

Missions Month

Community Gathered Around Jesus Christ

Romans 1:1-5

What is missions?

Rooted in the Latin *mitto* (meaning “to send”), missions is the half-millennium-old English term signifying the *sending* of Jesus’ followers into his global harvest of all peoples. For nearly three hundred years, the term *missions* has been used in particular for **world evangelization**, or for pioneering the gospel among the peoples where it has yet to advance.

Among others, two passages in the Gospel of Matthew get to the heart of missions. Jesus says to his disciples in Matthew 9:37–38, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.” Missions means sending out workers into the global harvest.

A second passage is Jesus’s sending out of his disciples in Matthew 28:18–20, “the Great Commission.” Here, Jesus’s main command “make disciples of all nations” follows the charge to “go”—to be sent out. Jesus and his established church send out to pioneer the church among peoples who otherwise have no access to the gospel.

The passage from Isaiah 61, which Jesus applied to himself, highlights several essential features of his mission.

1. Jesus was sent in the power of the Holy Spirit

Jesus in His ministry was empowered by the Holy Spirit even though He was the divine Son of God. He was guided by the Spirit (Luke 4:1).

2. Jesus was sent to proclaim the Good News

At the core of Christ’s ministry on earth was proclaiming the reign of God. “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!” (*Mark 1:15*)

Acts 1:8 says, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my *witnesses* in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Witness (noun and verb) means

a) “a living record,” one who bears “witness” by his _____.

Those whose lives and actions testified to the worth and effect of faith, and whose faith received “witness” in Scripture. First Peter 5:1 says, “To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a *witness* of Christ’s sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed.”

There was a region in Southeast Asia where mission work was reaping a great harvest. Researchers were curious why, in this particular region, many were deciding to follow Jesus. So they conducted a study asking individual converts the question, ‘what helped you become a follower of Jesus?’

The results came out as follows:

What helped you become a believer of Christ ?

Had a dream about Jesus	= ___%
Debate about Bible and Koran	= ___%
Experienced miracle of Jesus	= ___%
Experienced daily love from Christians they know	= ___%

b) “To bear witness to,” sometimes rendered “to testify”—one who bears “witness” by his _____.

c) “Martyr,” one who bears “witness” by his _____.

3. Jesus was sent to form a community of the Good News

In Luke 5, Jesus called a few fishermen to form the core of his disciples, promising that they would now fish people (*Luke 5:1-11; 6:12-16*). Even during the earthly life of Jesus, his followers were empowered to join in his ministry, proclaiming the Good News of God’s reign and demonstrating that Good News.

As in the Old Testament, God’s mission involved forming a people through whom He restores His kingdom on earth. Jesus’ mission was not simply about getting individuals right with God. He was also in the business of forming a people to proclaim and live out the reality of God’s kingdom.

Missions is a team task.

The completion of the love of God in the church is the very goal of missions that bring glory to Himself by reconciling this condemned universe back to Himself. But as God’s love is displayed in the church, the church is God’s own witness now. It is God’s own means now of proclaiming the gospel by word and by transformed life.