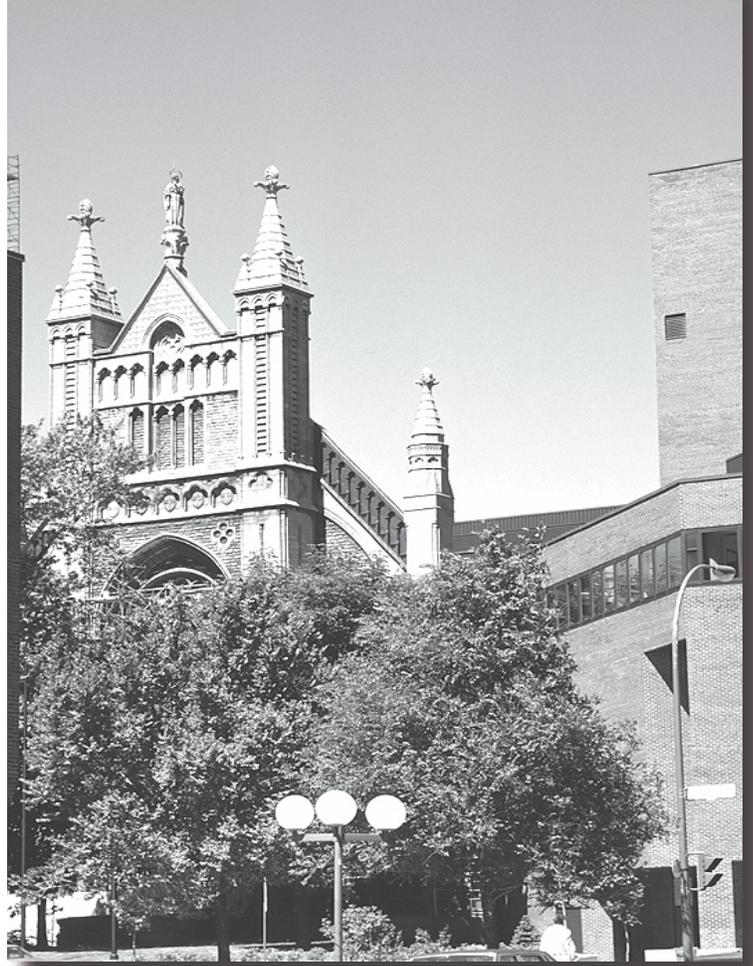


God's Purpose for the Church

“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen” (Mark 16:15, 20).



Every friend of Jesus is a friend of missions. Where there is a healthy spiritual life, there is a love for the missionary cause. When you consider the reasons of this, you obtain an insight into the glory of missions, and into your calling to embrace this cause as a part of your soul's life. Come and hear how much there is to make missionary work glorious and precious.

1. It is the cause for which Jesus left the throne of heaven. The heathen are His inheritance, given to Him by His Father. It is in heathendom that the power of Satan has been established. Jesus must have Himself vindicated as the conqueror. His glory, the coming and manifestation of His kingdom, depend on missions. (Isa. 2:8; Matt. 24:14; 28:18, 28; Mark 13:10; Luke 21:24; Rom. 11:25)

2. Missionary work is the principal aim of the church on earth. All the last words of the Lord Jesus teach us this. (Mark. 16:15; Luke 24:47; John 17:18; Acts 1:8) The Lord is the head and He has made himself dependent upon His body, upon His members, by whom alone He can do His work. (1 Cor. 7:21) As a member of Christ, as a member of the church, shall I not give myself to take part in the work, that this goal may be reached?

3. It is the work for which the Holy Spirit was given. See this in the promise of the Spirit: in the leading of the Spirit

vouchsafed to Peter and Barnabas and Saul. (Acts 1:8; 11:12, 23, 24; 8:2, 4; 22:21) In the history of the Church we find that times of revival go hand in hand with new zeal for the missionary cause. The Holy Spirit is always a holy enthusiasm for the extension of the kingdom.

4. Missionary work brings blessing on the Church. It rouses to heroic deeds of faith and self-denial. It has furnished the most glorious instances of the wondrous power of the Lord. It gives heavenly joy over the conversion of sinners to those who watch for it with love and prayer. It cleanses the heart to understand God's great plans, and to await the fulfillment of them in supplication. Missionary work is a token of life in a Church, and brings more life. (Acts 14:27; 15:4, 5; Rom 11:25, 33; 15:10; Eph. 3:5, 8, 10)

5. What a blessing it is for the world. What would we have been, had not missionaries come to our heathen forefathers in Europe? What a glorious blessing has missionary work already won in some lands? What help is there for the hundred millions of heathen, if not in missions? (Isa. 49:6, 12, 18, 22; 54:1, 2) Heaven and hell look upon missions as the battlefield where the powers of Satan and of Jesus Christ encounter one another. Alas! that the conflict should be carried on so feebly.

6. There will be a blessing for your own soul in love for missionary work. (Prov. 11:24, 25; Isa. 58:7, 8)

You will be exercised in faith. Missionary work is a cause for faith, where everything goes on slowly, and not according to the fancy of men. You will learn to cleave to God and the Word.

Love will be awakened. You will learn to go out of yourselves and your little circle, and with an open eye and a large heart to live in the interests of your Lord and King: you will feel how little true love you have, and you will receive more love.

“Missionary work is the principal aim of the church on earth.”

You will be drawn into prayer. Your calling and power as an intercessor will become clearer to you, and therewith the blessedness of thus co-operation for the kingdom. You will discern how it is the highest conformity to Him who came to seek the lost, to give up your own ease and rest to fight in love the fight of prayer against Satan in behalf of the heathen.

Young Christian, missionary work is more glorious and holy than you suppose. There is more blessing in it than you are aware of. The new life in you depends upon it more than you can as yet understand. Yield yourself up anew in obedience to the Word to give missions a large place in your heart; yes, in your heart. The Lord Himself will further teach and bless you.

And if you would know how to have your love for missions, as the work of your Lord, increased, attend to the following hints: Become acquainted with the missionary cause. Endeavour by writings and books to know what the condition and need of heathendom is; what, by the blessing of the Lord, has been already done there; what the work is that is being done now. Speak with others about this cause. Perhaps there could be instituted in your neighbourhood a little missionary society. Perhaps one of your prayer meetings, say, once a month, could be set apart for prayer in behalf of the missionary cause. Pray also for this in secret. Let the coming of the kingdom have a definite place in your secret prayers. Endeavour to follow the material for prayer in the promises of the Word about the heathen, in the whole Scriptures, especially in the prophet Isaiah. (Isa. 49:6, 18, 21, 22; 54:1, 3; 60:1, 3, 11, 16; 62:2) Give also for missions: not only when you are asked; not merely what you can spare without feeling it; but set apart for this cause a portion of what you possess or earn.

Let the Lord see that you are in earnest with His work. If there is missionary work that is being done in your neighbourhood, show yourself a friend to it. Although there be much imperfection in that work, -- and where is there work of man that is perfect? -- complain not of the imperfection, but look upon the essence of the cause, the endeavor to obey the command of the Lord, and give your prayer and your help. A friend of Jesus is a friend of missions. Love for missionary work is an indispensable element of the new life.

Son of God, when Thou didst breathe Thy Spirit upon Thy disciples, saying, 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost,' Thou didst add: 'As the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you.' Lord, here am I: send me also. Breathe Thy Spirit into me also, that I may live for Thy kingdom. Amen.

1. 'Unknown makes unbeloved,' is a word that is especially true of missionary work. He who is acquainted with the wonders that God has wrought in some lands, will praise and thank God for what the missionary enterprise has achieved, and will be strengthened in his faith that missionary work is really God's own cause.

Among the books that help to awaken interest in missions are biographies of missionaries. *The Life of Henry Martyn* is one, formerly issued by the Book Society. *Uncle Charles* is the name of a book with an account of missionary work in South Africa. Some books on missions are generally to be found in our Sabbath school libraries.

2. We should never forget that the missionary cause is an enterprise of faith. It requires faith in the promises of God, in the power of God. It has need of love, love to Jesus, whereby the heart is filled with desire for His honor, and love to souls, which longs for their safety. It is a work of the Spirit of God, 'whom the world cannot receive': therefore the world can approve of missions only when they go forward with the highest prosperity.

3. Let no friend of missions become discouraged when the work proceeds slowly. Although all baptized men are not converted, although even amongst the converts there is still much perversity, and some fall back after fair professions. Amongst our forefathers in Europe, a whole century was occupied with the introduction of Christianity. Sometimes a nation received Christianity to cast it off again after thirty or forty years. It required a thousand years to bring them up to the height at which we now stand. Let us not expect too much from the heathen at once, but with love and patience and firm faith, pray and work, and expect the blessing of God.

Excerpt from: The New Life: Words of God for Young Disciples of Christ by Andrew Murray (1828-1917).