

COME AND SEE

A History and Theology of Mission

by

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Study Guide

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Introduction and Design

This study guide is designed to help pilot you through *Come and See: A History and Theology of Mission* with the hope of bolstering group discussion, reflection, prayer, and further engagement with the material found within the book.

The very first page of *Come and See* invites us into the purpose behind the authors' writing and hopeful aim for readers and participants, namely: to grasp the heart and mission of the God of the Bible. Within its pages you will find a survey of history and theology—but, in simple verse, this work is primarily an *invitation to see*. The invitation resides in the overarching story of the scriptures, bursting forth from the very heart of the Triune God. It is a call to all peoples. "Come and see what God has done, his awesome deeds for mankind!" - Psalm 66:5

How will we respond to this call?

Chapter 1

The Doctrine of God and Mission

In chapter one, “The Doctrine of God and Mission,” the reason for mission is highlighted as this: “The rejoicing in the love and goodness of God.” To better understand and engage in God’s mission, we first look to see *who* he is, and *what* he is like (i.e. The Doctrine of God), otherwise we will miss the best reason for mission: To know and enjoy God for who he is. In this section we’ll spend time reviewing the chapter in discussion together.

Discussion

There are several reasons that may lead us as disciples of Jesus to pick up a book *on* missions, or even participate in a study *of* missions.

- What would you say was your primary motivation for picking up this book (or participating in a study around it)?

Perhaps we may begin by thinking about *this* statement as a trellis upon which our affection for God might grow and deepen throughout the course of this study. “*Everything*

begins with God. Mission is no exception” (pg. 5). We might even say, *especially* mission, because apart from God, mission doesn’t exist. Why begin a study of *mission* seeking to understand the fundamental truths of who God has revealed himself to be? Are there drawbacks to mission if we begin our inquiries elsewhere?

- What do you think about this statement? “*Nothing moves us to embrace and engage God’s mission like knowing his heart*” (pg. 4). Do you think that’s true? Can you think of examples from your own life?

How we understand God’s mission is perhaps most tied to how we see his eternal Trinitarian reality. When we read John 1:18, we learn that “No one has ever seen God; the only God,” but there is *One* who has made God the Father known. Read through John 1:1-18 and John 17:1-5.

- What do these passages show us about how God makes himself known and the relationship between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

“God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have been loving one another, delighting in one another, sharing and overflowing towards one another for eternity past, and now overflowing into the world” (pg. 11).

- Consider for a moment how truly stunning it is that *this* is who God is, how wildly different he is from the god of Arius or the god of Islam. What response does this stir in your heart?

Passages like Ephesians 1:3-10 and Revelation 13:8 also show us that before the foundation of the world, the Triune God was already preparing to share this fellowship of love with sinners.

- Think back to your reading from this chapter or take time to read through these two passages now. What are your observations from these texts that reveal how God was preparing for this?

Perhaps you entered into this study confident in your understanding or sense of God's mission in the world. Perhaps this is all new news to you and you are simply excited to grow in your love and understanding of God and his mission. Whatever the case may be, our understanding of mission only matters so much as we first find *ourselves* to be caught up in the loving, outgoing life of God.

- Before moving on from this chapter's discussion, reflect on this question: If God's mission in creation and redemption is to bring men and women into the fellowship that Father, Son, and Spirit have always shared, where do I view myself within the mission of God?

Chapter 2

The Glory of God and Mission

In Chapter two, “The Glory of God and Mission” we continued to develop our understanding of God’s mission, this time focusing on God’s glory, and how we see God’s glory expressed through his self-giving nature. In this section we’ll spend some time reflecting on what we’ve learned and discuss it together.

Discussion

In chapter one we learned that God’s mission isn’t primarily something God *does*, but rather is central to who he is.

- How might we understand God’s glory and his mission to be inextricably tied to one another?

Isaiah 42:1-8 was referenced in this chapter as a way of drawing our attention to what *God* has to say about his glory.

- As you read through the passage, what observations do you make of the text? Where is the main focus of the text going?

Think about this statement and discuss: “*God is not a glory-monger. He’s a glory sharer. But the glory always goes from Father to Son by the Spirit and then to Christ’s people*” (pg. 16).

- How is it that God can share his glory when we noted earlier in Isaiah 42:8 that God says, “*I am the Lord; that is my name; my glory I give to no other; nor my praise to carved idols*” (See also John 17:20).

Look back at Ephesians 1 now and note how Paul uses this repeating statement about God, ‘to the praise of his glory’ (vv. 6, 12, 14).

- In this instance, what is Paul referring to? *What* is “to the praise of [God’s] glory”? How has the circle of God’s glory-sharing expanded up to this point?

Trying to define God’s glory might feel nearly impossible to us. That’s because there are some words in our vocabulary that we can communicate with not because we can say them,

but because we *see* them. That's what God's glory is like.

- How does that idea connect with this statement from chapter 2 of the book?

“The glory of the triune God is a self-giving glory. When God acts for the sake of upholding his glory, this does not cancel out his self-giving nature. Rather, it expresses it” (pg. 17).

- In what ways does God act for the sake of his glory?

Missio Dei was an important term that was used in this chapter.

- What are some truths that *Missio Dei* tethers us to as our perspective of mission develops? How might these truths bring us peace and fuel the church seeking to engage in mission? (See also John 20:21)

- How do we participate in the *missio Dei*?

- If God's mission is not a response to the world, and it's not something we get from the world, then what is it?

- Who ultimately defines what mission is, and why?

“Creation and redemption flow from the fact that God delights to spread his goodness. God is a “fountain of sending love” (pg. 18).

- Is this characteristically how you have come to view God? Are there demonstrations of this in your own life? What are they?

Before moving on from this chapter's discussion, reflect on this question personally:

- What is my reason for mission? Do I see my life primarily as something I offer to God and the world, or something else?

Chapter 3

The Bible as Missional: Creation to Abraham

In chapter three, “The Bible as Missional: Creation to Abraham,” we considered how the Bible has been formed *by* and *for* mission. We also saw God’s mission starting to take shape as we surveyed the book of Genesis and the life of Abraham, as well as what a Christ-centred view means for us as we take this all in. In this section we’ll spend some time reviewing what we’ve learned and further conclusions we draw from the text.

Discussion

Think about all the ways your understanding of the Bible has been shaped and informed throughout your life.

- Before this study, would you say you thought about the Bible as being “a missional document?” How come? Or why not?

- How does a Christ-centred view of God, creation, and the Christian help us to see mission at the heart of everything, *even* the Bible?

Consider this statement: “The Bible isn’t a static document full of commands to do this, that, or the other that just happens to have a few proof texts relating to mission (pg. 25).

- Sometimes, in the attempt to locate “a biblical basis for mission,” we may have a temptation to pull broadly from the New Testament, like the book of Acts or the Epistles. However, what do we miss out on when we do that? How might we understand the whole Bible as being formed *by* and *for* mission?
- Do we consider the Old Testament as being included in that understanding? What was Jesus’ summary of the Old Testament? Read Luke 24:44-49 to help guide your discussion surrounding these questions.

- Now read Acts 26:19-29 and think about Paul's appearance before King Agrippa. Where did Paul's understanding of mission come from?

As we begin to take a closer look at the Old Testament ourselves and the narrative found in Genesis, we spot some significant details. In Genesis 1-11, there is not just *one* fall that occurs, but *three*. Global failures resulting in global consequences.

- How do you understand the stories surrounding each of these? What is God's response of promise in each instance? (The fall of Adam and Eve, the fall of the flood, and the fall of Babel).

Picking up with the story of Abram, read through Genesis 12:1-3. In verse 3 God makes a promise to Abram when he says, "*I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.*"

- What is significant about this particular promise? Or

perhaps another way of thinking about it would be to ask, “What is God’s purpose in blessing Abram?” Read Galatians chapter 3 and see how that sheds light on this question.

Closing out this chapter’s discussion, reflect on this statement and question: “God has promised to bless his people, in order that they might bless the world.”

- ☐ What implications does this have on my life today?

Chapter 4

The Bible as Missional: Exodus to the Prophets

In chapter four, “The Bible as Missional: Exodus to the Prophets” we continue to follow the story of God’s unfolding promise of blessing to Abraham’s ancestors, the people of Israel. Moving through the narrative of the Exodus, we learn more about God’s missionary heart for those outside the people of Israel as well, and how his self-giving, overflowing fountain of glorious love is on display all throughout the Old Testament. In this section we’ll discuss what themes we have identified in the surrounding narrative and how these point us to the overarching story of God on mission in the Old Testament.

Discussion

GOD’S PROMISE TO HIS PEOPLE

As you have explored mission in the narrative about Israel and the ministry of the prophets, what are some key elements you see emerging in the Old Testament surrounding the theme of mission? (Think about themes like *promise, blessing, seed*).

- What is “the blessing” the nations are intended to receive that is talked about in Galatians 3:8?

GOD’S PROMISE IN EXODUS

- How does God continue to unfold his promises regarding the seed of Abraham in the book of Exodus?
- What do we learn about God’s missionary purpose in the story of the Exodus?

FROM THE PROMISED LAND TO THE PROPHETS

Read through the story of Rahab in Joshua 2:9-11.

- How did the neighbouring nations (The Canaanites) view Yahweh and understand his deliverance of Israel from the enslavement of Egypt? What was the result of their understanding Yahweh this way?

In Exodus 19:4-6 and over and over again in the Old Testament, God reiterates that the people of Israel have been given an *identity* and a *role* by him for the sake of the world. These are true for the Church today (1 Peter 2:9-10).

- How do you understand this God-given identity and role in your own life?
- How does God remind David about *how* He is going to fulfill his promise through the lineage of David in 2 Samuel 7?

- What do you think was God's purpose in choosing to bless Israel, choosing David, choosing the church?

Throughout Israel's history in the Old Testament, we see Israel forgetting and turning away from the Lord and the priestly calling he gave them. Israel finds themselves in captivity, exiled from the promised land. But God never forgot about Israel or his promise to them. In Isaiah 49 we see again that God had always intended for his blessing and redemption to extend much further than the people of Israel only.

- What was God's plan to bless the nations outside of Israel? How is that blessing received?

Chapter 5

Mission in the New Testament

In Chapter five, “Mission in the New Testament,” we surveyed the New Testament by examining Jesus’ earthly ministry and the early church’s ministry so far as the *Where, What, How, When, and End* of mission. Underneath these illustrations we see a clear pattern on display: The blessing of God (the gospel) is meant to go from where it is to where it is not. In this section we’ll spend some time discussing our observations and the implications for us.

Discussion

THE “WHERE” OF MISSION

(Luke 4:31-44; Acts 10:34-48; Romans 15:19-20)

- Read through one (or all) of the passages below. Note any observations you make about what these passages show us about the scope of “*Where*” mission takes place.

- What does the Luke passage teach us about the mission and heart of Jesus?

THE “WHAT” OF MISSION

(Isa. 49:6; Luke 4:43; Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8; Rom. 15:20; Gal. 3:8)

- ☐ Take a look at each one of these passages above and identify the “*What*” of mission.

THE “HOW” OF MISSION

- ☐ Read Matthew 28:18-20 and then discuss what pattern we see Jesus, Paul, and the rest of the early church following in their approach to “*How*” they engaged mission?

THE “WHEN” OF MISSION

We read earlier from Matthew 28 that Jesus taught that disciple-making occurs until “the end of the age.” “*And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age*”—in other words, between the two comings of Jesus. A helpful term (Inaugurated eschatology) was also defined for us in this chapter.

- What do these points and passages like Matthew 24:3-14; Romans 11:25-26; and 2 Peter 3:3-12 have to do with how we understand “*When*” mission takes place?

THE “END” OF MISSION

Read through Revelation 7:9-12. Take a moment to imagine yourself in the scene. After a few minutes, spend time in prayer praising God and asking him to ignite a fire in your heart for the advancement of his kingdom.

“After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshipped God, saying, “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honour and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.”

Chapter 6

Jesus: The Way, The Truth, and The Life

In chapter six, “Jesus, The Way, The Truth, and The Life” we spent time exploring the reality of the uniqueness of Christ. We did this by examining five major views (or beliefs) and their underlying claims, and investigated these through the lens of Scripture. In this section we’ll spend time discussing these views and their accompanying claims; What claims Jesus made about himself, and why *these* claims are *really* good news.

Discussion

Begin by working through each of the definitions listed below in discussion. As you read through the definitions, think back to the scripture passages that were brought up in this chapter and how you would address these from a biblical response. There were several references, so it may be helpful to read only a few to help guide your discussion.

(Romans 1:18-25, 3:9-23 10:3, 10:14-17; John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 Kings 18:21-29; Acts 10:2-22, 10:34-43; 1 John 4:8 16; 2 Peter 3:9; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:44-48).

Definitions:

- Pluralism: *“The belief that there are multiple (plural) ways to arrive at ultimate reality or salvation”*

- Relativism: *“The belief that each individual determines what is true and what makes up ultimate reality. Salvation, and the way to it, then, is relative to each person’s own opinion or experience”*

- Universalism: *“The belief that all ways, or all religions, lead to the same ultimate reality or salvation.”*

- Christian Universalism: *“The belief that Christ died for all, but there is no need for humanity to know about or respond to it. All are saved by the cross, no matter what they believe in this life.”*

- Exclusivism: *“The belief that there is only one way that leads to ultimate reality or salvation.”*

- ☐ What are some temptations you have faced in encountering these views? Or what are some ways that these ideas have influenced the way that you view mission?

- Based on what we have encountered in the above passages, how might we wrestle with this question? *“What about those who haven’t heard?”* Have you ever heard this question before? Have you ever asked this question yourself? Consider these statements from the book for a moment before answering: *“God loves people more than you and I do.” “All that God does flows out of his love.” “People are his idea.” “Redemption is his doing.”*

Closing out this chapter’s discussion, reflect on this statement and question: *“It is not arrogant to declare with delight that Jesus saves sinners, for it is his doing and not our own. It is not presumptuous to say that Jesus is the only way. No—in fact, it is the most loving thing we could do.”*

- Do I find myself delighting in declaring that Jesus saves sinners? Why or why not?

Chapter 7

A Short History of Mission

In Chapter seven, “A Short History of Mission,” we investigated a brief overview of the history of Christian mission, and how God has used broken, sinful people for his glory among the nations; continuing to do so today through the advancement of the gospel. In this section we’ll discuss different eras of history (including our own) in which we see God progressing his mission forward.

Discussion

There were four general eras that were listed as a way of organising mission history and helping us to understand God’s work in the world. These eras were defined as: The Roman Era (30-400); The Expansion Era (400-800); The Islamic Era (800-1200); The Modern Era (1600-present). Begin by discussing some of the key missional features (how the work of mission was spreading) surrounding each era. Then pick out some of the notable figures during these time periods within the church and share about what you learned.

- Who were the Moravians, and what are they most known for? Is there anything striking about their example of engaging mission that inspires you?

- William Carey is known as “the father of modern missions.” What were some of his contributions to the spread of the gospel? Is there anything in particular from Carey’s story that resonates with you?

- What was the vision behind the ‘Lausanne Congress for World Evangelization’ meeting in 1974?

- What were some important discoveries that came out of that meeting that have made a substantial impact on the Great Commission work of the church today?

There is only so much history of mission that this chapter was able to cover, and still so much more we could find to read, learn, and be challenged by including all of the stories of men and women who God has used to expand the reach

of the gospel all around the world. However, let's attempt to identify some guiding patterns and principles that this overview has helped us to see.

“First, the growth of the church has not been consistent. Places that at one point in the past were Christian strongholds have later become spiritually cold” (69).

- Why is that?

“Second, God's mission does not advance only in one direction.

- In what way is mission centripetal (moving or tending to move toward a centre) and centrifugal (moving or tending to move away from a centre) (70)?

“Third, the gospel doesn’t always spread under what we might think of as the best conditions” (80).

- ☐ What are some examples of this?

“Finally, for much of church history, Christian mission has been seen as an activity moving from the West to the rest” (80).

- ☐ How did God enable the Western church to play that role in the last 400 years?

Closing out this chapter’s discussion, consider whether there is a particular era or person within the history of mission that you are being prompted to explore further. There were several listed that you might want to go back and look at to jog your memory. Some notable names were: Nicolaus Zinzendorf, C.T. Studd, Hudson Taylor, William Carey, Anne and Adoniram Judson, and Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg.

Chapter 8

The Mission Legacy of the Reformation

In Chapter eight, “The Mission Legacy of the Reformation”, we pulled back the blinds and uncovered what was at the heart of the Protestant Reformation, and some of the misconceptions surrounding this movement that took place within Europe’s history of the sixteenth century. For the Reformers, Scripture translation, evangelism, and church-planting were central to the work of mission. In this section we’ll discuss what we learned and what lasting impact the Reformation has had on the church today.

Discussion

THE REFORMATION AND MISSION

- What five phrases were at the theological heart of The Reformation?

While doctrinal purity may have been at the heart of the Reformation’s movement, it was truly Reformational theology that helped to reform and fuel the work of mission globally.

- What have the five solas, and other theological truths that have come out of the Reformation contributed to the Church's understanding of and engagement in mission? How would you say the doctrine of justification reveals the missionary heart of God?

- What was the problem that John Calvin and others saw within the churches of Europe that caused him to believe that it was necessary for the Church at that time to undergo significant reform? How might the church in your context benefit from undergoing a similar kind of reform?

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

- Why was it that the Reformers saw the expanding availability, accessibility, and distribution of the Word of God as being so pivotal to mission work? How do you understand that work needing to continue today?

- Can you think of some shifts or advancements that took place in the work of mission due to the Reformer's conviction and commitment to the "missionary Word"? *Think about the implications of these for the Church today.*

THE PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS

Think back to our study on the Old Testament from chapter four and the role that was assigned to Israel by God. Read together through 1 Peter 2:4-10 and discuss these questions:

- How did the Reformers shift away from the emphasis of the Catholic clergy-centric model, and teaching toward "the priesthood of all believers" mobilize the church for mission in a renewed effort? How does this same great truth mobilize us for mission as the Church today?

CALVIN'S GENEVA & TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

Consider the persecution and powerful effort from popes, kings, and others to suppress the witness of the gospel throughout Europe during the Reformation--And yet, more than 2,150 churches had been planted after only seven years

of Calvin's missionary-theologian sending-hub in Geneva being established. Calvin's strategy was to, "*train up people well and use every means possible to spread the Word*". The work that God accomplished and established through the Reformation is at the core of missionary activities today.

- How can we express our gratitude and learn from this period of history in mission work?

Chapter 9

The Task Remaining

In Chapter nine, “The Task Remaining”, we arrive now to discuss and ponder the current advance of God’s mission in the world. In seeking to understand the times we live in, we acknowledge that there is a specific task and a particular mission that God has given to the church in this age. The task of the church remaining is an activity with both a scope and a time frame. In this section we will discuss what it *means* and what it will *take* to reach the nations.

Discussion

UNDERSTANDING THE TIMES

- To be sure the church may at times be occupied with varying “tasks,” but when you think of *the task* “remaining” given by Jesus to the church today, what is the primary activity you think of?

- In what ways are you currently engaged in this activity? How do you see yourself engaging in ways you aren't currently?

REACHING THE NATIONS

Since the task given to us by Jesus in the Great Commission is “to make disciples of all *nations*”, it is undoubtedly beneficial to understand what the New Testament writers meant when they used the Greek word *ethnos* (typically translated as “nations” in English).

- Do you think the New Testament writers were primarily referring to what we think about today as being a “country” or “nation-state”? Why or why not?

When you think of the “nations” represented in the Old Testament (Amalekites, Greeks, Cretans, Egyptians),

- What would you say were the primary features that bound or defined them together as a people?

- How might we understand peoples to be bound together today?

Consider this quote from the chapter: “*What if mission isn’t first and foremost about place, but about peoples?*” (pg. 85).

- Why is this question posed by the 1974 Lausanne Congress important for us as disciples of Jesus to ask ourselves? Is there an important distinction being made here that changes (or challenges) the scope of our mission in the church?

A “people group” has been defined as: *“the largest group within which the gospel can spread without encountering barriers of understanding or acceptance”* (pg. 86).

- Can you consider what some of these barriers could be and what mission entails in order to cross these barriers?

HINDRANCES TO MISSION

It’s estimated that about seven thousand people groups, comprising nearly four billion individuals, remain with little to no access to the Gospel, many with no Scripture in their language, and many with no existing churches among them. It’s estimated that more than two billion of them have never heard the name of Jesus.

- Why does so much of the Great Commission remain uncompleted? The book identified some of these as being: Confusion over what mission is; The tyranny of the immediate; Mobilization; Poor stewardship; A poor theology of calling; Creative access countries, and spiritual warfare. Start by working your way through discussing each example and include any others that come to mind.

- Would you say any of these examples are evident hindrances in your own life? If so, how can you begin growing to work through these?

Review these two statistics from the *Center for the Study of Global Christianity*: “As of 2015, 86 percent of Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists say that they do not personally know a Christian” (pg. 91). This 86 percent totals over two billion people. “A study found that current mission strategy ‘makes Christians one hundred times more effective in splitting existing denominations where Christians already exist than in planting new churches where there are no Christians’” (pg. 92).

- Close out your time of discussion by reading through Revelation 7:9-12 together. What is God speaking to you about through his Word and through what you have studied and learned here?

Chapter 10

The Mission of the Church: Proclamation

In chapter ten, “The Mission of the Church: Proclamation”, we dig into defining the church’s mission and learning about two different views on *how* the Church should approach her mission primarily. In this section we’ll focus on what the relationship between the two are and what it means for how we live our mission out.

Discussion

DEFINING THE CHURCH’S MISSION

Our mission exists under God’s mission. He is the one who sends, and as the Church, we are the sent ones. Consider this quote from the chapter: *“The mission of the church is specific, not random or all-encompassing. Churches do not independently decide what their mission is; God has already given us a defined mission”* (pg. 95).

- What is this defined mission given to the Church? Do we have explicit commands about this? What is it about passages like Matt. 28:19-20; Luke 24:47; and Acts 1:8 that we should observe and heed?

- Certainly we are *sent* in the same way as Jesus, but how might the way we carry out Jesus' mission in the world be different from how he carried out his mission while on earth? Are there instructions given on what the Church *may* do and *must* do to carry out this mission?

TWO VIEWS OF THE CHURCH'S MISSION

In this chapter, two major views were shared as two different approaches on how the church should approach its mission. For the last two hundred years, there has been an on-going debate around these views involving the “*Ministry of Proclamation*” and “*Ministries of Mercy*.”

- Define and discuss a little the differences between the prioritism view and the integral approach.

- Which do you find yourself leaning toward more?

WORD AND DEED IN CHRISTIAN MISSION

- If the mission of the church is primarily to proclaim the gospel, do you think societies suffer more or less from this emphasis?

Recent research has suggested that the positive effect from missionaries who embraced prioritism in their approach to mission in societies around the world has been tremendous.

- What kind of long lasting transformation have we seen in societies where mission work has focused primarily on gospel proclamation?

In theology, “*general revelation*” and “*special revelation*” are used as two ways to describe how God reveals himself in the world.

- How do you understand both of these in relation to the mission of the church? How does this affect what it means for the church to be a “*witnessing community*” in the world?

THE MISSION OF GOD AND HIS CHURCH

“God’s mission is a relational mission from start to finish. Therefore, the church’s mission is one centred on bringing men and women into relationship with the triune God through heralding what God has done through Christ (pg. 102). The New Testament reveals that Christian maturity in the church carries with it the fruit of doing good to those around you, especially fellow believers.

- What do Christian ethics and Christian mission demonstrate about how we should approach opportunities that arise to do good deeds?

Chapter 11

The Mission of the Church: Ministries of Mercy

In Chapter eleven, “The Mission of the Church: Ministries of Mercy”, we see that the church in her pursuit to carry out the *missio Dei* has a specific assignment and command to proclaim the gospel of Jesus. At the same time, the Christian must also be involved in ministries of mercy and the church must teach the need for such ministry in order to obey the Great Commission. In this section we’ll review and discuss whether engaging in ministries of mercy and gospel proclamation are equal partners in the work of mission, and take stock of this in our own teaching.

Discussion

SOCIAL ACTION AND THE CHURCH

As we begin to explore a little deeper the implications that the *missio Dei* has on the church and our engagement in social action and mercy ministries, a good place to start is with these two questions: “*First, In what ways does God’s kingdom break into our world now through the people of God? Second, is the activity to which a single believer is called by God also part of the mission of the local church?*” (106).

- How would you respond to these two questions? Can you give some examples of how you understand this

to be the case?

Sometimes one of the difficult tasks in making the connection between how we understand the Bible and applying the gospel to life is found in what we believe about what is going to happen in the future and how it affects us today. This is especially true for how we make a distinction around what the Church must do and may do as she carries out her mission.

- ☐ What are some examples of what the church *must* do and *may* do? Can you think of some from your own life or in the life of your local church?

- ☐ Why should we as Christians be interested in mercy ministries?

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The Kingdom of God is a reign, with a reigning King, and it is also made up of a people who live under the rule and reign of this King.

- ☐ What does it mean that this kingdom is “*inaugurated*” but not yet “*consummated*”? Can the extension of the Kingdom and the demonstration and outworking of the Kingdom go hand-in-hand?

- ☐ Are they different from one another?

WORKING OUT THE GOSPEL

James 2:15-17 says, “*Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world*”. Basic Christianity teaches us that we should be concerned for and engage the needy, but never to the neglect of God’s designed role for the church to proclaim Christ.

- ☐ How might we understand the importance of mercy ministries while still holding a proportionate view of

the primary nature of proclamation?

Some helpful questions to ask when navigating an approach to engaging social causes are: 1). Am I doing for these people something they could or should do for themselves? 2). Is the help I'm trying to give going to be sustainable when I leave? 3). Is the help I'm trying to give demeaning or even harming the people I'm trying to help? 4). How can I give ownership to those I'm helping so that they are part of the solution, and in fact, driving much of it?

Chapter 12

The Global Church

In chapter twelve, “The Global Church” we take a final look together at God’s global church, His amazing on-going work throughout the world, and the different opportunities to engage and partner in global mission. In this section we’ll discuss the implications for us of what it means that GOD is a global God, with a global gospel, and that WE are a part of a global church, with a global mission--made up of varying opportunities and challenges.

Discussion

A GLOBAL GOD

God himself is unity in diversity (one God in three persons).

- Since that is God’s nature, might it not stand to reason that God also desires and delights in a globally diverse church?

Think about where you live for a moment, then think about the local church around you.

- ☐ In what sense would you consider it to be vibrantly diverse, or “*monocultural*”?

After you reflect on this, take time to discuss this quote from the chapter: “*From the very beginning the church was more diverse than any other existing religious or social movements*” (pg. 116).

- ☐ Why do you think that was the case? What evidence might we draw from the New Testament or other early church history to support this understanding?

- ☐ What’s so significant about the fact that the New Testament was originally written in *koine* Greek? Does this truth communicate anything to us about God’s heart?

A GLOBAL GOSPEL

It's plain to see that there are many dividing walls that exist between humanity, *but*

- what does Ephesians 2:14-16 teach us about what Christ has done to abolish those walls?

Think back to how the “Indigenising Principle” and “The Pilgrim Principle” were discussed.

- What does it mean that the gospel may be encultured, but that it always remains meta-cultural?
- Where is unity ultimately found in the global Church of such incredible diversity?

A GLOBAL CHURCH AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR MISSION

Consider this global statistic: “77 percent of evangelical Christians are African, Asian, or Latin American” (pg.120). Or how about this one? “A single house church network in China has the stated goal of sending twenty thousand Chinese missionaries to unreached groups by the year 2023” (pg.121). Those are pretty incredible realities to think about. Places that were once mission fields are now sending at a steadily growing pace.

- Are you surprised to find that places like Europe or North America are no longer at the center of Christian witness? Or stated more simply, that: “*Mission today is no longer simply ‘from the West to the rest,’ but ‘from everywhere to everywhere.’*”

In light of these realities, think about what kinds of opportunities our global diversity brings to the Great Commission. Can you think of specific opportunities you know about today?

CHALLENGES TO MISSION

- What kinds of challenges does being part of a vastly diverse global church present for mission? Have you or your church encountered some of these?

At the end of this study, the most important truth we can reflect on are these three statements:

*“God is a global God.
The gospel is a global gospel.
The church is a global family.”*

FOR FINAL CONSIDERATION

Stop for a moment to consider all you have learned throughout *Come and See*.

- Is the Holy Spirit stirring anything in you as you close out this opportunity of studying more about the nature of God and his mission in the world? Spend some time praying and praising the Lord for what he has done and what he continues to do to cause the gospel to go out to all peoples, everywhere!