

“Missions 101”

Introduction: The following six statements form a basic, biblical, theology of missions, or missiology. They will hopefully challenge and guide us as individual believers and as a New Testament Church. This statement by Steve Saint is true in regard to missions. **“Show me how you live and I will tell you what you believe.”**

Before giving the six statements, it would probably be helpful to start by defining some terms in regard to missions. Avery Willis writes, “By *mission*, I mean the total redemptive purpose of God to establish his kingdom. *Missions*, on the other hand, is the activity of God’s people, the church, to proclaim and to demonstrate the kingdom of God to the world. The word *mission* comes from the Latin word *mittere* meaning to *send*. God is both the *sender* and the *sent* (in Christ). The church is *sent* by God on mission and cooperates with God *to send* missionaries.”

Here are six statements that form a basic theology of missions:

- 1. God is a missionary God (Jonah 4:10-11, Luke 19:10, John 17:18).** So our mission is rooted in the redemptive mission of God that is rooted in the loving heart of God.
- 2. Every follower of Jesus is a missionary right where we are (Matthew 4:19).** We have a sphere right where we are where we are to steward our influence well for the sake of the gospel as witnesses of Jesus (2 Corinthians 10:12-18).
- 3. Every Christian is also called to either go or send others as cross-cultural missionaries.** 3 John 5-8 says, “Beloved, you do faithfully whatever you do for the brethren and for strangers, who have borne witness of your love before the church. If you send them forward on their journey in a manner worthy of God, you will do

well, because they went forth for His name’s sake, taking nothing from the Gentiles. We therefore ought to receive such, that we may become fellow workers for the truth.” Tom Steller comments on this passage by saying, “We must either go out for the sake of his Name, or we must send and support such people who do, and do so in a manner worthy of God....It is not of secondary importance to be engaged in this ministry of sending. It is a very high calling. It is walking in the truth. It is the manifestation of a healthy and prospering soul.” However, we must remember that giving to a missions offering does not satisfy our requirement to be witnesses.

4. The mission of the church is the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20).

5. The end result of fulfilling the Great Commission is the planting of local, New Testament congregations. I believe Acts gives us the pattern for a true New Testament Church, which definitely includes church planting. Aubrey Malphurs says, “If we desire to know how the early church understood Christ’s commission, we can find the answer in the Book of Acts. Acts is a church-planting book because much of what takes place does so in the context of starting new churches.”

6. The ultimate purpose of missions is the global glory of God (Revelation 7:9-10). In Let The Nations Be Glad, John Piper has written, “Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn’t. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man. When this age is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. But worship abides forever. Worship, therefore, is the fuel and goal in missions.”