

Dear all

One of the things I have been doing throughout my three years at TCF is compiling a 'Pastors Notebook'. This is a collection of notes about specific issues that have arisen where I have had to briefly provide a biblical response to specific questions or situation. Its an eclectic mix and the issues I have written about include: Guardian Angels; Atonement and Redemption; Baptism; Cremation or Burial; Dealing with bad thoughts; Freemasonry; Genocide; Spiritual Gifts; Halloween; Hating Father and Mother; Leadership; Loneliness; Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage; The Role of Women; Premarital Sex; Prophets and Bears. I would like to continue with this but mainly through writing on my understanding and reflection on ideal aspects of church life. However, if you have any question relating to the Bible or life's challenges or any issue of practical concern, I would be very happy to provide a response for you to consider. **Ask away!**

For this letter, one of the features of TCF's corporate life is its commitment to missions and I see a growing interest in this as we are fed by reports from Zambia, Hungary and less frequently, from India. Also, our '5th Wednesday' events when we hear from visiting missionaries or missions organisations have been part of my ongoing education but it is so good for the church too. So, 'Why should a church be interested in mission?'

1. **Jesus commanded us:** He called us to participate in making disciples of all nations, baptising them, and teaching them to keep His commandments (Matthew 28: 18-20). There are many ways to be involved with this effort - prayer; giving; finding out about missions; going and sending!
2. **The World needs it:** Mercy has been extended to us, and mercy is required of us. In Romans 10:14-15 the Apostle Paul says, "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent?"
3. **Workers are few:** Jesus said, 'The harvest truly is plentiful, but the labourers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into His harvest.' (Matthew 9:37-38). Paul says 'we are the labourers together with God.' (1 Corinthians 3:9)
4. **Mission Workers depend on giving and support (through God):** Paul thanked the Philippian church for their contribution to his care (Philippians 4:10-18). Fulltime mission workers depend on prayer, encouragement and financial support to meet their physical needs, so that they can give themselves fully to the work of spreading the gospel.
5. **We have been blessed for a reason:** 'To whom much is given, much is required' (Luke 12:48). Are we fulfilling our responsibility as good stewards of all that God has given us?
6. **Safe investment:** giving to the cause of the gospel is a way to store treasures in heaven that will never fade or fail (Matthew 6:20).
7. **Reward:** an eternal inheritance is a reward that never goes away. "For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do." (Hebrews 6:10).
8. **Establish His kingdom on earth:** 'Your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven' (Matthew 6:10). The preaching of the gospel heralds the coming of the Messiah as it did with John the Baptist. We want him to find us alert and working hard to advance His Kingdom when he returns.

I have then listed a number of practical ways in which a church can demonstrate its commitment to mission and it is a particular joy that TCF provides most of the examples I have provided.

The involvement by a church in missions is certainly one aspect of fulfilling the Great Commission but so too is my personal activity as a disciple. That is a much more difficult thing and I am reflecting on the message by Peter Maiden and especially the issue of 'compartmentalising' that leads to 'privatising' my faith. I should be a disciple in every aspect of my life and in fact, it is this personal habit of life that should define me. It is about *being* and not *doing*! I expect to be challenged by our speaker, Gordon Weir, whom I have known for many years as he addresses our personal discipleship at the Church Weekend on Moving Forward with the Lord but I also look forward to being with you over the weekend.

Please pray for the continuing ministry with individuals whom I meet regularly. If you would like to meet individually over any issue or concern, or for mutual encouragement, I would love to spend time with **YOU!**



'God had only one Son...

and He was a missionary.'

David Livingstone