

Global Missions: Part 2

Is the “I” in You?

“Finding Your Role in World Evangelization” by Todd Ahrend
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Ingrained in the minds of many Christians is the idea that to be involved in mission work means one thing only: living overseas long-term. This is an unhealthy way to approach missions because it excludes most people. Even those that go long-term will eventually come home and need to appropriate their vision in another way. If it is an attribute of God to desire the redemption of all nations, then it must be cultivated into every one of His followers as an attribute. That is why it is vital to the Church that other avenues of involvement in missions are explored. The following habits are not to be viewed in terms of “which one is for me?” The idea is that a person who prioritizes God’s global plan will do all or most of them.

The main habits of missions are:

1. Going
2. Praying
3. Sending
4. Welcoming [...]

Going

This habit is most commonly associated with missions. In the past and even still today when someone thinks about missions this is the most natural association. A definition of the goer is the person physically present, laboring on the mission field. Going may mean a short-term trip or an extended amount of time. Ultimately, the goer is willing to completely immerse themselves in an unfamiliar culture with the intention of furthering the gospel in that culture. They are innovative, low maintenance, steadfast, and persevere with little fellowship.

In Exodus 3:7-10, God mentions nine different times to Moses that He is concerned with the Israelites and their condition as slaves and is getting ready to bring them into the Promised Land. God speaks to Moses. Look at Moses’ reaction, “But Moses said to God, ‘Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?’” (Ex. 3:11). Sounds like us sometimes, doesn’t it? Our temptation is to focus on ourselves and our insufficiency! We think there is no way God could want us involved and so many of us never enjoy the blessing of participating. Look at God’s reaction; He puts the focus back on Himself in the next verse, “I will be with you” (Ex. 3:12). Before Robert Morrison left to be the first Bible translator in China, someone asked if he really thought he could change the 2,000 year problem of idolatry in China; his response, “No I don’t, but I expect God can.” [...]

Praying

A passage that challenges us to pray for the world is found in Matthew 9:36-38, “When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.’” Jesus saw the vastness of lost souls compared to the scarcity of the laborers and He looks to the disciples and says, “Ask.” What a powerful image! Not go, or preach, or have a conference, but ask. Let’s evaluate our own prayer lives and see if we come to God with our desires or if we are concerned with His. Obviously, we need to pray for ourselves and yes, we

need to lift up our family and friends, but God also desires that we join together and intercede on behalf of all nations and beg Him to send forth laborers into the field.

Sending

Paul the Apostle has an interesting observation, “And how can they preach unless they are sent?” (Rom. 10:15). The unreached do not have a chance at hearing the gospel if there are not people on the home front funding and praying for those that are going. It is like asking the question, “which is more important, the rescuer who goes down into the well to save a life or the man at the top holding the rope?” You can’t have one without the other. There was a principle in Israelite warfare, “The share of the man who stayed with the supplies is to be the same as that of him who went down to the battle. All will share alike” (1 Sam. 30:24-25). Why? Because they are equally important in God’s army.

In our culture we think we are entitled to live at whatever standard matches our income. Our reasoning is that since a person makes \$60,000 a year, they should live at \$60,000. When a person gets a raise, their standard of living gets a raise too! Maybe when a Christian gets a raise or comes into unexpected financial gain, God intends that person to be a resource for someone else! This thinking is so contrary to our culture. [...]

Welcoming

America hosts a large number of internationals—the world is at our doorstep! Over 650,000 international students and scholars are studying here from 188 countries of the world. What a perfect opportunity to extend God’s grace and love to the world! And you don’t even have to leave. The Welcomer gets his name from the idea that he welcomes those from other countries to his country.

The foreigner is close to the Lord’s heart. Over forty times in the Old Testament alone we are commanded to care for the foreigner in our land,

“The alien living with you must be treated as one of your native-born. Love him as yourself, for you were aliens in Egypt. I am the Lord your God.” Lev 19:34

*He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing. And you are to love those who are aliens, for you yourselves were aliens in Egypt.
Deut 10:18-20*

God reminds the Israelites of their past exile in Egypt so that they will be motivated to love the foreigners, for they once were foreigners. Similarly, we should be reminded of our past, how we were foreigners to God and yet he had mercy on us. [...]

Everyone can be a welcomer. All it takes is a little time, energy and a willingness to say hello. [...]

Relevant Scriptures

Deut. 10:18-20	<i>He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow...</i>
1 Samuel 30:24-25	<i>“Who will listen to what you say? The share of the man...</i>
Matthew 9:36-38	<i>When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them...</i>
Romans 10:15	<i>And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it...</i>

Questions for Discussion

- How has this article broadened your ideas about your involvement in global missions?
- Of the four habits discussed in this article, what do you think are your strongest habits currently? How are these being implemented in your life?
- What is a habit that you would like to grow in?
- What could be the next step for your growth in this habit?