

Mission Work and Ghana

Tim Williams

06-04-2017

Matthew 28:19-20

19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

Mission work is going “out into the world” to other countries, cultures, and communities to spread the message of Christ and Him crucified, and to serve God by serving those in need.

Why? Why go overseas? Aren't there poor, needy, and lost in this country? Couldn't we save time and resources by staying home and focusing on our community? Yes, of course there are needy and lost people in the United States and in our community. And there is a cost associated with missionary work. However, there are a number of reasons to conduct missionary work and to support it from home.

Go Into All the World

From the very beginning Christianity was focused on a world view not just a local view, as stated in Matthew 28. This is true of both evangelism and service to others. Love knows no bounds, especially not geographical bounds. The question is not either local work or mission work; we can and should do both.

Romans 10:13-14

13 for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” 14 How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?

People are everywhere and we should go wherever we can go, and wherever we are called to go.

Go Where the Harvest is Ready

We need to go where the harvest is ready to be gathered. We need to not waste our efforts where the harvest is not ready or where people are not receptive for whatever reason.

Matthew 10:14

If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, leave that home or town and shake the dust off your feet.

It is important to be wise in our work for the Lord and to make proper judgments as to the work before us. It is clear that, in a number of foreign countries, the fields are ripe for the harvest due to the circumstances that exist both economically and spiritually. They are far more ripe than the United States where there is so much wealth and comfort.

We are Wealthy and They are in Need

We are extremely wealthy and we are free! Therefore, we have an obligation to help others that are not as well off. The Body is called to share and serve when we have the means.

II Corinthians 8:13-15

¹³ *Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality.* ¹⁴ *At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. The goal is equality,* ¹⁵ *as it is written: "The one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little."*

Where life is difficult, the opportunities to show the love of God abound. Meeting serious life needs and alleviating pain, fear, and want is the best way to show the love of Christ. And meeting people's needs is showing them the love of God in the most direct and clear way. Because of this God said He will reward these efforts.

Proverbs 19:17

Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will reward them for what they have done.

Brothers and Sisters in Need

We also go overseas because we have brothers and sisters in the body of Christ that are in need. Serving them is serving Jesus himself.

Matthew 25:40

⁴⁰ *"The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'*

Romans 12:13

13 *Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.*

The Missionary Calling

Another reason to conduct overseas missions is that some Christians are called to be missionaries and we need to support the calling and gifts of our brothers and sisters in Christ.

I Corinthians 12:27-31

²⁷ *Now ayou are the body of Christ and individually lmembers of it.* ²⁸ *And sGod has appointed in the church first tapostles, second prophets, third teachers, then vmiracles, then wgifts of healing, xhelping, yadministrating, and vvarious kinds of tongues. ²⁹ *Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? ³⁰ *Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? ³¹ *But zearnestly desire the higher gifts.****

Apostle Means Missionary

The term apostle means one "sent out with a message" and is not only used for the original 12 apostles, but is also used for others that served as missionaries. For example, Romans 16:7

refers to Andronicus and Junias as apostles and I Thessalonians 2:6 refers to Paul, Timothy, and Silas as apostles.

I won't go over the characteristics or scriptures, but take the time to look at the Spiritual Giftedness class material on the church website or at <http://findmyspiritualgift.com/> and you can learn more about the gift of the apostle/missionary.

Some people are called – even compelled – to go overseas and serve the Lord, like my father Bob Williams. My Dad started planning in the 70s, made trips to Ghana, and then moved there after retiring in the 80s. All told, he made over 40 trips. He could not stay home. His only choice was where to go. Just as some are called to give, some to show mercy, some to encourage, some to evangelize, and some to teach, some Christians are called to do mission work. We must support each other's gifts.

Why Ghana?

We have established the need for mission work, but that begs the question: Why Ghana? Why not somewhere easier to get to or closer to home? There are a number of reasons that make Ghana the right place for Camp Hill to focus our efforts.

A Close Connection

First, we already have a connection with Ghana and all the necessary relationships and infrastructure to make efficient use of our efforts. Jerry Reynolds and others began a work in the 1960's which my father continued. We have a close connection with the Bomso Church of Christ and the Ghana Bible College. There are current works underway such as the medical missions, Bible education, children's ministries, and the Helping Hands program that Don created and oversees.

Those who came before created a wise set of programs that work to teach Ghanaians to serve and evangelize their own nation. The Ghana Bible college teaches preachers practical knowledge so they can serve their communities. This is far better than the old idea of a foreign missionary living in one village and providing all the service to the people.

A Strong Church & Reputation

The church is strong in Ghana which allows us to work with the Body there to accomplish more and to work with greater efficiency. The Helping Hands program that Don started works through the church elders in Ghana to serve members of the body first and then others in need.

The church has an excellent reputation in Ghana both with the people, and with the government. Through the decades the church has provided major relief in times of famine and disaster. Through Biblical teaching members are taught to obey their government and pay taxes – always appreciated by governments. And the Churches of Christ, unlike formally organized denominations, do not take any money out of Ghana. Other denominations collect money

from members and send some of it to denominational headquarters. Governments and social organizations in foreign countries appreciate the fact that, because we are non-denominational, no monies raised leave the country where they were raised and are needed.

The mission work was designed from the beginning to help Ghanaians help themselves and take charge of their own lives, their own church, and their own ministries. This has allowed the church in Ghana to be held in high esteem in the country instead of the church in America being the center of attention.

A Good Return on Investment

One of the key reasons to work in Ghana is that our wealth receives a fantastic return on investment. A few hundred dollars from the Helping Hands fund can help someone start a business and change their life. Such a return is impossible in America and most Western countries.

The fields Are Ripe

There is a great need for economic help coupled with a field ripe for the harvest as the church continues to grow. Not only do we receive a good return on our investment due to economic conditions, we also receive a great return on investment because there is a good response to the gospel in Ghana as in other areas of Africa. Hearts always are more open where there is not wealth to distract people from the need for God.

The Body Needs Us

While the church is strong, there is still much poverty and difficulties among our brothers and sisters in Christ. We can, should, and must help. The body of Christ is one worldwide. We have a close connection and knowledge of Ghana. Therefore, we should help our family there since they are in need. Our loving involvement in Ghana serves the Body of Christ AND evangelism of the lost while showing love to everyone!

Don Pownell Desires to Serve

We have among us those called to serve in various ways. Don Pownell decided several years ago to continue the work in Ghana with his own skills and ministries and we should support him and his efforts. I must admit that I am not an impartial observer. It moves me greatly that Don has taken on the challenge that my father passed on to him to continue the work in Ghana. And Don has found his own way to serve through the Helping Hands fund. I am not going to go into detail about Don's work. Don has explained his work in prior lessons and will continue to do so. I fully support the Helping Hands fund. It is a marvelous and valuable ministry that has already made a difference in many lives.

I want to make it clear that I, the eldership, and the congregation here fully support the work in Ghana led by Don Pownell.

Don and Charlie Yana will be leaving for Ghana later in June. Please support this effort with your money (if possible), with your encouragement, and with your prayers. There may be a special contribution next week, but regardless, any funds you wish to contribute to the work can be placed in the contribution and marked simply, "Ghana." Don will be wiring monies to Ghana before he leaves and any monies collected at this point will go either to the Helping Hands fund or will be used to directly help someone in Ghana.

Don and Charlie are going to Ghana and in so doing, all of us at Camp Hill are going to Ghana. May God be praised, lives impacted, and souls saved. There is plenty of time to talk to Don and Charlie to provide encouragement and find out how you can help. We will also have a special prayer with them before they leave. Please talk to them both to get more information.

I would like to close with Psalm 96:9-10. The whole point of all we do – our local ministry and our mission work – is to bring praise to our great God whom we serve and who has given us salvation and eternity through Christ. He is powerful and He will see his work done through Don and Charlie. As stated in verse 10, Don and Charlie will, "state among the nations" that the Lord reigns, carrying His message on our behalf to Ghana:

Psalm 96:9-10

9 Worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness; tremble before him, all the earth. 10 Say among the nations, "The LORD reigns." The world is firmly established, it cannot be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity.

If you want to know more about mission work, or if you want to find out how to serve in your own ministry, or if you have any needs, please come to the foyer where the elders will help you as we stand and sing.