

Discipleship And The Theology Of Missions & Ministry

God, the Father, is the author, sustainer, and finisher of Missions [and Ministry]. Jesus Christ, through His incarnation, revealed the holiness of God, His love for us, and the price necessary, for mankind [men] to enter into a relationship with Him. Whereas this Gospel is the message of missions and ministry, the Holy Spirit is the guide and power by which individual lives are changed here and for eternity. As we enter into a relationship with God, he calls us to a “participation in the Gospel” (Phil 1:5) whereby all people in all places might come to know and thereby glorify Him.

The Great Commission of Jesus Christ provides the key foundations upon which the theology of missions and ministry is built as we are called to “make disciples of all nations.”

*“And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and earth. **Go** therefore, and make disciples of all nations, **Baptizing** them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, **Teaching** them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, **I am with you Always**, even to the end of the age.’” Matthew 28:18-20*

1) Missions and Ministry is Relational [Incarnational] (“Go” and “Baptizing”)

Missions is borne out of the Love of God.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him, should not perish, but have eternal life.” John 3:16

The incarnation of Jesus Christ proves the passionate love of a great God, who would pay the greatest price of His Son’s sacrifice on the cross so that we might enter in to a personal relationship with Him. God came and “dwelt among us”. Jesus was “Immanuel”...or “God with Us”. From heaven’s standpoint, Jesus Christ had to “Go” and be among us [to accomplish our salvation].

Now, in the Great Commission, He calls us to “Go” and participate with Him in taking the Gospel to the nations and making disciples. Whether to the campus or to “the ends of the earth”, we must go ‘in the flesh’. Disciples are made in the context of personal relationships.

And as we “make disciples”, we are to “*baptize them*”; that is, bring them into relationship with other Christians in the church [body] of Jesus Christ.

2) Missions and Ministry is Transformative [Cooperative]. (*"I am with you always, even to the end of the age."*)

God calls us to join Him in His global purpose that all would come to know Him. We are called "ambassadors" (II Cor. 5:20) and "witnesses" (Acts 1:8) as we share with and minister to others. In living obedient lives to Jesus Christ, we are 'salt' and 'light' to a lost and dying world. God works in us to accomplish his purpose.

"For it is God who is at work in you both to will and to work for His good pleasure." Phil. 2:13

In the Great Commission, Jesus states that it is the work and power of *"the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit"* that make the disciple. As we become fit and useable in His hands, He uses us in that process. We become examples for others to follow. Disciples become disciplemakers!

Paul calls this our "participation in the Gospel." Phil. 1:5 This "koinonia" is not only the fellowship in the Gospel, but also the communication of and distribution of the Good News.

3) Missions and Ministry is Transferrable ["Passing It On"]. (*"teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you"*) [translatable]

We "pass on" what has come to us. "This Gospel has come to us, because it is on it's way to someone else." * God has blessed us so that we might be a blessing to others. This is the theme and a principle of life throughout Scripture. God greatly blessed Abraham so that in his seed *"all the nations of the earth shall be blessed."* Gen. 22:17-18 God was gracious to and blessed his people so that all the world would know His way and salvation...

*"God be gracious to us and bless us
And cause His face to shine upon us-
That Thy way may be known on the earth,
Thy salvation among all nations." Ps. 67:1-2*

In cooperation with God in His global purpose, we are to be stewards. All the time and energy and gifts and money that we have comes from the Father. It all still belongs to Him. We must be stewards of it all, honoring Him with the first part of all we have, and being careful to be obedient stewards of the whole with the whole world in mind.

*Claude Hickman, Live Life On Purpose

We also cooperate with God in His global purpose through Prayer. The prayers of the Lord's obedient followers accomplish much. He has chosen His children to have a strategic part through prayer of breaking the darkness and bringing His glorious Light to the World!

The Word must be passed on. Jesus said to teach what He has taught us. Truth transferred is the Gospel propagated. The Content of how we live and what we share must be the same as He commanded us.

Paul said the same when he instructed Timothy...

"And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also." II Tim. 2:2

Paul included the incarnational aspect of "passing it on" as he told the Thessalonians... "*...we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but **also our own lives**...*" I Thess. 2:8

His life was to be imitated... "*The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things...*" Phil. 4:9