

## MISSIONS AND OUTREACH

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Missions and outreach to have both an internal and external component. Since not everyone who says Lord, Lord is saved (Matthew 7:21), internally we need to preach to the lost souls, plant the seeds and pray that they will make a decision for Christ. Also, inside the church we need to make our love sincere for Jesus by practicing to obey everything He commanded us to do. This world can smell a hypocrite a 1000 miles away and hypocrisy will not entice them to leave the pleasurable, broad path they are on.

Missions and outreach also has an external focus to it as well as an internal one. In the Great Commission we are commanded to “GO” to all nations. Every member of the church must be ready to give the reasons why they have hope in Christ (1 Peter 3:5). We all have an obligation to God to love our neighbors by feeding the poor, helping the widows and healing the broken hearted. Since we believe that no one is too evil that the blood of Christ cannot cleanse their sins, we believe the Gospel message should be preached to all people without prejudice. The message we preach is the risen Christ. Not everyone has the spiritual gift of evangelism but everyone has spiritual gifts that can be used for missions. Let’s turn to both of these internal and external aspects by reviewing the Great Commission.

### **Matthew 28:16-20**

**<sup>16</sup> Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. <sup>17</sup> When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. <sup>18</sup> Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”**

## INTERNAL FOCUS OF MISSIONS AND OUTREACH

### **Unbelieving Church Members**

The Great Commission begins by stating there was only eleven disciples. Jesus started out with 12 disciples so what happened to one of them? Even after having experienced the presence and teaching of the Good Shepherd who promised to lay down His life for the sheep (John 10:11) Judas still rejected the Gospel message. Romans 10:9 states to become a Christian one must declare Jesus Christ as Lord of their life. This means to become born again (John 3:3) one must have decided to deny oneself the ability to choose one’s own path in life (Matthew 16:24). By being a member of the 12 disciples Judas had an appearance of religion but inside the cup remained filthy. The Pharisees had a similar problem. They loved places of honor in the Synagogue (Matthew 23:2) or in public settings as ones deemed “religious” but in reality there

were “full of dead man’s bones and all things unclean” (Matthew 23:27). Judas betrayed Jesus for a meagre 30 shekels, the equivalent to four months’ wages. Obviously when Jesus told the disciples to not love the world or anything in it in 1 John 2:15 Judas ignored the command and remained with both of his feet in Satan’s kingdom.

Lest we think too little of Judas and too highly of ourselves let us look at what Jesus says awaits many people inside of the modern day church. According to Jesus not everyone who comes to church, worships God, prophesies or even does miracles; will make it into heaven (Matthew 7:21). Some of the reasons people come to church have nothing to do with loving God. Some come to socialize, some to obtain positions of honor as church leaders, some to appease parents or spouses and even some to try and “buy” their way into heaven by doing good deeds. To those who are still dying in their sins inside of the church (Romans 6:23) I believe we have an obligation to show them the light (Matthew 5:14-16), plant the seeds of righteousness (1 Corinthians 3:6-9) and pray that they will receive the Spirit of God (2 Corinthians 1:22) and become His children (John 1:12). **Our mission and outreach field begins inside of our own church!**

### **Cleaning the Cup**

To teach this world about the Gospel message is a command that is not easily accomplished. First, before one can reach a lost soul one simply must understand the broad path that they are travelling on. Paul tells the church of Rome that God has given them over to a depraved mind and as such they have become gossips, slanders, God-haters, insolent, arrogant, boastful and full of all kinds of evil (Romans 1:27). Now not all non-Christians fit this description to the same extent. Some are very nice people who have integrity and do some amazing deeds of love for their neighbors. That being said they all share the same characteristic in common:

1. **Their love of gratifying their sinful nature is strong enough to keep them from acknowledging and bowing their knees to God.** They are on the path that leads to destruction (Matthew 7:13) but they love being on this path because it is broad enough to satisfy all of their desires. Unlike Christians who have a written Bible containing their morals, non-Christians do not have anything written that confines them to specific morality. Their values and morals can change as their life circumstances change so that they can always maximize life’s pleasures.
2. **Scripture states they hate the light (John 3:20) because God exposes their deeds as being evil.** They simply will not get onto the narrow path because it means surrendering their will to another – God (Romans 10:9). God’s command for them to be holy in 1 Peter 1:16 frightens them because the broad path that currently gives them pleasure is diametrically in opposition with the kingdom (Ephesians 5:11) that God is offering them.
3. **They can smell a person walking on their path of darkness a mile away!** They have all had someone tell them they are on the wrong path and that they should give their hearts to Jesus. Since God’s eternal power and divine nature can be clearly seen from what God has made they are left with no excuse to know God (Romans

1:20). That being said what keeps them from God the most is not just their love of pleasuring themselves but is also their experience with so called “Christians.” We have all heard of priests who have touched little boys or pastors who have embezzled funds or committed adultery. Their witness has been very effective but not for God but for Satan. When we ignore the planks in our own eyes while at the same time asking them to radically change their lives (Matthew 7:5) – no wonder we appear as white washed tombs! **How does one reach those who only see a hypocrite when a Christians preaches to them?**

### **The Church as Training Grounds**

To reach out not as a hypocrite but as an ambassador (2 Cor. 5:20) and royal priest (1 Peter 2:9) of Christ we must clean the inside of the cup by doing the following:

1. **Hate evil and love good.** Romans 12:9 states for love to be sincere as Christians we must learn to hate being on the broad path and sincerely seek to do what is right in God’s sight. 1 Peter 4:3 states we have spent enough time doing what the pagans are doing and should live our lives as ones who will give an account to Him who judges the living and the dead (1 Peter 4:3-5). While non-Christians will not approach the light in fear that their deeds will be exposed, we as Christians should love approached the light so that our evil deeds are exposed, confessed and cleansed (John 3:21).
2. **Love one Another.** Jesus summarized all of Scriptures by telling us to first love God and then to love one another (Matthew 22:37-38). Love for one another inside of the church is one that binds us together (Psalms 133:1) with the bonds of peace (Ephesians 4:3). As brothers and sisters in Christ, belonging to the same family, we are to love one another deeply and from the heart (1 Peter 1:22). If we cannot have unity and equality inside the church, then how are we to go to the world and tell them God is love? How will the world recognize us as true Christians if have not mastered the ability to love each other (John 13:35)?
3. **Spiritual Fervour.** An alternative translation of this verse in the Zondervan Bible Study is “be set on fire by the Spirit.” We as Christians are not to be like the church of Laodicea, lukewarm or indifferent to the spiritual gifts God has given to each and everyone of us (Revelation 14:22). Our thirst for God must be genuine and our surrender to the Lord complete (Romans 10:9). Loving the ways of the world while keeping one foot in the church simply will not do! Christ wants His ambassadors to spread the Good News of the Gospel message (2 Corinthians 5:20) through both their words and deeds (1 John 3:18)! Let God ignite the passion inside you to the extent that you just can’t help but live for Him moment by moment.
4. **Hospitality.** According to 1 John 3:17-18 if we close our hearts to the poor of this world then the love of God is not in our hearts. By sharing one another’s burdens, we fulfill the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2). Always remember when we do unto the least of this world we have done it unto Christ Himself (Matthew 25:37-40). How

hard it is to preach the Gospel message to one whose physical needs are not being met? Nearly impossible for their only concern is survival. Take care of their physical needs first so that they can clearly attend to their spiritual needs.

The church is the training grounds for getting our “act together.” We want to be more like Jesus so that when we get out into the world and preach, all they see is Jesus and not our sinful nature.

## **EXTERNAL FOCUS OF MISSIONS AND OUTREACH**

While missions and outreach is internal it is also to be an external focus. The ABW does an excellent job of reaching out to the world. They support missionaries both international and local. They provide funds to feed the poor that reach from our doorstep to abroad. This part of our missions we need to celebrate and continue for I am certain that God looks at our sacrifices of resources and says good and faithful servants. As churches we need to pool resources in Missionary Societies like this one so that the enormous cost of feeding the global poor and reaching the lost souls for Christ might be possible. That being said let’s look at our local mission field.

### **Local Mission Field**

That being said as a church we must be careful to not “hire” out our responsibility to reach out into surrounding communities. Since Christ asks us to be His ambassadors how can we in good conscience hire others to fulfill this command in our lives? This does not mean that everyone is called to be an evangelist (1 Corinthians 12) but at the same time which one of us has not been blessed with riches that cannot or should not be shared? Which one of us does the command to love your neighbor not apply to? The answer is that everyone in the church has spiritual gifts that are to be exercised in love towards our community. Whether that is acts of hospitality, preaching, sharing wealth, offering a car ride or a listening ear in times of trouble; we all have gifts of service that can show our community that we love them.

1. **What is our mission field like?** Nine out of ten people are not saved in North America. We don’t have to go across the world to find a person who does not love Jesus! There was a time that I wanted to be a missionary. I thought and prayed about this exciting ministry. While I loved the idea of going far away to a foreign country I was not sure if I could raise enough funds. I prayed to God and He told me that my mission field was here because the harvest is truly plentiful in New Brunswick but the workers are so very few (Luke 10:2). They need our love to see what God wants for them!
2. **What is the message we are going to tell them?** God loves them with all His heart and has not turned His back on them despite their reluctance to want to get to know Him. Since God wants no one to perish (1 Timothy 2:4), He sent Jesus to atone for their sins by dying on the cross (John 3:16). Tell them the simple Gospel message:

having faith in Jesus and making Him in charge of their lives (Romans 10:9), they will be brought into a right standing with God, adopted as His children (John 1:12). Tell them repent for the kingdom of God is at hand (Mark 1:15). Tell them no one is beyond God's redemption! Even though they are enemies of God, Christ still loved and died for them (Romans 5:10). **Tell them the simple Gospel message and let the Potter mold the clay!**

### **Don't be Afraid GO!**

**Even though the disciples were told Jesus had to die and raise again and even though they saw Him in the flesh, some of them still doubted Him.** If some of the disciples doubted Christ raised from the dead, how much more are we capable of doubting this same power? To GO out into the world and preach the Gospel message can be very frightening. Will we be able to stand? What if the people, despite our efforts, reject the Gospel message? What if the people in our community's ridicule or persecute us? Leaving the comfort of the church and going into a world that is hostile to the Gospel message (John 15:18) can be scary. When it comes to persecution our mission field locally is not near as frightening as other mission fields in this world. In many places in this world mentioning the name Jesus Christ will at best case scenario get you placed in jail and most likely executed. We are fortunate that we do not face this kind of physical persecution. That being said, let us not belittle how frightening it can be to enter into a spiritual battle with the forces of evil in this world (Ephesians 6:12)! Like the disciples we need to be reassured that God is always with and protecting us! When we go out into this world remember the same Spirit that raised Jesus Christ from the dead lives inside of us and is greater than all the demonic forces put together (Romans 8:11)!

### **CONCLUSION**

Missions and outreach has an external focus to it as well as an internal one. Since many who say "Lord, Lord" will not make it to heaven we have an obligation to the unbelievers inside the church to plant seeds of righteousness. Before one can GO and effectively preach the Gospel message one must first clean the inside of the cup so that the world does not see a hypocrite but a genuine believer. With the cup clean one has an obligation to God to reach out into the local community and spread the Gospel message. Every member of the church must be ready to give the reasons why they have hope in Christ (1 Peter 3:5). We all have an obligation to God to love our neighbors by feeding the poor, helping the widows and healing the broken hearted. Since we believe that no one is too evil that the blood of Christ cannot cleanse their sins, we believe the Gospel message should be preached to all people without prejudice. The message we preach must be kept basic: the risen Christ loves all people and wishes none should perish!