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The Missionary Task: What Should the Missionary Be Doing?

Goal for This Week:

To consider what is and what is not necessarily the missionary task.

Review of Past Weeks:

Our Ecclesiology and Missiology flow out of our doctrine of God and leads to doxology.

In Matthew 16 we see Jesus give the keys of the kingdom of heaven to the _____

and in Matthew 18 we see the keys of the kingdom given to _____.

The church is to be congregationally _____, elder _____, and deacon _____.

The church is the _____ and _____ of missions because the church is the

_____ of Christ helping the _____ of Christ (the *means*) get ready for the

_____ of Christ (the *end*).

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

What is the task of a missionary?

How Mission Organizations Answer:

*The International Mission Board (IMB):*¹

1. “ENTRY
 - a. Find them – the role of research
 - i. Understanding people groups
 - ii. Understanding levels of evangelization

¹ <https://www.imb.org/topic-term/six-components-missionary-task/>

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- iii. Understanding Bible translation
 - iv. Understanding the GCC (Great Commission Collective) network
 - b. Get to them
 - i. Explore political, economic, religious environment
 - ii. Explore access options
 - iii. Acquire necessary skills and/or resources
 - c. Develop an ability to communicate with them
 - i. Language
 - ii. Culture
2. EVANGELISM
- a. No salvation apart from hearing and believing the gospel
 - b. Making disciples starts with sharing the gospel
 - c. Evangelism is non-negotiable
 - i. Some are gifted
 - ii. All are responsible
 - d. Gospel message must be faithful to Scripture and understandable
 - i. Role of language and worldview
 - e. If there is no evangelism, it is not missions
3. DISCIPLESHIP
- a. Goal is disciples, not “converts”
 - b. Disciple = learner/follower of Jesus who is being transformed by the Holy Spirit to be conformed to the image of Christ
 - c. This includes knowledge of Scripture
 - d. This includes transformation of character
 - e. This includes development of skills like Bible study, prayer, evangelism
 - f. This is a lifelong process
4. HEALTHY CHURCH FORMATION
- a. Discipleship normally happens in a local church
 - b. Local church is the automatic, natural home of a healthy disciple of Jesus
 - c. Where there are none, we must start churches
 - i. This was the consistent practice of apostles
 - d. Even where there are churches, it’s always good to start new churches
5. LEADERSHIP TRAINING
- a. The goal with new churches is maturity
 - i. Self-governing, self-supporting, self-propagating
 - ii. Fully able to understand, teach, and obey the Word of God
 - b. Leader need to be trained
 - c. Know/Be/Do: knowledge, character, skills
 - i. Initial stages are simply discipleship, and this is critically important
 - ii. Biblical qualifications are primarily exemplary, what every disciple should be
 - iii. Also able to teach
 - d. Knowledge of content, interpretation, application of Bible, along with theology
 - e. Character includes maturity, humility, and integrity
 - f. Skills include teaching, shepherding, evangelizing, discipline
 - g. All should be taught carefully and rigorously

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- h. All can be taught non-traditionally in context of local church
- 6. PARTNERSHIP AND EXIT
 - a. The goal is not to be there forever
 - b. Stay too long, and you develop unhealthy dependence
 - c. Stay too short, and you leave new believers/churches as prey to wolves; look to the phased process of Model, Assist, Watch, and Leave
 - d. Example of Paul included ongoing involvement even after physically leaving
 - e. Example of apostles also included partnership in the gospel
 - i. Take them with you as you go!”

Observations and Important Things to Note about the IMB:

*Association for Baptists for World Evangelism (ABWE):*²

1. “A missionary is an evangelist. The New Testament uses the word meaning “to proclaim the gospel” at least 54 times. It also uses the related words, *reasoning*, *persuading*, and *preaching*.
2. A missionary is a church planter. Not all missionaries personally plant or pastor new churches, but all missionaries should devote themselves to serving local churches. God’s glory is revealed through the church (Ephesians 3:10).
3. A missionary is a disciple maker. Jesus’ parting command was to teach the nations to obey all his commands – not merely secure a profession of faith.
4. A missionary is a trainer of leaders. Paul appointed elders everywhere he planted a church (Acts 14:23). He told his protégé, Timothy, to train men who would train others (four generations of leadership development). On the mission field, this means that national believers must be empowered to lead when missionaries are gone.”

Observations and Important Things to Note about ABWE:

² <https://abwe.org/blog/defining-missionary-task-4-steps/>

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*Reaching & Teaching International Ministries (RTIM):*³

“Reaching & Teaching is a missions organization that assists local churches as they seek to *make mature disciples, establish healthy churches, and train local leaders* around the world. We believe that the local church is both the means and the end of biblical missions. We desire to serve local churches as they send missionaries around the world.”

1. *Making Mature Disciples* – In the Great Commission, Jesus said, ‘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 commanded you.’ Obeying the Great Commission requires patience because teaching all that Christ commanded takes time. Maturity takes time.

When our missionaries cross cultures, they seek to learn languages in order to effectively communicate the gospel to those who don’t follow Jesus. When someone turns from their sin and trusts in Jesus, they are encouraged to be baptized into membership in a local church. Every Christian is a disciple and every disciple should be a member of a local church – that’s the pattern we see in the New Testament. The church is the primary vehicle that God uses to disciple a new Christian toward maturity...

2. *Establishing Healthy Churches* – Reaching & Teaching is committed to seeing healthy churches among all nations. We establish a healthy local church where there isn’t one. Without this focus on healthy local churches, the task of missions is incomplete and off-target.

What do we mean by “healthy local churches”? We see in the New Testament the priorities of preaching the Word, protecting sound doctrine, and raising up biblically qualified elders. We also see the practice of church discipline and the right administration of the sacraments as essential in the life of the local church. All our missionaries share a common commitment to these convictions about the church, which means they’re all aiming at the same target.

From the thriving metropolises of global cities, to the rainforests of Indonesia, to the desert sands of North Africa, we desire to see healthy local churches established all around the world. Whether planting, revitalizing, serving, or pastoring, establishing healthy churches is central to the work.

3. *Training Local Leaders* – Finally, Reaching & Teaching longs to see healthy churches led by qualified pastors. We believe churches are best served by a plurality of elders who are able to teach and shepherd God’s flock. The qualifications of these leaders are clearly outlined in the New Testament and are indispensable for the health of the church and the spread of the gospel. We believe that training local leaders includes teaching to be able to teach others also (2 Timothy 2:2). Qualified leaders multiply themselves by training other leaders.”

³ <https://rtim.org/go/what-we-do/>

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Observations and Important Things to Note about RTIM:

Concluding Thought:

- The task of the missionary is to do the task of the _____.

Resources That Are Used This Semester:

Akin, Daniel L. *10 Who Changed the World*. Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2012.

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DeYoung, Kevin and Greg Gilbert. *What Is the Mission of the Church?: Making Sense of Social Justice, Shalom, and the Great Commission*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011.

George, Timothy and Denise George. *Baptist Confessions, Covenants, and Catechisms*. Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 1996.

Hammett, John S. *Biblical Foundations for Baptist Churches: A Contemporary Ecclesiology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2005.

Leeman, Jonathan. *One Assembly: Rethinking the Multisite & Multiservice Church Models*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020.

Leeman, Jonathan and Gregory A. Wills. *The Rule of Love: How the Local Church Should Reflect God's Love and Authority*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018.

Ott, Craig. *The Church on Mission: A Biblical Vision for Transformation among All People*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2019.

Piper, John. *Let the Nations Be Glad: The Supremacy of God in Missions*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010.