

What Is Missions?

By Dietmar Schulze

Pre-Session Assignments

One week before the session, participants will take the following assignments.

Assignment One

The book of Acts is divided into three parts according to Acts 1:8. The three parts are called Jerusalem, Judea/Samaria and the ends of the world. Read Acts 1:8 and prepare to share which of the following shows the correct division of Acts into three parts.

- A. Chapters 1–10; 11–20; 21–30
- B. Chapters 1–7; 8–12; 13–28
- C. Chapters 1–5; 6–17; 18–28

Assignment Two

Read the comments related to **What Is the Goal of Mission?** in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to share your answer to the following question: What has been the goal of mission for you so far?

Assignment Three

The word *mission* comes from a Latin word meaning “to send.” Read John 20:21. Prepare to share your answers to the following questions: Who sends? Who is sent? To do what?

Scripture to Memorize

“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.” Matthew 28:19-20

Session Goal

Consistent with God’s Word and in the power of the Holy Spirit - by the end of this session, disciples will understand the biblical foundations for the missionary mandate and its practical application today.

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Dietmar was born and raised in a Christian home. At the age of twelve, he received the assurance of his salvation and was baptized. He became a follower of Jesus Christ, a born again Christian, and a fourth-generation Baptist. When he was sixteen, he survived three life-endangering situations in one week. This experience made him curious about God’s plan for his life. In a military training camp, on his twentieth birthday, he received the call to vocational ministry. After his theological studies, Dietmar worked ten years as a pastor in two Baptist churches. He has been teaching in a seminary since 2007.

It's in the Book

30 minutes

Real-Life Scenario

Where do people who live in the USA have to go in order to do missions? Where do they begin and what is their destination? (See Acts 1:8.) For you and your friends who are on mission, what is your “Jerusalem,” your “Judea/Samaria,” and your “remotest part of the earth”?

What is Mission?

In the English language we use the terms *mission* and *missions*. *Missions* describes the ministry of the church and agencies to reach people around the world for Christ by crossing cultural boundaries. *Mission* refers to everything the church is doing that points people toward the kingdom of God. The origin and power of mission is God Himself. Mission includes activities, as well as Christian character. Jesus commands His disciples to be salt and light in this world (Matthew 5:13-16).

Read Matthew 5:13-16 out loud.

Discussion Question

What does it mean to be salt and light in this world?

Who Benefits from Mission?

Read Revelation 7:9-10 out loud.

Studying the Passage

Verse 9. a great multitude which no one could count. Who are those people and where are they from? They are **from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues**. Do you sometimes wonder how many groups need to be reached so that people from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues will stand one day in front of the throne of God?

For strategic purposes, mission agencies use the term *people group*. The International Mission Board (IMB) defines a *people group* as “an ethnolinguistic group with a common self-identity that is shared by the various members. There are two parts to that word: *ethno* and *linguistic*. Language is a primary and dominant identifying factor of a people group, but there are other factors that determine or are associated with ethnicity.

In order to communicate the gospel effectively, missionaries need to be aware of cultural bridges and barriers. A barrier is an obstacle to the communication of the gospel, while a bridge makes the proclamation of the good news easier.

The IMB has calculated that currently, 11,508 people groups populate all the countries of the world. Many of these people groups have been reached with the gospel, while others have not. Approximately 6,800 people groups have fewer than two percent of evangelical Christians in the total population.

Assignment One Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment One** during the week can now share how the book of Acts is divided into three parts.

Discussion Question

The church has been on mission for almost 2,000 years. Why do you think so many people groups in the world remain unreached?

On Your Own

In the space below list people groups you are interested in and pray for them. Maybe one day God might send you to one of them.

What Is the Goal of Mission?

Studying the Passage

Verse 10. and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.” One day people from all people groups will stand before the throne. That is the day when mission ends. What are the people doing there? The people worship God and the Lamb. Therefore, what is the goal of mission? The worship of God is the goal of mission. Who is the Lamb of God? It is Jesus Christ (see John 1:36) who gave His life so that people who believe and follow Him are saved. In mission, the church proclaims salvation is from God the Father through His Son, Jesus Christ. That is the good news, the gospel.

How will the people get to the throne? They are in front of the throne of God because of God’s grace and because the good news has been preached to them (Romans 10:14). Will someone be in heaven because you have proclaimed salvation to them?

Assignment Two Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment Two** can now share what has been the goal of mission so far.

Studying the Passage

Matthew 28:18-20 is called the Great Commission. **Verse 19. make disciples.** The Greek New Testament has only one verb in the command form. It is the command to make disciples.

Verses 19-20. go . . . baptizing . . . teaching. The other verbs are participles that explain how the command to make disciples should be carried out. A missionary is a disciple who makes disciples.

Assignment Three Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment Three** during the week can now answer three questions according to John 20:21: Who sends? Who is sent? To do what?

On Your Own

In the space below write the part of the disciple-making process where you want to grow. What could be the next step for you?

Discussion Question

Which part of the Great Commission seems to be most difficult for you today? Why?

Where Do I Get the Power to Do Mission?

Studying the Passage

Acts 1:8. power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you. The word *dynamite* comes from the Greek word for *power*. How does the Holy Spirit enable you to be on mission? The answer is the POWER strategy:

Pray - Ephesians 3:16; **Obey** - 1 Peter 1:2; **Walk**- Galatians 5:16;
Evangelize - Acts 14:7; and **Resist** - Ephesians 6:13

The book of Acts describes how the church did mission in the power of the Holy Spirit.

On Your Own

Read the five Bible passages of the POWER strategy and pray that the Holy Spirit will strengthen you in those five areas.

Heart and Hands

8 minutes

Read again the **Real-Life Scenario** near the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your answers have changed during the session.

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven. Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied today will change your heart for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something for the glory of

Christ.

3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ. Write what the Spirit reveals to you below and then be ready to share that with the group.

Since Last Week

5 minutes

Give the group this update: "In our last session I made a commitment to . . . I want to let you know how that turned out. On that same issue, I think the Holy Spirit now is leading me to . . ."

Grace-Filled Accountability

5 minutes

Disciples can agree on a way to hold one another accountable. Confessing faults with other disciples allows them to offer grace, insights and encouragement. Even more important is confession to Christ, the source of true forgiveness and cleansing.

Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service

5 minutes

Groups of disciples always are making preparations for evangelism, missions and service. Use these minutes to work on the next plan.

Prayer

7 minutes

Every disciple will pray aloud, offering praise to Jesus, thanking Him specifically for His gracious acts, making heartfelt confession, committing to actions flowing from the Bible study, praying toward evangelism locally and globally and interceding for others as prompted by the Holy Spirit.

At Home: Nail It Down

Missions describes the ministry of the church and agencies to reach people around the world for Christ by crossing cultural boundaries. *Mission* refers to everything the church is doing that points toward the kingdom of God. The origin and power of mission is God Himself. Mission includes activities, as well as Christian character. Disciples need to be salt and light in this world. (Matthew 5:13-16).

In Revelation 7:9-10 we read that people from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues will worship God and the Lamb. How do people get to the throne? They are in front of the throne of God because of God's grace and because the good news has been preached to them (Romans 10:14). In order to communicate the gospel effectively, missionaries need to be aware of cultural bridges and barriers.

The people before the throne worship God and the Lamb. The worship of God is the goal of mission. In mission, the church proclaims that salvation is from God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. That is the good news, the gospel. Will someone be in heaven because you have proclaimed Christ's salvation?

Jesus has sent His disciples on a mission with the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). Disciples should make disciples by going, by baptizing and by teaching.

Acts 1:8 tells us that the church will receive power from the Holy Spirit. Doing mission with the POWER strategy means to: **P**ray - Ephesians 3:16; **O**bey - 1 Peter 1:2; **W**alk - Galatians 5:16; **E**vangelize - Acts 14:7 and **R**esist - Ephesians 6:13.

Are you ready to be on a mission for Jesus? Begin where you live and ask God for His guidance. And never forget: It is not for your own glory, but for the worship of God. That is the goal of mission!

Follow-Up Question

What is the nature of mission and why is it important?

The Making Disciples curriculum is a gift from Southwestern Seminary to those who, for the glory of the Father and in the power of the Spirit, will spend a lifetime embracing the full supremacy of the Son, responding to His kingly reign in all of life, inviting Christ to live His life through them, and joining Him in making disciples among all peoples.