



WHAT ON EARTH? IS MISSIONS?

UNDERSTANDING YOUR ROLE IN CHANGING THE WORLD



Dear leader, welcome to this DVD series focusing on missions.
Please read these instructions carefully so that you can maximise the value of this series.

This series contains three discs that cover three themes:

- 1. What is the mission of the church?***
- 2. What is missions?***
- 3. What we can do to change the world?***

The format of each disc is straightforward. In each disc, the presenter will share a number of thoughts for two or three minutes at a time – sometimes it's a bit longer and sometimes shorter.

This guide is not a total transcript of the presenter's words but it will give a summary of his key thoughts so you can follow along.

After each of these short presentations, you will have an opportunity to pause the DVD and take as much time as you need to engage the group in discussion about the specific content the presenter has raised. Listed in this **Leader's Guide** are some suggested themes and questions to discuss.

In the **Participant's Guide**, these themes and questions are written out so that people have space to write their personal thoughts and reflections. Please refer to the **Participant's Guide** so you are familiar with it.

After each discussion, please resume the DVD.

Please conclude each gathering with a time of personal reflection so that each person can record their thoughts.

■ RECOMMENDATIONS:

Prior to the series:

- Consult your Pastor to ensure he or she is happy for you to show and discuss this series.
- Watch the whole series so you become familiar with the content. While doing so, please follow along with this guide.

Prior to each Life Group meeting:

- Watch the particular disc and follow the transcript so you pick up the emphasis and flow of thought for the session.
- When the DVD instructs you to "pause", please do so. Look at the discussion topics or activities suggested in this guide next to the word discussion.
- Have complete freedom to modify any question or activity to suit your group.
- Please add your own creative ideas to the discussion.

During the Life Group meeting:

- Ensure everyone is relaxed, comfortable and ready to watch.
- Minimise distractions.
- Begin the designated session.
- Pause when instructed.
- Lead the discussion.
- Resume disc.
- At the end, allow time for people to record their reflections in their **Participant's Guide**.

**MAY THE HOLY SPIRIT GUIDE YOU AS YOU LEAD
THE GROUP IN DISCUSSING MISSIONS.
THROUGH THESE STUDIES, MAY THE LORD IGNITE
A GREAT PASSION WITHIN THE GROUP FOR
REACHING THE LOST PEOPLE OF THE WORLD.**

WHAT
ON EARTH?
IS MISSIONS?

SESSION ONE: WHAT IS THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH?

Before you play the disc, please commit the discussion to God and ask the Holy Spirit to open all your hearts and minds to hear and respond to His Word.

▶ PLAY DISC

Introduction by presenter

A big question: What is the mission of the church?

|| PAUSE DISC

DISCUSSION: Ask the group to take out their Participant's Guides. Maybe break up into groups of three or four and ask them to write in their own words what they believe is the mission of the church.

▶ RESUME DISC

The Great Commission (Matt. 28:16-20)

|| PAUSE DISC

DISCUSSION: Ask the group to discuss the Great Commission. What do Jesus' words mean to you? What are the practical implications of these words? Or, in other words, what do we need to do to fulfil this commission?

▶ RESUME DISC

Mission

- Mission is our human response to the divine commission.
- Mission is an activity of God Himself.
- Mission is, "a comprehensive word that embraces everything which God sends His people (the church) into the world to do". (John Stott)
- Mission describes any activity from the church to the unsaved world.

|| PAUSE DISC

DISCUSSION: From this definition by John Stott, what things do we do (as a local church) or should we do that would be described as "mission"?

▶ RESUME DISC

Back to our central question: What is the mission of the church?

This series proposes that the mission of the church involves FOUR things.

1. TO BE A WITNESS

A first aspect of our mission is to be a witness, that is, to tell others about Jesus.

> **Acts 1:8 is a key Scripture about being a witness.**

→ In New Testament times, a "witness" was someone who spoke with firsthand knowledge or from personal experience.

> **Examples: Acts 1:21-22; 1 John 1:2-3**

|| PAUSE DISC

DISCUSSION: Do you find it easy or hard to tell others about Jesus? Why/why not? What have you found has helped you to tell others about Jesus?

▶ RESUME DISC

Notice Jesus' words in Acts 1:8: "...you will BE my witnesses..."

- Jesus did not say we would DO witnessing; he said we would BE His witnesses.
- There is a big difference between being and doing.
- Being witnesses is not our assignment; it is our identity.
- Witnessing isn't just sharing our faith; it is embodying and exemplifying our faith.
- Being a "witness" is a way of life.

|| PAUSE DISC

DISCUSSION: Discuss the difference between being a witness to doing witnessing. Does anyone have an example of when their actions spoke louder than their words as a witness to the life of Jesus within them?

SESSION ONE: WHAT IS THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH?

▶ PLAY DISC

Witnessing also involves, as the Word suggests, speaking (testifying, declaring) to others of the reality of Jesus in our lives.

> 1 Peter 3:15

|| PAUSE DISC

DISCUSSION: *Take a minute or two to write down your firsthand knowledge of Jesus. How did you get saved? What does He mean to you? If time permits, get one or two people to share their salvation stories.*

▶ RESUME DISC

2. SOCIAL ACTION / LOVE IN ACTION

The mission of the church is to declare the Gospel AND to demonstrate the Gospel through acts of care, compassion and mercy.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus vividly expressed His expectation for His followers.

> **Key Scripture: Matt. 5:13-16**

- Jesus used the images of salt and light to illustrate the influence He expected His disciples to exert in human society.

Summary of teaching about salt and light:

- Christians are to be fundamentally different from non-Christians.
- The world is dark but Christians are to be its light.
- The world is decaying but Christians are to be its salt and hinder its decay.
- Christians are not to be segregated from the world but let their light shine into the darkness and their salt soak into the decaying meat.
- The lamp is no good if it is under a bed or a bowl and the salt is no good if it stays in the salt cellar.
- We must let our light shine, so that our good deeds are seen.

Good News and good works are inseparable.

- The Gospel has social implications.
- True mission should always be incarnational.
- It is Christian to care!

→ Parable of the Good Samaritan

|| PAUSE DISC

DISCUSSION: *Read the parable of the Good Samaritan as a group (Luke 10:25-37). What are the lessons for us from this parable? Jesus' final words to the expert in the law were: "Go and do likewise" (v 37). What application do these words have for us?*

▶ RESUME DISC

Defining "compassion".

- Compassion is love in ACTION!
- It is not just a declaration but a demonstration.

Based on Jesus' example, "mission" is to enter into other people's worlds and demonstrate the Gospel through acts of care, compassion and mercy.

|| PAUSE DISC

DISCUSSION: *Describe what it may mean for us to follow Jesus' model and enter into other people's worlds. How can we demonstrate compassion in practical ways?*

▶ RESUME DISC

3. BE AN ADVOCATE FOR JUSTICE ISSUES

A third aspect of our mission as the people of God in the earth is to be an ADVOCATE for justice and morality.

|| PAUSE DISC

DISCUSSION: *What is "justice"? Why do you think we have a responsibility to advocate for justice and morality?*

SESSION ONE: WHAT IS THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH?

▶ RESUME DISC

“Justice” is the right use or exercise of power. It is to be treated fairly, respectfully, with dignity, equality, impartiality, honour and rightness.

“Injustice” is the abuse, misuse or non-use of power. It is to be treated unfairly, disrespectfully, with indignity, inequality, partiality, dishonour, and unrighteousness.

Part of our mission as the people of God in the earth is to advocate for justice and morality.

God and justice

True justice is grounded in the very nature of God.

> **Deuteronomy 32:4; Ps 146:7-9**

Scripture uses a number of words in relation to God’s justice. He protects (Jer 49:11), upholds the cause (Ps 146:7), defends (Ps 68:5), watches over (Ps 146:9), sustains (Ps 146:9), lifts up (Ps 146:8), keeps intact (Prov 15:25) and leads out (Ps 68:6).

Scripture tells us who God exercises justice for: fatherless (Ps. 68:5; “orphans” in James 1:27), widows (Ps 68:5), oppressed (Ps 146:7; 103:6; Isaiah 1:17), weak (Ps 82:3), poor (Ps 82:3), hungry (Ps 146:7), prisoners (Ps 146:7) and those who are bowed down (Ps 146:8).

He has revealed himself as a God who is an advocate and defender of justice – to advocate or defend what is right or should be put right.

God’s concern is for the voiceless, fatherless and family-less (Ps 82:3; Isa. 1:17).

|| PAUSE DISC

DISCUSSION: *What do these Scriptures show us about God’s justice?*

▶ RESUME DISC

A. God as advocate in the Old Testament

There was a strong Old Testament tradition in the Law which required justice to be exercised among God’s people.

B. God as advocate in the New Testament

Under Roman law, a party to a trial in a Roman court could be assisted by a legal adviser, his (Latin) *advocatus*, from which we get the English word advocate. In the Greek it is *parakletos*. It literally means “one called alongside (to help)”.

→ Jesus has revealed Himself as our Advocate (Rom 8:34; 1 John 2:1).

C. God as advocate through the CHURCH

The themes of salt and light (Matt. 5:13-16) describe the influence Jesus required His people to exert in the world. The implications are that:

- Christians can influence non-Christian society.
- Christians can hinder social decay and dispel the darkness of evil.

|| PAUSE DISC

DISCUSSION: *What can and should we do to be advocates in our society? What are some of the major social and moral issues we need to advocate for?*

▶ RESUME DISC

Practical points about being an advocate:

A. Know what we’re talking about

- Be informed.
- Understand the debate and other people’s position.

B. Be compassionate

- Have genuine love and don’t speak out of anger.

C. Speak from your own experience

D. Don’t be hypocritical

- Live the life with transparency and integrity.

E. Don’t conform to political correctness

|| PAUSE DISC

DISCUSSION: *Discuss why each one of these points is important. Discuss the practicalities of each one. What can we do as a group to advocate for the powerless, defenceless or underprivileged?*

SESSION ONE: WHAT IS THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH?

▶ RESUME DISC

RECAP

What is the mission of the church?

- 1. To be a witness** – to live a life that bears witness to what we believe and actively share our experience of Jesus with whomever and wherever.
- 2. Social action** – to demonstrate the love of Jesus and His Gospel through acts of compassion, mercy and care.
- 3. Advocacy** – to stand up for what is right and righteous by God's standards.

|| PAUSE DISC

DISCUSSION: *Ask each person to take a few minutes to write down just one thing from today's discussion that they will apply to their lives in the coming week. Maybe ask for a few people to share what they have learned from today's discussion.*

SESSION TWO:

WHAT IS MISSIONS?

Before you play the disc, please commit the discussion to God and ask the Holy Spirit to open all your hearts and minds to hear and respond to His Word.

▶ PLAY DISC

Review and recap of disc one.

|| PAUSE DISC

DISCUSSION: *What really impacted you from our last discussion? What have you done about what we discussed?*

▶ RESUME DISC

4. MISSIONS

A fourth aspect of the church's mission is "missions".

|| PAUSE DISC

DISCUSSION: *What does the term "missions" mean to you?*

▶ RESUME DISC

Definition of missions: *Missions is any activity in which Christians are involved in reaching lost people of other cultures or ethnicities that may involve crossing cultural or international boundaries.*

→ Focus on the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20)

- All authority in heaven and on earth.
- Go and make disciples.
- Teaching them to obey (also see John 14:15; 23-24).

|| PAUSE DISC

DISCUSSION: *What is your understanding of Jesus having all authority in heaven and on earth? What's your concept of discipleship? Why do you think these two words are the key to the whole passage? Why do you think many people don't disciple others? Why is it important not only to know Jesus' commands but to obey them?*

SESSION TWO: WHAT IS MISSIONS?

▶ RESUME DISC

Continuing focus on the Great Commission

"To the Nations"

- For many people, the word "nations" means (political and geographical) "countries" but in the original Greek the word *ethne* is used.
- *Ethne* is where the English word "ethnic group" comes from.
- Jesus is not referring to the geopolitical countries but to people-groups.

|| PAUSE DISC

DISCUSSION: *How do you think this distinction between nations and people groups should affect how we fulfil the Great Commission? How many different people groups, as distinct from nationalities, do you know? Let's list the ones we know.*

▶ RESUME DISC

People groups

- There are more than 16,000 distinct people groups on earth.
- Of these 16,000, at least 6000 are counted as "unreached" or "least-reached".
- This means that a person living in one of those groups will probably never encounter anyone who will be able to explain about Jesus in a language they understand clearly.
- Added together, such people add up to over 2.7 billion individuals or about 30% - 40% of the earth's population!

The World Today

- Diagram of the current spiritual state of the world.
- One third of the world is "Christian", of which only about one third are "dedicated" Christians. The remainder are "nominal".
- Another one third of the world belong to people groups where the church is already strongly established.

- The remaining third of the world's population live in people groups where there are so few Christians, that they will most probably never hear the Gospel in their lifetimes.

(source: www.joshuaproject.net/globalstatistics.php)

Can the objective of reaching all nations be reached?

- Today the mission's task force consists of 4,000,000 congregations and approximately 600,000,000 believers
- That is: 580 churches for one Least Reached People group!
- Chart: Ratio of nonbelievers to Christians from the 1st century.
- We are living in the first generation that can effectively fulfil the Great Commission within our lifetime.

Before the end comes the Great Commission has to be completed.

> **Matthew 24:14; Rev. 5:9; 7:9**

|| PAUSE DISC

DISCUSSION: *If we are the first generation in history that has the potential to fulfil the Great Commission, what should we be doing? What can we as a Life-Group do to reach Least-Reached Peoples.*

▶ RESUME DISC

"Regular" vs. "Frontier" Missions

- Experts on Mission have identified two kinds of missions work: "Regular" and "Frontier" missions.
- Regular Missions happen when workers bring the Gospel to people groups (nations) where there is already a substantial Gospel presence.
- Frontier Missions happen when workers take the Gospel to people groups who do not yet have it.

SESSION TWO: WHAT IS MISSIONS?

The great imbalance: church spending

- Diagram of church spending.
- 95% of all church spending is spent on the church itself – on buildings, programmes, etc.
- 4.5% is spent on regular missions – outreach to people of other cultures but cultures that have been reached.
- Only 0.5% of all church spending goes to frontier missions.

What missions is not

- Missions is not just evangelism.
- “Evangelism” is when a Christian or Christians explain the Gospel to unbelievers and help them to start following Christ.
- Missions includes evangelism but is much wider. The ultimate aim of missions is to establish a Gospel witness among people groups where there was none before.

Missions is not just caring for orphans and for humanitarian aid

- The vast majority of funds today for “missions” go to different forms of humanitarian aid, leaving relatively little available for church planting or “frontier” missions.
- There’s nothing wrong with humanitarian aid, relief and development. It is Christian to care.
- Meeting people’s physical and material needs is a way to demonstrate the Gospel.
- We should do all we can to alleviate human suffering but prioritise and emphasise the eternal destiny of those who have never heard about Jesus.

The Great Commission was not an afterthought

Jesus repeated the Great Commission on a number of occasions, even wording it differently to make it clearer (Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47; John 17:18; 20:20). The disciples followed Jesus’ commission (Acts 10:42).

In Acts 1:8, Jesus envisages the Gospel going out from each church in concentric circles...

- “Jerusalem” – best represents your church’s immediate location.
- “Judea” – represents the neighbourhoods around you.

- “Samaria” – represents people further away including people of a different culture that may be living in your vicinity.
- “Ends of the earth” – least-reached people groups.

The Great Commission was Jesus’ master plan to reach a lost world.

SUMMARY AND RECAP

We have examined:

- Jesus’ last command which we commonly call the Great Commission with its emphasis on making disciples and all that entails: Going, teaching and baptising.
- Jesus’ masterful strategy to reach the world by engaging with the various people groups of the world.
- There are over 16,000 people groups on earth, of which over 6000 are classified as unreached.

A number of critical points to really understand cross-cultural missions:

- Jesus said that He will not return until the Great Commission has been fulfilled.
- Then we talked about the difference between regular missions and frontier missions.
- In seeking to understand cross-cultural missions, we discussed what missions is not.
- Missions is NOT just evangelism. Missions may involve evangelism but it is so much more.
- Missions is NOT just humanitarian aid and relief. While meeting people’s physical is vitally important, we emphasised that we should prioritise Gospel proclamation and discipleship.
- Missions is NOT just some afterthought of Jesus but His intentional plan to let the world know about His saving grace.

II PAUSE DISC

DISCUSSION: *Ask each person to take a few minutes to write down just one thing from today’s discussion that they will apply to their lives in the coming week. Maybe ask for a few people to share what they have learned from today’s discussion.*

In our next discussion we’ll be talking about what we should do. How should we respond to what we’ve been discussing? What are the implications? Have a great week out there in the mission field.

SESSION THREE: WHAT SHALL WE DO?

Before you play the disc, please commit the discussion to God and ask the Holy Spirit to open all your hearts and minds to hear and respond to His Word.

▶ PLAY DISC

REVIEW AND RECAP OF DISC TWO

|| PAUSE DISC

DISCUSSION: *What really impacted you from our last discussion? What have you done about what we discussed?*

▶ RESUME DISC

Today's BIG question: *Can those who have never heard of Jesus be saved?*

"General revelation"

- The term "revelation" means uncovering or unveiling.
- It is a word theologians use to describe how God has made himself known to us – He reveals Himself.
- We can know God because He made Himself known.

This leads to the question: *How has the infinite God revealed himself to finite human beings?*

- Theologians draw a distinction between what they call "special revelation" and "general revelation".

"Special revelation" refers to how God has specially and specifically made Himself known:

- The ultimate and final revelation of God is Jesus Christ.
- God has also specifically revealed Himself in the Holy Scriptures – the Bible – which is called biblical revelation.
- As Christians, we believe in the authority, inspiration (that is, the divine authorship) and inerrancy of the Bible (that the Bible in its original languages is without error).

"General revelation" is the belief that God has revealed Himself to all people, at all times, and in all places. This divinely given revelation has been made available to humankind in two primary ways:

1. Creation (Rom 1:18-20; Ps 19)
2. Conscience (Rom 2:14-16).

Questions for discussion

Q. 1 *What happens to someone who believes in Jesus and dies?*

|| PAUSE DISC

DISCUSSION: *Try to summarise the answers as succinctly as possible.*

▶ RESUME DISC

Q. 2 *What happens to someone who rejects Jesus and dies?*

|| PAUSE DISC

DISCUSSION: *Try to summarise the answers as succinctly as possible.*

▶ RESUME DISC

Q. 3 *Suppose there is someone somewhere who never hears the Gospel but lives a good life and does good things? What happens to him and her at death? Please remember to keep your answer biblical.*

|| PAUSE DISC

DISCUSSION: *Try to summarise the answers as succinctly as possible.*

SESSION THREE: WHAT SHALL WE DO?

▶ RESUME DISC

Q. 4 Try to guess how many people in the world will never hear the Gospel in their lifetimes?

|| PAUSE DISC

DISCUSSION: Try to summarise the answers as succinctly as possible.

▶ RESUME DISC

Final Question: If a person who has never heard of Jesus has a chance of being saved (through general revelation) but someone who hears and rejects Him goes to hell ... are we doing them a disservice by being obedient to the Great Commission and telling them?

|| PAUSE DISC

LEADER'S NOTE: Please allow about a minute's silence to let the impact of this argument sink in. It should have a powerful effect. Then talk through their responses.

▶ RESUME DISC

> Scriptures to examine: John 14:6; Acts 4:12; also Rom 10:13-14

|| PAUSE DISC

DISCUSSION: How should all this affect the way we live our lives? Leader, for other Scriptures please see Acts 10:43; 1 Tim. 2:5; John 10:9; 2 John 1:9; 1 John 2:23.

▶ RESUME DISC

Calling. Do we have to have a specific or special calling to be involved in missions?

|| PAUSE DISC

DISCUSSION: Do we need a special or specific call to be involved in missions?

▶ RESUME DISC

IDEAS FOR HOW WE CAN CHANGE THE WORLD BY BEING INVOLVED IN MISSIONS

1. PRAY

- A. Pray for more workers in ministry, especially cross-cultural ministry (Matt. 9:37-38).
- B. Pray for the missionaries you know of and support (Eph. 6:19-20).
- C. Pray for the Least-Reached People groups.
- D. Pray for the political scene in the nations that are on your heart and especially where the missionaries serve.
- E. Pray for a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

|| PAUSE DISC

LEADER'S NOTE: Take as much time as you need and lead the group to pray for the things outlined above.

▶ RESUME DISC

2. GIVE

A second way to be involved in global missions is to give generously and sacrificially.

Our tithe belongs to our local church first and foremost but our offerings (which are above and beyond our tithe) can be allocated to where God leads us. Missions is a great place to designate our offerings.

|| PAUSE DISC

LEADER'S NOTE: Here are some Scriptures that speak about supporting missionaries financially. Please work through them with the group. 1 Cor. 9:4, 14; 2 Cor. 9:10; Rom 15:24; 3 John 1:8; Luke 8:1-3. How can we as a group raise more money to give the missionaries our church supports?

SESSION THREE:

WHAT SHALL WE DO?

▶ RESUME DISC

3. GO

A third response to the global missions challenge is to go ourselves.

- A. Short-term teams
- B. Tent-makers
- C. Missionaries

|| PAUSE DISC

DISCUSSION: *Ask people how many of them have been on a short-term team or have done tent-making. Ask them to share their experiences good and bad. What was the biggest shock about other cultures?*

▶ RESUME DISC

4. PRACTICALLY SUPPORT YOUR MISSIONARIES

Missionaries are real people doing a real work for God in real places. They need practical help and support.

|| PAUSE DISC

DISCUSSION: *What can we do as a group to better support the missionaries our church supports? Let's come up with concrete ideas and work out who will do what.*

▶ RESUME DISC

5. ADOPT A LEAST-REACHED PEOPLE GROUP

Another way to be involved as a group is to adopt one of the 6000 Least-Reached People groups. See www.joshuaproject.net and pray about what country and people group God puts on your heart.

|| PAUSE DISC

DISCUSSION: *Discuss with the group how they'd like to go about doing this.*

▶ RESUME DISC

6. REACH OUT TO PEOPLE OF OTHER CULTURES IN YOUR OWN COMMUNITY

|| PAUSE DISC

LEADER'S NOTE: *How many different cultures are you aware of in your neighbourhood? Let's think of practical ways in which we can engage with them.*

▶ RESUME DISC

7. SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL PASTOR AND HIS/HER MISSION'S VISION

|| PAUSE DISC

DISCUSSION: *What can we do to honour our Pastor? How can we all "own" the vision of the church and the global vision more personally?*

▶ RESUME DISC

RECAP AND WRAPPING UP

This was the final in our three-part series seeking to understand missions.

Let's do a quick recap of this session:

We started by asking a mind-numbing question: Can someone who has never heard the Gospel be saved?

- We talked about how God in His mercy reveals Himself.
- He reveals himself generally through His creation and conscience.
- But He specially, specifically and finally revealed Himself in Jesus.
- In addition He has given us His Word – biblical revelation.
- Jesus and God's Word are the embodiment of the revelation of God.
- The responsibility falls upon us, then, as the church, to take this revelation and share it through our conversation, actions and preaching.

We emphasised that we must go and tell people about Jesus because the stakes are so high.

Then we looked at some practical ideas for how we can be engaged in global missions. What can we do? What must we do?

1. Pray.
2. Give.
3. Go.
4. Practically support missionaries.
5. Adopt an unreached people group.
6. Reach out to people of other cultures in your own community.
7. Support your local pastor and his/her mission's vision.

|| PAUSE DISC

LEADER'S NOTE: *Now that the series is over, let's do some reflection. Take a minute or two and write on your worksheet the one BIG lesson you got from this series. As a group let's discuss what WE (collectively) are going to do about missions?*