

## Becoming a “World Christian”

### I. Introduction.

There is a danger in doing a class like this one. We have spent the last several months trying to inspire you and excite you about missions. Do not, then, use the material in this class as an excuse to refuse a legitimate call to the mission field. The purpose of this class is to remind those of us who are not called to the field that we are not therefore a part of the mission. The purpose of this class is to call those of us who remain here to sacrifice for the missionary endeavour.

### II. Only Three types of people in the World

In Luke 10, we are able to see two types of people.

- a. *Go-ers*. These are the ones who go out on the mission field to preach the Gospel. vv 2-3.
- b. *Senders*. We see these in vv. 5-7. Jesus recognizes some who are not sent out into the mission field. But what is the mission of these who are to stay? Their mission is to provide support for those who go.

We also see the biblical command to “send” in Romans 10:14-15. “How can they preach unless they are sent?” And also in III John, the apostle praises Gaius for his service to those who went out “for the sake of the Name” – missionaries. Sending, or supporting, is a vital part of the missionary enterprise. Without senders, the Great Commission cannot be fulfilled.

- c. *Enemies*. Read Philippians 3:17-19. What motivates these “enemies of the cross?” v19 – their god is their appetite, they set their minds on earthly things. They revel in luxury.

**There are not two different missions. There is one mission – to preach the Gospel of Christ and to make disciples of all the nations. Whether you are on the field or here at home, your mission is to contribute to the spread of the Gospel.**

### III. Temporal or Eternal?

Christians need to understand that we are not to be at home in this world. If once that reality drills itself into our minds, we will be freed in a tremendous way to devote ourselves to the spread of the Gospel.

1. James 4:4. "Friendship with the world is hatred toward God." If this world is not our home, then it is treason for us to become entrenched in its culture, its desires, its definition of success. Imagine an ambassador from the United States who goes to work in another country that is hostile to his own. Of course, he will want to be familiar with the people and culture of this place. But what if he became so assimilated into the culture that he began to think of this new place as his home? His allegiance to his home would be questioned. Christians must remember that we are simply on a pilgrimage through this world.
2. Hebrews 11:8-10. Why did Abraham live in tents? Why not build a huge mansion? The Bible says that Abraham was a wealthy man. Abraham lived in tents because he knew that this was not his home. He was looking forward to the city whose builder and architect is God! For Christians, our final destination is Heaven, much better than the promised land!

**How does this idea free us to be "supporters" instead of "consumers" (enemies)?**

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**Mark, Here I am inserting another manuscript on 3 John. I would encourage you to synthesize these two in order to make one lesson that uses the exegesis of 3 John as its core. I trust you can do this. I would ask that you get one of the elders (maybe Steve Boyer or Scott Croft) to read over it before you teach in on 24 August. Also, you will need to type up a handout using the Lesson 4 Template.**

**Thanks for the help.**

**Andy J.**

Well, before we turn to our book of the Bible, we need to confirm together one critical "structural" truth that undergirds all the things we will talk about tonight. We can get there by answering one question together.

- b. What is the great passion of God, with regard to his dealing with humanity? That he would get glory in his people.

1. That he would get glory - as they praise him for his mercy.

**Romans 15**

*<sup>8</sup>For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews<sup>[1]</sup> on behalf of God's truth, to confirm the promises made to the patriarchs<sup>9</sup> so that the Gentiles may glorify God for his mercy, as it is written:*

*"Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles;*

*I will sing hymns to your name.*<sup>[2]</sup> <sup>10</sup>Again, it says,  
*"Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people."*<sup>3</sup>

2. That knowledge of his glory would cover the earth.

### ***Habakkuk 2***

<sup>13</sup> *Has not the LORD Almighty determined  
that the people's labor is only fuel for the fire,  
that the nations exhaust themselves for nothing?*

<sup>14</sup> *For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD,  
as the waters cover the sea.*

3. That he would have a witness in every people group.

### ***Revelation 5:9***

*And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals,  
because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every **tribe**  
and language and **people** and **nation**."*

And later in chapter 7, we see that Christ will accomplish just that as we read:

### ***Revelation 7:9***

*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.*

4. That the glory of the Son would be known and delighted in by  
and through his people

### ***2 Thessalonians 1***

<sup>9</sup>*They [the ones who continue in rebellion toward God] will be punished with everlasting  
destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power*  
<sup>10</sup>*on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all  
those who have believed.*

So, whatever else we might say about him, it seems clear from these passages that God is a passionately missionary God. He has a great, eternal plan to call a people from throughout the world and to make the Glory of his name known through the preaching of the Gospel around the globe.

IV. Only Three types of responses to God's missionary passion.

So if we agree that this is God's great passion with regard to humanity, how should a Christian live in response to this reality? How should we think and, specifically our thought for this evening, what should be DO in light of this reality? The reality that the God who has loved us as Christians so richly, for his glory's sake, has a passion to expand his glory and extend that joy to people from all nations!

To consider that question I want to turn to a book of the Bible that may not be especially familiar to many of you, but one that has some of the clearest teaching in all of Scripture on the ways we can respond to the reality of God's missionary passion. So turn with me please to the book of 3 John.

Background:

In this letter, the Apostle John writes a short note to a friend, Gaius, apparently delivered to that Gaius by another friend named Demetrius. In particular, John has been encouraged by a report from some "brothers" who have returned from the church where Gaius is a member and they brought a good report of Gaius' spiritual health. Now, as I read verses 1-8 in the passage, look and see what two specific actions are commended (one implicitly and one explicitly) as evidence of a love for God's name and a faithfulness to work for his truth.

### **3 John 1**

*<sup>1</sup>The elder,*

*To my dear friend Gaius, whom I love in the truth.*

*<sup>2</sup>Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well. <sup>3</sup>It gave me great joy to have some brothers come and tell about your faithfulness to the truth and how you continue to walk in the truth. <sup>4</sup>I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.*

*<sup>5</sup>Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers, even though they are strangers to you. <sup>6</sup>They have told the church about your love. You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God. <sup>7</sup>It was for the sake of the Name that they went out, receiving no help from the pagans. <sup>8</sup>We ought therefore to show hospitality to such men so that we may work together for the truth.*

In light of an implied or understood passion for evangelism in the heart of God, what two fundamental responses are commended in this passage as good and honoring to God?

Answer: Those who Go to expand the Gospel and those who Send or Support the expansion of the Gospel.

Do you see that? Let's take a minute to look at each of them in turn.

a. *Go-ers.* First let's look at the "brothers" described in verses 5 – 7.

Read Verses 5-7

*5 Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers, even though they are strangers to you. 6 They have told the church about your love. You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God. 7 It was for the sake of the Name that they went out, receiving no help from the pagans.*

John commends these “brothers” to Gaius, thanking him for the way he has supported them in the past and encouraging him to continue to do it all the more in the future, and says specifically that he should treat them in a manner worthy of God. And then he mentions two things about these men that mark them out as Go-ers that especially deserve honor and assistance from the Church.

What are those two marks that show these “brothers” are God-honoring Go-ers?

1. *They went out for the sake of the name.*

First, these Christians are commended by John to Gaius because they “went out.” They had intentionally left the place that they were living and moved or traveled to another place. There is implied in this passage the understanding of some personal sacrifice and inconvenience, expense and difficulty. It seems clear that it would have been easier for these brothers to have stayed where they were, safe and secure in their own city, but they didn’t do that...they went out.

But, and more critical to their commendation is the reason they went out. They didn’t go out for the love of travel, they didn’t go out because their business forced them to relocate, they didn’t go out because they were curious about other cultures or longed for adventure. Rather, they went out “for the sake of the name.” It was because they longed to bring Glory to the name of Christ Jesus that they went out. It was because they longed to see people who didn’t know and love the name of Jesus come to worship him for his mercy.

2. *They took no help from the pagans (unbelievers).*

And, John makes it clear that this was a Christian mission, not a business trip, they were motivated by a desire to preach the Gospel freely. They were not charging people a fee to teach the Gospel, rather they relied on the support of the churches or on their own financial resources, or both.

Going out for the sake of the Name is a special ministry that John commends highly. When it is done for the glory of God it works to expand the knowledge of his truth and brings pleasure to God.

So...what about us personally and as a church? How can we respond practically to the Biblical commendation to “go” with the Gospel.

1. We can consider what claims the evangelistic imperative of the Gospel might have on our activities right now, in our current relationships, right where we are.
2. Pray and consider carefully whether you, individually, should go out for the sake of the name. Are there things that are not “God honoring” that are preventing you from seriously considering that response?

3. Talk to other Christians you respect about this issue. There is a tendency to want to “be serious” about such a thing before you talk with others, but such an attitude (while pretty natural) robs you of good counsel and Godly encouragement.
4. Talk to the CHBC elders early on in your thoughts. We as elders, and as a church body, want and need to be a part of your consideration of involvement in cross-cultural evangelism. Don’t wait until you are sure before you approach one of us, or one of the church staff, we want to help you with that process and it’s our privilege to do so.
5. Consider involvement in a short-term overseas opportunity. I hope that there will be a number of opportunities for CHBC members to do such things in 2003. Keep your ears perked and again talk to some of the elders or staff if you want to consider that more seriously.
6. Take advantage of opportunities to talk with people who have “gone out for the sake of the name.” Like the Buss family that is here living with us in 516 East Capitol. Also, the IMB needs a couple of our members to meet missionaries again at Reagan (and maybe BWI) airports next Monday, Oct. 28<sup>th</sup>. Flights arrive at 1, 4 and 6 PM. If you would be willing to take a few hours to help greet those folks, come find me after the service.
7. Read some good books from the Books stall on Missions like:
  - a. Mack and Leeann’s Guide to Short-term Missions
  - b. Let the Nations be Glad, by John Piper
  - c. Operation World
8. Attend the Missions Core Curriculum class when it is offered again next Spring.

Those are just some things that you can do personally to thoughtfully consider your personal, direct involvement in going out for the sake of the name.

But what if you are unable to “go” for various reasons? What is your responsibility in light of God’s missionary passion? Well there is a second response that John also commends in this letter. It is the only alternative that I find in Scripture for a Christian seeking to obey and honor God. And this response is the primary stated basis for John’s confidence the spiritual health of his friend Gaius. Did you notice that? John says that he hopes Gaius will enjoy good health and good circumstances in keeping with his evident good spiritual health (in verse 1). He hears that Gaius is faithful and walking in the truth. But what is the stated basis for that confidence in Gaius’ good spiritual state?

Answer: Faithful support for the brothers, these itinerate missionaries to the Gentiles. Certainly we know that a love for missionaries is not the sole mark of a healthy Christian, but John does seem to intend that we see it as a significant mark of spiritual health.

- b. *Senders/Supporters.* John recognizes there are some, many even, who are not sent out into the mission field, like his friend Gaius for example. But there is a mission for those who don’t go. Their mission is to provide support for those who do go, to deliberately, intentionally and lovingly support the spread of the Gospel at home and abroad.

Look again at what John writes to Gaius in verses 5-8

*<sup>5</sup>Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers, even though they are strangers to you. <sup>6</sup>They have told the church about your love. You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God. <sup>7</sup>It was for the sake of the Name that they went out, receiving no help from the pagans. <sup>8</sup>We ought therefore to show hospitality to such men so that we may work together for the truth.*

We also see the biblical command to “send” in Romans 10:14-15. “*How can they preach unless they are sent?*” And in Titus 3:13 we see Paul’s clear instruction to his friend Titus to “*Do everything you can to help Zenas and Apollos on their way and see that they have everything they need.*”

Paul writes to the Romans about his own ministry saying:

*Romans 15: 23- 24 <sup>23</sup>But now that there is no more place for me to work in these regions, and since I have been longing for many years to see you, <sup>24</sup>I plan to do so when I go to Spain. I hope to visit you while passing through and to have you assist me on my journey there, after I have enjoyed your company for a while.*

Sending, or supporting, is a vital part of the missionary enterprise. Without senders, the Great Commission will not be fulfilled. And that’s not all, we are commanded by Scripture to not only support and show hospitality to such workers, but to do so “in a manner worthy of God.”

Application:

So what does this mean for us? If we personally, and as a church, intend to be faithful as sender/supporters what questions should we ask ourselves?

Personal:

Well, first do you realize and consciously plan your life in order to free you to support workers who have gone out for the sake of the name?

Is your lifestyle, the house you live in, the car you drive, the job you hold, the school you send your children to, the clothes you buy, the vacations you take, the things you do with your time, all calculated to advance the praise of the NAME among all peoples?

Do you pray regularly for the workers that we support from CHBC? They are listed in the back of the church directory for just that purpose.

Have you tried to find ways that you can personally show support and encouragement to the Christian workers, the Buss family, who are staying with us while on their state-side assignment? This is a family that has gone out to work among Muslims for the sake of the name, how are you showing hospitality to them in order to work for the truth? I know

many in our church have shown wonderful hospitality to the Buss family and to others, but what about you?

As a church:

What about in our life together as a church? What implications does this passage have for the manner and degree to which we should work to support those who we “send,” either directly from our fellowship or as friends of our fellowship?

(Ask for thoughts from the congregation)

- We should make sure the nature of our care is not shoddy or half-way, but in a “manner worthy of God. What might that look like?
  - o Support fewer missionaries with more complete financial support. Trying to be the main source of support for the workers we assist. This allows them to have to look to fewer churches for fundraising and helps them to have a greater accountability relationship with us. We don’t want to just fund a lot of workers...we want to fund workers in a manner worthy of God.
  - o Care for needs while they are state-side. So we host the Buss family, and have hosted the Cline family, and hope to host others in the future.
  - o Maintain personal relationships with them through letters, emails.
  - o Try to make trips to visit and encourage them when possible.
  - o Pray for them faithfully. Paul saw this as one of his greatest needs, so he wrote to the church in Thessalonica saying simply, “Brothers, pray for us.”
  - o

Well, as best I can read Scripture those are the only two options if we want to be faithful in our response to God’s missionary passion and plan...we must either “go out for the sake of the name” or we must deliberately, intentionally and excellently encourage and support those who are sent. I just can’t see any other option, that is honoring to God. Though...there are other responses recorded in Scripture.

We see one such response in verses 9- 11. John continues,

*<sup>9</sup>I wrote to the church, but Diotrophes, who loves to be first, will have nothing to do with us. <sup>10</sup>So if I come, I will call attention to what he is doing, gossiping maliciously about us. Not satisfied with that, he refuses to welcome the brothers. He also stops those who want to do so and puts them out of the church.*

*<sup>11</sup>Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil but what is good. Anyone who does what is good is from God. Anyone who does what is evil has not seen God.*

Some people, for various reasons, have no love for those who are sent out for the sake of the name, no desire to be sent or to send. There can be various motivations for this, fear, pride, a sense of competition, selfishness, love for the comforts of the world and the comforts our money can bring us. Diotrophes seems to have been driven, at least on the

surface, by a sense of pride and competition...a desire to be first in his church, without honoring others beyond himself.

*Not satisfied with that, he refuses to welcome the brothers. He also stops those who want to do so and puts them out of the church.*

Well we may be sometimes characterized by apathy toward God's global passion for his name, but I trust none of us are vocal, active opponents of missions! But, friend, we shouldn't be too quick to draw a clear dividing-line between ourselves and this Diotrophes. What was the root of his evil actions? Well, it seems that he had made a bad investment with his heart, he chose to love himself and his place in this world, more than he loved the name of Christ. He ultimately didn't love the brothers, and didn't support them, because he loved himself and his place more than the Name for whose glory's sake they had gone out. What a stupid and tragic investment of his life and resources.

We should pray that God, in his kindness to us, will spare us from making such a mistake...that our hearts will be filled with the joy of loving and hoping in the hope that will not disappoint...the expectation that God will see the Glory of his name lifted up on the lips of people His Son died for all over the world...and that we will invest our lives and all that we have in that hope, here in DC and around the world.

[end inserted text]

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## V. A War-time mentality

During WWII, a motorist on the highway would periodically be met with large billboards that read, "Is this Trip Necessary?" The idea behind those placards was that every resource that was being used in the United States was one that was being held away from the soldiers on the front.

### 1. Discussion Questions

- Is this a legitimate mindset for us as Christians as we consider the need for the nations to hear the Gospel?
- What would a war-time mentality look like in the modern world?
- What are some ways that we can work to cultivate a war-time mentality?
- How would you define "extravagance" for a Christian?
- Does this mean that all Christians should be utilitarian ascetics? If no, why and how should we think about these things?
- What is the key issue in having a "war-time" mentality, outward behavior or inward motivation?

**\* Note: This is not meant to be a constraint on Christian liberty, nor to try to guilt people into reluctant obedience. Rather, this discussion should be helpful to prevent "thoughtlessness" by helping people to think about their motivations. Be gentle and**

**careful to point people to the motivation of meditating on the worth of the Gospel, not to a restrictive view of enjoyment.**

2. Some useful quotes and statistics that you can disperse throughout this discussion:

Shortly before he and his four friends were killed by the Auca Indians in their attempts to bring them the Gospel, missionary Nate Saint wrote this:

As we weigh the future and seek the will of God, does it seem right that we should hazard our lives for just a few savages? As we ask ourselves this question, we realize it is the simple intimation of the prophetic Word that there shall be some from every tribe in His presence in the last day, and in our hearts we feel that it is pleasing to Him that we should interest ourselves in making an opening into the Auca prison for Christ.

As we have a high old time this Christmas...may we be moved with compassion as our Lord was. May we shed tears of repentance for these we have failed to bring out of darkness. Beyond the smiling scenes of Bethlehem may we see the crushing agony of Golgotha. May God give us a new vision of His will concerning the lost and our responsibility. (p262-263)

“The seven hundred million dollars per year Americans give to mission agencies is no more than they give for chewing gum.” (p261)

All quotes from Randy Alcorn, Money, Possessions and Eternity

## VI. Conclusion

Every Christian must choose how he will live. There is a war going on in the world. Millions of people, thousands of people groups, have no chance yet to hear the gospel. If you are not a go-er, you must be a sender.

We should not spend too much time thinking about rules for our lifestyles, but rather we should spend our time thinking of, meditating on, reading about, and praying to the one who poured out his life to purchase us for God. Our worldview should always be primarily cast in the wonderful, searing light of the

Gospel. That, not a set of rules from the outside, will help us to develop an appropriately Biblical worldview.

Well did the hymnwriter understand this point who penned these lines:

*Turn your eyes upon Jesus  
Look full in His wonderful face  
**And the things of earth will grow strangely dim**  
In the light of His glory and grace.*