

Kraaifontein Baptist Church Mission Policy Document

I. The Foundations of Mission Work

1. The Great Commission

Great Commission of Jesus recorded in **Matthew 28:19-20** includes: Going to all nations with the Gospel of Jesus; making disciples, implying the process of teaching them how to obey all that Jesus has said (primarily to trust in Jesus first and then obedience to his words); baptising them in the name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit (implying they understand in some sense and agree with the teaching concerning the Triune God); all with the *promise* that Jesus's presence with us specifically through the Holy Spirit he sent into the world on the day of Pentecost (**Acts 2:1-12**). His Spirit is with each Christian through regeneration and sealing (**Ephesians 1:13; Titus 3:5**).

2. The Nations of the World

The emphasis of Jesus is that the Gospel must move outward from us all the way to the outskirts of the world. To this effect Jesus speaks of the coming of the kingdom: "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" (**Acts 1:8**). This outward emphasis also finds precedent in the ministry of Paul who said, "It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation" (**Romans 15:20**). More than Paul's example, the words of the Lord Jesus to his disciples was that the Second Coming of Christ will not take place until, "this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come" (**Matthew 24:14**). All nations here does not refer to geo-political borders, but to each people group because the root word refers to ethnic groups. This is best illustrated in the promissory vision of the new heavens and the new earth where, "a great multitude that no one could count, *from every nation, tribe, people and language*, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb" (**Revelation 7:9**). This means that God has been faithful in executing his promises to Abram when he said, "all peoples on earth will be blessed through you" (**Genesis 12:3b**).

The accomplishment of God's purposes in the salvation of people from all nations worked differently in the Old and the New Testament. In the Old Testament it was mainly promissory with glimpses of the surrounding nations coming into the covenant and redemption as was the case with Ruth the Moabite, Rahab from Jericho (**Joshua 2**), the widow at Zarephath (**1 Kings 17**), the healing of Naaman (**2 Kings 5**). Indeed, Israel was to be a light to the nations and through her obedience shine the glory of God so that the nations would come to Israel (**Exodus 19:4-6**). This is called *centripetal* evangelism whereby the people of God were to be a holy community and merely by her holiness were to attract others to join God's people. This was to change with the coming of the Servant of the Lord in Isaiah.

The Servant of the LORD prophecies provide some of the most detailed prophecies of the coming of Jesus the Messiah. One of the prophecies see the Servant as bringing justice and salvation to the nations (**Isaiah 42:1, 6; 49:6; 51:4-5; 52:10; 61:1-2**). Initially in Jesus's ministry he clarifies to his disciples that his ministry is "to the lost sheep of Israel" (**Matt.**

15:24) and often refuses to serve those outside of Israel's promises (although he clearly engages with Gentiles regularly - as with the Syrophenician woman - **Matthew 15:21-28**). Throughout his ministry though, Jesus shows his disciples that their picture of clean and unclean (as with people and food) no longer apply which means that he opens the door to Gentile participation (**Mark 7:1-30**). After his resurrection, Jesus further clarifies to his disciples that the gospel message is to go to the ends of the earth (**Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:9**) which he reiterates to them in a vision to Peter (**Acts 10:9-23**), the calling of Saul of Tarsus to be witness to the Gentiles (**Acts 9:15**) and in the wisdom of the Jerusalem Council not expecting Gentile converts to "become Jewish" before they are truly saved (**Acts 15:1-35**). This is called *centrifugal* evangelism, moving outward from the centre. The role of the Apostles in the early church is a once off foundational function which in its Apostolic features (Apostolic authority, writing of Scriptures, performance of miracles, prophecy) is unrepeatable in the church today (**Ephesians 2:20**).

3. General Revelation Insufficient for Salvation

God's promise is that his revelation comes both supernaturally (through his Word and the Gospel), and naturally (**Psalms 19:1-4; Romans 1:18-25**). This second aspect is called "general revelation" which is the revelation of God to be found in nature. Once this general revelation is observed by us and we attempt to construct who God is from this we have "natural theology". Since God is the one revealing himself in nature as the "heavens declare the glory of God" and "the natural world displays the invisible attributes of God" there is nothing deficient in the content of general revelation. The problem is that we have rejected God because of *our* hardened and foolish hearts and exchanged the glory of the invisible God for idols made to be like visible things (**Romans 1:21**). Because of this, the man on an island who does not have access to the Gospel looks at the created realm, and rather than worship his creator, worships false gods. Therefore, by natural light alone, no one can be saved. Therefore, if someone does not bring this man or woman the Gospel of Christ, they will be lost.

4. Christ Insufficiently Clear in Other Religions

What of references to Jesus in other religions, or indeed symbols that show something of the death and resurrection in other cultures - are these sufficient for someone to gain a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ? The simple answer is: no. Insufficient material concerning the content of the Gospel is found in the Qur'an. A Muslim might become *curious* concerning the Gospel from what he reads in the Qur'an, but finally a person must be confronted with the Word of God for them to be saved. Likewise a person might learn some things in Taoism, Hinduism or Judaism about God that are true (insofar as they conform to natural and supernatural revelation), but these hints and clues are insufficient without the testimony of Christ given in the New Testament. We do not believe that imperfect representations of God or Christ in other religions are sufficient means for someone to be saved. Such a position is called "inclusivism" and in contrast to this we affirm "exclusivism" which states that only through conscious faith in Jesus Christ can a person be saved (**John 14:6; Acts 4:12**).

5. What Mission Work is Not

Some have argued that whatever is God's mission is also our mission. They thus take the calling of Abram as something that the church should take up and do - "blessing the nations" in a general way. Such teaching usually argues that to be a blessing to others includes both spiritual and physical. Although there are aspects of the individual Christian's responsibility which include hospitality, care and love (as in the parable of the Good Samaritan - **Luke 10:25-37** - and **James 1:17**), this must not be confused with the

mission of the institutional church. Thus, when care packages are prepared for the poor, hospitals and schools are built, and rights of the unborn are defended, or Christians live according to the moral principles of the Gospel — all these are good things for the *organic church* to engage in, but they are not *the mission* of the institutional church. The mission of the institutional church is the proclamation of the Gospel, the making of disciples, and the edification of the church, not primarily social efforts, mercy, or justice.

6. The Urgency of the Task

This task cannot be relegated to “Missions Organisations” since these often lose touch and accountability with the existing church. Nor can we excuse ourselves from mission work because of the reports of “dreams” since this is not a means by which God has promised in his Word to save the lost. Nor can we object that God is sovereign and therefore will save those whom he would save, since he has commissioned the organic church throughout the ages to be a witness to the Gospel (**Rev. 1:12, 13, 20, 2:1, 5**) and God works his sovereignty through the means of the faithful local church. Nor indeed can this task be relegated to “larger churches” since we do not know whether they might have Gospel priorities or not. Rather, each church is responsible to use their gifts and resources to the utmost so that the Gospel of Christ might reach the ears and hearts of those who have not yet heard and that God might be glorified in the salvation of his sheep (**John 10:14, 27**). What we do with our gifts and resources will ultimately be imitated by the next generation. If we lose a focus to reach the lost in this generation we will teach our children that it is not essential to pray for and pursue the lost in our communities and where Christ has not yet been named. The threat of hell is real, therefore the task of the church to reach the lost with the Gospel is urgent. As the Apostle Paul argued, how will they respond to the Gospel, if no one is sent to preach it to them (**Romans 10.13-17**).

7. The Central Role of Prayer

Jesus speaking to his disciples said, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest” (Matt. 9:37-38). Paul often asked for prayer in his missionary journeys (**2 Thess. 3:1; Romans 15:30-33; Eph. 6:19-20; Col. 4:3-4**). These passages show us that we should be in constant prayer that the Lord would raise up more workers in his mission field, that they would be faithful and bold, that the Lord would give them opportunities to speak and in those opportunities that they would know what to say, and that God would reap a harvest through their labours.

8. Calling and Appointing of Missionaries

The office of “missionary” does not have a separate set of qualification to that of an elder in the New Testament. Therefore, the candidate must “aspire” and “desire” the responsibility of overseer (**1 Tim. 3:1**). Furthermore, he must have all the character qualification of an elder (**1 Timothy 3:2-7 cf. Titus 1:5-9**). Thus the candidate must be Biblically qualified as an elder, his call to the ministry must be recognised by the local church, and he must be sent out from the local church with their blessing, support, prayers and ongoing discipleship. This candidate will be a member of KBC and therefore in agreement with the *Confession of Faith* (1689).

9. Accountability of Missionary

If there is reason to place the candidate under church discipline or remove him from office either on moral grounds (**1 Cor. 5:11**) or for living inconsistently with the standards of eldership (**1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9**), or for neglecting his responsibilities to preach, disciple and church-plant, then the disciplinary process will be followed by the elders of

KBC. The responsibility for oversight over missionaries will not be delegated to a “missions committee” but to the elders of KBC, since they are responsible for teaching and spiritual oversight over all those in membership.

10. Biblical Mission Strategy

Those sent out as missionaries are missionary pastors. Their responsibility is not to start schools or do practice medicine but to proclaim the Gospel, disciple converts, baptise new believers, establish a church community, administer Lord’s Supper, appoint elders and deacons, and teaching them how to discipline members living in public unrepentant sin. Once this task is completed in one region, the missionary could decide to either move on to another region to restart this process while maintaining a Paul-Timothy like relationship with the first planted church where there might be further need to mentorship and discipleship. Alternatively, the missionary could revoke their status and support as missionary and become the pastor of the newly appointed church. This might also include the work of translating the Bible into the local language. The goal of the missionary activity is the establishment of healthy churches with qualified elders teaching in accordance with the truth of God’s Word as expressed in the *Confession of Faith* (1689). The goal of establishing such church is that Christ may have his bride (**Rev. 19:7-9**) and that God might receive the glory from the nations (**Psalms 98**).

11. Financial Support of Missionary

KBC is responsible for the majority of the financial support of any missionary appointed by us. Rather than exhausting missionaries who are often required to spend much of their time fund-raising, newsletter-writing, and campaigning for increased support, KBC will take the responsibility to provide for the bulk of the missionary financial support or the totality where it is possible. The church will also consider partially supporting missionaries who already have most of their support from another church, provided the sending church takes full responsibility and accountability for their missionary and they are of like mind to our own mission statement. Paul’s bi-vocational tent-making cannot be used as an argument against financially supporting missionaries since Paul himself argues, “For the Scripture says, “You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain,” and, “The laborer deserves his wages.” (**1 Tim. 5:17**).

II. Applications: Priorities in Mission Activity

1. **Unreached Mission.** Evangelistic and Discipleship work among unreached people groups (*international*). This is intended to meet the need of those countries who do not have a gospel witness. These countries are mainly located in the 10/40 window. The focus here is on people groups that have not heard the gospel. Regular updates should be given to the church about how the gospel is advancing in places where it previously did not exist. These updates can be found in Operation World and Joshua Project. We should respond through intercession. “The fields are white for harvest, pray to the Lord of the harvest that he would send harvesters” (John 4:35). Ultimately, we should pray that the Lord would raise up from within our number someone who would be willing to go to these places as a Gospel witness, and then we should be willing to support them financially.
2. **Persecuted Christians.** Many of our brothers and sisters in the Gospel are suffering for the name of Jesus (*international*). Special honour is afforded to those who have suffered for the gospel (Matt 5:11; Acts 7:54-60; Revelation 6:9-11). We can learn more about those laying down their lives and pray for them in an informed manner. Regular updates should be given to the church and we should respond in intercession and generosity.
3. **Theological Education** in accordance with Evangelical and Reformed principles (*local*). This is to meet the constant need there remains in South Africa for faithful pastors who are trained according to Evangelical and Reformed principles. Where it is within our means, we hope to support Bible College (or individuals in Bible Colleges) who adhere to classical theology as expressed in the confessions and specifically adhere to the inerrancy of Scripture, Reformed soteriology, the doctrine of creation in opposition to evolution, the cessation of supernatural gifts such as tongues and prophecy as foretelling, and a complementarian position on women in ministry. In the long term it would be wonderful if we can train up candidates for the ministry from scratch at the church, rather than delegate this responsibility to Bible Colleges.
4. **Gospel Partnerships.** Since our church has been given many gifts by way of leaders and resources, it is our responsibility to partner with other churches whom we can help in order that they too might be established as beacons of the Gospel (*local*). Some churches have already been identified for such ministry. This support is achieved through leadership training, providing accountability, mutual invitations to preach in one another’s pulpits, regular intercession, and financial giving.
5. **Ministers Training.** In response to the constant need of Evangelical and Reformed Ministers in South Africa, it would be good to start an internship program lasting two years (*local*). This program will be extended to students who have completed their first three or four years of theological training and will include giving them supervised ministry opportunities and feedback, asking them to watch and learn from the work of the church leadership, a guided reading course through some of the most essential books on doctrine, the Christian life, counselling, and church practice. A reasonable stipend will be provided for such an intern.
6. **Evangelism and Discipleship.** The central way the local church proclaims the Gospel is through the faithful preaching in the church services (*local*). Nevertheless, the gospel must also be shared by the individual members within the local church. Jesus’s commission to us in Matt 28:19 could well be translated as “As you go” meaning while you go about your day, share the gospel, tell others that Jesus is Lord, and tell them they must be reconciled to God. This can be done through the distribution of Christian tracts, and by means of Gospel conversations. Although courses like EE3 and Way of the Master could be helpful guides here, the Gospel is shared in many different ways

according to the specific person's circumstances and present knowledge in the New Testament (as is shown by Jerram Barrs). In this, it is not merely the responsibility of the pastor to communicate the Gospel, but it is his responsibility to "equip the saints for works of ministry" (Eph. 4:12-16) since we believe in "the priesthood of all believers" (1 Peter 2:9) who displays "the manifold wisdom of God" even to the realms of spiritual rulers (Eph. 3:10).

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