

Biblical Mission Pt. 1

Module 3.9

Perhaps a constant and consistent need for the church today, whether local or global, is to continually clarify its purpose, or mission, and its philosophy of ministry. This clarification is needed for several reasons. 1) Many may have never stopped to consider what the mission of the church is. 2) It is possible that some with a local church may be asking for the church and its leaders to pursue something that is not biblically faithful to the mission the church has. 3) We all forget and need to be reminded.

Whether local or global the church has one mission: To make disciples who make disciples (Matthew 28:19-20). Or “disciple cycles” as the popular Hip-Hop artist Lecrae describes it.

Regardless of how it is communicated, unpackaged, or put into writing, this is the mission that every church has and this is the one primary focus that every church must engage in.¹ To this end, the church must be on mission because Jesus Christ came on a mission and is continuing that mission through his body, the Church (John 20:21).

In Colossians 1:19-20², the Apostle Paul outlines the mission of God saying, “For in him, all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of the cross.” The mission of God is to reconcile all things to himself in Christ Jesus.

As a Fellowship, we have sought to clarify our commitment to biblical mission by agreeing that “*we affirm God’s plan for this age is best summarized by Jesus’ command to make disciples of all nations.*” As such, our Fellowship obediently joins The Triune God of the universe in proclaiming freedom and salvation, the Gospel, to all.

“*This includes the evangelistic call to reconciliation with God by means of the completed work of Christ.*” As the apostle Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 5:20–21, “Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” To be a disciple-maker is to plead with men and women to trust in Jesus Christ for salvation. It is to herald the good news of

¹ From a “mission” standpoint it is unhelpful to pit Evangelism against Discipleship, as if the two were opponents. To “make disciples” implies that evangelism has already happened, for discipleship happens only in the lives of those who have been evangelized and are now believers. Furthermore, the command is not to “make converts”, but rather “disciples”. Evangelism, in and of itself, is not in fulfillment of the great commission. Evangelism is a necessary part of the mission of the church but it is not the end goal...disciple making disciples is the goal.

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Jesus Christ to all knowing that our job to plant and water gospel seeds, but it is God who gives the growth (1 Corinthians 3:6-7).

The *mission* of the church is to make disciple-makers, obediently joining God the Father in his reconciling mission. This is the “what” that every faithful church must do. The *vision* of a church is the “how.”

Throughout the world, each and every church is to be pursuing one mission, and there should be uncompromising consistency between all churches regarding the “what”. However, “how” a local church accomplishes that mission is expressed in beautifully diverse ways. Locally, each body of believers must do the hard work of fleshing out these biblical commands for themselves.

In a beautiful display of diversity, God has uniquely wired and called local bodies of believers to work out the commands of making disciple-makers in different ways. The difficult task therein is prayerfully discerning how God is uniquely calling or called your local body and not simply copying the call of another local body.³

Lastly, we affirm “*the lifelong pursuit of obedience to God by means of the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit.*” To state it another way, our purpose as believers is to exalt Jesus Christ as Savior and obediently submit ourselves, collectively and individually, to Christ by the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit, for the glory of God the Father. We are not called to simply get people to “pray a prayer.” Rather, we are called to make disciples, and disciples are those who actively seek to obey everything Christ has commanded them to obey (Matthew 28:19-20).

In Romans 8:28-30, we learn that God’s purpose for us is to conform us “to the image of his son.” Discipleship is the process of looking more like Jesus tomorrow than I do today. It is the process of my desires and actions being changed by the Holy Spirit so that what I want and what I do honors and glorifies the Lord.

Within our Fellowship there are numerous and invaluable resources regarding discipleship and discipleship programs! We do well to familiarize ourselves with them and leverage them for God’s glory. However, we must also remind ourselves that while disciple making may benefit from a well outlined system of steps and check points, its purpose and orientation are quite simple:

As disciple-makers, we simply say to those around us, “follow me, as I follow Jesus.”

³ Learning from other churches can be incredibly helpful. However, church leaders must resist from buying into the lie that “if it works there, it will work here.”