

Grace Bible Church

Theology of Missions

Part I: The Purpose of Missions

We see the primary purpose of missions as bringing God glory through the building up and increase of both the breadth ("of all nations") and depth ("make disciples... teaching them") of His Church - the body of believers throughout the world. We desire to see God raise up godly men and women from within Grace Bible Church who will serve as career missionaries.

Part II: A Brief Theology of Missions

God desires to reach the nations with the good news of His Son, Jesus Christ. We believe the **Old Testament** foundation for missions is clearly seen in Genesis 12:1-3, wherein God stated His intent to create a nation that would spread His glory among the nations:

"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.'"

The mission continues in the **New Testament**, as Christ Jesus instructs all believers to take the gospel with us 'as we go' into the world, as stated in this foundational passage in Matthew 28:18:

"And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'"

The mission of reaching the nations is to be carried out by **the church**. Jesus said, in Matthew 16:18:

"...I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

The rest of Matthew's Gospel is a record of Jesus explaining what His church would look like: who the leaders are – those who serve; what our collective heart should be – one that seeks the lost; who the foundation of the church is – Jesus Christ crucified, buried, and resurrected; and what our commission is: as we live among those whom God has placed around us we are to make disciples.

The **pattern for missions in the book of Acts** is that existing churches send out proven people as missionaries to take the gospel to the nations and establish churches among unreached peoples. The sent ones should be those who have been **set apart by God**, those whose lives demonstrate that His hand is on them. These are to be equipped, prepared, tested, affirmed, and sent out by the church with much **prayer**:

"While they (the church) 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 13:2-3)

These missionaries serve under the authority of, and give an account to, their **sending church**:

"...they [Paul and Barnabas] 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." (Acts 14:26-27, with 13:3; 15:41; 18:22-23; 21:17-20a)

It is our (GBC's) desire to exalt God and His mission by following the biblical pattern for missions and thereby spreading His glory among the nations. We are eager to see God raise up men and women from our congregation to take the good news of Jesus Christ to the unreached and unengaged peoples, and to strengthen the church around the world. May God, through a partnership between senders and goers, be pleased to draw various peoples into enjoyment of His glory! We are both humbled and excited that He would invite us to participate in this, the greatest cause in the universe.