

And who the heck am I though? I'm Dave Hyatt. I'm one of the pastoral staff here and have been for about 15 years now, and my role is in the area of missions and outreach. And so as we get started, you know, we're in the Book of Acts, and I'm going to touch on Acts, but I won't spend a ton of time there. Apologies to those who made the beautiful displays and all those things. And but we're going to talk a lot about around the Book of Acts. And I want to ask you a question.

What's the greatest endeavor that humanity has ever undertaken? What's the most audacious thing that people have ever set out to do? You know, could it be maybe the human genome project of mapping the three billion base pairs in a human genetic makeup or maybe something ancient like the Great Wall of China that spans 13,000 miles. It took over a thousand years to build in different times, or maybe the Great Pyramids or putting a man on the moon. You know, these are massive, massive undertakings by humanity working together, billions of dollars spent and work. But I would like to say, I think that the most incredible undertaking that a human being, that humanity has ever undertaken is the effort to fulfill the Great Commission of Jesus Christ.

And we'll talk about what that is, but let me read one author and I'm stealing a lot from this guy's book, Steve Richardson. And he says this. He says... As soon as I find it, I will read it to you guys. "The Great Commission is the most ambitious undertaking in the history of the world. It involves hundreds of millions of people and spans thousands of years. It encompasses a vast number of languages, cultures and locations. No other endeavor, even the creation of the cosmos itself, compares with the audacity of God's redemptive plan. Adding shock to astonishment, God has entrusted a significant measure of this monumental task to weak-kneed men and women like you and me. At stake are the reputation of God and the eternal destiny of hundreds of millions of souls." This is the Great Commission of Jesus Christ is the statement that Jesus made in Matthew 28:18-20. You can show it up here. It's a command that Jesus gave, a commission, something like a commissioning of an officer or the commissioning, the command, the charge that Jesus gave to his disciples at the end of his life, after his resurrection, after his death, his burial, his resurrection. Before his ascension, he said to his disciples, to these weak-kneed disciples, he said, all, "then Jesus came to them and said, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always to the very end of the age." So it's my contention that this is the most ambitious undertaking of that's ever been done in human history, that this command and the millions of people who have said yes to this, I will engage in this, the billions of dollars and two thousand years of history this baton has handed on from those disciples to us by the power of the Spirit to say, yes, we will continue. But what does it involve?

Well, two things I want to point out. So where it says all nations there, now, maybe you're thinking, OK, so Jesus told his disciples to go and talk about him and every nation of the earth. That's not that big a deal. That's 195 countries. You know, you know, one dude went around the world in 80 days, apparently. You know, we could we could knock this out in no time. Right. We could. Well, when he says nations, the word that Jesus uses for nations there, that Matthew, that we translate nations isn't a country. There are 195 countries in the world, but there are over 17,000 nations. Nations are ethnic, ethnolinguistic people groups. Tribes that have an affinity, the same culture, same language across which the gospel through which it can spread. But it can't go

beyond that so very easily without crossing a cultural barrier. So a nation there, there are 17,000 nations and the smallest little islands in the world and little tribes tucked away in the hardest to reach places on planet Earth. And Jesus says, go to them, go to them, go to every single nation. And don't just I don't just want a marketing campaign. I don't just want a banner somewhere that says, hey, Jesus did it. Jesus saves. He's the Lord. And you can translate into the language and everything's done. You get to all those 17,000. He said, make disciples and baptize them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey everything I've commanded you. So this is this is deep work among 17,000 distinct people groups. And his disciples must have been terrified. What are you talking about? What are you talking? How can we go to every single nation on planet Earth and make disciples and teach them about you, all that you've taught us to obey everything? And he says, but look, guys, look, surely I am with you always to the very end of the age.

Now we turn to the Book of Acts, this beautiful, beautiful Book of Acts where this is being carried out. And we've got to see over the last several weeks, if you turn with me to Acts 13 and 14. But before we get there, just going to overview the Book of Acts that Jesus restates his commitment, his command in Acts 1:8 early. He says, I want you you're going to go to you're going to be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria to the ends of the Earth. Jesus, we've seen this over the last several weeks that Jesus is working in the hearts of men and women in Jerusalem. So Jewish people coming to him, things crossing cultural and geographical barriers into Samaria, reaching them with the good news about Jesus, crossing cultural and geographical barriers to the Gentiles, going to people like Cornelius, who we looked at a couple of weeks ago. Cornelius, a Roman centurion, crosses in cultural barriers, going to Ethiopian eunuchs. And this good news is spreading like these massive rocks dropped into the center of history that's radiating out in these waves crossing geographical and cultural barriers.

And we come to the city now in Acts 13 of Antioch. And Nik preached about Antioch last week and spoke about this city. If you haven't had a chance to listen to that message or you didn't, please go back and listen to it. He did a fantastic job of talking about the uniqueness of the city of Antioch. It was the third largest city in the Roman Empire, second only to Rome or third only to Rome and Alexandria in North Africa. So Antioch was a big cosmopolitan city where they weren't just, wasn't just a group of Jewish people who were following Jesus, but the good news started to spread to Gentile people. And here I'll read along. It says, now in the church at Antioch, there were prophets and teachers, Barnabas, who we heard about before, but Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manian, who had been brought up with Herod the Tetrarch, and Saul, who we'll later learn as Paul. While they were worshiping together and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, set aside, set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them. So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and they sent them off. The two of them, the two of them sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus.

So here we see that these two guys are called out. So Barnabas and Saul. And as this just recounts only five leaders of this church, probably a small church, maybe 100 people or so. But fully 40% of their best leaders are said, are sent out on a mission. They're sent out on this mission that God gives them. And I'm not going to read through the next two chapters, but basically what happens in these chapters, Barnabas and Saul, they go to the Jewish people, they go to Jewish synagogues

and they begin to preach about who Jesus is. Some of the people respond. So they come back and as they preach, some people get kind of mad. Some of the Jewish people start to oppose them as some Gentile people are interested as well to the point where Saul and Barnabas are no longer welcome in the synagogue. So they leave the synagogue and they head off to talk to the Gentiles. Now, when we talk about Gentiles, Nik talked about this last week, but if you weren't here, the Gentile, the Jewish-Gentile relationship was not one that was all that warm and fuzzy. There was a lot of animosity between them. So for Saul, a very Jewish guy and Barnabas, a Jewish guy to go to the Gentiles and talk about what Jesus had accomplished, that he wasn't just Israel's Messiah. He wasn't just the Savior sent to Israel. He wasn't just a light for them, but he was a light for all the nations, for Gentiles, was radical. It was a massive shift to go from the Jews only to the nations. And you see what Jesus is doing is what we talked about in Matthew, that the gospel is beginning to spread to every tribe, to every tongue, to every nation. And this begins in earnest as they head off.

So Paul and Barnabas, they go into Asia Minor and they go to different cities and they begin to preach the gospel. And Gentile people start to respond. They start coming to faith. And amazingly, they come back and they report to the city of Antioch and say, hey, the Gentiles, God has opened a door of salvation to the Gentiles and God is at work in the Gentiles. And so they rejoice altogether and they say, okay, keep it up. Let's keep doing this.

So there has been this ongoing gift of this baton, I liken it to, of the good news of the gospel, of what Jesus accomplished on his cross and his death, his burial, his resurrection, his ascension to the right hand of God, that God has made a way that we can be reconciled to God through Christ. Okay, so that's the good news that Jesus entrusted to his disciples and they've passed down to us. And we're tasked with passing on to others and getting to every nation. So that's the idea of missions. That's the idea of what missions and missionaries and all that fun stuff is about. And I want you to know, though, I'm not unaware that those aren't the most, that there's not universally warm, fuzzy responses to the ideas of missions and missionaries anymore. You know, that there was a time in American history and in history when, you know, my wife and I, for a time, we were missionaries and that was a fairly, in these settings, a noble thing. But there are other settings that it was like a little embarrassing or a lot embarrassing. Missionaries can be seen as those who come in and destroy cultures, who uproot, introduce disease, do all kinds of awful stuff. So I'd like to address three big problems that people have with missions. Okay, three big problems that people have with missions. If we're going to assume that the church ought to be about this, that every person who's a follower of Jesus ought to be involved in it and interested in it, then we should look at some of the issues that we're facing. And so the three things that I picked, there are many issues, but three. The first challenge to missions is one that it's peripheral, that missions is just, you know, one of several good things we can do. We should have different departments in the church and, you know, missions is just one. It's an important one, but not all that, not much different than others. Second, that Western missionaries are obsolete. We don't really need them anymore. There's no real need for Western missionaries to go out into the world. You know, there are many, the majority of Christians don't live in the West. They live in the global, global South, we'll say in Africa, Latin America. So what's the need for expensive, you know, pasty faced Americans to go around the world? We need other folks to get out there and do the work. We are, we're no longer necessary. Or the, and the last one, that missions is harmful. Missions is harmful.

That missions isn't really a good thing at all.

So I'd like to address each of those, take those in turn and address those and say, what does, what does the scripture have to say about those? And, and then wrap up as we look back at the book of Acts. So the first one that missions is, is peripheral. It's just something that's done on the side. You know, the scriptures, if they were just, if missions just showed up there in Matthew 28:18-20, that we looked at the Great Commission, like, well, what was God doing for all those centuries beforehand? You know, the whole Old Testament, what was that about? Why did it take God so long to come to the conclusion that people should go and tell others like he started with Israel, right? And the good news that the law was for Israel, his salvation was for Israel, the sacrificial system was for Israel. What took God so long to get around to this Great Commission, if it's all that important, if it should be something that's central? Well, here's another thing I take from this book from, from Richardson here, this quote, the next slide there says that "the theme of the entire Bible is God glorifying himself by blessing all nations on earth through Jesus Christ, the descendant of Abraham." So according to him, the theme of the entire Bible, Old Testament and New Testament, is that God is glorifying himself by blessing all nations on earth through Jesus Christ, the descendant of Abraham. So missions isn't something that just starts in the New Testament, doesn't just start with the idea of going and making disciples, but missions stretches throughout the entire Bible. Well, if that's true, we should be able to find it and we could spend a lot of time going over a lot of verses, but we're just going to touch on a few here. And the first, you know, if you know the story of the scriptures, you know that it starts off in creation. God creates Adam and Eve, creates a perfect world in which they live. And very soon afterwards, there's a cataclysmic fall, we call the fall where sin enters the world, they give into temptation, they give into the temptation of Satan and they fall away from God. The relationship with God is fractured and broken. The relationship between Adam and Eve is broken. The relationship with creation is broken. Relationship with all of humanity falls into disrepair and destruction. This cataclysmic thing happens, but God begins immediately his plan of restoration and redemption. So over the next couple of chapters, we see that the depth of man's sin, but very early in the process, God intervenes and he sends, he speaks to a man, Abraham, and he says to Abraham in verses one through three of chapter 12 of Genesis, I will make you into a great nation, I will bless you, I will make your name great and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you and whoever curses you, I will curse and all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you.

All the peoples, all the nations, this is Hebrew, you know, what we looked at with Jesus speaking in Matthew was Greek, but it's really the same word. Every nation, every tribe on earth will be blessed through you. That's God's promise and he started way back, thousands of years before Jesus ever turned up. He says to Abraham, I'm going to bless every single nation through you. How on earth could he make such an audacious claim to an old guy who has no kids, an old wife, both shriveled up and old, but God makes this promise and he does it through the Lord Jesus. He does it through the Lord Jesus. So God's vision was never just for the good news to be held in Israel, like, okay, I love the Israelites and I hate everybody else. The Israelites are the good guys, everybody else is the bad guys. That's never been the case. That's never been the case. Israel sometimes forgot that beautiful vocation they had been given, that great task that they had been given to be a light to the Gentiles, but it was never the case.

I was reminded, a friend said recently, he was at a church down, I won't say where, but he was at a church and the benediction to this church every week would be this, it would be from Psalm 62. It'd say, may God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine upon us. Amen. You're dismissed. No, you don't go anywhere. That's, so that was their benediction. Every week it was this, it says, may God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us. He said, until one time someone came and spoke and he said, the guy did, spoke about the rest of this Psalm and verse, I'm just going to go into verse two, but the entire Psalm goes, speaks of this. It says, may God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us so that your ways may be known on the earth and your salvation among all nations. The blessings of God flowed out to Israel so they might flow through Israel to the nations. That was always God's intent, always God's intent that the blessing of God would flow to Israel. So it would flow through Israel. They like us forgot that they like us forgot that.

And so this, this great commission isn't something that just shows up in the new Testament, spans back into the old Testament. And when we come into the book of Acts here, as Paul goes on to speak to the Gentiles, he goes on to speak to the Gentiles in Acts 13:47. Before he's leaving to go to the Gentiles, he says to his Jewish friends, he says in verse 47, for this is what the Lord has commanded us, I have made you a light to the Gentiles that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth. That you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth. I've made you a light to the Gentiles. Paul's quoting from Isaiah. So we have from Genesis, we have the law there. We see from the Psalms, the writings and from the prophets, God has said from all the Old Testament, your goal, your role as Israel is to be a light to the Gentiles, to the nations. That was always God's intent. And that's what the apostle Paul quotes from Isaiah when he says to the Jews who are rejecting Jesus. Okay, now we're moving on to the Gentiles. This is going to keep continuing on.

And lastly, if missions is peripheral, then why? Why at the end of the book of Revelation, when we sang some from that, we talked about that a little bit today. Bob read from the Advent calendar about Revelation. There's a beautiful picture in the book of Revelation of what heaven will look like in Revelation 7:9. It says, after this I looked and before me there was a great multitude that no one could count. From every tribe, every nation, every people, every language standing before the throne and before the lamb. And they were wearing white robes and holding palm branches in their hands. And verse 10 goes on, they sang, they worshiped God and they said, salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the lamb. And the Great Commission, we see that God glorifying himself by blessing the nations, bringing the nations to himself, giving them life, giving lost people life. God brings himself glory. That. So missions is not peripheral. It's not just something tacked on. It's not just something added on. It's central to what God is doing in time and history and what he calls his people to do. The mission of God is to redeem the nations for himself, for his glory.

And the second challenge we had to missions was that the Western missionaries are obsolete. OK, Dave, so maybe you're saying that the missions really is something central to the Christian faith. Maybe the central to the life of the church, what we should be about. But maybe given the history of colonialism, imperialism, all the things that the Western nations have done, made the expense of sending Western mission, Western missionaries, how fragile we can be, frankly, in many ways. Maybe we've run our race and we hand the baton off to our Chinese brothers, our Haitian

brothers and sisters, our South Koreans and Brazilians and they complete the race. And we just kind of maybe we can fund it and we just watch from the sideline and we cheer them on. We cheer them on, but we don't necessarily have to be part of it. Well, first off, I'd ask you, why on earth would we ever want that? Why would we want that? If really the great commission is bringing God glory through declaring the goodness of Jesus. Have we not experienced the goodness of Jesus in our lives? Have we not experienced his grace, his kindness, his love? Wouldn't we want to tell other people? Wouldn't we want to let other people know? I remember sitting with some Haitian friends. We were driving up into the mountains where they grow coffee. The coffee you're drinking is this Haitian Pearle coffee that goes to support Haitian missionaries. But we're driving up into the mountains. Should have been a three hour trip that took us about seven and a half. But there we went through the mountains and I was talking to my friends. So it was Pastor Dimanche and Pastor Johnny Philippe. Both of these guys were hardworking guys. Johnny was a pastor, he had a school and an orphanage. Dimanche was a civil engineer, also pastoring a church, but they were involved in trying to send Haitian missionaries. And if you know anything about Haiti, it's the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere financially. Just it's just in a terrible, terrible condition right now and has been for quite a long time. This is right after the earthquake. And they're trying to raise money to send Haitian missionaries around the world. I said and I asked both these guys independently, I said, why? Why would you do this? You know, you have you're both really busy guys. You know, things are really, really hard. Why are you about this? And they both got tears in their eyes separately. And they said, why? Jesus is good. The gospel is so good. Why shouldn't we have an opportunity to participate in the Great Commission? Why shouldn't we? We for a hundred years have received missionaries. Shouldn't we have an opportunity to participate in the goodness of God and tell other people about Jesus? And these guys, I was like, absolutely. How can we partner with you to do that? And we have we have we've started to to help them send missionaries across the world to Senegal. So if you don't if your geography is not great, Haiti is here in the Caribbean and Senegal is in West Africa. So quite a distance away. But Haitian missionaries being sent to Senegal. Side note, I'm using the word missionary and missions and I'm doing that knowing that those aren't all happy terms for everybody. So I'm hoping that we're filling those with meaning that is better. But just going to leave that aside. So secondly, the Western missionaries are obsolete. Why would we want to not participate? It's a privilege to participate in the work of God around the world. So Western missionaries are privileged to go.

Secondly, I will admit that Western missionaries need to play different roles. Now as we send out people, we are no longer going to be necessarily the lead dog in the pack. And the view isn't great from the back of the pack, you know, but it's where often we need to be at this point. We will go as servants, not as those who are pioneering often. Sometimes we'll go as equippers, as launchers, as servants, but they're still profound roles for Western missionaries to go into the world. We have some folks who have worked in Peru for years and they acted as, Blair and Joe McGuire, and some of you have been there with them, they acted as wonderful brokers between the Peruvian church, which wanted to reach an indigenous tribal people, but didn't really know how, so the Americans came along with them and helped them learn how to reach out to their tribal peoples. We have learned some stuff, some hard won lessons over the last 200 years of missions. So we get to pass some of those things along. But the missionaries will look very different. Missionaries continue to serve in some critical roles and equipping and serving. We have missionaries who go and they train

nationals. They train them in how to plant churches, how to understand the scriptures and how to cross cultures. So there's still a massive role for Western missionaries in the world. So we want to continue to send. We want to continue to help fulfill the Great Commission through the sending of Americans from here. Just like Barnabas and Saul were the best and the brightest in this church. There were 40% of the leadership of the Church of Antioch was sent. We don't, and the church itself set them aside. So we have the privilege of continuing to send.

And then the third argument I want to address is that missions is harmful, that the missionaries that go in, they wreck cultures, they're imperialistic, they go in and they bring disease and they do all kinds of awful things. And one illustration that came to mind is 1956, some of you may know there was there were five missionaries who were killed in Ecuador. So Jim Elliott, Nate Saint and three other guys that were trying to reach out to a tribal people in Ecuador. And they were killed. And that was tragic and horrible. And the US, the reporters from all over the world interested. There were stories in Life magazine about how valiant these guys were and the efforts that they were undergoing. And thousands of people were raised up as missionaries afterward. They were lauded as heroes who laid down their lives. You fast forward to 2018. There was a young guy, John Allen Chow, and he went he felt burdened to reach the North Sentinelese Indians in India, a small island about 800 miles off the coast of India. And he went to this little island, tried to learn. He had tried to learn some language. And this island was a forbidden place by the Indian government said, don't go to these people. They're non-contacted people. He went and was speared to death by the people on the island. And, you know, the response of folks was typically like, what a waste. What an idiot. How dare he. Go in there and violate their culture. What was he thinking or was he thinking. It's not his you know, this was, nothing had really changed between these two. Honestly, when you when you look at their motivation, the good news that they had, what had changed was culture had shifted away from this was something noble and laudable. This was something mockable and foolish. Why would he do that? If I were to tell you that 10 guys showed up in Palmyra at two o'clock in the morning and started beating down the doors and smashing the windows and kicked into a place. What would you think? Like boy, that's horrible unless I told you they were firemen. There was a fire in the house. They were firefighters. They showed up with their truck and they came into to rescue people because they were there was a raging inferno going on and they laid their lives down. So one you see them as idiots that ought to be arrested and shackled and the other you see them as heroes who were going to rescue human beings. And nothing shifted here truly except the cultural perception of what they were about. So those who are sent out into the world are not going out and honestly, I will make some apologies for the course of human history. Sometimes missionaries do some dumb stuff. Okay, sometimes they do some dumb stuff. Sometimes they have failed. Sometimes they've cooperated too much with Western power. Sometimes they've come coordinated too much with the local governments and things and they've done some dumb things and, for that, I apologize. I wish it hadn't happened. But by and large Western missionaries have gone and done fantastic things in the world and I wonder why should the only thing the West exports, why should the only things that we export to the world be like pornography and crazy liberal cultures and weapons and foolish entertainment and dumb video games. Why should those be the things we export? Everybody's fine with that. Oh, go ahead export that, globalization is great and fine until you come to talking about Jesus and then it's like, oh don't go out and that's imperialistic and that's imposing. It's like we have good news to tell people and when missions is done well, and a lot of the missionaries we support that

go in so carefully to figure out what's the local culture. This is a beautiful culture, but it's broken. It has beauty and wonder and music and art, but it also has sin and evil. One missionary sent me a video of a little girl that the Christians in this village, this little girl was born, but the shaman said she should die. So they just buried her they buried her. So the Christians went and they heard about this and they dug her up and they rescued her. They breathed life back into this little girl and they raised her. That's there's not just you know, there are some horrible things that go on in cultures some terrible things. I had an Iranian friend and I asked him, you know, he had come to faith in Jesus and he talked about the number of Iranian people who were open to the gospel. And I asked him why he said Dave you've never had your mom beaten because her hair is showing. You've never had your sister beaten in front of you because some of her hair was showing. They're awful things in culture. There's some awful things in culture that need to be redeemed, that need to be challenged and Western culture as well. We have some evil horrible stuff that needs to be challenged that's not glorifying and honoring to God. Missionaries, when done well, missions when done well, it's not trying to export culture not trying to export. It's to try to say what does the scripture say about the goodness and glory of God? What does it look like for a Shepibo person to walk with Jesus for a Shaikh person to walk with Jesus for a Haitian person to enculturate to take the beautiful aspects of their culture to leave behind the garbage. And to take the beauty and glory of Jesus and say this is what it looks like to worship God before his throne. So missions when done well looks like that. It's not an exportation of Western culture. We have missionaries who are working in leper colonies as physicians and working to start schools and hospitals and clinics and teaching people. They're not exporting Western culture. I mean we make our mistakes we repent of those but we that's not the thrust of mission. So next slide here. I want to I want to point out, one author said this, he said, "Areas where Protestant missionaries had a significant presence in the past are on average more economically developed today with comparatively better health, lower infant mortality, lower corruption, greater literacy, higher educational attainment, especially for women. Do you want a blossoming democracy today? The solution is simple. If you have a time machine send a 19th century missionary." Go back in time send a Protestant missionary there and these will be the fruits. Now this is that's just setting aside the good news of the gospel. That's setting aside that the gospel makes transformation but those are the physical outcomes. But we as followers of Jesus if you're a follower of Jesus you believe that what's at risk. What's at stake is the souls of men and women. So going as missionaries is not optional. It's to declare the good news that Jesus is who he said he was and he wants to save people from eternal separation from God.

So just some concluding thoughts. I want to pass on to you guys the Great Commission that we've talked about in Jesus is it draws together the great command that Jesus gave. Okay the Great Command, the Great Commandment if you know whenever it was asked in Matthew 22, what's the greatest commandment Jesus? He said well it's the love the Lord your God with all of your heart with all your soul and all your mind. And the second is like it to love your neighbor as yourself. So in the Great Commission it draws together this that to love God is to glorify God to honor him to talk about how he really is, how he's accomplished salvation in Jesus. And to love your neighbor as yourself is to say, what better what more social what more just and wonderful thing can I do than to tell them that God loves them. That he gave his son on the cross, that he wants to give them life. He wants to breathe life into their dead souls and give them life eternal. It brings together the good news, the great commandments both of them, in the Great Commission



are tied together beautifully and wonderfully. And this isn't, I am not saying that what we do here when whenever we talk about living with Jesus, loving like Jesus, leading others to do the same are unimportant and missions is more important and all of that. I am saying that the role, what you are being equipped for, what I am being equipped for as you spend time with Jesus as you spend time in small groups as we sit under the teaching of God's word as we worship together, is to be agents of hope and change in this world both locally and globally.

There are two cornerstones out here that you'll see in this building out here. It says "for the glory of God", 1990 for the glory of God, as you come in these doors over there and the three-story classroom building it says "pointing people to Jesus." Those two things for the glory of God, pointing people to Jesus. They could be put right together because that's what we're about for the glory of God pointing people to Jesus.

So by way of application some things I challenge you. I'm proud of our church for the commitment we've had over the last 50 years as we talked about a couple of weeks ago to making Christ known in the world. These kind of Acts 13-like individuals who are sent out into the world just it's been amazing to see. Let's keep it up. Let's keep it up. Let us keep on pressing on. We have nothing to be ashamed of. Let's keep talking about Jesus and making disciples around the world. I'd love to ask you to think about in your own life what barriers are you crossing. What barriers are you crossing what cultural or geographic barriers are you crossing. If it's truly God's heart to call laborers into his harvest field would you consider going? Would you consider your role in the Great Commission of God? You know my wife and I used to work up at Penn State worked a lot with university students, and no one was shy about recruiting them. Hey we want you to come work for Gore-Tex; we want you to come work for these guys. As a church we're like, you know if God calls them. They said hey Barnabas, Saul, the Holy Spirit said you guys are going, pack your bags. Let's go. So I challenge you to consider what does God have for you in terms of either short-term missions, long-term missions, getting to know a missionary in our church. Changing how you give, the lifestyle that you live in and your generosity. I would like to just throw the last slide up here and this may be a little bit dangerous but I'm just going to ask you if God's making you think about hey what role might we have and might I have, my family have, in missions. Well send me an email or text me, give me a call. I'd love to sit down and talk with you. Love to just sit down and spend some time with you and say what would that look like. What would it look like? What would next steps look like in your life.

Truly the great task in all of human history, the greatest task we've ever undertaken is to fulfill the Great Commission. We're closer than we've ever been there, but there are still 7000 unreached people groups in the world. We've got the 10,000, but they're 7000 they're getting harder and smaller. We've picked a lot of the easy fruit. So the hard stuff is up at the top of the tree. So we got to keep climbing. There's a lot of work to do but we trust that God is going to keep calling the to himself. Keep calling the tribes and nations and peoples to himself.

Let me pray. Jesus you promised to be with us always. The immenseness of the task, the seriousness of what we undertake, is not lost on us. But the power of the good news, the grace that you have shown over the last 2000 years and more to draw people to yourself. We're confident that it'll keep on going. We thank you Jesus that you didn't leave us alone as orphans

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but you sent your Holy Spirit like we saw poured out in the Book of Acts. Just how you work there crossing cultural geographic barriers. We ask you to continue to cross those barriers, use us to cross those barriers by the power of your Spirit, in Christ's name. Amen.

So we do have prayer counselors that will be up front here. If there's anything on your heart that you'd like to talk about or pray about, please come on up and have a time of prayer with them. Thank you. And, as Nick always says, you are not dismissed you are sent.