



Engage Until He Comes



**2022 CMPC
Mission Conference
March 9-13**

“Engage Until He Comes”
Chestnut Mountain Presbyterian Church
Mission Conference

Dates: March 9-13, 2022

Theme Verse: Luke 19.13: *“Calling ten of his servants,
he gave them ten minas, and said to them,
‘Engage in business until I come’ .”*

Schedule:

Thursday, March 3

6:00pm Men’s Prayer Night and Dinner

Saturday, March 5

Day of Prayer and Fasting

Wednesday, March 9

5:15pm Dinner

6:30pm Opening Night with Missionary Testimonies

Desserts from Around the World in the CLC

Thursday, March 10

5:15pm Dinner

6:30pm Round Robin with Missionaries

Coffee and Conversation in the Gathering Room

Friday, March 11

5:15pm Dinner

6:30pm Opening Worship Service

Saturday, March 12

8:00am Men’s Breakfast

10:00am Ladies’ Brunch

5:00pm International Dinner

6:30pm Worship Service

Sunday, March 13

8:30am and 11:00am Worship Services

10:00am Sunday School with Missionaries

6:30pm Closing Worship Service



EXALT EQUIP ENGAGE

At Chestnut Mountain Presbyterian Church, we want to exalt God as we worship Him, equip God's people to carry out the ministry of the church, and engage God's world with the gospel of Jesus Christ. One of the ways that we seek to carry out our mission is through our annual Mission Conference. This is one of the most important events in the life of our church family as it's a tremendous opportunity to be challenged about how we're doing in meeting the responsibilities of being the people God calls us to be and engaging our hearts, minds and wills in the tasks He gives us.

CMPC held its first annual mission conference in 1974 with a goal to raise \$5,000 to support world missions. God moved in a powerful way, and more than \$20,000 was pledged, enabling the church to support 11 missionaries. Today, our annual Mission Faith Promise totals more than \$350,000 and we support 50 missionaries in 21 countries.

Plan to participate in as many of the pre-conference and conference activities as you can. The fellowship opportunities occurring as we eat together each night (along with the Saturday Men's Breakfast/Women's Brunch) enable us to reflect together on how God can use us in His unfolding plan to reach the nations with His message. Saturday's International Dinner, as we bring various dishes from around the world, is a great opportunity to experience foods from different cultures and anticipate that great banquet one day with believers from every people group on earth (Isa. 25:6-9; Matt 26:29; Rev 19:9).

Please be in prayer that God will use this conference to magnify Himself and will enable us to spread the aroma of Christ in Chestnut Mountain and the world. We will have a church-wide Day of Prayer and Fasting on Saturday, March 5 to prepare our hearts for what the Lord will do.

John Batusic

Engage in Business Until Jesus Comes

Occasionally you come across a quote that stops you in your tracks. Amy Carmichael has a lot of such quotes, and one in particular grabbed me recently. Actually, it's not even her quote but from a colleague of hers, but it made me stop and think. Here's the quote: *Life is not long enough for everything*. In a world where people make Bucket Lists of what we want to do, and there are endless options of how to spend our time and money, the fact is we do not have time or the resources to do everything people suggest, or the world provides the opportunity to do. Life is just not long enough for everything.

But we do have to make decisions. That's what Jesus means when he says, **Engage in business until I come**. (Luke 19.13)

So how do we decide what business to **engage** in? Some of you have most of your lives ahead of you and you are genuinely asking the question: what does God want me to do? Then many of you are approaching my age and we realize we do not have as many days left as we have already lived, yet we are still asking the question: what does God want me to do, especially with the days we have left? So we all can ask this question—whether we are young or not as young—knowing the truth: *Life is not long enough for everything*. We have to choose. We must make decisions about what business to **engage** in.

I have this book in my office: *5,000 Places to See Before You Die*. I enjoy looking at it. I enjoy reading it, but I know the list is about 990 places too long. So I want to carefully choose the ten places I really want to see because life is not long enough for everything.

One business we all must be **engaged** in is the Great Commission. So let me say to us who are older: we need to think strategically how to use the years we have left and the resources that have been entrusted to us. Some need to explore how God could use us to assist missionaries around the world by going on the field. Some need to figure how to leverage our financial assets to support the kingdom more. Some of us need to spend more time in prayer for missions. I'm thinking it would be good for us to meet in groups and talk and bounce ideas off each other and see how strategic we can be in serving the Lord. *Since life is not long enough for everything*, how does God want me to live the rest of my life? What should I **engage** in?

Those of you who are younger need to be asking the same questions. We need to be helping our children and grandchildren answer these questions. The mission conference is a great time to think about these questions. Plan on participating in the whole conference, prayerfully seeking God's direction for each one of us in how we should **engage** in business until He comes.

-What steps can you take to start engaging in global missions?

-What steps can you take to grow in global missions?

Individually, we have to make decisions on what we will engage in. In the same way, our church cannot support everything. Have you ever wondered how our leadership decides to support missionaries?

CMPC Mission Strategy

CMPC seeks to be a catalyst to assist, encourage, facilitate and support planting Reformed, reproducing churches with indigenous leadership in key areas around the world for the glory of God. CMPC also seeks to be a catalyst to assist, encourage, facilitate and support CMPCers who are called by God into full-time ministry, including those who are called as church planters, campus workers and as cross-cultural missionaries. To accomplish this, the strategic focus in our missionary support, short-term journeys, and other mission related activities (e.g. Mission Conference, Mission Moments, Missionary Prayer Emails, etc.) is:

- Supporting work in North Georgia, North America and the world.
- Supporting the work of formal partnerships.
- Supporting and developing full-time workers from CMPC.
- Increasing mission awareness, mission mindedness and mission participation in the entire congregation.

Holly Dempsey
Engaging in Hospitality

Romans 12.13: *“Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.”*

Years ago, when Brian and I were newly married, we were invited to a couple's home after church. It ended up being one of the most memorable evenings we've ever had. Don and Cindy graciously asked us to join their family for dinner. We sat around the table and shared chicken noodle soup and peanut butter sandwiches. They had not planned a meal or cleaned their house for guests, but they had prepared their hearts to be faithful to the call of biblical hospitality. Even now, their hospitality is a model for us to be faithful to our calling in Christ.

Romans 12:13 characterizes hospitality as one of the marks of a true Christian. Today we put little emphasis on this characteristic, but it is one of the most tangible ways to show our love to others. When we practice hospitality through a loving, giving, and sacrificial spirit, it results in opportunities for relationships, discipleship, and evangelism. At the same time, we exemplify God's covenant relationship with us.

As we consider our mission conference theme, "**Engage** Until He Comes," let's evaluate how we can **engage** in our homes, church, work, school, or even at the grocery store. We have been entrusted with much. How are we using our possessions and our gifts to bless others? Are we looking for opportunities to serve those in need, build relationships, encourage others in their faith, and share Christ with the lost? When assessing our own lives, how will we show hospitality—even today?

Hospitality doesn't have to be complicated. It can be as simple as ordering pizza, going out for coffee, or roasting marshmallows over a fire in the backyard. Hospitality could look like inviting the new visitor at church to sit with you during the worship service or spending time getting to know the visiting missionary during the mission conference. Whether a college student, young couple, single mom, or empty nester, all people want to be loved and included.

So, what hinders us from practicing hospitality? 1 Peter 4:9 says we should "Show hospitality to one another without grumbling."

Here are just a few ways we may grumble or make excuses:

- I don't have the money.
- My house isn't clean, or it's too small.
- I'm too busy with my kids.
- I'm too tired and don't have time.
- I'm an introvert, and I may not have anything to say.
- We don't have anything in common.

We need to be mindful of how we complain, to renew our minds with what God's word says about hospitality, and to pray for God to turn our hearts to be more people-focused and less self-focused. Can you imagine what a difference it would make in our church, community, and world if we were faithful to our calling of biblical hospitality?

-What does hospitality look like for you and your family?

Travis Brown
Read **Isaiah 6.1-8**

What makes you want to engage until He comes? A sense of duty? Compassion for the lost? There are many reasons we might want to share the Good News of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection with those around us, but God's Holiness is at the core. Let's take a look at God's Holiness and how it impacted Isaiah.

-How is God's majesty described in verse 1?

-The seraphim are powerful angelic beings. Their name literally means "burning ones." Imagine the power that these burning winged beings must have! Despite their powers, they still must cover their eyes and feet in the presence of God. Why do you think that is? (*cf.* Exodus 3:5 and 33:20)

The seraphim are unable to look at God's Holiness and must still do his bidding! Isaiah realizes that if *they* can't withstand God's Holiness then he doesn't stand a chance. He comes to understand God's Holiness in a way that makes him hyperaware of his own sins. He confesses his own sins *and* the sins of his people. Take a few minutes to do that now.

The seraphim then purify the very thing that Isaiah said was unclean by taking a burning coal from the altar of God and touching it to Isaiah's lips. Normally when something clean touches something dirty, the clean thing becomes stained (imagine cleaning up spaghetti with a white shirt). But here the Holiness of God consumes the filth of sin, purifying Isaiah. To put it differently, Isaiah's sin is consumed and incinerated by God's Holiness.

With his newly purified lips, Isaiah is now equipped to carry out God's task. The order is important here: Isaiah is only tasked with **engaging** the world *after* he confesses his sins and is purified from his sins.

If our ability to **engage** others with the Gospel was up to us, our unclean lips would soil the glorious message. Thanks be to God, however, that our guilt has been taken away and He has atoned for our sins. As we go out into the world to **engage** others, remember that we aren't telling them a hypothetical message—we're telling them something that has already happened to us.

Sue Ostien
Only God Knows

Read **Matthew 25.31-45**; vs. 40: *“And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’”*

vs. 45: *“Then he will answer them, saying, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’”*

He was just 21 years old and was carried by his parents into our dirt-floor clinic in rural Haiti. Comatose, obviously in pain, he was dying, probably from AIDS. I started an IV, gave him some fluids and Morphine (that we had smuggled in) and got him stabilized. Several of us sat with his distraught parents, praying with them and singing Psalms. God had equipped us to deal with this crisis in our medical mercy clinic. We could not have done this on our own.

Matthew 25:31-45 calls us to minister to those who are strangers, hungry, naked, sick, or in prison. One of our goals in mercy ministry is to exalt God by bringing Jesus and hope to hurting people. We are to be present serving in God’s world at home, in our community, or internationally. Every one of us has something to offer to others. Sometimes it’s just a prayer or holding a hand; sometimes it will be more.

Philippians 2:12-13 says, *“... continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God who works in you to will and to act on behalf of His good purpose.”*

Do you know where our community soup kitchen is? Have you ever contributed to CMPC’s food pantry? Do you know where local food pantries are located? Do you know how to help a hurting woman access the local women’s shelter? What about serving the homeless in our community at Good News @ Noon? One way to serve Jesus is by serving our community in local mercy ministries. Maybe your next step is to become a volunteer! Jeremiah 29:7 calls us to be a blessing to the city in which we live. Start there. Only God knows where that might lead!

Terry Ensley

The Importance and Power of Teamwork and Prayer in the Gospel

Some of the more powerful concepts of Scripture are taught in metaphors: farmers sowing and reaping, soldiers fighting, and athletes competing. Much of farming is done by families working in teams. The military and much of athletics is about teamwork. A powerful picture of the nature of teamwork in ministry is painted for us in Philippians 1:27, *“Only let your manner of life be worthy of the Gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the Gospel.”* Let’s pull out some of the words and phrases:

Worthy

Gospel of Christ

One spirit

One mind

Striving

Side-by-side

Wow! A team worthy of the gospel of Christ. The teammates labor and fight side-by-side with singleness of mind and spirit.

That leaves us to question, does Scripture specifically pull prayer out for this powerful team effort? In Romans 15:30, Paul makes an urgent request—no, not *request*, rather he *begs* them to become a team striving in prayer. *“Now I beg of you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of The Spirit, that you strive together in prayers to God for me.”* (NKJV) It should strongly grab our attention when we read that Paul appeals to them based on their relationship to not one but two members of the Godhead. Also, it is interesting that here it takes two English words, “strive together” to translate the one Greek word *“sunagonizomai.”* With that said, we should remember Paul had great opposition; and in his great desire for the Gospel to reach the nations, he begged them to pray for him as a team. Or, to pull in the language used earlier, a team working side-by-side.

In 2 Corinthians 1:8-11, Paul tells us he was in despair of life. *“...God...delivered us from so great a death...whom we trust that he will deliver us ... you also helping together in prayer for us... .”* (NKJV)

“Helping together” translates the Greek word “*sumperilambano*” which means in its most literal sense “assisting together,” with respect to prayer to save the life of Paul. We see in these verses that Paul first credits God, then the prayers of a team of people, for saving his life.

A recent example of teamwork that caught the attention of many was UGA’s winning of the National Championship. We saw a team win because they had honed the ability to “strive together.” Because of the unity of the team, all members were synchronized and expended every ounce of strength and skill they possessed for the good of all.

Our spiritual ears should hear Paul beg us to have this same type and level of teamwork in ministry, and especially in prayer, to take the Gospel to the people of our homes, community, and the nations.

-Is God calling you to join a small group to pray for global missions? Or, to consistently pray for the needs of the church body?

Larry Piedt
As We Are Going

Luke 14.23: *"Then the master said to the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.'"*

What a thrill it is to watch the birth of a baby: The tears of joy seeing that new birth, watching a child grow and being able to be a part of the nurturing, helping through the mistakes and challenges of life, and eventually seeing the child become an adult. I'm not referring to a physical birth, (although I've experienced this with all four of our sons) but the spiritual birth of a new believer.

I've had the privilege of leading many to Christ over the years, but this new birth is one of my favorites.

Many years ago, as a First Officer for Northwest Airlines (later Delta Airlines), I was flying with Captain Bill. I had known him for a brief time, and I knew he had attended a local church in Memphis. Bill, not being really interested in spiritual things, allowed me to change the conversation to eternal life. Throughout the trip which lasted three days, I used several illustrations to explain the Gospel. On the final day before we left for the airport, I received a call from his hotel room. He seemed anxious to meet with me. As I walked into his room, I was surprised to see him in tears and he cried, "I can't wait any longer, I want eternal life now." We got on our knees, and he trusted The Lord Jesus as Lord and Savior. I was able to clarify his commitment to Christ and talk about spiritual growth on our flight home.

As soon as he met his wife (who picked him up), he used the tract that I had given him to lead her to Christ on their way home. As soon as he got home, he picked up the phone (before cell phones) and called his pastor at 1:00 A.M. He said to him, "Why did you never tell me about this?" The following week he was baptized and had a reception at his home, including many of his fellow pilots from the airline. During the evening, he asked me to share the Gospel message to the whole group as I had shared with him.

Bill became a Sunday School teacher and very active in that church and shared that story many times with others.

This is just one of many examples of everyday evangelism experiences in our everyday lives. Jesus said, "As we are going," in Jerusalem (our neighborhoods, our workplaces, our friendships and families) in Judea, (as we travel throughout our state through our work) in Samaria, (places we do not necessarily want to go), and to the uttermost parts of the world, (eventually mission journeys).

Someone you know needs to know Jesus!

-Are you trained and equipped?

-Have you ever shared the gospel with anyone?

-Do you know what to say? Do you know how to respond to typical questions about the good news of Jesus?

**Beginning in April, Larry and Nancy Piedt will be offering a class on how to share your faith in Christ. This will be for anyone who wants to grow in his or her personal understanding of the gospel message, as well as anyone who wants to learn how to share the gospel message with neighbors. If you have questions or want to join the class, please see Dee Hammond.*

Dee Hammond
Engaging God for Guidance

Read **John 14.15-31**

Engaging in global missions can be as clear as mud. How do we even begin? Every year our church supports many different missionary units around the world. Currently, we support nearly 50 partners in 21 countries around the world. We support missionaries focused on unreached people groups, pastors on college campuses, local church plants, missionaries focused on mercy ministries, and missionaries engaged in other ministries. If one of the goals of the mission conference is to **connect with missionaries**, how can a regular CMPCer keep track of them all? There are so many! Another outcome that we want to see from this year's conference is people **praying for global missions**. With so many missionaries, so many updates and so many prayer requests, how can our church make sure we are praying for everyone? Additionally, what about **giving to missions**? Should CMPCers give directly to a missionary, by faith promise, by check, by direct deposit, through an estate? There are so many options! By the way, how much should a person give to missions anyway? **Going cross-culturally** with the message of the gospel is a high calling. Many people in our church wonder what it means to be called to the mission field. How does a person know for certain if he or she is called? What are the steps that someone needs to take to become a missionary? How does a family know if they are called to go cross-cultural? Who makes the decision?

Sometimes it's very easy to be confused about our individual role in global missions. These, and many other questions, are probably (hopefully!) swirling around in your mind during this season. With so many opportunities before us, we can be overwhelmed, even to the point of being paralyzed with no involvement in missions at all. However, this is not what the Lord would have for us. He has instead promised to guide us in all that we do. He will guide us in our daily lives, in our decisions, and yes, in missions too!

In today's reading Jesus is giving the "Farewell Discourse" to His disciples on the night before He goes to the cross. We can see very clearly the importance of God's Word in our lives (vs. 23-24). Additionally, we see the Father has promised the Holy Spirit to be with us and remind us of all that the Lord said while He was here.

God's Word and the Holy Spirit are crucial when we consider how we are to engage in global missions. God, the Father, has sent us God, the Holy Spirit, to be with us always. The Holy Spirit is our comforter, our advocate, our intercessor, our helper, and our counselor. The Holy Spirit leads us and guides us as we attempt to engage in global missions. As we engage God, He promises to guide us to answers that will help us be more Kingdom-minded.

So, don't be overwhelmed. Move forward in small steps. Read God's Word daily. Pray. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you decide what your next, best, step is in missions. God promises to remind you of what Jesus taught when He was here. He promises to lead you. He promises to walk with you. Remember, the greatest communicator of all time is the Holy Spirit, but too often we have our ears clogged up with the things of the world.

-How is God calling you to engage in global missions?

Kasia Tunnell – Missionary to Poland

Jeremiah 15.16: *“Your words were found, and I ate them, and your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart, for I am called by your name, O LORD, God of hosts”*

When Germany invaded the Netherlands in the spring of 1940, Corrie ten Boom and her family found themselves thrown into the horrors of war. This Dutch watchmaker’s story of bravery and sacrifice, as she helped save the lives of countless Jewish families, is a beautiful picture of faith in action. The depravity and horrors Corrie encountered are very difficult for us to imagine. Yet there was one part of Corrie’s life that made her supernatural display of hope, forgiveness, and love for others possible—it was her deep faith in and love for her precious Savior, Jesus Christ. The Ten Boom family held fast to the Word of God. From holding Bible studies in their house to reading passages to prisoners of the concentration camp where Corrie and her sister were held, the Bible and its deep truths were the center of Corrie’s life. She **engaged** those around her with the words of hope and eternal life found in the Bible.

The world in which we live is much different from the ancient world of the prophet Jeremiah or the realities of World War II. Yet amid this changing scenery there is an immutable God and His unchanging Word. There are transcendent truths found in the pages of the Scriptures that are as true and powerful today as they were decades and centuries ago.

So how do we **engage** our modern world? How do we respond to the rebellious man of the 21st century? How do we speak to hurting and brokenhearted people? The answer to that question is found in our delight in the Word of God. Do we meditate on it as Jeremiah did? Is it front and center of our lives? Do we find it sweet and satisfying? J. Gresham Machen said that “In the Bible, there is that which meets every need of man, which answers every mood, which speaks to every heart.” The message of the Bible is not only cross-generational but also cross-cultural. It speaks to all of us because all of us are made in the image of God.

During our family devotionals, we tell our kids that we can’t truly love our neighbor if we don’t know what it means to love God. And we can’t truly love a God we don’t know. So, take delight in His Word. In its pages, you will find refuge and hope that nothing else can offer. Corrie once famously asked, “Is prayer your steering wheel or your spare tire?” Let me ask you a similar question—is God’s Word your steering wheel or your spare tire? My prayer is for the Bible to become our steering wheel as we **engage** the world until our Savior comes.

Nathan Tunnell – Missionary to Poland

1 Corinthians 1:31: *“Therefore, as it is written: “Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.”*

While we think about what it means to “**Engage** Until He Comes,” I thought it would be helpful to reflect upon why or for what purpose we are to **engage**. In his epistle to the church in Corinth, Paul convicts the believers of their desire for glory and their need for acceptance and approval from men. They were forgetting that God, through the ministry of the Spirit, was the only acceptance and approval needed. We are no strangers to this desire. From powerful kings of the ancient world to the man of modern society, the lust for recognition has been poisoning our hearts for centuries. Like Pharisees, we want our good deeds to be seen, our efforts to be rewarded, and our names to be exalted.

Soli Deo Gloria, Glory be to God alone, was one of the 5 Solas of the Reformation which summarized the basic belief system of the Reformers. At the heart of this was the conviction that everything we do is for the glory of God alone. This stands in sharp contrast with the prideful and self-glorifying modern world. As Christians, we should reject any notion that we deserve any credit for our work and acknowledge that everything we have is a gift from our Creator. As we **engage** others with the good news of the Gospel and see to the needs of our communities, we should use the gifts God has given to serve one another “in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ” (1 Pet 4:10-11).

One of the biggest joys of parenting young children is the privilege of catechizing them. As we go through each question in the Westminster Shorter Catechism, we talk about what each of the answers mean. It’s a joy to see the face of our youngest son light up when we ask him, “What is man’s chief end?”. We teach them that grace and mercy are offered to rebellious sinners to the glory of God alone. We teach them justification by faith alone, in Christ alone, to the glory of God alone. We strive for the central focus of our time each night be done for the glory of God.

If we are to “**Engage** Until He Comes,” it must be for the God’s glory. And the only way to truly glorify the Father is to glorify the Son. And glorifying the Son means that we repent of our sins and look to the finished work of the cross because the Holy Spirit has given us a new heart.

Dean Warnock
Discovering Gifts from God

Romans 12.3-8: *“For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. ⁴ For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. ⁶ Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; ⁷ if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; ⁸ the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.”*

In July of 2015, I had open heart surgery to replace my aortic valve. After a successful surgery my doctors said I would have a resurgence of energy with the proper blood flow, and I waited and waited for it to come. Doctors tried vitamin B12 shots, steroids, and energy drinks to no avail. I decided to see an oncologist and after many blood samples and a bone marrow biopsy in May of 2016, I was diagnosed with chronic lymphocytic leukemia. My wife’s first thought was, how long does he have? But the strength of Jesus came over me and told me everything was going to be alright.

Soon after that, Pastor John organized a hands-on prayer session with many in the church, and I knew God meant for me to help others from that time. I was to use this as a gift from God to help others with cancer. I joined a website called *My Leukemia* and have reached out to others on the website and in our own church with encouragement and research about their disease.

The word cancer is one of the scariest words we have, but it also can be the discovering of the one of the gifts God gives each of us. Paul writes in 1 Timothy 4:14, *“Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership.”* Every Christian has been given a gift from God and often several gifts. Do you know what your spiritual gifts are? If not, ask one of the pastors or elders to help you discern yours.

Faith Promise Giving in Missions

2 Corinthians 8.1-5: *“We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, ² for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. ³ For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, ⁴ begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints— ⁵ and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us.”*

What is Faith Promise? A Faith Promise commitment is an agreement between you and God that, as God enables, you will give a specific amount during the year to the Global Missions program. This is a commitment to give by faith, based on God’s promises, expecting Him to enable you to give it.

What is the Biblical Basis for It? 2 Corinthians 8,9; 1Chronicles 29:14,16; Luke 6:38; Malachi 3:10; Psalm 37:5; 2 Chronicles 9:6

What Does it Entail? Faith Promise requires a commitment. It is committing yourself to a specific amount of money, and by faith, based on God’s promises, expect Him to enable you to give it. This helps you to reprogram your whole life priority system so you begin to actively look for God’s provision.

Who is Called to Participate? God’s Word instructs all believers to go and reach. Pray that every family would be involved.

How is a Faith Promise Supplied? From the experience of many individuals and churches, there are three general ways God uses to supply a faith promise:

- God provides money in dramatic, unexpected ways
- God leads people to reorder their priorities
- God shows people creative ways to generate income to give

How Do I Make a Faith Promise?

- Pray for what the Lord would have you do and know that what He commands He also enables.
- Commit yourself to make a Faith Promise, realizing that your faith will grow as you stay committed to that promise.
- Look for various ways God will use you to give your promise.
- Give faithfully as God enables you.

Dee Hammond
What are we doing?

Have you ever stopped to think about what exactly we are called to *do* as Christians? A few answers are to love God with all that we are, to abide in Christ, to love our neighbor, to serve God, and to reach the lost world with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Maybe you are thinking of something else, but hopefully you agree with all of these. Unfortunately, when we try to understand what it means to engage God's world, things can get a little blurry. What are we doing? Evangelism or Outreach or Witnessing or Pre-Evangelism or Missions? This is obviously meant for a longer discussion, but here are a few thoughts:

Missions

- **"The specific task or purpose that the church is sent into the world to accomplish."* – Kevin DeYoung
- **"God's will that every people group be reached with the testimony of Christ and that a people be called out for his name from all the nations."* – John Piper
- **"If everything is mission, nothing is mission. If everything the church does is to be classed as "mission," we shall need to find another term..."* – Stephen Neill
- *Not everyone is a missionary, but only those who have been set apart by God and called to carry the message of the gospel to the nations. (Acts 13.1-4)

Evangelism, *evangel*, is derived from the Greek word "*euangelion*" which is translated *good news*.

- *From the same word, we derive the word *gospel*.
- *We find also that many words we use in English are in reality synonymous—*evangel(ism)*, *gospel* and *good news* all speak of the same thing and find their root in the same word. They speak of the act of spreading the gospel and to the content of the message that is given. They refer both to the method and the message.

Outreach is not found in the Bible, though the idea certainly is throughout the Bible.

*Outreach implies action more than message.

*When a church engages in outreach, it is reaching out to the community in order to meet needs or to let people know of its existence.

*Outreach helps us answer the question: "If CMPC closed her doors and shut-down for good, would the community notice? Or, to say it another way, "Would the community be impacted if CMPC decided to close down?"

Witness, "*martures*", is the word for martyr. (Acts 1.8)

*As a result of what they have seen (witnessed), they will be the ones to share it with others (witnesses).

*This is a very strong word. Giving proof or confirmation of what has been seen or heard. Making something known. One who has information and gives away information.

Pre-Evangelism is more of a lifestyle. (1 Peter 3.15)

*Everything that a Christian does that will cause a non-Believer to question his or her actions or reactions in everyday life.

There is clearly a significant difference between these terms; however, all are noble actions and bring honor to God. All are needed as well! The bottom line is the Holy Spirit is working in us and through us as we engage God's world. Defining terms is very important. As well, our actions are important and should not be underemphasized, but people are not saved by actions. They are saved by the gospel message of Jesus Christ dying for sinful man.

**If you are looking for a Sunday School class that discusses these various ideas, join us in The Harvest Sunday School class at 10:00am in The Gathering Room. (Room A102)*

Sarah Tilley

Colossians 4:2-4: *“Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. ³ At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison— ⁴ that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak.”*

A few years ago, a friend of mine invited me to go with her on a Prayer Walking mission journey to a closed country in the Middle East. My first response was a hard no. I am not proud to admit this, but I remember thinking, “what’s the point in taking off ten days of work, and buying an expensive plane ticket just to pray?” But I could feel the Holy Spirit prompting me to pray about giving this opportunity consideration.

As I prayed and read God’s Word, the Lord reminded me of Acts 12 where Peter was placed in prison, and the church prayed earnestly to God for Peter to be released. God answered their prayers by sending an angel of the Lord to rescue Peter out of prison. The Lord humbly reminded me of how He not only listens to our prayers, but desires for us to pray for His people. Through this I felt the Lord calling me to go on this Prayer Walking journey.

Right before entering this closed country, we were informed that two local missionary women would be facing a trial in the nation’s capital during the time that we were there. They were being charged for denying the Muslim faith and for sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In this country, the punishment for these crimes is the death penalty. These two missionary women’s trial was to decide not if but when they would be facing the death penalty.

I will never forget the secret prayer meeting that our team held for these two missionary women the night before their trial. I know that we were being joined by thousands of believers all over the world, praying that these two women’s lives would be spared. Our loving Heavenly Father answered yes to these prayers and both women are alive to this day, freely proclaiming Christ and sharing the Gospel in the United States.

I confidently know that God did not “need” Sarah Tilley’s prayers in order to spare the lives of these missionaries. But I am so grateful that He graciously and lovingly reminded me of the power of prayer and how He desires for us to earnestly pray to Him. How incredible it is that the Creator of the universe invites His children to know and enjoy Him through prayer!

When I think back to the incredible opportunity that I had to be in a closed country, I’m reminded to pray for one of our CMPC missionaries, Emily. In Colossians 4, Paul asks the church to pray that God may open a door for the Word, to declare the mystery of Christ: something I need to be reminded to do daily.

Emily chose to give up freedoms that I get to enjoy every day and potentially risk everything for the sake of the Gospel. As you read this devotional, please take some time to pray for her and the people with whom she is sharing the Gospel.

Simple and effective ways to pray for our missionaries:

Pray for Open Doors: Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message. Col. 4:2-3

Pray for Boldness: Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel. Eph. 6:19

Pray for Acceptance: Pray . . . that my service in Jerusalem will be acceptable to the saints there. Rom. 15:31a.

Pray for Refreshment: Pray that I . . . together with you may be refreshed. Rom. 15:32b

Pray for Safe Travel: Pray . . . so that by God's will I may come to you with joy. Rom. 15:32a

Pray for Protection: Pray, too, that we will be saved from wicked and evil people, for not everyone believes in the Lord. 2 Thess. 3:2.

Pray for Rapid Evangelism: Finally, dear brothers and sisters, I ask you to pray for us. Pray first that the Lord's message will spread rapidly and be honored wherever it goes. 2 Thess. 3:1

Bob Bradbury
Are You Prepared?

1 Peter 3:15: *"...but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect"*

The theme of this year's mission conference is "**Engage** until He Comes." That is similar to our Lord's final words to His disciples, what we call the Great Commission: "To go into all the world and preach the gospel." It is an unchanging mandate given to every believer and has never been rescinded. Along a similar line are Peter's words in 1 Peter 3:15 where he exhorts his readers to "always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks us for the hope that is in us."

Recently my wife and I went through a light case of COVID. It was kind of like a cold without any bad side effects. I think that one of the reasons it was so light was that we had been taking two natural resources that we regularly make, namely elderberry syrup and hydroxychloroquine. In essence we were preparing our immune system for any upcoming attacks against it.

In a similar way, we can prepare to make a defense of our spiritual hope. How? A good place to begin would be to write out your testimony of how and when Christ became real to you. Go over it, perhaps sharing it with another believer for fine tuning. Be sure to tell how Christ has made a difference in your life since He has become your Lord and Savior and that you now have a new purpose in living: namely to live for the glory of God (Col. 3:17). Moreover, becoming a Christian does not mean you are now perfect, but you now know where to find forgiveness.

When you feel it tells your story, you may want to ask Dee Hammond, our pastor of Missions and Outreach, if you can share it with him. He may have additional suggestions. Then begin to pray that God will lead you to share your testimony with someone else—perhaps at school, your place of employment or in your neighborhood. Don't be blown away when the first opportunity comes because if you are praying and want to share your faith, opportunities will come. God will open doors. You can count on it.

Sarah Booker
Our Unique Mission

John 17.17-21: *"Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth. I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me"*

As I ponder these verses, there is much that can be said. However, I want to key in on four words in this passage: **sanctified, truth, world, and sent.**

Jesus' desire is that you and I be **sanctified**, set apart to a special purpose and unique mission. All Christians are called to be separated from the unbelieving **world** spiritually while also being active in the **world** in a practical way. So, what is this special purpose and unique mission for which we have been called? First, we are called to get to know God whose word is **truth**. Only as we get to know the author of all **truth** can we carry out our unique mission, to be **sent** out into the **world** with that **truth**. You see, the more we know God the more we will love Him, and the more we love Him the more we will trust and obey Him. Furthermore, it's only when we truly know our God that we will love Him so much that we want others to know and love Him too. Then, we see the need to **engage** in sharing the **truth** of Jesus with the **world**. Just as Jesus' disciples were **sent** out into the **world**, we who "believe...through their word" are **sent** so that others may hear and believe the **truth**: the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Do you really trust this **truth**? If you do, is there anything that's keeping you from spending time in God's Word, from getting to know Him, and from doing all you can to see that others know Him too? Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any hindrance that's standing in your way.

Jason Cunningham
Praying Boldly

Read **Acts 4.23-31**

In our ongoing work to **engage** the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Church must face the reality of an existing and growing threat of opposition and even violence for preaching the Gospel. In Acts 4:23-31, the early Church is faced with the same challenge. Peter and John have just been arrested, threatened, and released for engaging God's world through the preaching of the Gospel. After their release, Peter and John report this news to the early Church. The first thing to note is that the disciples' reaction upon hearing that Peter and John were threatened was to praise God and pray!

In their prayer, we find a model that can give us confidence in our task. First, the Church acknowledges the sovereignty of God. They start by reminding themselves that they are petitioning a God who governs all creatures and their actions. If God is powerless over certain events, it makes no sense to ask Him to change them. We must be fully persuaded of God's providence. Next, they call to mind that God has revealed Himself through His Word. They recognize that God spoke by the power of the Holy Spirit through David who was emboldened in Psalm 2 to proclaim that nations that do not "Kiss the Son" are destined for destruction. Finally, they acknowledge that despite Jesus' violent opposition leading ultimately to His death, this was exactly what God wanted to happen.

Men of great faith throughout history have faced opposition, imprisonment, and death not because evil men triumphed over them, but because God foreordained it for His glory and the building up of His Church. Being in the right frame of mind, they are now ready to petition God. They have brought the Sovereign God, Creator God, and Omnipotent God into their minds. The threats of the Sanhedrin suddenly seem like pebbles among mountains. Now, we might think they would pray for safety, their lives being recently threatened. But we need to keep in mind that if God had intended to keep us safe while serving Him, He would have ordained another means of building His Kingdom. Yes, we should pray for safety; but sometimes God's plan is bigger than our own security. "Look to their threats and grant us boldness." The disciples pray that they would remain bold in their task of engaging the world, despite the external threats that loomed before them. And when they prayed, the place began to shake. The disciples prayed and the Holy Spirit showed up. That same Holy Spirit is available to us today. Revivals are born in the atmosphere of bold prayer. As we seek to **engage** a dying world, may our prayers reflect a confidence that no amount of opposition can overcome God's plan.

Sending Missionaries Well

Read **Philippians 4.14-19**; vs. 19: *“And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”*

Have you ever wondered how CMPC supports our missionaries? We consider our missionaries to be part of our CMPC family around the globe. They are our “hands and feet” in places that we cannot go. It is a partnership, and we want it to be done well. Therefore, we support them through three important means: The Faith Promise, prayer, and sending short-term mission teams.

The Faith Promise: This is our sole means of supporting our missionaries financially. This offering is comprised of individual commitments to give a specific amount to cross-cultural missions, as God provides, over the next year.

It should expand, rather than decrease or replace, our normal giving. This commitment is non-binding, but seriously undertaken. There are many creative ways we can free up resources in order to control our spending habits, adjust our lifestyle, and make personal sacrifices. These may lead us to cut back on things like cable TV, magazine subscriptions, entertainment, eating out, new clothes, etc. While these things fade away, the work of missions has eternal results. Prayerfully consider what amount the Lord would have you commit to missions in the year between the conferences. Join us in this challenging exercise of trusting God to provide all our needs as we seek to partner with the work of the gospel overseas. And remember: The Faith Promise benefits the giver as well as the recipient (Acts 20:35)!

Faith Promise Goal: The Mission Committee has a goal of \$350,000 in view so that we may support those whom God raises up to go cross-culturally with the gospel in answer to our prayers according to the command of Jesus: *“The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field” (Matt. 9:37-38)*. Meeting this goal enables us to uphold our current commitments.

We also pray for our partners. If you’re not currently receiving regular prayer e-mail updates sent to us by our missionaries, please contact Cindy Burch at chestnutmountain@gmail.com If you want to be involved in a missions prayer small group, please contact Dee Hammond.

Finally, we support our missionaries by sending short-term teams to serve alongside them, to encourage them, to help them with additional resources if they have need. When we visit our missionaries, we can truly experience what they do day after day, and it helps us to know how to pray more specifically for them.

Vikki Turk

Sharing the Love OF God

John 14.15: *"If you love Me, you will keep My Commandments."*

Do we get to pick and choose? Do we realize that God provides all we need to obey His commandments through Jesus Christ, the Word and Spirit?

He pours His love—Love of Him first, into our hearts to overflow to others so that we make Him known. Fears are overcome as we focus on His glory. Ask and receive the help He has promised through His Word and Spirit. He empowers us to yield ourselves to Him as His instruments of love, love that shows when we pray for those the Lord puts in our paths or speak the Truth of the Gospel in love.

I saw such love demonstrated when invited to come, meet and pray for a Hindu yoga instructor. Asking God's glory and will, I prayerfully and purposefully went to the first class. It wasn't very far into the class when we were instructed, "This is where we give thanks to the sun..." and I was saying, "Lord, I'm out of here! What would you have me do?" He gave me the thought, "Where is my glory if you leave?" I prayerfully stayed, thanked the instructor after class and told her that I couldn't reconcile her request to give thanks to the sun because I worshiped the Creator of the sun, Jesus Christ. Imagine my surprise when she said "Oh, I love Christians!" Compelled by His love, I shared Jesus' Words that He is the Way, the Truth and the Life, and that no one could come to the Father except through Him. By His love, we love, share, teach, disciple and pray that God give the increase to the seed of His Word, thereby loving Him by keeping His Commandments: The Great Commandment and the Great Commission!

Acts 20.24: *"But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God."* (KJV) What moves us? What do we count dear? Do we see in our lives the Lord's ordained course to "follow with joy?" Do we see ourselves as having received the ministry of reconciliation to share the Gospel and disciple others? Scriptures tell us that we are new creations, Christ's Ambassadors, ministers of

reconciliation with His Word of reconciliation. The only way to a life of obedience and joy is in Jesus: to yield ourselves completely and be filled with the One in Whom all the fullness of the Godhead dwells. He is Love Personified; the Source and Sustainer of the love we need to love Him and others.

Let's yield, ask, and receive the "How much more," the Father has promised in and through the Holy Spirit, as He pours forth the love OF GOD in us to others.

John Rollo

Help and Hope for the hopeless

Read **Matthew 25.31-40**

When Teddy A. found the young Ethiopian mother, she was in the second story of a shack in the slums of Addis Ababa, bed ridden and curled into a fetal position. She was taken to hospital, died of complications and never made it home. At the Orthodox Funeral, the priest said, "I tell you this woman was saved. She came regularly for confession, often took holy water, came to church when she could, honored the saints. You too must do this to be saved."

Contrast that with another Ethiopian Mother. She stood before a small group formed under the ministry of Ethiopia Act. "When I found out I had AIDS. I was devastated: Kicked out by family and husband; I had no hope for my son and me. You reached out to me, helped me with medication, and taught me about Christ. I will not likely live a long life, but I hope to see my son graduate from high school. But I now know where I will be one day, and when I need a hug, this is where I come."

The team ministers to the lowest of the low in the slums, in many cases moms who have been kicked out of homes by the person who infected them. The team works with the main teaching hospital. That hospital looks to the team to train recipients. They have been so successful that the WHO has asked them to train their workers. Several local churches, after years of ignoring those with HIV, have come and asked if they could take patients and care for them in their church.

Things like this happen because of the support of people in churches like ours. We know that. But can you imagine what it might be like to actually go and serve in this way: to be a part of a work bringing hope to the hopeless?

Brian & Megan Moore – Missionaries to Germany

Read **Isaiah 62:1-9**

God's people are uncertain. Who should they trust? Many of the Prophets of the Bible and the books of Kings make clear that false prophets and competing religions reigned supreme, spewing forth contradictions and confusion. Recent history and events have bothered the people of Judah quite a bit. For example, according to Isaiah, God will deliver His people from Assyria but *not* from Babylon? How could this be? Are they really *that* sinful and disobedient? Either way, it invites other concerning questions too, such as: Is God still trustworthy? And if so, maybe He's not as powerful as we thought? Maybe He can't stand against the so-called gods of Babylon? Maybe He's decided to abandon His people altogether?

The Book of Isaiah is God's resounding answer to such questions, declaring detailed prophecies of future events, revealing more of His power and character, and comforting His people with His faithfulness to His promises. Chapter 62 is among the passages intended to comfort God's people.

In verses 1-5, the Lord makes an incredible statement, promising that His people will ultimately one day be His shining, perfect, beautiful bride. God's people will be His delight. And until this happens, *He* will not keep silent nor will He be quiet. He will faithfully and tirelessly pursue this end for His name's sake and for the sake of His people.

In light of this promise, the Lord sets before His people a very intriguing challenge in verses 6-9. Let it be a challenge for us today as well. In effect, God says: "Hold me to these promises! Do not let me off the hook. Stand, watch and never be quiet. In the same way, I won't stop working to fulfill these promises, *you should never stop reminding me, bothering me and asking me to do it!*" The prophet says, "Give Him no rest...." In the words of Jonathan Edwards, we should "sue God and force Him to fulfill His work" through our prayer lives.

Far too often, we take the great promises of God for granted, but here God calls us to actively **engage** with His promises. In many ways, I imagine that this is what Paul meant when he wrote that we should "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17). What better and more exciting way to **engage** God and **engage** the world until He comes than to continually remind Him of and ask Him to fulfill His promises? These promises will direct and focus our prayer lives in new and life-giving ways as we are regularly reminded of and eagerly anticipate God's fulfillment. As Jacob says while wrestling with the Lord, "I will not let you go until you bless me."

May our prayer lives be conducted with the same conviction and confidence. And may we all look forward to the day God predictably but astonishingly fulfills all that He has promised in ways more marvelous than we ever could have thought or imagined.

Cindy Burch
Peace in the Dark

Read **Psalm 42, I Thess. 5:18**

It was early August 2021. COVID was peaking in our area. Jesse had been in and out of the hospital 3 times and we were back in again, this time for a week and a half. Bruce and I were pulling shifts to be with Jesse; one of us needed to be there all the time. The hospital was at capacity; staff were stretched and under stress. One night I listened for a long time to a nurse who cried while telling about the toll COVID care was having on her and her fellow co-workers. That night, I was there with Jesse. It had been a long exhausting day and the room was finally dark and quiet. Jesse was sound asleep (Ativan is quite effective) and I was thinking about all the close calls and the unexpected new issues Jesse was facing. I remember praying and asking God, "Is this it? Are you calling Jesse home? How much more can he endure?" I began to remember and thank Him for times of His faithfulness to us—which is an incredibly long list. That night, I was comforted by the presence of He who never forsakes and promises to be with us. God gave peace and confidence that He had Jesse and I could rest.

Many of you remember because you were praying for us. At the end of August when Jesse came home with pressure sores, you continued to pray until those healed in mid-November. When you saw us, you asked about Jesse. You brought food to our house; you sent cards and notes. You called and emailed. Some came and visited. On November 30th Jesse had more seizures and we went back to Braselton ER (where they remembered us and greeted Jesse by name!!). You joined with us, praying for his care and healing even as being in the hospital / COVID concerns kept us physically apart for a long time. You were a lifeline to us of practical help and encouragement.

How you ministered to us is similar to how we can minister to our missionaries: praying for their needs, encouraging them by sending cards/ notes/emails, calling them—reminding them that they are remembered and being brought before the Throne of God through prayer. Contact me at chestnutmountain@gmail.com and ask to be on the list to receive emails from our supported missionaries. Join us by coming alongside and **engaging** in His work by praying for our missionaries as they serve in their various areas of the world.

Will Owens
God Gives the Growth

1 Corinthians 3.6-7: *“I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.”*

Matthew 28.19-20: *“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”*

As we are thinking about the global mission conference and **engaging** the lost world around us, these are just a few of the verses from the Bible that come to my mind and are a great encouragement to me! 1 Corinthians 3 tells us that it is God (not us!) who gives the growth. What a great relief to hear that. We cannot change a person's heart, neither can we make a believer grow in their walk with the Lord. That does not mean we just sit back, choose not to **engage** and do nothing, however. We need to be planting and watering so that God will give the growth! We ourselves have been changed by God, so now it is our job to go and tell everyone about that life-changing experience!

Now that can be a scary thing. It can make us wonder, how do I share? What am I supposed to say? What if I can't answer a question he or she might ask? What does Matthew 28:20 tell us? *“I am with you always, to the end of the age”* Wow! What else do we need to know? Jesus is with us until the end! He has given us a Spirit of strength. We can be confident when we share the good news of the gospel of Christ because we know we have Jesus with us. We don't want to hide the great gift we have—the gift of eternal life, spending eternity with God! Just as if we would tell people if we won the lottery or if our favorite sports team won the championship or if we had a new member in our family born. We don't want to be shy about the Gospel.

So I challenge you as I challenge myself; share the gospel with as many people as you can—family, friends, people you meet in public, wherever you are! Interact with them and build relationships with them. Don't be afraid of what questions they will ask, or if you won't know the answers. Rely on the Holy Spirit. Remember, God gives growth and Jesus is with you until the end.

Deb Eidson
Just Open the Door

1 Thessalonians 2:8: *“So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us.”*

In the beginning of this school year, God nudged me to start a women’s Bible study with the female teachers at school. This year started off very hectic with many teacher absences and few substitutes to cover classes which almost made me wait on starting the Bible study. After the last school year, where everyone was wearing masks and feeling isolated from others even though we were in the same building. I felt the call to **open my door** and open my heart to this ladies’ Bible study.

We meet each week to go through a book, to share our lives—the good parts, the bad parts and even the ugly. This day has become my favorite day of the week. God has done amazing things in this Bible study! He is moving the hearts of many of these ladies, pushing all of us to get into His Word, to pray with a purpose, and to spend time alone with God! Examples of God’s work:

*A woman and her husband and having biblical discussions.

*Another woman is pointing her child to God while going through difficult times.

*We are all praying for each other, every day of the week.

I am in awe that God would ask me to be a vessel as Paul was a vessel in Thessalonica for the Gospel of God. Paul is a model for us all, but understand that Paul was only a vessel. All he did was **open the door**; then he allowed God to do the work. God has given me a burden for these ladies. There are days and topics that seem scary. It has driven me to spend more time in His Word, to pray a little longer and a little more often, to be more open to His purpose and not my own.

John Piper said, *“I know many of you feel like you have little or nothing to give. I am bold to say on the authority of God’s word: if you are a Christian, that is not true. You have Christ. You have the Holy Spirit. You have the word of God. You have spiritual gifts. You are a new creation in Christ. You are a fountain. This is not a matter of personality. This is a matter of faith. Trust him, and give yourself.”* All we have to do is **just open our door** and be the vessels God is calling us to be. He will do the rest! Our God is an amazing God! He is too good to keep to ourselves!

Steve Saville
Engage with Prayer

Matthew 14.16-19: *“But Jesus said, “They need not go away; **you give them something to eat.**” ¹⁷They said to him, “We have only five loaves here and two fish.” ¹⁸And he said, “Bring them here to me.” ¹⁹Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass, and taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds.”*

Prior to the feeding of the 5,000, Jesus first challenges the disciples to provide for the crowd: “You give them something to eat.” Once the disciples acknowledge and understand how inadequate their resources are (“we have only”), Jesus blesses His heavenly Father, multiplies the food, and gives it to His disciples to be ministers of His provision. It begs the question of us: whose resources are we ministering out of?

Jesus’ words help us recognize how totally inadequate our resources are to engage in ministry (serve). When we recognize that, it drives us to our knees in prayer seeking God to equip us with His power for missions. As Jesus tells us, “for apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:5). Sometimes we attempt to minister out of our own completely inadequate resources. When we pray, we access the unlimited resources of our King and become ministers of His provision!

Why then is prayer sometimes a last resort instead of a first priority? Perhaps we think we don’t need to: I’ve got this, God; I can handle it. Walk by sight and not by faith. When things appear to be going well, we don’t think we need to, or we become complacent. Paul tells us in 2 Cor. 1:8-9 that they had difficult circumstances, “utterly burdened beyond our strength.” “But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead.” Perhaps our motive in part is our own glory in self-reliance instead of God’s glory through total dependence on Him.

Engaging God in prayer helps us disengage from self. Psalm 46:10 says “Be still, and know that I am God.” Literally stop striving. Stop. Wait, but an active waiting—a waiting filled with prayer, a waiting of dependence on God, a knowing that He is God and there is no other.

CMPC's Evangelism and Outreach focus is "Driven by relationships and undergirded by prayer." The key and starting point is always our relationship with God, bought and paid for by Jesus Christ. For Christians, our relationship with others becomes an overflow of our relationship with God. Spending time in prayer helps increase our heart's capacity for God and others, increasing our love for God and others. Love is defined in part as actions that flow from a committed relationship. Prayer has real results. God has ordained His relationship to the world in such a way that He will respond to our prayers and connect His people—His church—to "and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power to those of us who believe according to the working of His great might." Eph. 1:19

Finally, when we pray for missions, we can pray confidently knowing that God has guaranteed the goal of missions will succeed. He says so in the rest of Psalm 46:10."I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted in the earth!"

-Whose resources are we ministering out of?

-What is it that keeps you from praying?

Dee Hammond
Engage Now!

1 Thessalonians 1.7-8: “...you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. ⁸ For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere...”

In the 1950s there were five young missionaries who were not ashamed of the gospel and knew that it was the power of God for the salvation of souls. These men prayed and prepared for lives of service to the Lord. They followed the leading of the Holy Spirit to an unreached Stone Age tribe deep in the jungles of Ecuador. In many ways, their example, like the Thessalonians, has sounded forth around the world.

When missionaries come to visit CMPC, I love to ask how they prepared for the mission field and how we can be intentional in our daily lives if we feel the Lord calling us to missions. What can we learn from the Auca Five before they made it to Ecuador? Consider how they each lived before God called them to the mission field: While in high school, **Roger Youderian** overcame the effects of polio so that he could play basketball. He later went to college on three scholarships and went into agriculture. After a few years of drawing maps of farms, he enlisted in the Army and became a paratrooper. **Pete Fleming** became a Christian at age 13 and in high school was the Valedictorian. In his graduation speech he said, “*I believe that we have a right to go back to the Bible for our anchorage. Here we have a recognized foundation... let us build upon it.*” He went to college as a philosophy major, eventually earning a master’s degree. **Ed McCully** was part of Wheaton College’s championship football team, a National Oratorical contest winner, senior class president, and a law school student. He took a part-time hotel clerk job so he could both study for school and the Scriptures. **Nate Saint** became infatuated with flying when he took his first flight at seven. He took a daytime job in a welding shop and went to night school, completing his high school course in a few months. He worked at a small airport where he learned to fly small planes, and he gained his mechanic’s license while working in an airline overhaul shop. In school, **Jim Elliot** was a champion wrestler, honor student, president of the Student Foreign Missions Fellowship, amateur poet, and Student Council Representative.

This is just a small glimpse into the lives of five men that gave everything for the Gospel to reach the unreached. They were not lazy. They were not wrapped up in the materialistic things of the world: big money, big houses, big businesses, but were focused on living lives of service to the Lord. In many ways they were just like you and me. Jim Elliot wrote in his journal: *"Wherever you are, be all there! Live to the hilt every situation you believe to be the will of God."* God is still calling people to go to the mission field, and He might be calling you.

-Are you listening to God's call?

-If you sense God calling you to the mission field in any capacity, please contact Dee Hammond. We want to pray for you and with you.

-If you have questions about what God might be doing in your life, please contact Dee Hammond.





