

Faith Community Bible Church Philosophy of Missions

Introduction

When Jesus said to his disciples “I will build my church” (Matt 16:18), he meant that he was going to supernaturally grow his kingdom through the ministry of his disciples. We stand in that long line of disciples of Christ throughout the ages and as each of them have followed Christ, we seek to imitate them in their gospel ministry (1 Cor. 4:15-17). It is our desire at Faith Community Bible Church to honor Christ and to see his name magnified by being diligent laborers in the “white harvest” of souls (Jn. 4:35). Christ’s food was to do the will of the Father (Jn. 4:32-34), and as his disciples, we want to follow his example.

What is Missions?

Missions is joyfully advancing God’s Kingdom by making disciples of all the nations until Jesus returns (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 28:31; Matt. 24:14). God’s kingdom is advanced through the planting and establishing of local churches (Acts 13, 14, *et. al.*). Jesus made the primacy of the church clear in the task of making disciples of all the nations.

Where is Missions?

Local Missions

- Planting and strengthening churches in our local area. This means that every person in the body is a local missionary and is doing the work of evangelism.

Foreign Missions

- Planting and strengthening churches outside our geographic region. This means that the church supports and/or sends missionaries to these areas.

Thus, our desire is to follow the “Acts 1:8 strategy” -- *but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem (locally), and in all Judea and Samaria (regionally), and even to the remotest part of the earth (globally).* The strategy that Jesus gave to the disciples is wonderful because it enables us to see the whole world as a mission field, starting with our own neighborhood.

What are the goals and results of Missions?

- To depend on the Holy Spirit in the work and for the outcome (Rom. 15:18-19; more below under “How can we accomplish Missions?”)
- To be joint partakers of the gospel and to share in its blessings (1 Cor. 9:23; Phil. 1:5)
- To be planters and “waterers” so that we can see God cause growth and receive our reward from Him (1 Cor. 3:5-8)
- To enjoy the mutual encouragement of each other’s faith (Rom. 1:11-13)
- To make the nations glad in God and see all peoples praise Him (Ps. 67:4-5).

What is our Method for Missions?

Our method is partnering/co-laboring together with believers and God to meet the physical and spiritual needs of people (Col. 4:11; 1 Cor. 3:9; 2 Cor. 6:1). A partnership assumes *relationships* that involve ongoing communication, accountability and prayer, etc. We understand this partnership to go both ways since all churches are called to the work of missions. However, this paper focuses on our responsibility of going and sending. So, following the Acts 1:8 progression, we strive to be engaged in the work of missions in the following ways:

1. Partnership as a local church in order to reach our community for Christ through personal interaction and finances. This involves partnering together within our body or with other local churches to reach our community (our “Jerusalem”; cf. see above discussion of “Local Missions”).

- Colossians 4:5-6 – *Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.*
- Matthew 5:16 – *Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven*
- 1 Peter 3:15 – *but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an*

account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence

2. Partnership with other churches through personal interaction and finances. This takes place by the strengthening and building up of churches so that they can continue to be established in reaching their local community for Christ (our “all Judea & Samaria”).

- 1 Thessalonians 3:2 – *We sent Timothy [or short term missions team, or fill in the blank], who is our brother and God's fellow worker in spreading the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith.*
- 3 John 5-8 – *Beloved, you are acting faithfully in whatever you accomplish for the brethren, and especially when they are strangers; and they have testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God. For they went out for the sake of the Name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles. Therefore we ought to support such men, so that we may be fellow workers with the truth.*

3. Partnership with missionaries to unreached people groups through personal interaction and finances. God's heart has always been for the unreached nations to see his grace and glory and to praise him (Ex. 19:4-6; Ps. 22:27-28; 33:8; 66:1-7; 67:1-7; Isa. 42:10; 49:6; 52:10, 66:19; Jer. 16:19). This takes place through sending short term and long term missionaries as well as supporting the work of pioneering missions (our “remotest parts of the earth”).

- John 12:32 – *And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.*
- Acts 13:47 – *For so the Lord has commanded us, 'I have placed you as a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the end of the earth.'*
- Romans 10:13-18 – *for 'Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved.' How then will they call on Him in whom they have*

not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news of good things!' However, they did not all heed the good news; for Isaiah says, 'Lord, who has believed our report?' So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ. But I say, surely they have never heard, have they? Indeed they have; 'Their voice has gone out into all the earth, And their words to the ends of the world.'

- *Romans 15:16-21 – Therefore in Christ Jesus I have found reason for boasting in things pertaining to God. For I will not presume to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me, resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed, in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Spirit; so that from Jerusalem and round about as far as Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. And thus I aspired to preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named, so that I would not build on another man's foundation; but as it is written, "They who had no news of Him shall see, And they who have not heard shall understand.*
- *Titus 2:11 – For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men.*

How do we learn about Missions?

A critical component of reaching the nations is equipping the saints for the work of missions (Ephesians 4:11-12). God has specifically gifted the church with evangelists, not only to evangelize, but to train others in evangelism. So, while some are gifted in evangelism, all must labor and strive to do the work of evangelism. We equip the saints for the work of evangelism through preaching and teaching, Home Fellowship Group discussions, training classes before mission trips, and stocking the church library with helpful resources.

Who does Missions?

While all believers are "missionaries" since all are commanded to be lights of the gospel wherever they are (Matt 5:16), some are called out by the Holy Spirit to be sent by the church to do full-time missions in places outside of our local area (Acts 13:1-3; cf. 9:15). Our desire is to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit by sending people within our local body to others parts of the mission harvest field.

What are the risks of Missions?

God intentionally and providentially uses physical and financial hardship, suffering, persecution, and even martyrdom to spread his fame to all the nations. Paul's missionary journeys were filled with hardship and trials (2 Cor. 6:1-10; 11:23-30). These hardships were the God-appointed means through which the gospel was proclaimed and advanced (Acts 9:16; Phil. 1:12; 2 Tim. 4:17).

- Acts 8:1, 40 – *Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him to death. And on that day a great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. . . . But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he kept preaching the gospel to all the cities until he came to Caesarea.*
- Philippians 1:12-14; 3:17; 4:14 – *Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel, so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else, and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear. . . . Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us. . . . Nevertheless, you have done well to share with me in my affliction.*
- Colossians 1:24-25 – *Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of his body, which is the church, in filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions. Of this church I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, so that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God.*
- 1 Thessalonians 2:1-2 – *For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain, but after we had already suffered and been mistreated in Philippi, as you know, we had the boldness in our God to speak to you the gospel of God amid much opposition.*

How can we accomplish Missions?

We can be successful by being filled with and serving in the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8; 2:4; 4:8, 31; 10:1-48; 11:12; 13:4, 9; 15:7; 20:23; 21:11; Rom. 15:18-19; 1 Cor. 2:4; 2 Cor. 3; 1 Thes. 1:5). From the above verses and many more, it is clear that the Holy Spirit is the one who promotes missions, sends missionaries, guides and directs missionaries, sustains and empowers missionaries, and produces the results of this great task.

Conclusion

These biblical truths serve as an umbrella from which more specific guidelines flow. Whatever guidelines are created (short term trip guidelines, missions contracts, etc.) should be in unity with the Scriptural principles above.