

Biblical Mandate for Cross-cultural Mission

PANORAMA SERIES

1 FOUNDATIONS

1.1 BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS:

“Biblical Mandate for Cross-cultural Mission”

2 CHARACTER

3 COMMUNITY

4 COMPETENCY

5 CHURCH

6 CONNECTION

7 COVENANT



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Biblical Mandate for Mission
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Scripture Focus

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth . . .

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all of the creatures that move along the ground.” So God created man in his own image; in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

Genesis 1:1, 26-28

“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”

Genesis 3:15

The LORD had said to Abram, “Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”

Genesis 12:1-3

Then Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain and said, “This is what you are to say to the house of Jacob and what you are to tell the people of Israel: ‘You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites.”

Exodus 19:3-6

And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

Matthew 24:14

Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Matthew 28:18-20

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witness in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Acts 1:8

Quotes

“Millions of people in today’s world are extremely hostile to the Christian missionary enterprise. They regard it as politically disruptive (because it loosens the cement which binds the national culture) and religiously narrow-minded (because it makes exclusive claims for Jesus), while those who are involved in it are thought to suffer from an arrogant imperialism. And the attempt to convert people to Christ is rejected as an unpardonable interference in their private lives.”

John Stott, *The Living God is a Missionary God, in Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*

“Scripture, theology, the Church, and even Christians would not exist without mission. Therefore a theology without mission is not a biblical theology, a Church without mission is no longer truly the Church and a Christian without mission is no true disciple. For Christians, mission is not an optional extra for the fanatical few or for the specially anointed; it is a fundamental definitive of who we are in Christ.”

Patrick Johnstone, *The Church is Bigger Than You Think*

“Scholars agree that the glory of God is the ultimate goal of God’s mission.”

Avery Willis Jr., *Biblical Basis of Missions*

Learning Objectives

As a result of the readings, discussion and activities in this session, the cross-cultural witness candidate should be able to:

- grasp the Biblical Mandate for Cross-Cultural Mission
- articulate a biblical view on the authority of the Christian witness to all peoples of the world
- understand and articulate the connection between the grand plan of redemption as revealed through the Bible and the call to cross-cultural mission
- demonstrate a grasp of the essential message of the mandate

Case Study: Applying the Biblical Mandate - *By What Authority?*

Josiah and Rachel had both developed enough competencies in their language skills to navigate the markets, read road signs, engage people in polite conversations and understand some of the chatter of the busy streets of Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Through their faithful translator, Samir, the Ingalls even had been able to share the Gospel with a handful of inquisitive Hindu men in an internet café just down the street from their apartment. Josiah and Rachel Ingall were pleased and excited at every opportunity to actually give witness to the Gospel as they were working among the Hindus in this predominantly Muslim nation.

Samir was a vibrant believer and an excellent translator. He and Josiah had grown to be very close friends over the past ten months. A symbiotic relationship was nurtured as Josiah mentored Samir in the ways of Jesus and Samir helped Josiah learn the Bengali culture.

Samir had family out in the far reaches of this densely populated nation. His nephew served as a pastor of a tiny congregation in a village about two hours from the capitol city. His nephew had asked if Josiah would come to a neighboring village to meet with four other pastors for a day of instruction and fellowship. Arrangements were made and Josiah ventured out for the first time into the rural village life of Bangladesh.

The two-hour motorcycle ride was mostly uneventful. Josiah and Samir on a vehicle barely intended for one person gave rise to a couple of scary moments and a few amusing experiences as well. Nevertheless, they traveled down a winding, muddy road, cutting through an endless myriad of rice patties and bamboo structures, until they arrived at their destination.

Samir's nephew was standing on the road to greet these special guests. His wife's grandfather was the leader of this particular village. He was a Hindu priest of some sort and his compound was the largest development in the area. He had agreed to allow Josiah and Samir to conduct "religious classes" in a hut at the edge of his family compound. After the pleasantries and appropriate

greetings were exchanged, the meal adequately planned and a time for tea arranged, Josiah began his meeting with the five Bengali pastors.

Josiah did his best to converse in Bengali. He asked each pastor to give his testimony and describe his ministry. He noticed each pastor had a copy of William Carey's Serampore translation of the Bible. While Samir was sharing his testimony with these pastors, Josiah silently thanked God for Carey's faithfulness to God and wondered if he would ever be "at home" among the Bengali people like Carey was.

These pastors had many questions for Josiah. He began to teach them in his native English because he was not able to discuss theology and biblical interpretation in any other language yet. Samir was very patient and careful to translate exactly what Josiah said. Josiah noticed the village leader, the Hindu priest, standing outside the hut, a safe distance away but certainly able to hear all that was being said.

"Why is Christianity such a small movement among our people?" one pastor wanted to know. Just as Josiah started to answer he heard a strange sound and looked toward the main house of the compound just in time to see the village leader's wife break the neck of a squawking chicken. She then slit its throat and stood still for a moment as she let the blood of the chicken spill on the ground. "I guess lunch will be chicken-and-something," he thought to himself.

During lunch, the Hindu priest asked if Josiah and Samir could meet with him after the "religious class" had concluded. They agreed to do so as the class commenced for about two more hours. The pastors had to leave by mid-afternoon so they could walk back to their respective villages before dark.

Later that afternoon, as tea was being prepared, Josiah found himself alone for a few moments. He thanked God for the great opportunity to encourage these faithful pastors. He was humbled, tired and energized all at the same time. He couldn't wait to tell Rachel every detail, especially about the woman wringing the neck of the chicken!

His moments of solitude were interrupted by the unmistakable sounds of a multitude of children. Josiah watched as they streamed across the compound, dressed in their school uniforms and gleefully heading to their respective homes. They

were laughing, jumping mud-puddles and playfully pushing each other. Josiah thought to himself, “Kids are kids no matter where they live.”

Their festive chatter changed to curious looks when they saw him, this blonde-haired, tall American. There was no hope of blending in for Josiah. He found himself surrounded by dark-skinned, dark-haired, dark-eyed Bengali children. The national pastime of Bangladesh is staring, and the children learn to do it early in life.

Josiah’s broad smile and Bengali greetings quickly made him a welcome visitor in the circle. The kids began to pepper him with questions. A stern adult voice silenced the children and they scattered when the Koranic teacher scolded them as he sought to rescue Josiah from his captors.

The Hindu priest’s compound included the village school. The children were learning the Koran from this scholar who traveled to the village each morning. Tall by Bengali standards, dressed in the traditional white robe with an Islamic head-covering that marked him as a scholar, this man struck quite an imposing figure.

He smiled and asked Josiah, “Who are you and where are you from?” Samir saw the entire event unfold and he approached quickly but politely. He stood by to assist as Josiah needed. Before Josiah had a chance to respond, the Hindu priest said, “He is a religious teacher who has come to my village to teach a class.” “What kind of class?” the Koranic

teacher inquired. “He is teaching from the Bible,” Samir said.

In the next few moments the Hindu elder invited the Islamic teacher, Josiah, Samir and Samir’s nephew to sit around a small table in the center of the compound. After tea was served, the Hindu leader looked at Josiah and said, “Please tell us more about your God.” Josiah prayed silently and looked at each man before responding. In this small circle of men, in a remote village in Bangladesh, three of the largest religions in the world were represented. Josiah was given a rare opportunity to give a witness to an Islamic teacher, a Hindu priest and a Christian pastor. Wow!

Josiah began by explaining that God was the God of creation. He then shared the truth about God’s love for all mankind. With Samir as his translator, he pointed these men to the redemptive activity of God in history.

Josiah was beginning to tell them the truth of the incarnation when the Koranic teacher interrupted him and said in a stern voice, “By what authority do you teach such things?” With a gentler demeanor, the older Hindu priest said, “Yes, I agree with my friend. By what authority do you say these things? I am a Hindu and I have my own beliefs. Mohammed is the teacher for our village children and he has his beliefs. Are you telling us we are both wrong and you are right? Again, I ask you, by what authority do you say these things?”

THINK ABOUT #1

#1 What propels Christians beyond cultural and religious boundaries to share the Gospel?

#2 Are the claims of the Gospel unique to Christianity? How so?

#3 Had you been Josiah, how would you have answered the question, “By what authority do you teach such?”

Cross-Cultural Mission Can Be Controversial

Why have the people of God transported God's message across cultural lines for centuries? What authorizes followers of the Jesus Way to seek to actually convert people from other faiths to Christianity? Why do Christians feel compelled to do so?

The Apostle Paul told the church at Rome that he was "obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks" (Romans 1:14). Why was he *obligated*? Paul's motivation was rooted in something deeper than a desire to demonstrate his philosophical brilliance. He was moved by more than his interest in engaging others in the sphere of ideas.

Paul's mission efforts were controversial. In Thessalonica, various Jewish leaders responded to Paul's work in their city by recruiting a mob and starting a riot. They told the city officials, "These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here" (Acts 17:5-9).

Cross-cultural mission efforts remain controversial in the 21st century. What right do you have in engaging in mission efforts that may result in the transformation of another culture?

Back in January 2003, David van Biema authored the cover story for Time magazine that addressed this very issue.



Read this article from Time magazine, June 30, 2003:

<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1005107,00.html>

The God of the Bible

In order to understand your motivation for mission more fully, you must begin with a clear picture of the God of the Bible. Your mission needs to be linked to His mission. His mission is rooted in His Person.

So – what does the Bible reveal about God? Why can we trust the Bible? Is the biblical witness an accurate witness to God?

Let's begin our journey in the book of Genesis. It is an ancient account of beginnings. Genesis is the most unique, comprehensive, personal and purposeful statement of creation and origins ever written. This fact is summarized by Derek Kidner in his excellent commentary on the first book of the Bible:

"No work that is known to us from the Ancient Near East is remotely comparable in scope, to say nothing of less measurable qualities, with the book of Genesis. Certain epics from Babylonia tell of Creation, others of a Deluge; the fullest extant version of the Epic of Atrahasis, more than 1,200 lines long, links the two events in a continuous story which provides some sort of parallel to Genesis 1-8; but when these come to an end, Genesis has barely begun."

Derek Kidner, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*, Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1967, p. 13.

Genesis stands alone in antiquity. No other account of the beginnings of the universe, earth, living creatures or mankind even remotely compares to the literary masterpiece that is Genesis.

Read Genesis 1:1-2:3.

Here in semi-poetic narrative, the author sets forth the incredible story of the beginnings of all that is! And notice, God is behind it all. The drama opens and God is present. He has no beginning. He is a living God who is totally self-existent. He exists independently from what He creates. In Genesis, God is portrayed as the only true God. He is incomparable. He is eternal. He is active and engaging. He is distant and near. He is above and beyond. Yet, He is present and can be known.

Read Genesis 1:26-31.

Notice God exists in plurality. God, His Spirit and His Word are eternal. God uses the plural pronouns “us” and “our” when referring to Himself. In fact, in Genesis 1:1, “God” is plural in the original Hebrew, but “created” is singular. In the very first sentence of the Bible the reader is confronted with the truth that God is not like us!

On the final day of creative activity, God creates man and woman. He decides to place His unique signature across the canvass of humanity. He is placing His image within each human. Mankind will be distinguished from the rest of the living creatures. Bearing the image of God will be the unique privilege of humanity.

Bearing God’s image means that mankind will rule over God’s creation. This authority is derivative and limited. Nevertheless, humanity expresses the image of God by stewarding the creation of God. Plus, mankind can directly relate to God. God has given humans the capacity to know Him and live in relationship with Him. No other part of creation is directly addressed in this creation account. Only mankind is in conversation with God.

Human beings were created to serve God. They were given instructions by God and were to live in

obedience to Him. God’s image has led human beings throughout the centuries to be what Robert Cate calls “incurably religious” (Robert L. Cate, *Old Testament Roots for New Testament Faith*, Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1982, p. 145). In fact, Cate argues:

“From all ages and under all conditions, man has sought for God. There is something in the image of God that makes it impossible for man to find a complete life apart from God. It just may be that man’s search for God is also a part of the image of God.” *Cate, Ibid.*

God’s creation of mankind includes gender assignment. God gave humanity both a male form and a female form. Mankind is to live in community, not in isolation. Love is both possible and appropriate in this relationship.

So – we’ve just read pages 1 and 2 of the Bible and we have already learned so much about God! He is living, eternal, complex, creative, self-existent and purposeful. He has placed mankind in His creation to play a specific role by bearing His image. Mankind has the unique capabilities inherent in this image-bearing assignment.

THINK ABOUT #2

#1 In your own words, what distinguishes Genesis from all other works in antiquity?

#2 What have you learned about God from Genesis 1-2?

#3 How would you explain the uniqueness of humanity?

Paradise Lost

One can hardly imagine a more idyllic setting than the Garden of Eden. Page 2 of Genesis closes with this summary statement, “The man and his wife were both naked and they felt no shame” (Genesis 2:25 NIV). At this point in the story, God and humanity are in harmonious relationship with each other. Further, marital bliss exists in the very first marriage. Beautiful!

Two profound theological affirmations can be made after we have read the first two chapters of the Bible. Walter Brueggemann states these brilliantly in his commentary on Genesis:

“First, the Creator has a purpose and a will for creation. The creation exists only because of that will. The Creator continues to address the creation, calling it to faithful response and glad obedience to His will . . . Second, the creation, which exists only because of and for the sake of the Creator’s purpose, has freedom to respond to the Creator in various ways. As the texts indicate, the response of creation is a mixture of faithful obedience and recalcitrant self-assertion.”

Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis*, Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982, p. 13

If you didn’t already know the story, nothing you have read so far would have prepared you for Genesis 3. However, as Brueggemann notes, God allowed a certain freedom that opened the door for self-assertion. Genesis 3 records the sordid details.

Read Genesis 3.

Man and woman chose to rebel against God and willfully disobey His express command. In so doing, they unleashed a power still faced to this good day. The knowledge of good and evil became a reality because of their choice. This sad chapter receives theological explanation later in Paul’s writings (cf. Romans 5, 8).

Humanity fails and sin is introduced in Genesis 3. Kidner points to the resulting brokenness in three arenas: personal, spiritual and physical (Kidner, *Ibid.*, p. 73). Even creation itself is affected negatively (cf. Romans 8:19-22). In fact, the detrimental affect is felt on the very next page of the Bible as it records the first human murder (Genesis 4:8).

Even though the words “fallen” and “sin” do not actually appear in the text of Genesis 3, both human history and the rest of the Bible affirm the truths embodied in both words. Humanity “fell” and sin resulted in drastic consequences.

The Creator Responds

How does God respond to the choices made by his newly minted humans? Genesis 3 records God’s evening stroll in the Garden of Eden. Meanwhile, Adam and Eve were hiding because of their shame. God called out to Adam, “Where are you?”

What unfolds next is God’s judgment. The depth and scope of God’s wrath reveals the seriousness of the offense. No one escapes unscathed. However, there is a ray of hope contained in the harshness of God’s words. As He pronounces His oracle of condemnation, He also speaks a prophetic word that sets in motion a great plan.

Read Genesis 3:15.

God makes a promise in this verse. He states the “seed of the woman” will crush the head of the seed of the serpent. Also, the offspring of the serpent will “strike the heel” of the woman’s seed.

This interesting statement (actually delivered as judgment to the serpent) contains the beginnings of the Gospel – the *protevangelium* according to scholars. The Hebrews would have never referred to seed belonging to a woman. It will be many years later before this prophecy finds fulfillment in Jesus (cf. Matthew 1:23).

The point for us is – **God offered a redemptive promise.** God didn’t just banish humanity from the Garden. He didn’t just judge the first couple with separate words of condemnation. He didn’t just pronounce judgment on the serpent. He actually spoke a word of deliverance and redemption in the midst of the statement of His wrath.

God is not going to sit idly by and let mankind drift into utter ruin. He is not going to allow the crown jewel of His creation live in brokenness forever. He is not going to abandon humanity and allow the serpent to wreak further havoc without a battle. No, He is going to implement the great plan of the ages. And . . . **One day** . . . victory will be won over the serpent and his realm.

God's stroll through the Garden and His call to Adam demonstrates powerful truths about our God. He is interested in relationship. In fact, His desire for it is so powerful that He will come looking for it. He will seek mankind. His voice continues to be heard – calling out, "Adam, where are you?"

To Illustrate

In John 4 we read of the encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. This conversation is filled with insights from Jesus, not the least of which is found in verse 23 where Jesus declares that true worshippers will worship the Father in "spirit and in truth." He then adds, "For they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks."

"Seeks" translates the Greek word, *zeteo* which means "to seek after, strive after or aim at." God is striving after people to worship Him. He is seeking, calling out.

On October 16, 1999, Yo Yo Ma, the world famous cellist, took a taxicab in New York City at 86th Street and Central Park West. He stowed his 1733 Montagnana Cello – valued at \$2.5 million – in the trunk of the cab. Still weary from a concert the evening before at Carnegie Hall, Ma departed the cab and forgot his prized cello. Less than 30 minutes later, he realized his mistake. What ensued next was an all-out search for the rare musical instrument.

Ma had a receipt that contained the medallion number from the cab. Hotel security officers, the NYPD and eventually the Mayor's Office all got in on the search. An APB was put out on this cab across all of New York City. Finally, in less than three hours, the cab was discovered – and thankfully, the cello was still in the trunk!

Find this story at:

<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9F03E5DC1639F934A25753C1A96F958260>

Yo Yo Ma's frantic search for a valued cello can't compare with God's search for people He loves. God is seeking to restore relationship with all of humanity. He wants to redeem mankind and heal the brokenness resulting from sin. He searched for Adam in the Garden. He is searching today for every human being across our world.

CONNECTIONS: Case Study Insights – The Biblical Mandate

The book of Genesis offers the fullest explanation in all of literature! No other voice from antiquity even approaches the breadth of this one book. It is held in high regard by Muslims, Jews and Christians alike. Surely, it needs to be read, studied, expounded and explained.

So, what have you learned that may enable you to answer the question from the Koranic teacher or the Hindu priest in the Case Study at the beginning of this session?

Here are some suggestions to guide your thinking.

- Genesis is unparalleled in scope. No other ancient book so fully explains the origins of creation and mankind.
- It contains a powerful and compelling drama that reveals the God of the universe. He has placed His image in *every* human being on the planet.
- The universal desire (*incurable religiosity*) of humanity to bow at some altar points to the uniqueness of mankind. How do we account for this phenomenon? Every civilization unearthed and studied by anthropologists contains an altar. Religious impulses are a consistent thread in the tapestry of the human story.
- The God of Genesis is a seeking God. He decided to respond personally to mankind's brokenness.
- Creation and mankind have a purpose because of the will of the Creator. Humanity failed and is falling short of this purpose (cf. Romans 3:23).
- God did not simply acknowledge the separation that resulted from man's sinfulness. He set in motion the great plan of redemption.

This is a universal message intended for a universal audience. God is seeking worshippers. He is the original missionary!

Call, Covenant and Commission

God speaks a promise-filled prophetic word in Genesis 3:15. How is this promise going to be fulfilled? What shape will it take?

Call of God

As you continue reading and studying Genesis, you will discover that God reveals the incipient details of His plan in chapter 12. Here on the twelfth page of Genesis, God calls out Abram (we'll call him Abraham in this session) and his family to serve as the earthly, physical vehicle through whom He will restore mankind.

Read Genesis 12:1-3

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of this encounter between God and Abraham. In the Genesis account, history turns a page. God now address the brokenness of humanity through this one man's family. Abraham becomes the central character in this cosmic drama for generations to come. God promises to make his name great (Genesis 12:2). Indeed!

Throughout history, the people of God become known as "the children of Abraham" (cf. Psalm 105:6, Romans 4). God is often known in the biblical material as the "God of Abraham" (cf. Genesis 32:9). Jesus, Himself is referred to as "the son of Abraham" (Matthew 1:1). And yet, Jesus boldly proclaims His eternal nature and divinity when He exclaims, "Before Abraham was, I am!" (John 8:58).

In Genesis, the great plan of the ages now begins to take shape. God's redemptive activity is funneled through Abraham and his family. God promises to transform Abraham into a great nation, to bless him and to make his name great. He intends to bless those who bless Abraham and curse those who do not.

Now don't miss the powerful truth of Genesis 12:3. God states both a promise and a purpose. Hear both of them: "*All peoples on earth will be blessed through you.*" Wow! This is God's purpose! He is going to bless *all peoples* through Abraham and his family.

The rest of the biblical witness is the testimony of this purposeful promise. What unfolds after Genesis

12 is the historical documentary of God's purposes being lived out among His people as He reaches out to all peoples.

Covenant of God

God solidifies this purposeful promise by making a **covenant** with Abraham (cf. Genesis 15, 17). As this story progresses in Genesis, the reader is becoming more acquainted with God. God is revealing more and more of Himself. He is a covenant God. He is going to live in relationship with His people, and this relationship is defined by the covenant.

God's covenant with Abraham signals the birth of a new community. Abraham's descendants are also in covenantal relationship with God. He renews this covenant several times throughout history (cf. Deuteronomy 5:1-3; Ezekiel 34:25-26, 37:26-28).

The covenant embodies the purpose of God in the life of Israel. He is a God of redemption. His redemptive activity is demonstrated in great feats like the exodus, but the activity of God is always connected to His covenant with Israel that was initiated in His relationship with Abraham.

God continues to make reference to the covenant throughout the Old Testament. His covenantal actions were on display for all to see. He reminded Israel again and again that the covenant was an expression of His divine, loyal love (Hebrew – *hesed*). In fact, as Robert Cate points out, "Ultimately, Israel's future hope was based upon the steadfast love and mercy of God" (Cate, *Ibid.*, p. 71). This is stated clearly in *Isaiah 55:1-3*.

In fact, years later, God made another covenantal promise. He spoke through the prophet Jeremiah the promise of a **new covenant** (Jeremiah 31:31-34). Jesus laid claim to this promise and announced its fulfillment when He instituted the Lord's Supper: "This cup is the *new covenant* in my blood" (Luke 22:20). God's covenantal relationship has been extended and is now lived out in His relationship with the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ (cf. Galatians 6:12-16).

Commission of God

So, how is Abraham's family to be involved in this great plan of redemption? Are Abraham's descendants charged with simply living in community with the God of creation?

Are they supposed to do something? Do they have a role to play in this cosmic drama?

We have to read beyond Genesis to discover the answers to these questions. In Exodus we read of the greatest story of deliverance in the history of Israel. Contained in that story are truths that help us further understand the purposes of God and the roles that His people will play.

Read Exodus 9:13-19.

In this narrative, we learn that God chose to reveal His purpose through Moses to Pharaoh, the King of Egypt. Did you catch the statement of God's purpose? Look again at verses 14 and 16. God is going to demonstrate that He is unique in the universe and His desire is for His name to be proclaimed throughout the earth. This offers us insight into the very heart of God. God's plan is bigger than just the deliverance of Israel. His plan includes all the peoples of the earth!

God eventually delivers Israel from the clutches of the most powerful dynasty of the ancient world. But, His work is not complete once the exodus is history. In fact, His work is just beginning. He

invites Israel to participate in the great plan of the ages.

Read Exodus 19:3-7.

This passage is the Great Commission of the Old Testament. Notice the comprehensive nature of God's message. God claims, "The whole earth is mine" (Exodus 19:5). This is the Creator of the universe speaking! He has made a crucial choice. *Israel* is now **commissioned** with a practical role in the accomplishment of humanity's redemption. God has responded to the brokenness of mankind. He is going to "call out" to "Adam" through the voice of Israel.

In this passage, Abraham's descendants are now on the verge of becoming "a great nation" and it is time for them to shoulder the responsibility of the blessing; namely becoming God's ambassadors among the rest of the families of the world.

God is making Abraham's name great through them, and He is going to bless all peoples of the world through them.

THINK ABOUT #3

#1 Describe the effects of humanity's choice in Genesis 3.

#2 How did God respond to Adam, Eve and the serpent?

#3 Briefly explain God's plan of redemption as it is lived out through Abraham and his descendants.

The Church and Its Cross-Cultural Commission

When you open the first page of your copy of the New Testament, about 2000 years have elapsed since Abraham. In summary, God's people have inhabited the land promised to Abraham and lived in covenantal community with Him. However, there has been a great deal of brokenness within this community.

God's purposes in redemption have been communicated in various ways and through various people.

Read Hebrews 1:1-4.

God's voice is most clearly heard through Jesus. In Jesus, the great plan of redemption reaches its apex. God has spoken fully and completely through His Son. Jesus is the official spokesman for the future purposes of God.

Again, don't miss the comprehensive nature of the language contained in this description of Jesus. No one else in history compares to Jesus. He is the "exact representation" of God. His name is superior to any other (cf. Philippians 2:9). He is the "heir of all things" and the agent of creation.

The Gospels record the actions and teachings of Jesus. For our purposes, we will simply note that Jesus both established the church (Matthew 16:17-20) and commissioned it (Matthew 28:16-20; Luke 24:45-49; John 20:21; Acts 1:8).

He is uniquely qualified to speak authoritatively in both establishing the new community of God's people (the Church) and in charging it with its role in the great plan of the ages (the Great Commission).

Read Matthew 28:16-20.

This passage is commonly known as The Great Commission. Once again, notice the comprehensive language used by Jesus – "all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." Further, Jesus challenges His followers to make disciples of "all nations" (Greek *ethnos* means "people").

Does this sound familiar? Remember God's purpose-filled promise to Abraham? He promised that through Abraham, "all peoples" of the earth

would be blessed. The Church of the Lord Jesus Christ now bears the responsibility of proclaiming the message of Jesus (redemption) to all the inhabitants of the earth.

The charge from Jesus is comprehensive and compelling. He is challenging His followers to lead people to become fully devoted disciples. This task involves going, baptizing, teaching and mentoring. Obviously, this is a taxing and time-consuming endeavor. This commission extends far beyond mere evangelism. It is deeper than just introducing someone to Christ. The responsibility for teaching, mentoring and discipling is inherent in Jesus' command.

Since the responsibility is to carry this message to "all" nations, it will require building bridges across cultural divides. Jesus states this plainly in another passage.

Read Acts 1:7-8.

In this passage, Jesus appeared to a relatively small band of followers after His resurrection. These disciples are curious and inquisitive about what happens next on God's agenda. How will the great plan of the ages continue? Is it time to bring about some catastrophic event that will de-throne Rome and establish Israel to its rightful place in history?

Jesus elevates all discussions to center upon the Kingdom of God. He is preparing for His earthly exit. He offers one last explanation of events and issues a charge to His followers. What is next on the agenda? It will be the cross-cultural witness of His followers beyond Judea and Samaria to the very ends of the earth!

Transporting this message across geographical, political, social, racial and cultural barriers is an immense task. Of course, we remain engaged today in this grand enterprise.

Notice in both Matthew 28 and in Acts 1, Jesus offers a message about power and presence. He is going to be with us (Matthew 28) and the Holy Spirit will empower us (Acts 1). The responsibility to reach our world with the message of Jesus Christ is beyond our capacity for accomplishment. We cannot fulfill this obligation with our own ingenuity or prowess. We need the very presence and power of the Lord Himself. Guess what? That is just what He has promised!

As a cross-cultural witness, He will be with you as you prepare. He will empower you to handle the challenges you will face as you answer His invitation to participate in the plan of the ages. He will give you the strength and grace to make the necessary sacrifices and transitions required by such a life calling. You will proclaim His Name among the nations. You have entered a mysterious partnership with God. You are on a Co-Mission with Christ as you carry forth the message of the ages.

Read Matthew 24:14.

God’s love for the nations is boundless but not timeless. One day the curtain will be drawn on this act in the cosmic drama. Central to the fulfillment of this age is the proclamation of the Gospel to the peoples of the world.

God is moving history (His-story) toward His desired end for His creation. Our world is not just

passing time. Events are not just randomly occurring. God is at work in the world to accomplish His plan (the Meta-narrative or the Big Story). While the actions of humanity are performed on an earthly stage, there is a much larger narrative unfolding simultaneously. Followers of Jesus understand that their lives are connected to this larger story. It is the great plan of redemption, orchestrated by the God of creation and put in motion through the people of God.

As you answer the call of God in your life, you are contributing to this divine drama. God has written you into the script! Your life is now filled with meaning and purpose. Our world is filled with others who do not even know about this grand story. Their lives have yet to experience the fulfillment of their Creator’s intent. You now have the precious privilege of ushering them on stage and assisting them in learning their role.

THINK ABOUT #4

#1 How would you describe the Cross-Cultural Commission of the Church?

#2 What is your role in God’s grand plan of redemption?

Contemporary Application

Read the following article: “*Winning People to Christ Not the End Task, Says Ministry Leader*” by Michelle A. Vu of *The Christian Post*.

http://christianpost.com/Missions/Church_planting/2008/10/winning-people-to-christ-not-the-end-task-says-ministry-leader-28/index.html

Mission leader Bob Moffit states: “The end task of the Great Commission is not winning people to Christ,” Moffitt contends. “Be careful, winning people to Christ is essential. It is part of the process but it is not the end process. It is not hitting the target.”

What is your initial reaction to missions leader Bob Moffit’s conclusions?

Do you agree or disagree? Does his assessment cause you to think differently about your application of The Great Commission in your own ministry? Explain.

Go a Step Further

If you would like to explore the encounter between Abraham and God a bit further, then read:

The Living God is a Missionary God by John Stott in *Perspectives of the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, 3rd Edition, Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1999, pp. 3-9.

Work through the Study Questions at the end of Stott’s chapter. Record your comments.

The Message within the Mandate

What is the core message of the Biblical Mandate? What is God calling on you to share with your world? What do the nations of the world need to hear and know?

You will have to decide how to communicate the basic truths of God’s redemptive hope. You will have to grapple with developing your understanding of the core message of the Biblical Mandate.

Here are my twelve suggestions to you:

1. The God of the Bible is the God of Creation. The Bible begins with a statement of fact and faith. *In the beginning, God . . .* The God of the Bible is the eternal, living and only God. He is not just the God of Christianity. He is the God of all of creation. The message of Genesis is a comprehensive message about an eternal God.

2. God has created all humans in His image. God has given humanity a gift that is unparalleled in the rest of creation. Only mankind receives the precious gift of God’s image. He has placed an impression on the soul of every human.

3. God’s desire is for mankind to bear His image and reflect His glory. God placed His image in humanity for a reason. We are to show His likeness. We are to reflect His glory. We read in **Isaiah 43:7** “. . . *everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.* God’s glory is His essence. It emanates from His character. We are to reflect Him and His glory in our world.

4. Human beings have sinned against God. Genesis 3 shares the universal story of mankind’s rebellion against God and the consequences of such behavior. Separation, brokenness, death and pain are just some of the ramifications of this decision.

5. Sin has resulted in humanity’s inability to fulfill God’s purpose. Sin has had a far-reaching effect. In fact, the Apostle Paul declared that creation itself has been marred by humanity’s willful disobedience (Romans 8:18-25). In a more direct way, sin has had a telling effect on mankind. We have lost the ability to truly reflect God’s glory. Once again, listen to Paul’s summation: “*There is*

no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

6. God’s response to mankind’s rebellion is redemption!

God spoke a word of judgment to Adam, Eve and the serpent in Genesis 3. However, He also offered a purpose-filled promise in **Genesis 3:15**.

Somehow, God was going to speak to human beings and their dilemma through the “seed of woman.” His choice of Abraham (**Genesis 12:1-3**) signaled the earthly beginning of the great plan of the ages – God’s offer of redemption.

7. God’s voice is most fully represented in the Person of Jesus Christ, His Son.

Throughout the history of God’s people, His voice could be heard. He spoke in various ways and through multiple people. However, He has spoken most fully through His Son. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews states this truth succinctly in his introductory paragraph (**Hebrews 1:1-4**). In fact, Jesus so embodies the very voice of God, the Apostle John refers to Him as *The Word* (**John 1:1-3, 14**). This imagery hearkens the reader back to Genesis 1 where God’s creative voice was heard time and again. In the face of humanity’s sinfulness and separation from God, once again **God spoke** in the form of His Son.

8. Jesus Christ is God in the flesh. God’s glory emanates from His Person.

Mankind has fallen. We have lost our ability to truly reflect God’s glory and fully express His purpose in our lives. **Jesus Christ is the answer to our dilemma.** The glory of God flowed freely from and through the Lord Jesus. Listen to John’s testimony: “*The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth*” (**John 1:14**). The writer of Hebrews puts it this way, “*The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word*” (**Hebrews 1:2**). What human beings have not been able to do, Jesus does perfectly. He is a perfect reflection of the **glory of God**.

9. God’s offer of redemption is a restoration of His glory in human beings.

Sin has marred God’s image in us. We are tainted because of our sinfulness. We cannot fully reflect God’s glory and fulfill our purpose for existence.

However, God has answered us in the midst of our great need. He has offered us the gift of eternal life through His Son (**Acts 4:12**). The gift of salvation is accompanied by the **work of restoration**. God is restoring His glory in us as we yield to His power at work within us. He is shaping us so that we may more accurately bear His image in our world (**Romans 8:29**). As we grow and mature in Christ, God’s glory is restored in us. In **2 Corinthians 3:17-18**, Paul writes, “*Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*”

10. The Church must transport this message of redemption to all peoples.

God promised Abraham that he would use his family to bless “all the peoples of the earth” (**Genesis 12:3**). God invited Israel to participate with Him in communicating this message to the nations (**Exodus 19:6**). God’s desire all along was for all the nations. He spoke through Isaiah the prophet and declared “*my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations*” (**Isaiah 56:7**). Jesus established a new covenant with His followers (**Luke 22:20**). He established the Church (**Matthew 16:18**) and commissioned it to bear witness to Him to all peoples of the world (**Matthew 28:16-20; Luke 24:45-49; John 20:21; Acts 1:8**).

11. God’s Name is to be proclaimed to the nations and His glory to be pursued to the ends of the earth.

David declared, “*The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands*” (**Psalms 19:1**). This doesn’t surprise us when we recognize that creation is simply reflecting its Creator! Again, hear the words of David in **1 Chronicles 16:8, 24, 28, 29**: “*Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done . . . Declare his glory among the nations . . . Ascribe to the LORD, O families of nations, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength, ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name.*” God expressed His desire for His glory to cover the entire planet in His message to the prophet Habakkuk, “*For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD*” (**Habakkuk 2:14**).

12. God's great plan will succeed!

God is in control of His universe. He is the architect of the great plan of the ages. His Kingdom will be established forever. His message of hope will accomplish His purpose.

He gave the Apostle John a glimpse into the future:

“After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: ‘Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb’ ”
(Revelation 7:9-10).

THINK ABOUT #5

#1 In your own words, write out the core message of God that you will communicate to the people of the world.

#2. What will you commit to do this month to further develop your capacity to communicate the core message of God?

Examples to Follow

God's people have not always embraced the responsibilities of His commission. Israel struggled to maintain its purity and identity as the people of God. Unfortunately, Israel's identity as missionary priests was never fully expressed.

There are examples of God's message being proclaimed to the nations in the Old Testament. The most famous example is found in the story of **Jonah**. He became a reluctant missionary to the people of Nineveh. Obviously, he is not the best example of a cross-cultural missionary!

The New Testament contains many examples of cross-cultural missions at work. In the lives of Peter, Stephen, Barnabas, Philip, Silas, Timothy and Paul, we can observe missiological principles and practices. Naturally, many of the mission efforts were lived out in the New Testament era by folks whose names have been lost to history. For example, Paul wrote a letter to the church at Rome. Who established the church in the most powerful city in the world? The truth is, we don't know.

Christians carried the message of Jesus across the ancient world through the work of merchants, sailors and businessmen. The Gospel was communicated through the channels of human communication much as it is today. Plus, itinerant church planters and evangelists like Paul had incredible influence upon the spread of the message of redemption.

Throughout history there have been numerous examples of believers who have embraced the message of the Gospel and have been gripped by its claim on their lives. They became vital participants in the proclamation of the Gospel to all the peoples of the world. Let's consider one of those for our purposes: **William Carey**.

William Carey: Missionary, Bible Translator, Social Reformer



William Carey
1761-1834

Timothy George, in his account of the life of William Carey, sets the context of Carey's inauspicious beginnings as a missionary:

“Two hundred years ago, on June 13, 1793, William Carey; his wife, Dorothy; and their four children, including a nursing infant, sailed from England on a Danish ship headed for India. At the time few people noticed their departure. Carey was a shoemaker by trade. With only a grammar-school education behind him, he had no credentials for missionary service except an inextinguishable conviction that God Almighty had called him to devote his life to ‘the conversion of the heathens’. Moreover, he went to India as an illegal alien, having failed to secure the required immigration permit from the East India Company. He also lacked financial resources, apart from the meager funds he had scraped together. As the unknown pastor of a small-town church in the English Midlands, he had been able to muster the promise of support from only a handful of friends. The Baptist bigwigs felt the venture was too uncertain to commit their denomination to it.”

Timothy George, *Faithful Witness: The Life and Mission of William Carey*, Birmingham, AL: Christian History Institute, 1998, p. xvii.

As George points out, the opening chapter of Carey's missionary endeavors was hardly front-page news in eighteenth century England. However, by the end of his career as a missionary, Carey's influence on the history of missions can hardly be overestimated! In fact, Carey is now generally

referred to as the “Father of the Modern Missionary Movement.”

Why is Carey so designated? What unique accomplishments set him apart as a “successful” missionary? What were his missiological methods?

Time and space prohibit a full presentation of William Carey’s missiological contributions to the history of missions. However, for our purposes, let’s examine the core values of his missiology as revealed in his writings and in his methodology.

For background and biographical information on Carey, consult the following standard works on Carey’s life and contributions:

Life of William Carey, Shoemaker and Missionary by George Smith, London: John Murray, 1887 – note this work was added to the *Everyman’s Library* in 1909 and can now be accessed online at –<http://www.biblebelievers.com/carey/index.html>

William Carey, D.D., Fellow of Linnaean Society by S. Pearce Carey, New York: George H. Doran Co., 1923.

Faithful Witness by Timothy George.

William Carey was reared in a pious home in a Northamptonshire village in England. At the age of eighteen, he left the Church of England and found his way to the Congregational Church. At the age of twenty-two, he was baptized into a Particular Baptist church and became a Baptist pastor three years later.

Carey had many interests as a young man. He made a living for his family as a shoemaker, but he was a voracious reader. He was particularly intrigued by *The Journal of Captain Cook’s Last Voyage*. In fact, Carey would later comment that his imagination was set afire by reading of Cook’s adventures across the world. Consequently, his heart began to warm toward missions.

Carey served as a pastor for ten years in Moulton and Leicester, England. He led his congregation to pray and fast for the “heathen” across the world who had never heard of Christ. He collected statistics on populations, drew extensive maps that he kept in his cobbler’s shop and even fashioned together a globe from leftover leather in order to

teach local school children about the peoples of the world.

His theological convictions, intellectual curiosity, penchant for geographical information, knowledge of the peoples of his world and his growing sense of God’s missiological call on his life led him to author one of the most influential books in missions history, *An Enquiry*, published in 1792.

On the one hand, this book contains the most comprehensive compilation of world population statistics yet published in the English language. On the other hand, it also contains a strong, clearly stated plea for initiating a mission effort for propagating the Gospel among the “heathen” that cannot be ignored.

In this masterpiece, Carey addresses every objection imaginable that had been raised against starting any kind of missionary movement or organization. He lists the objections, evaluates their merits and summarily overwhelms them with biblical, theological and missiological arguments. For example, some leaders informed Carey that he should give attention to reaching the lost in his native England:

“It has been objected that there are multitudes in our own nation, and within our immediate spheres of action, who are as ignorant as the South-Sea savages, and that therefore we have work enough at home, without going into other countries . . . Our own countrymen have the means of grace, and may attend on the word preached if they choose it. They have the means of knowing the truth, and faithful ministers are placed in almost every part of the land, whose spheres of action might be extended if their congregations were but more hearty and active in the cause; but with them the case is widely different, who have no Bible, no written language (which many of them have not), no ministers, no good civil government, not any of those advantages which we have. Pity therefore, humanity, and much more Christianity, call loudly for every possible exertion to introduce the gospel amongst them.”

William Carey, *An Enquiry*, contained in Timothy George, *Ibid.*, p. E.7-E.8.

Under Carey’s leadership, the Baptist Missionary Society was formed on October 31, 1792 and he

would set sail in the following summer for India as its first missionary under appointment. He spent the next forty-one years in service as a missionary and never returned to his beloved England.

It is amazing what all occurred during this forty-one-year span of ministry in India, inspiring over fifty biographies since Carey's death! Here is a brief summary of the fruit of his life's investment.

1797 his first convert, Ignatius Fernandez, a Portuguese businessman

1800 first Hindu convert, Krishna Pal

1801 New Testament printed in Bengali

- Led in establishing forty-five churches and mission stations
- Trained and sent out forty-five Indian teachers and thirty Indian missionaries
- Served for thirty years as a Professor of Languages at Williams College
- Founded Serampore College
- Personally translated and oversaw the translation of the Bible into forty-two languages which made the Word of God accessible to one-third of the world population
- Established a paper mill, printing press and published the first Indian newspaper
- Established Serampore Press which distributed 213,000 copies of the Bible
- Authored grammars and dictionaries for six major Indian languages
- Served as the government censor for literary productions
- Social reform efforts led to establishing laws throughout India that prohibited the accepted practice of heathen infanticide and led in the abolition of the suttee rite where widows were burned on the funeral pyres of their husbands

Carey's incredible career as a missionary was undergirded by core theological convictions and guided by two missiological principles. George Smith points out the two principles:

“Two principles regulated the conception, the foundation, and the whole course of the mission which he now began. He had been led to these by the very genius of Christianity itself, by the example and teaching of Christ and of Paul, and by the experience of the Moravian brethren. He had laid them down in his *Enquiry*, and every month's residence during forty years in India confirmed him in his adhesion to them. These principles are that (1) a missionary must be one of the companions and equals of the people to

whom he is sent; and (2) a missionary must as soon as possible become indigenous, self-supporting, self-propagating, alike by the labours of the mission and of the converts”.

George Smith, *Ibid.*, Chapter 4.

Carey's ministry was undergirded by his profound conviction that all peoples of the world should have access to the Gospel. Further still, he believed that the Bible was the Word of God for all peoples. He was convinced that the Bible had to be placed in the hands of every human being.

Consequently, he gave much of his life to studying languages and training indigenous people to read and write their own language. He worked tirelessly to translate, print and distribute the Bible into as many languages as possible. In fact, during his five-month voyage to India in 1793, he translated the book of Genesis and argued its merit with a group of Muslims aboard the ship!

Today it is difficult to understand the various pressures mounted against Carey when he began his mission efforts. He faced the personal resistance from his wife. He faced the theological resistance from the older, more seasoned pastors in his Baptist Association. As I have already mentioned, he was challenged by multiple objections surrounding the logistics of missionary work in general. Further, he faced the financial pressures of seeking to raise funds to begin a new missionary enterprise that had very little footing in the hearts of local Baptists.

Also, Carey had to face the reality of political and legal resistance at the hand of the East India Company. This company originated in 1600 when a group of British businessmen combined their efforts to earn a profit from the spice trade with South Asia. By Carey's time, the power exerted by the East India Company was unchecked throughout India. In fact, it had its own military and established its own legal jurisdiction over the entire colony of India!

What did this have to do with Carey? The East India Company had established laws and policies that strictly forbade any Christian missionaries permission to work in India. In fact, the only British citizens allowed in India had to have permits issued by the Company. These laws forbidding missionary endeavors in India by British citizens were finally repealed in 1813 due to the leadership of William Wilberforce.

So, Carey faced opposition on every hand – politically, theologically, financially and personally. Upon what authority would his calling and ministry rest? Carey was convinced the God of the Bible is the only God. He believed firmly that the authority for his work as a missionary was based upon the authority of the biblical message. Thus, his translation work was his life’s work. Listen to a letter in which Carey explains the importance of this work to Dr. John Ryland who was back in England:

“22nd January 1808. Last year may be reckoned among the most important which this mission has seen--not for the numbers converted among the natives, for they have been fewer than in some preceding years, but for the gracious care which God has exercised towards us. We have been enabled to carry on the translation and printing of the Word of God in several languages. The printing is now going on in six and the translation into six more”.

George Smith, *Ibid.*, Chapter 10.

If you could have asked William Carey, “By what authority?” how do you think he would have responded?

What do you think about Carey’s two missiological principles he wrote about in his book *An Enquiry*?

Biblical Mandate for Cross-Cultural Witness: Summary

Cross-cultural mission can be controversial. Why would you undertake such a task? What obstacles will you face as you prepare and when you go?

Certainly, you must resolve the issue of authority and mandate before you serve in the cross-cultural context. You need to be assured of your purpose for reaching across cultural divides to embrace other peoples. You need to be well-grounded in your understanding of the Biblical Mandate that undergirds your ministry and supplies the message of your mission.

This mandate is rooted in the very character of God. God has revealed Himself as a seeking missionary God. He is the God of creation and redemption. He is the God of the universe and the God of salvation for mankind. He has created human beings with the potential to know Him and serve His purposes. He has placed in the life of every human being the distinctive feature known biblically as the “image of God.”

However, mankind’s ability to bear God’s image and reflect His glory in His world has been marred and tainted by sin. The relationship between mankind and God has been broken. Sin has resulted in separation, suffering and judgment. This is a universal problem that affects all of humanity.

The Bible is a comprehensive witness to this story. Genesis begins with the account of creation and introduces the God who is. Mankind’s rebellion is recorded in this ancient book as well. Further, God’s redemptive response is shared even in the midst of judgment.

God’s choice of Abraham and his family changes the course of human history. A cosmic drama unfolds in real time through the lives and antics of real people. God’s message is proclaimed and His purpose is lived out through this family. The message from God is a universal message for all mankind. In fact, this message is of such importance, God Himself visited earth to proclaim it in the form of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

God speaks most fully and completely in Jesus. Jesus accomplishes the work of salvation so that the

brokenness caused by mankind's sin can be healed. The image of God can be restored in human beings as they posit their faith in Christ and experience the redemptive power of God. God's glory can be reflected in the lives of the followers of Jesus so that all peoples may have the opportunity to be saved from God's judgment.

The Church has been given the task of fulfilling God's purpose throughout the earth by making disciples of all peoples and leading them to obey Christ. This challenge compels God's people to cross cultural, social, economic, linguistic, political, ethnic, financial and personal barriers in order to accomplish God's grand purpose.

While mankind is living out an existence in history, God is working out His plan and purposes in His Story. This is the Big Story (meta-narrative). The people of God are participating in the accomplishment of God's great plan of the ages as they pursue His glory to the ends of the earth.

Here are passages from the Bible that serve as the foundation for grasping the Biblical Mandate for Cross-Cultural Mission:

Old Testament

- God is Creator – Genesis 1:1, 26-31
- Man's Condition – Genesis 3:1-24
- God's Covenant – Genesis 12:1-3
- God's Commission – Exodus 19:3-7
- God's Compassion – Isaiah 52:1-54:17
- God's Comfort – Isaiah 61:1-3

New Testament

- Context for Missions – Matthew 24:14
- The Co-Mission – Matthew 28:16-20
- The Charge – John 20:21
- The Challenge – Acts 1:7-8
- The Culmination – Revelation 7:9-17

Further Reading

There are numerous resources to augment your understanding of the biblical material related to the mandate of cross-cultural mission.

Atlantic Baptist University of Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada publishes an online guide to the New Testament. It is an excellent resource produced by Dr. Barry D. Smith. You can access it at:

<http://www.abu.nb.ca/courses/NTIntro/indexNTIntro.htm>

Dr. David Teague of Gordon-Conwell Seminary has produced a guide primarily for preachers about the Meta-narrative. However, it has useful information for those who are seeking a full understanding of God's purposes lived out on the grand stage of human history. His guide is found at: <http://www.postmodernpreaching.net/metanarrative.htm>

Questia.com – You can join this online service making multiple academic titles available to you for your perusal. This service is helpful because it houses entire books and articles from across the scholarly community. For example, one of the standard works in researching worldviews and philosophy of history is *The Christian Philosophy of History* by Shirley Jackson Case. It is available through questia.com at:

<http://www.questia.com/library/book/the-christian-philosophy-of-history-by-shirley-jackson-case.jsp>

THINK ABOUT #6

#1 Again, in your own words, what is the Biblical Mandate for Mission?

#2 After studying and reflecting on this material, how should Josiah answer the question of the Koranic teacher and the Hindu priest in the Case Study presented at the beginning of this session?

Self-Awareness, Survival and Solution

#1 On a scale of 1 to 10, how well do you understand the Biblical Mandate for Mission? Explain.

#2 What portions of the biblical material do you need to study further in order to strengthen your personal biblical foundation?

#3 What is your philosophy of history? What additional thought and study do you need in developing your understanding of the Big Story?

#4 Explain the authority you claim for your ministry and mission calling?

So What?

Imagine

How are you going to respond when asked, “By what authority do you teach these things?”

Lifestyle

How is the Biblical Mandate for Mission already affecting how you live each day? Do you carry a burden for the lost peoples of the world like William Carey? How does your current lifestyle communicate your mission?

Missional Formation

Are you giving enough attention to studying and reflecting upon God’s Word? Are you researching and developing an understanding of God’s great plan of redemption as revealed in His Word and through the history of the people of God? What else do you need to do?

Language and Customs

How does the Biblical Mandate for Mission fit in another culture? How will you help another believer from another culture understand the mandate? What exposure and engagement do you have right now to peoples from other cultures who already understand the mandate?

Stretch Life on Life

Perhaps you can choose a couple of other members in your group to discuss the issue of the Biblical Mandate more in depth. Choose some folks who will challenge you both intellectually and spiritually. Make a commitment to deepen your understanding and strengthen your grasp of the mandate to reach all peoples of the world.

Additional Resources for Biblical Mandate for Mission

“**The Biblical Foundation for the Worldwide Mission Mandate**” by Johannes Verkuyl, in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, 3rd edition, edited by Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne, 1999, pp. 27-33.

“**The Story of His Glory**” by Steven C. Hawthorne, in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, 3rd edition, edited by Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne, 1999, pp. 34-48.

The Church is Bigger Than You Think, Patrick Johnstone, 1998, Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications.

Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places: A Conversation in Spiritual Theology, Eugene Peterson, 2005, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Eat This Book: A Conversation in the Art of Spiritual Reading, Eugene Peterson, 2006, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

The Jesus Way: A Conversation on the Ways that Jesus is The Way, Eugene Peterson, 2007, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

The Open Secret: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission, Lesslie Newbigin, Revised Edition, 1995, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free, F.F. Bruce, 1977, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Salvation to the Ends of the Earth, Peter T. O’Brien and Andreas J. Kostenberger, 2001, InterVarsity Press.

PANORAMA - a broad view of the world and your place in it.
PANORAMA is a web-based multi-media small group experience facilitated by Network churches to prepare their people for cross-cultural service in the world.