holy Spirit in saving people.

ILL: I was having breakfast with some men one morning last week and I mentioned that when I pray through the membership and directory, I know issues that almost every family is dealing with. There is a sense of helplessness that comes over me. But, there are two things that drive that away. First, I am taking my concerns to the most powerful, loving, kind being in the universe and He is listening. Second, I am preaching the word of God and in it there is great power.

It is the same with you when you evangelize. You may feel insignificant and powerless when you evangelize the lost, but in reality you are backed by the authority of the one who created heaven and earth!

II. **The Rehearsal Allowed Temporary Restrictions (5-7)**

These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, “Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And proclaim as you go, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’”

ILL: We understand restrictions when someone is learning. It reminds of driving temps. The state has mandated that when a young person is learning to drive, that the only people they can kill in a fiery crash is their own family. After they get their license, then they can start to endanger the rest of the community.

A. **The Restriction**

These verses introduce some difficulties. Where does Jesus forbid them to go? “*Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans.*”

Literally the Greek reads, “*do not go in the way (road) of the Gentiles.*” If you

look at a map, roads going north lead to Gentile territory, while roads to the south went to Samaria. He adds to the restriction in verse 6, “*go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*”

What is he saying? He is telling them to only minister to the Israelites. Why?

B. The Theology

Why would Jesus make this restriction? Some people use these verses to claim that Jesus was opposed to salvation coming to the Gentiles. Obviously, there has to be another reason though. Can we find a reason rooted in Scripture?

There are at least two reasons why this restriction was placed on the disciples. The first reason was that the OT predicted that Israel would reject Jesus. “*The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.*” (Psalm 118:22) One major theme that runs through the gospels is the Jews rejection of Jesus. In John 6 after Jesus bread of life discussion John records, “*After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him.*” (John 6:66) The religious leaders reviled him and called him a child of the devil. The crowds wanted him crucified. In Matt. 21:43, Jesus looked at the Jews and said, “*Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits.*” Which brings us to the second reason.

The second reason is that in the plan of God, the rejection of Jesus by Israel opened the door to salvation for the Gentiles. “*The next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began to contradict what was spoken by Paul, reviling him. And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, “It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, “I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.’ ” And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.*” (Acts 13:44–48)

The restriction was practical as well as theological. The disciples needed to stay in the area for a short trip. But more importantly, both the OT and NT made clear that the rejection of Jesus by the Jews would pave the way for salvation for the Gentiles. Jesus hinted at this in verse 18.

III. The Rehearsal Was Practice for a Broader Mission (17-18)

Jesus makes it clear that they will be missionaries to the Gentiles in the future. “*Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues, and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles.*” (Matthew 10:17–18)

Jesus introduces an ever expanding mission to the disciples. A pattern that clearly played out in the book of Acts. The gospel was first preached in Israel and spread throughout the known world.

Conclusion:

Because Jesus restricted the disciples to Galilee and Judea on this short-term trip, doesn't mean that He had no care for the Gentiles. The disciples were practicing for a broader mission to the Jews and eventually to the Gentiles. The goal of discipleship means that we are to become like Jesus. Think like Jesus. View the world like Jesus. If that is true, then the church should have its eyes beyond the local harvest fields, and have the fields of the world in view.

Did you notice how missions begins in your backyard? For the disciples, missions began in Galilee. In one sense, there is no difference between evangelism and missions.

The Great Commission

Matthew 28:18-20

“And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.””

We have come to the third message on world missions. A big question that we are trying to answer is this: Does God have a heart for missions? If so, then what is our responsibility? I will go ahead and answer that question. God has a heart for evangelism and missions, if you don't then you don't have God's heart.

In the first message, I showed you that God has always had a heart for world missions. Last week we studied a short-term missions trip that Jesus sent the disciples on to prepare them to evangelize the world. Although Jesus' ministry focused primarily on the Jews, Matthew 10 showed us that His ultimate plans were world evangelism.

Today we are going to study the Great Commission. A familiar passage that is the subject of many missions conferences. We are not going to cover these verses comprehensively, but rather we're going to take note of how this passage pushes the theme of world missions along.

The setting is that Jesus has been crucified and rose from the dead. He has been on earth for about 40 days and it is his time to ascend to heaven. His work of redemption is finished. The price has been paid. No longer do the disciples need to preach, “The Kingdom is at hand.” They can now preach the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The key truth that Jesus is teaching is that now they are to make disciples just as they are disciples. Jesus lays out the goal of disciple-making, the power behind it, the extent of the disciple-making, and how to train new disciples.

I. Our Primary Purpose is to Make Disciple-Making Disciples (19)

There is one main command in this passage “*make disciples*.” Make disciples is the central command. Making disciples is the primary responsibility of the apostles. Making disciples is your primary responsibility. So a disciple of Jesus takes Jesus as his teacher and learns from him, and a follows him and becomes like him. The life of a disciple changes because of his attachment to Jesus.

You know this to be true. Your life is different because you are now attached to Jesus. You are his disciple, you probably were converted because you heard the witness of a disciple of Jesus. Most likely, you are actively praying for and evangelizing others who will become his disciples. The pattern that God expects is that we will be disciple-making disciples. If disciple-making is not an active priority in your life, then you are not taking seriously that Jesus made this a command.

ILL: Have you ever had children who would do good things, but not the things that you asked? Maybe moms you're under a time crunch and look at Jr. and tell him, “set the table.” Jr disappears and the table doesn't get set. Pretty soon, Jr comes into the kitchen and says, “Look mom, I put my clothes away.” You have a hard time being happy, why? He did a good thing? Yes, but not the main thing. The main reason you are left on this earth is to go and make disciples.

II. Our Disciple-Making Occurs in Power of Christ's Authority (18)

I know that some of you are thinking. “I don't have the ability. I am a little shy. It is

hard to turn conversations.” That is absolutely true. I have a hard time, but look at verse 18. Jesus says something very comforting to us. “*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.*” To understand how important that is, you must turn back to Matthew 10:1? “*And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction.*” When Jesus sent the disciples out on a short-term mission trip in Galilee, he gave them authority to perform miracles and exorcisms; something that only He had done to this point.

Here, Jesus says that He has been given all authority in heaven and earth. What does He mean? During His earthly ministry, Jesus limited His authority. Now, He exercises absolute authority over heaven and earth. “Authority” means the *right* and *power* to do something. So Jesus means that he has absolute right and all power to do as he pleases in heaven and on earth. There is no authority in *heaven* which can call the will of Jesus into question, and there is no authority on *earth* that can call the will of Jesus into question. And no power on earth or in heaven can frustrate his will when he exerts all his power to achieve it. “*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.*”

Without this declaration of Jesus’ authority, we could never venture confidently to make disciples. On what possible basis do we have any right to tell anybody they should change their whole way of thinking and acting and become a disciple of Jesus Christ? Only one thing could justify such outlandish proselytizing all over the world—that Jesus Christ rose from the dead and has been given an absolute authority over natural and supernatural forces so that every human and every angelic being will give an account to him. If Jesus has that kind of authority, then we Christians not only have the right but are bound by love to tell other people to change and become his disciples.

Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth; more than President Obama, more than Mr. Putin, more than all the CEOs of all the corporations in the world put together. He is the absolute sovereign of the universe, and one way or the other every knee will bow to him.

So we can confidently attempt to make disciples. No matter our education, no matter our ability to talk, no matter our knowledge of the Bible. Every effort that we make is backed by the most awesome and most powerful being this world has ever seen.

III. The Scope of Disciple-Making is All Nations (19)

Jesus told the disciples to “*go make disciples.*” Where? “*all nations*” The church is to plan how to make disciples of all nations. And, by necessity some people will leave their homelands. But the main task of all believers is to reproduce themselves wherever they may be. No one is more important in the task of disciple-making, but churches must work hard to ensure that they are sending and supporting people leaving their homeland.

Read the verse again: “*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,*” So Christ has “*all authority*” and is sending us to “*all nations.*” Since Christ's authority extends over the whole earth, we must go to all the nations, all the ethnic groups on the globe.

There is no culture and no religion beyond the authority of Jesus and therefore no culture and no religion beyond the Great Commission.

So what are we told to do with new disciples after their conversion?

IV. New Disciples are to be Baptized (19)

“baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,”

Becoming a disciple means dying to your old self. 2 Cor. 5:17 says that after conversion you are a new creation. There is nothing that symbolizes it better than baptism. In fact, turn to Romans 6:3, *“Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.”* (Romans 6:3–4)

So Jesus commands baptism as a normal part of disciple-making because baptism signifies in an outward way what it means to become a disciple—death to self-reliance and a new life of faith following Jesus. It is when you are baptized that you show the seriousness of your resolve to follow Christ.

I would like to urge you, if you need baptism to come talk to me. We are due for another baptismal service. If you have not been baptized, baptism is a normal part of becoming a disciple.

V. New Disciples are to be Taught Obedience to All God’s Commands (20)

“teaching them to observe all that I have commanded” All authority has been given to Christ, for the disciples to go to all nations, to teach disciples obedience to all of God’s commands. The new life of a disciple is a life of obedience to Jesus’ commandments, or it is not a new life at all. It is worthless to acknowledge the lordship of Christ in baptism and then ignore his commandments.

Obedience to all that Christ commanded is hard. You will spend the rest of your life learning that obedience. But there is one more “all” that will encourage you in this.

VI. Disciples are to Go, Knowing Christ is With Them (20)

“And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age”

Why is this such a special promise? Go back to verse 18. All authority has been given to Christ, and now we see that he is always with you. He who is all-powerful is with us always! Isn’t that encouraging?

Conclusion:

We are commanded to be disciple-making disciples. Some of us are called to go to foreign lands. We will see in the next couple weeks that the church is to do all it can to support the ones who go. But for us, here is Pound/Coleman. We are to make disciples, baptize them, and teach them obedience. This is an impossible job except that the one who commands has all authority and power to do it and he is with us. What a wonderful promise.

You Shall Receive Power

Acts 1:8

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

We have been tracking the development of the Bible’s teaching on missions. The Bible is what we call a progressive revelation. In other words, as you move through the Bible doctrines, and concepts and topics are taught more thoroughly. So whether you want to study God, Jesus, sin, marriage, salvation, land, worship, relationships, food or any topic; as you move through the Bible it adds to the already revealed teaching.

So what have we learned about missions so far? We learned that from the very beginning of the world. God wanted his name known and glorified throughout the whole world. This is the essence of missions. God created the world to be his tabernacle, his holy dwelling a house of worship. He entered into a covenant relationship with Israel whereby his acts would show the world that He is God. Israel was not to go out to other nations, rather God would draw the nations to Jerusalem to see His glory.

Jesus arrives on the scene and teaches for three years that the kingdom of heaven is at hand. In Matthew 10 while preaching about the kingdom, he sends the disciples on a short-mission trip that is training for when they go into the whole world. Jesus only sent them to the Children of Israel, probably because of the short amount of time that they but also to fulfill scripture concerning the future rejection of salvation by Israel. He alluded to the fact, that in the future the disciples would preach the gospel to all nations.

Last time, we saw that the Great Commission in Matthew 28 promised that the disciples would go in the authority of Jesus and their primary job would be to make disciple-making disciples. They were to go with purpose to other nations and God would be with them.

In today’s passage, we will see that the disciples were promised that they would go in the power of Jesus Christ and that God had a definite plan for the spread of the gospel.

Many of you know that Acts was written by Luke, the doctor. It is the second of two volumes. In order to better understand the beginning of Acts, we need to look at Luke 24:47-49, “*and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.*” This sounds very much like Acts 1:8, “*you will be my witnesses.*” Then he says in verse 49, *And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.*” They are to be witnesses, but first they must wait in Jerusalem until they are clothed with power from on high. Notice that in Acts 1:8 receiving power is what precedes and leads to being witnesses for Christ. And in Luke 24:48-49 they are to be witnesses but power from on high is so crucial they must wait for it in the city before they begin to launch out to the nations from Jerusalem.

I believe this is the main point of Acts 1:8, Power from on high is needed to expand the gospel throughout the world. God makes two promises in this verse and there are three elements to the promise. Let’s look at the first phrase of Acts 1:8,

I. Power From on High is Essential to World Evangelism

You will receive power, when the Holy Spirit has come upon you” The first promise is that they will receive power. Both Luke 24:49 and Acts 1:8 Jesus says that power must come first—*“You shall receive power ... and you shall be my witnesses.” “You are my witnesses ... stay in the city, until you are clothed with power from on high.”*

What kind of power is the Lord talking about? We know that their power is from the Holy Spirit, but what kind of power is it and what is the power for? In Acts you see the record of the gospel expanding. The word behind “power” is used ten times. Turn to Acts 4:33, *“And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.”* There was power behind their testimony. Other places, we see that they had the power to perform miracles.

I don’t want to get derailed, but very quickly I want to note that Acts is full of miracles. Some churches try to teach that we still have that power today. But remember the period of time covered by Acts is very short. It covered roughly 20-30 yrs. Miracles were used initially to authenticate the message of the Apostles. The Apostle received the authority of Jesus. If you read Acts carefully, you see that there is a decrease in the frequency of miracles the further you read. Why? Because as more New Testament Scripture was written there was less need to authenticate the message.

So what is the power that the apostles and all children of God receive? Turn to Romans 1:16, *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”* The gospel is the power of God for salvation. Turn forward to 1 Corinthians 1:18, *“For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”* Notice that the “word of the cross” (the gospel) is the power of God for salvation. **S** Look at verse 23, *“but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.”* (1 Corinthians 1:23–24) What is the power that saves people and expands from nation to nation to nation is the gospel.

APPL: Think about it. Isn’t it refreshing to know that you have the same power and authority of Jesus available to you that was available to the apostles? The power and authority of Jesus is in the gospel. You have all the power of God at your disposal when you witness. Of course you also have the Holy Spirit inside you giving you wisdom and compassion and concern for the lost condition of the people you witness to.

When I grew up, I was in a brand of Christianity that would exalt people. “This man baptized ‘x’ number of people last year.” or “This man is one of the greatest soulwinners I know. He led ‘x’ number of people to the Lord last year.” How perverse is that? The gospel is the power of God resulting in the glory of God; not man. God is glorified when Spirit-led people share the gospel of Jesus Christ with people and God’s Holy Spirit uses that gospel to save them from their sins.

So that's the promise of power.

II. God Uses Witnesses for World Evangelism

You will be my witnesses

ILL: One summer while I was a youth pastor in Memphis on a Friday, I was getting ready for a Monday departure on a missions trip to Mexico. I needed to carry a lot of cash with me to take care of things in Mexico, so I went by the bank to get it. I remember standing in line and, you know how you do, you try not to look at everyone. I looked down and noticed that the guy behind me had on some flipflops that his heels hung off the back. That was strange.

I got my money, and went over and sat down to make small talk with one of the managers. As we were talking, she looked up and threw down her pen, and said, "Again!" She looked at me and said, "We just got robbed." I looked around and said, "We got robbed?" Well, they lock the doors and wait for the police detectives to arrive. The detective asked me, "What did you see?" "What did you hear?" "What did you witness?" The only thing I had was, "His flipflops were too small." Even with that I was technically a witness.

The second promise made to the apostles is that they would be God's witnesses. What does Jesus mean when he calls them witnesses? They were the ones who experienced Jesus and saw him in a resurrection appearance. This experience means that they can testify directly to what God did through Jesus. Let me get even a little more specific. Jesus said, "*You shall be **my** witnesses.*" That means that the disciples did not testify of their own experiences; they testify to the resurrection of Jesus who died as Israel's Messiah.

APP: The pattern is the same today. You are God's disciple. A disciple must be a witness who goes about testifying directly to what God did in him through Jesus Christ.

So what is the plan? Where are they going to go?

III. The Plan is to Begin in Jerusalem and Spread From There

in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth

The plan was for the gospel to spread gradually beginning in Jerusalem. The gospel was to spread going outward from Jerusalem. The most important thing for our purposes is that the gospel was to be carried to farthest reaches of the known world. Isn't this what Jesus said in Matthew 13:33? "*He told them another parable. 'The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened.'*"

But as we will learn, we do need to plan and be intentional in helping the gospel spread in farflung parts of the world.

Conclusion: I want to close with a parable I read on this exact topic called the parable of the shepherd. There was a shepherd who counted his sheep and felt that there were many sheep missing. Very concerned about his missing sheep so he began to worry about it. And he sent a dog out and tried to find the sheep but the dog came back and only had a

tired dog and no sheep. So he thought, well, maybe I'll check with some other shepherds. Maybe some other shepherds have the same problem I do so he got a shepherds' council together. First there was old business then new business then a discussion of how to find sheep. Well, they appointed a sub-committee to research the problem of lost sheep. And the sub-committee came up with the following ideas. One great idea was neon signs blinking "Come, come, sheep, 11:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., Sundays." Another one was to give a handful of tracts to nomads who, in wandering through the desert, might stumble upon sheep...who, incidentally, couldn't read. One man came up with a brilliant idea. Perhaps we need an ex-shepherd to come in and call the sheep and we'll have a special week-long meeting. A third said, no, we probably could use a visiting music group with music geared just for lost sheep. A fourth one said, "No, we need to permanently change our music to the music that lost sheep enjoy, especially the lambs. That will bring them in." They got it all done and they still didn't have any sheep. Pretty good parable. It's pretty obvious what the Lord's plan was, isn't it? Forget all of the trappings and be what you are...a witness. The early church did it right.

We are to go throughout our community being a witness. It sounds almost too simple. Be a witness, not about ourselves, but about the gospel. It is the power of God. The Holy Spirit's power doesn't reside in how well you speak, or how great our church's music is, or even how dynamic the preacher is. The power of God is found in the gospel, when you share it one to one with people who need it. That's it.

Are you a witness?

The Church Sending-Out Missionaries

Acts 13-14

We are in the fifth of six sermons on missions. We are tracing the development of Scripture's teaching on world missions. Two sermons ago, we learned that Jesus has given every believer authority to proclaim his name and make disciples. And in Acts 1:8 we learned that we are to go out and proclaim the simple Gospel message and that the power of the God is in the Gospel. That gospel message spread systematically beginning in Jerusalem.

Today we are going to look at the pattern established by the church at Antioch. It has implications for how our church supports, sends, and communicate with our missionaries.

Before I get into the passage, I want to talk about the common way that missions is done. East Side Baptist Church where I served in Memphis supported over 50 missionary families for between \$250-700/month. It had a missions budget of almost \$200,000. That sounds great! Doesn't it? Except that no one ever knew the missionaries. We had a long bulletin board in a long hallway that had their prayer letters clipped to it. So theoretically, you could go along every month and read the new letters that the missionaries put out. Realistically, very few people even bothered to read the letters. Worse than that, there was no system in place to pray for them. We simply had a list on our prayer sheet. By contrast, our church currently supports thirteen missionary families. To tell you the truth, I almost think that that is too much.

It is common today for a church to invest \$75.00-\$200.00 per month in a large number of missionaries that few in the church ever have the opportunity to intimately know. As a result of this, missions has become impersonalized. The system of a missionary candidate and his family going out on deputation has been largely unchallenged. In this system it is left up to the missionary candidate to promote himself and his ministry to churches who will not have the opportunity to truly get to know or prove him in an actual ministry context. This enables incompetent and unqualified missionaries to get to the field, while it prevents capable and gifted missionaries from getting to the field.

The current system, the one that you are used to, is recent. It was only at the turn of the 20th century that this became a popular method to support missionaries. In essence, churches have turned their responsibility over to a third party...to the mission boards. Acts 13 lays out a far better pattern for missions. Let's read Acts 13.

“Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. While they were worshiping 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 after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.” (Acts 13:1-3)

What pattern do we see for local-church missions in Acts 13-14? The question I am asking is, “What is our responsibility to our missionaries?”

The Responsibility of the Church to the Missionary

I. The Church is to Select and Send its Own Missionaries

The church in Antioch (MAP) was an important church in early Christianity. It was the place where the word “Christian” was first used (Acts 11:26). It was intimately

connected with the early history of the gospel. Most importantly for us today, it was the first place where Gentile outreach was planned and directed by God. It was the primary church God used to send, support and supervise the church planting efforts of Paul and Barnabas in the first century. It is the example of this church that provides a model of what missions should look like from a local church perspective.

In Acts 13 it seems that the whole congregation was gathered for worship. They were praying and fasting. We are not told why, but maybe they were praying for Gentiles to be reached with the gospel. During this time the HS charged them to send Paul and Barnabas.

A. The church sends those who have a proven testimony

Who are Paul and Barnabas? They're the two most qualified leaders. Paul was an apostle. Barnabas was involved in the church from the very beginning. These men were "valuable assets" to the church and yet, God told the church to send them. What does that say? Well first it says that no one is irreplaceable. God can very easily replace his servants. More than that though, is that the person being sent should be proven. Any missionary sent out by the church should be involved in the ministry of the church prior. It is here that a man's heart for ministry is seen, his theology proven and his character tested.

ILL: I still have in my files the profile that FBC was looking for when I was hired. Several of the qualifications on the profile had to do with my being a proven leader. Not only that, but the church called my references to check about my provenness.

Our discipleship strategy at FBC should be to facilitate believers' spiritual growth and equip them for spiritual service. As we are faithful to do this, then God will raise up from within our church future Bible teachers, deacons, elders and missionaries.

As disciples in the church mature their spiritual giftedness will become evident in their service. It would seem from the passage that the church is responsible to identify those who are called and help prepare them for future ministry.

A. The church sends those who have a Divine calling

It is evident in verse 2 that these men had a divine calling. The Spirit charged "*Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul.*" In other places Paul uses the same language to describe God's action in his life.

It is not only essential that the missionary have proven testimony in ministry, but that both he and his church are certain of his calling by God. Each missionary that is sent should meet the qualifications of an overseer as outlined in Titus 1 and 1 Timothy 3, and give evidence of God's calling in their life.

After the Lord called them to set about Barnabas and Saul, the church in essence ordained them. Look at verse 3, *Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.*

Effective Christian leaders will likewise see the need to discern God's gifting for ministry in others, to support (and where necessary train) those whom God is leading to local ministry or mission elsewhere, and to affirm them by acts of ordination or commissioning.

II. **The Church Has the Responsibility to Supervise Missionaries (14:26-28)**

Let us skip to the end of the mission trip (Acts 14:26) and see a couple more things. *“and from there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work that they had fulfilled. And when they arrived and gathered the church together, they declared all that God had done with them, and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles. And they remained no little time with the disciples.”* (Acts 14:26–28)

At the end of their journey, Paul and Barnabas gave a report of their trip. They were accountable to the church. The church was supervising them. In other words, since they had been set apart by the church at Antioch, it was to the Antioch church that they gave their report.

In the current system missionaries are sent, gone, and forgotten. It is imperative that a line of communication is to remain so that both the church and the missionary be connected and blessed by seeing how God is working and binding them together. When they come back there are at least a couple benefits.

A. **The church shares in the glory of the missionary service**

Since Paul and Barnabas were an intricate part of the church, they were an extension of the church. The church's ministry was extended across the continent because part of its membership evangelized and planted churches in remote locations. The church shares in that joy and glory.

Isn't it great to hear from our missionaries like we have been doing in Sunday school? It is wonderful to hear what God is doing.

B. **The church is allowed to address needs that arise**

Humans all have spiritual social and financial needs. When the missionary comes back to the local church, it can address any needs that arise. Because of the close ties and accountability between the missionary and the church, the sending church is responsible to know if there are any problems that need addressing or any work that needs to be done.

Since I have been at FBC, we have had a number of missionaries come off the field for various moral failings and other issues. In past ministries I have known of others who have had to come off the field. In addition, we have had to drop a missionary or two because we could not account for what they are doing. They were evasive or just not doing what we originally paid them to do.

I want to close with a quick encouragement. I read a book on missions that recounted the history of the missions and the impact that prayer had upon missions. The author stated

that when we pray, we are literally extending our ministry to places we'll never be able to go. I may never physically minister in Poland, but I can minister to Poland by praying for the missionaries and the people. He went on to state, "The source of the spiritual vitality and power of any Christian movement is prayer. Everything vital to the missionary enterprise hinges upon prayer. The opening of difficult field depends upon prayer." We talked to two missionaries: Daniel Pero in Ireland and Kris Kolt in Poland who spoke of the difficulties of the people on the field. Look at the quote again. "The opening of difficult field depends upon prayer." Wouldn't you like to be involved in opening mission fields? Then pray.

The other thing that you can do is to give to missions. Listen to what the same man said about giving, "Money has the power to enable a man to multiply the length of his life service. With it he can set others to work while he himself continues to labor, thus paralleling his own life work. Money enables a man to extend the field of his life service."

Wouldn't it be great one day to be a missionary sending church? One that grows and disciples people to go to the far reaches of the world?

Partners in Missions

Philippians 4:10-20

“I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me. Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble. And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit. I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.”

What is the most common picture that people think of when you discuss their relationship to missionaries? I think it works something like this. There are some people who are especially blessed by God. They're the “A” team. They're the super Christians or whatever term you want to use. These people are more spiritual than everyone else. They become missionaries. We make heroes out of them. They are special people that we should note. We, the local church, are just a support team, while they do all the hard work. We support them while they are doing the hard work of the ministry.

Is that an accurate picture of how God views the ministry? Let us answer that question by thinking of how the Bible portrays the church. The NT teaches that we are intimately connected. Paul compared it to a body in Romans 12:5 “*so we, though many, are one body in Christ.*” He used the word “we.” Think about this. Had he ever been there? No. 1 Cor. 12:12 says, “*For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.*” In Eph. 4:25 Paul says, “*we are members one of another.*” He considers his relationship with the church intimate, even a church that he has never attended.

Another image of the church is that of a building. In 1 Cor. 3:17 Paul tells the church, “*For God’s temple is holy, and you are that temple.*” Writing to the Ephesian church Paul likens the corporate body to a building, “*in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.*” (Ephesians 2:21–22) Finally, Peter in 1 Peter 2:5 calls the Christians in Asia Minor “living stones” that are being built up into a holy temple.

The apostles never distinguish between the “haves” and the “have nots” spiritually. Paul never references himself as some super Christian with the churches being the support team or the JV team.

Let me sum up the introduction by giving you a big picture. All those who have been redeemed since Christ’s death burial and resurrection are the Church, singular. Two images that the Bible gives to describe the church are a body and a building. We are members of the body and we all have different functions, but there is not one of us that is

more important than another. Similarly, the church is likened to a building. We are the blocks.

OK, finally, the church is made of different assemblies in different villages, towns, and cities. The believers in each particular town are called the church. So you have the church, all the believers in Christ after he went to heaven. The church is made of individual assemblies in different places around the world. Most of the time it is easy to distinguish what the author means when he speaks of the church.

With this in mind, how does Paul view the churches that he works with? Paul views the churches he works with as partners. This passage, as well as others in Philippians, will give us guidance as to how we should view our relationship with our missionaries. We are partners with them.

Paul writes to the church in Philippi from prison, probably in Rome. Paul is still ministering and evangelizing. He tells them in Phil. 1:12 that his imprisonment served to advance the gospel. While in prison, Epaphroditus came from Philippi to care for him and to convey a gift from the church. Epaphroditus almost died while in Rome. The church found out and was worried about his health. Paul sent back the letter that we are reading and in the section we read today, he is expressing gratitude to the church for their support.

So let's look at missions partnerships.

I. Missionary Partners Show Active Concern for Missionaries (10)

"You have revived your concern for me" The word "revive" is a word that describes plants. It means to *shoot up, become green or flourish*. It is like a fruit tree that blossoms again every spring. It speaks of a plant that blooms after a long period of dormancy. The church at Philippi showed concern for Paul, and it ministered to his heart.

For missionaries, there can be a sense that they have been forgotten. Several years ago, one of our missionaries put out a plea for some temporary help, so that they could go home for a few weeks and ministry to their family. After a week, I emailed and asked how it's going finding a replacement. He told me that I was the first supporter to respond to their email. Imagine how much encouragement you can be to a missionary to communicate with them. By the way, you don't have to know them. Just send them an email and say, "I'm from FBC in Pound. I wanted you to know that I am praying for you. Could you put me on your prayer letter list?" Trust me, they would be more than happy to accommodate.

In fact, one person in our midst who wrote regularly to the missionaries is Alma Salesky. Every single missionary that we have, asks me how Alma is doing. Why? Because on their and their children's birthdays, Alma would send a birthday card, with a handwritten note, telling them what is going on at church. Just letting them know that they care. We need someone or some people who would be willing to take over for Alma.

Back to verse 10. The word "concern" is used ten times in this letter. It is a relational word that highlights the Philippians' affection for Paul. It expresses the concept of being "like-minded." He uses the word twice in Phil. 2:2 *"complete my joy by being*

of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.” The same word is used to describe how Christians are to have the same attitude as Christ in Phil. 2:5, “*Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,*” In 4:2 Paul urges two women who are quarreling to have the same mind, “*I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord.*” So what does it mean that the Philippians showed concern for Paul? All of these uses of the word point to the crucial importance of having the *attitude of mind* that builds relationships. So Paul tells his friends how delighted he is that they have caused their thoughts about him to grow and bloom again.

When you have close friends whom you care about you empathize with them. You care concerned when they have trouble. That is the kind of relationship that Paul had with the church at Philippi. That is the same kind of relationship that we should strive for with the missionaries that we support.

II. **Missionary Partners Share in Trials With the Missionaries (14)**

Look now at verse 14, *Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble.* The word “share” expresses a very important concept. The root word is the word “fellowship.” It is a compound word that means to “fellowship together” or to “share together.” They participated with the apostle in his trouble. Notice, that he doesn’t view himself as being on the front lines and they are the support team. Rather, they are right there with him. They are partners in ministry and in trials.

This is not some theological idea that he pulled out of his hat. How did they help him? They sent Epaphroditus. They sent tangible help. It is great that we send money. It is great that we pray, but sometimes it may become necessary for the supporting church to send actual help.

III. **Missionary Partners Share the Financial Burden with Missionaries (15-16)**

And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. Again and again the Philippians gave to Paul’s ministry. Paul was blessed by it. In verse 18 he likens their gift to incense offerings in the temple, I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.

When Noah offered burnt offerings on the altar after the flood, “the Lord smelled the pleasing odor” (Gen 8:21). The Torah instructs Aaron and his sons to burn the whole ram on the altar; “it is a burnt offering to the Lord; it is a pleasing odor” (Exod 29:18). According to Lev 1:9, 13, 17 the ultimate value of the temple sacrifices is their “pleasing odor to the Lord.” In the NT, the sacrificial death of Christ is a pleasing odor to God (Eph 5:2). By describing the gifts from the church in Philippi as a fragrant offering, Paul elevates their value to the highest level as sacrifices that are pleasing to God.

Your sacrificial giving to missions is a fragrant offering that pleases the Lord. Do you want to please the Lord and be richly blessed in this life and the one to come? Then

give generously to this ministry and to overseas missions. Why do you think it is called an offering? Ultimately, your gifts are to the Lord.

More than that. I read a little book called “The Pastor and Modern Missions” written in 1904. Listen to what the author said that you have the power to do when you give to missions. “Money has power to enable a man to multiply the length of his life service. With it he can set others to work while he himself continues to labor...with money he can insure the continuation of his activity through others long years and even generations after his own earthly career has ended.” Isn’t that powerful?

Conclusion:

We are in ministry together with the missionaries we support. They’re not the frontline soldiers while we support. We are all light in a very dark world. They happen to be in another country. We are to partner with missionaries in fellowship. We are to support missionaries in their trials. And we’re to give financially to their ministries.

APPENDIX 8
PANEL COVER LETTER

August 15, 2016

Hello Missions Panel Member,

This is the information packet for the Missions Panel in which you were recruited to participate. The goal is to brainstorm to ideas to get our church more involved in world missions. But we need to these ideas need to appropriate to our church context and make-up.

I have included two documents:

The first is a seed-idea-list. The list includes the six essential practices of missions-minded churches that we covered on Sunday, and suggested applications in our church.

These are only suggestions given to spark creativity.

The second document is an evaluation tool that we will use to evaluate how effectively we accomplish our goals. The results of the evaluation will be included in my dissertation.

Thank you for serving on this panel.

Sincerely,

Pastor Edgecombe

APPENDIX 9

IDEA SHEET

Ideas to Become More Missions-Minded

Practice One: Teach and preach missions as a central theme of the Bible.

Idea – during the time in January that I revisit our purpose, I will add missions to the sermon series.

Practice Two: Foster a vision for world missions with the congregation.

Ideas – 1) Occasional Skype sessions with missionaries; I'm thinking once a quarter during Sunday school or during church on communion Sunday. 2) Create a monthly "Missions Digest" email newsletter that summarizes the missionary letters. 3) Increase mission trip frequency from biyearly to yearly. 4) Introduce the "Missionary of the Month" to Sunday school classes to read about and pray for. 5) Report about large missions movements abroad.

Practice Three: Allocate significant funds to missions.

Ideas – We are doing a pretty good job at this time. I suggest that we restructure our missions section to include discretionary missions spending. I'll explain in the meeting.

Practice Four: Spend significant time in prayer for missions and missionaries.

Ideas – 1) Pray for one missionary during the morning service. 2) Pray for the "Missionary of the Month" during Sunday school.

Practice Five: Regularly communicate with missionaries.

Ideas – 1) Find a replacement(s) for Alma Salesky writing birthday cards for the missionaries. 2) Skyping missionaries more often.

Practice Six: Develop a carefully crafted philosophy of missions.

This is mine to work on.

APPENDIX 10

FBC MISSIONS MOBILIZATION PLAN

1. **Purpose:** The two overriding purposes of the missions mobilization plan are to get more people involved in world missions and to keep missions in the minds of the people.
2. **Overview:** This section explains two concepts mentioned in several essential practices of the last section.

Missionary attachés – recruit people to who will regularly communicate with and build relationships with certain missionaries. These people will become church attachés for a particular missionary. The recruiting and training of these attachés will serve to use the gifting of our church members to be involved.

Missionary of the month – since we support twelve missionary families, we can have emphasize a different missionary every month.

3. **Essential Practices:** This section will detail how we will apply the six essential practices of missions-minded churches.
 1. **Teach and preach missions as a central theme of the Bible.** I will preach about missions and how it relates to the overall purpose of our church in January. Occasionally, we will spend a month of Sundays preaching about missions. We can highlight famous missionaries of the past.
 2. **Foster a vision for world missions.** The missions attachés will eventually become a missions committee of sorts. They will communicate missionaries. When they find a special missionary need, they will communicate that need to the church. We will attempt to take one missions trip per year. The attaché will help with the trip planning. We will incorporate missionary contact information into our church directory. We will create an information sheet on each “missionary of the month” that people can take home with them. We can use the creative gifts of our membership to create these information sheets. Maybe in some form of refrigerator magnet. The “missionary of the month” can be prayed for during Sunday school and small groups. Mark can load a slide show to be shown during the morning slideshow between Sunday school and worship.
 3. **Allocate significant funds to missions.** We will create a section of the missions budget to be a discretionary fund that can be used to help with special missionary needs. When those funds are used, it will be reported to the church.
 4. **Spend significant time in prayer for missions.** Start having the Sunday school classes pray for the “missionary of the month.” We will also pray for a missionary during the morning service.
 5. **Regularly communicate with missionaries.** The missionary attaché will be faithful to write the missionaries. Let them know when we pray for them, let them

know that they are our missionary of the month. We will Skype missionaries more frequently. For the missionaries who minister close to our time zone, we can reorder the whole Sunday to emphasize missions.

6. **Develop a carefully crafted philosophy of missions.** We decided to incorporate a missions philosophy into our overall philosophy of ministry.

APPENDIX 11

KNOWLEDGE ASSESSMENT AND T-TEST RESULTS

Table A2. Responses to “I regularly make it a point to read missionary letters.”

Score	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre-test	1	4	6	9	9	2
Post-test	1	1	6	7	6	10

Table A3. Responses to “I can name more than five missionary families that our church supports.”

Score	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre-test	1	6	4	2	10	8
Post-test	1	1	2	3	7	17

Table A4. T-test: Paired two sample for means

	Pre-Course	Post-Course
Mean	97.70967742	110.6774
Variance	158.0795699	122.1591
Observations	31	31
Pearson Correlation	0.590585811	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	30	
t Stat	-6.700868687	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.0000001001	
t Critical one-tail	1.697260887	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.0000002003	
t Critical two-tail	2.042272456	

Table A5. Responses to “I regularly communicate with certain missionaries by email or other means.”

Score	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre-test	8	10	7	4	0	2
Post-test	8	7	6	2	5	3

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ABSTRACT

INCREASING PARTICIPATION IN WORLD MISSIONS AT FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF POUND, WISCONSIN

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The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2016
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This project was designed to increase the participation of the members of First Baptist Church of Pound, Wisconsin, in world missions. The process involved assessing and increasing their knowledge of the Bible's teaching on missions. It also included increasing their knowledge of the missionaries that the church supports. The project culminated in a missions mobilization plan to get the whole church more involved in world missions.

Chapter 1 introduces the ministry context of First Baptist Church, along with the rationale, purpose, goals, research methodologies, definitions, and delimitations of the project. Chapter 2 provides the biblical and theological basis for the project through the exegesis of five passages of Scripture (Matt 10; Matt 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; Acts 13-14; and Phil 4:10-20). Chapter 3 presents three case studies of ministries that are successfully involving their membership in world missions. Chapter 4 describes the project itself, including the lesson plans and the sermon series. Chapter 5 concludes with an overall evaluation of the project and suggestions for improvement and further development.

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