

God's Big Picture

Genesis 1:26–28 & Revelation 7:9-12 p. 1-2; 1223

What we've said so far:

A healthy church is a congregation that increasingly reflects God's character - as his character has been revealed in his word.

*A church's **ultimate** priority is to glorify God.

*Two **essential** marks of a healthy church are:

→ Expositional Preaching, and → Sound Gospel Doctrine.

*Other **important** marks of a healthy church are:

- a right understanding of conversion & evangelism;
- a biblical understanding of church membership;
- biblical church discipline;
- a biblical concern for discipleship and growth;
- biblical church leadership.

*Two final **important** marks of a healthy church are:

→ biblical understandings of the practices of prayer & missions.

→ What is Mission?

Missions is evangelism across boundaries, in a place and among a people where it is largely unknown.

→ Mission is God's Big Picture: the basic storyline of the bible.

Creation - Fall - Redemption - Consummation

a. Creation

b. Fall

c. Redemption

Isaiah 11:9 – *...for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.*

d. Consummation (or Restoration/Fulfillment)

★ In the midst of "Redemption," we have a commission.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.
(2 Corinthians 5:17-21)

So, what then does "the biblical practice of missions" look like?

Dever suggests 7 ways we practice missions, and I thought they were worthy of our consideration.

1. Learn About God's Word and God's World.

2. Pray for the Spread of the Gospel in Other Places.

3. Plan to Make Our Church Increasingly Useful to the Spread of the Gospel.

4. Pay to Support Those Who Go Out for the Sake of the Name Who Can't or Shouldn't Support Themselves.

5. Send Pastors and Others to Help Establish Churches in Gospel-Needy Places Far Away.

6. Care for Those We Send.

7. Wait for a Faithful Witness to be Established, and Help Those Sent Out to Endure.