



Beverly Heights
Presbyterian
Church

scattered seeds.

THE MONTHLY MAGAZINE

SEPTEMBER 2023

The Church Centered Mission

Highlights from

*THE TASK
FORCE ON
MISSIONS'
REPORT TO
THE SESSION*



Session established the Task Force on Missions in March of 2022 with the goal “to complete a comprehensive review of missions, from local to international, ... assessing both the current state of missions and identifying recommended actions towards faithfulness in the future of missions.” The Task Force was comprised of seven members: two Session representatives (Matt Parrish and Chad Winkler), two staff members (Peter Chace and Tom O’Boyle), one deacon (Rick Sikes) and two congregation members (Ben Cramer and Connie Webb).

In this issue of Scattered Seeds, we excerpt elements from the report. Written by Task Force Chairman Peter Chace, the 37-page report was submitted to Session on July 1, 2023. Session is currently reviewing it and hopes to make the full report available to members soon. Immediately below is the Task Force’s assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of our past and current endeavors in missions. If you have any inquiries or comments on this report, as abridged here, please contact Tom O’Boyle (tom@beverlyheights.org) or Peter Chace (peter@beverlyheights.org).

Summary of Findings

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Beverly Heights Church has a rich history of supporting missions as a congregation including sending 38 full-time pastors, pastor’s wives, or missionaries into the field between 1929 and 1979. Overall, missional strengths of the congregation include:

- Significant history in international missions including Uganda, Ethiopia, Spain, Thailand and China
- Significant history of regional missions including being instrumental in the founding of PRISM
- High buy-in from church members in local and regional mission partners such as Living Stones and Family Guidance, including leadership roles in several organizations
- Large investment of personal time and resources beyond the budgeted giving of the church
- Regular local mission trips with middle and high school students
- College ministry partnership with the Coalition for Christian Outreach
- Recent missionaries and pastoral candidates being trained or sent into the field including: Scott Boyd, Julie Livingston, Julia Piecka, Peter Chace, Kate Kuzko and Dr. Kyle Bennett

While Beverly Heights is marked by historical strengths in missions, there are nevertheless several key weaknesses, these include:

- Amassing too many mission partners resulting in transactional relationships and minimal communication
- Inconsistent rubrics for bringing on new partnerships and retaining long-standing relationships
- Legacy partnerships without adequate relational hand off to the next generation of church leadership
- Unclear ecclesiology resulting in confusion over the role of the Church in the world
- Unclear missiology resulting in “lowest common denominator” approach to mission partnership
- Unclear philosophy of methods resulting in conflicting conceptions of partnership with mission partners and members of the congregation



Our Church

THE CENTER OF MISSIONS

Missions begins in the Church, flows out into the world, and brings the world back into the Church. God is the One who sends, is sent, and sends His Church. Like Abraham, the Church is “called out” of the world to be a holy people, and given the promise of everlasting life through saving faith in Jesus Christ by the grace of God. The Christian church stands as part of Israel (Eph 2:12), as grafted in branches to the original root and tree (Rom 11:11-24). Though the Church always is, human eyes and wisdom cannot perceive it as God does. So, we distinguish between what our eyes can see - the church visible - and what God sees, the Church invisible.

The invisible Church consists of all the elect of all times and places that are gathered unto Christ. This is the true Church which only God fully knows. The visible Church consists of all who profess Christ, together with their children, and is the kingdom of Jesus Christ, and the household and family of God (Matt 13:47; Isa 9:7; Eph 2:19; Eph 3:15).

The Church, both invisible and visible, is more than a collection of individuals. The Church does not derive its authority or power from its members; rather, the members derive their identity from the Church, because the Church belongs to God, and Christ is the Head of the Church (Col 1:18; Eph 5:22-33). Paul tells Timothy that the Church is the household of the living God, led by people who exhibit right conduct, and is a pillar and protector of the truth (1 Tim 3:14-16). As part of the common confession of the church led by wise people who conduct themselves according to the gospel, Paul says Christ is “proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory” (1 Tim 3:16).

As the Great Commission commands to make disciples of all the nations (Matt 28:19), so the Church’s righteous conduct results in gospel proclamation and belief throughout the world. “To transform the city of man, the church only needs to do what she does, to be what she is. She needs only to teach, preach, sing, pray, break bread. Within the ark of Christendom, she need only keep the customs of the apostles, and all will be changed.”

The mission of God’s people is to be a people that bears witness to Him. Not just in theology, but in life and conduct. In order to rightly preach the Gospel, the church must *live* the gospel. The Church invisible, and this church visible – Beverly Heights Presbyterian Church – is a pillar and support of the truth. We are a protector of the gospel, and as we are faithful, Christ is proclaimed to the nations. *If we can’t be the church here, we won’t be able to spread it elsewhere.*

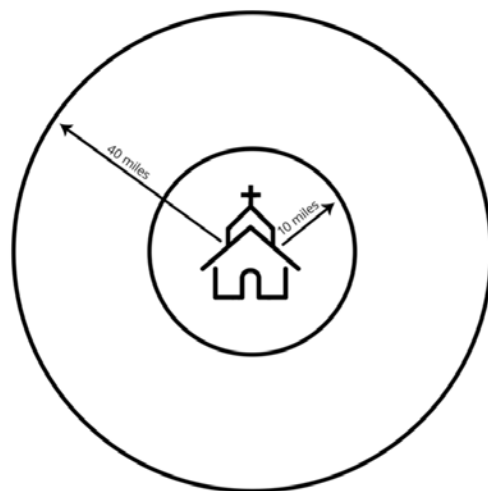


The 10/40 Window

The 10/40 window is a well-known concept in global missions. It denotes the rectangular area of North Africa, the Middle East and Asia approximately between 10 degrees north and 40 degrees north latitude. This area is widely considered the most resistant to Christianity and includes the majority of the world's Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists. For the last 50 years, this has been the focus of the majority of the visible Church's world missions.

To complement this in our own day, we are advocating for a second 10/40 window. A local 10/40 window of concentric circles surrounding a local church, about 10 miles to 40 miles outward from which the household of God can have the greatest impact and is charged with the greatest responsibility. Christ left the Church the task of being His witnesses beginning where they are and stretching to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). If a church cannot lead its own backyard well, how will it lead the world (1 Tim 3:5)?

The need of the day is a faithful church in every place, that the Church would be faithful in every place. Making disciples of all the nations begins by making disciples in our backyard. Missions begins on Sunday morning, flows out into the world and brings the world back into the Church. This is the Church-centered mission.





Mission Partner Survey Responses

*(EDITED
FOR SPACE)*

JULIA PIECKA | Urban Impact

From my experience, a healthy mission partnership with a local church is one where both participants are served! I have received support from Beverly Heights since 2018 when I initially went on the World Race; after my return from being overseas, Beverly Heights has continued to support my ministry ...

LORENZE JEFFERSON | Urban Impact

... One of the most important aspects of how Beverly Heights has helped me is by mentorship by way of Joe Williams. ...

SCOTT BOYD | PRISM

A healthy church partnership involves PRISM coming alongside the church to more effectively accomplish The Great Commission. ... Beverly Heights has provided support for the ministry from its beginning in 1980 through board members helping to establish the direction of the ministry, through financial giving, through prayer and personal involvement. ...

ALLYSON SVEDA | Family Guidance

... Last summer, your VBS collected donations to help refurbish the “White Oak” cabin at Promise Camp. Family Guidance views White Oak as Beverly Heights' cabin. We are asking other churches to come alongside your example and “adopt” or help rebuild a cabin. ... We look to Beverly Heights as an example of how we would like to interact with other congregations. ...

EMILY SHRADER | Serge

I think Beverly Heights has always done a good job of staying in touch – mostly because they assign a committee member as a liaison. For us, Sue Burditt has made it a healthy partnership. We have grown to know and love each other over the years! ...

AMY LAVELLE | Human Coalition (Health for Her)

... We are grateful for the long-term relationship we have had over the years and look forward to your continued support. ... Identifying the sanctity of life as a pillar of Beverly Heights and by regularly communicating throughout the year what a stance for life means. Working side by side in the pro-life arena. ...

JULIE LIVINGSTON | Living Stones

... BH has always been an exemplary mission partner. Perhaps the most profound example of the support they provide occurred in 2019 when BH stepped up to help launch the GROW phase of the Living Stones mission. Church leadership, primarily Nate, was instrumental in driving out a vision and near-term plan. ...



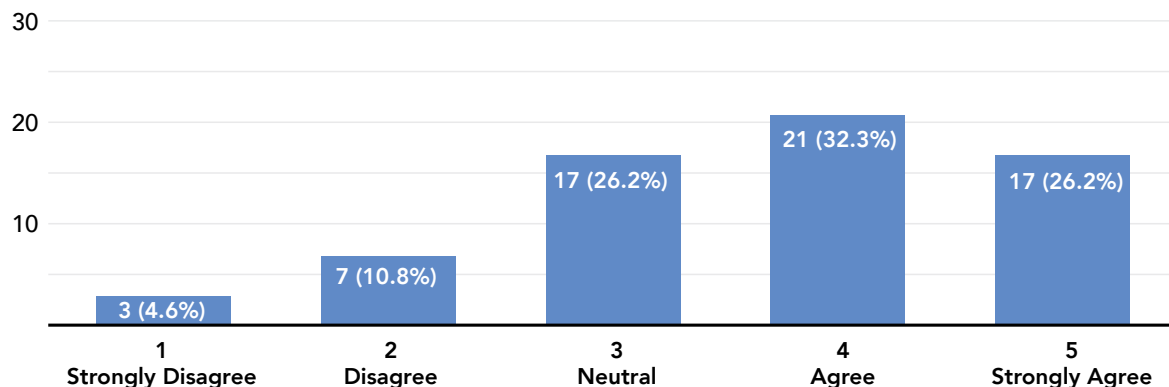
Survey Says

CONGREGATIONAL INVOLVEMENT IN MISSIONS

The Task Force conducted a church-wide survey to measure the congregation's self-identified involvement with missions. This survey is meant to serve as a snapshot in time as well as provide a baseline for future comparison. Overall, the survey agrees with feedback from mission partners and found that Beverly Heights is a congregation that is committed to missions but currently not well informed about mission partnerships.

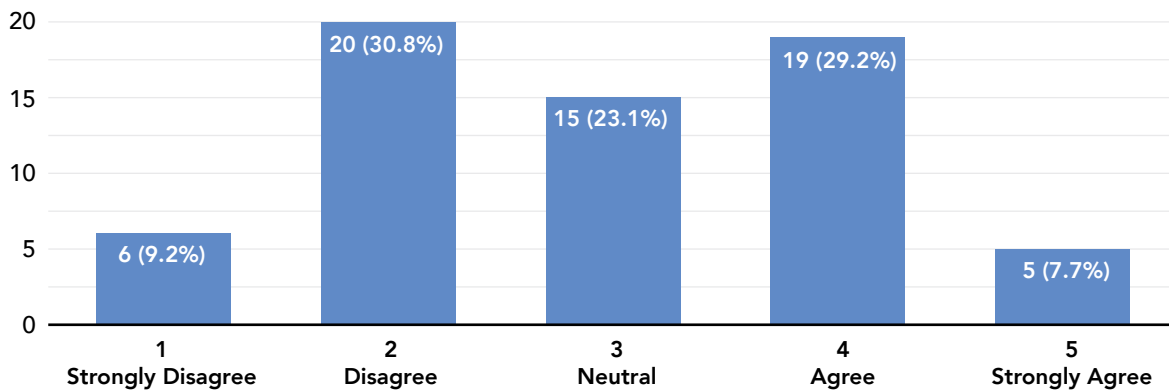
1. I know who Beverly Heights supports as mission partners.

65 RESPONSES



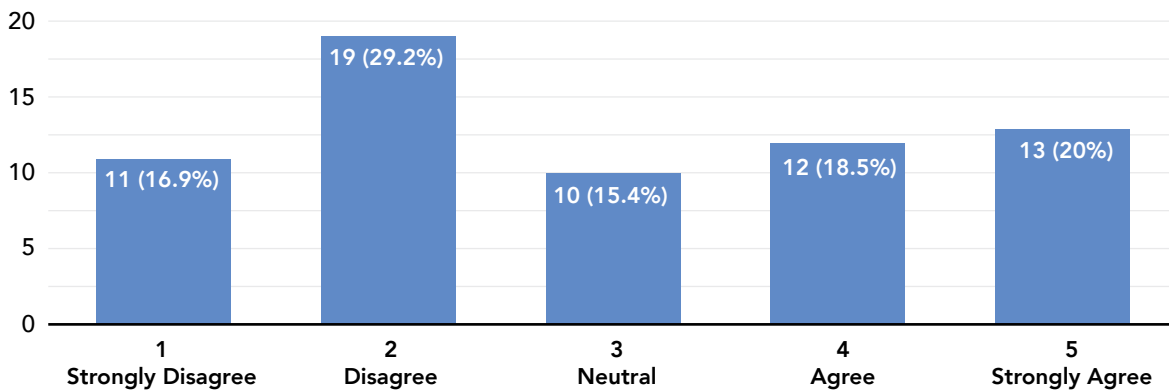
3. I regularly pray for our mission partners.

65 RESPONSES



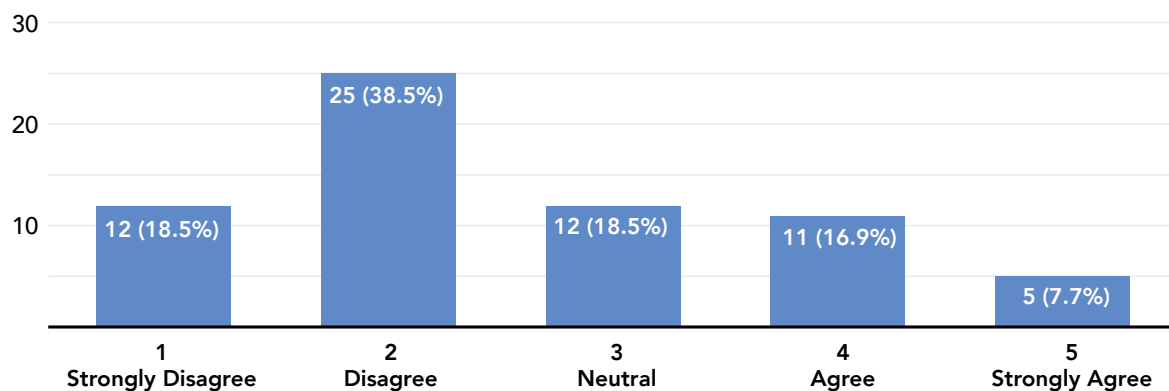
5. I regularly support missionaries, ministries, or mission agencies directly through service and volunteering.

65 RESPONSES



6. I understand the criteria by which Beverly Heights selects missions partners.

65 RESPONSES



A Church on Mission

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE DOING AND THE BEING

By Senior Pastor Nate Devlin

Beverly Heights Church is a congregation that has a long and distinguished history of mission engagement. For 93 years we have raised up missionaries and sent them overseas, we have helped translate the Bible into foreign languages, we have spent untold sums of money training workers, supporting partners, and building facilities.

We've promoted missions' engagement by reminding you that you are the salt, light and leaven of the kingdom of God, wherever God has sovereignly scattered you. All of these endeavors, both globally and locally, help contribute to the work of missions.

Engagement is effective and measurable, which is probably why many churches promote mission engagement. But has God called the church to mission *engagement* or are we supposed to be a church that is *on mission*? Is there a difference and if so, does it matter? I would say yes.

A church that engages in missions does important work. By engaging in missions, a church can often produce a sizable and significant ministry, but one that can also become external to the church itself. Missions can take on a life of its own, and when it does it often runs *adjacent* to the church rather than *through* the church.

When a church's mission strategy is focused on engagement, it runs the risk of inadvertently making missions external, abstract and transactional. Missions becomes external when a church starts to think of missions as something that happens *out there*, on the other side of the globe, or on the other side of town. Missions becomes an abstraction when a church starts to think of missions as an essential part of its vision statement or as a strategic initiative. Missions becomes transactional when church members start to think of mission participation as writing checks or serving on boards.

I'm afraid that far too much of the modern church's conception of missions is informed by engagement rather than essence, on *doing* rather than *being*. Of course, a church must do lots of things, in missions and elsewhere, but a church on mission remembers first and foremost who (or what) it is. What is the church on mission? Let me briefly suggest three things.

The church on mission is a **worshipping community**. John Piper once wrote that "missions exists because worship doesn't." Worship is primary. The church is a worshipping community, and we cannot accomplish the mission of God without worship. When we gather for worship on Sunday, we are on mission. When

we hear the Word, we are on mission. When we baptize babies, we are on mission. When we take communion, we are on mission. When we sing to the Lord, we are on mission. These are the real, covenantal, concrete realities of the church. Worship is powerful and it exists for the sake of the world.

The church on mission is a **witnessing community**. The church exists to be a certain kind of community filled with certain kinds of people. Christ died in order that we might be transformed into his image. He saved us so that we could reflect his surpassing beauty into the world. Christ calls us to holiness so that God's glorious character is shown through us to the world.

The church on mission is a **willing community**. When Jesus commissioned the church to go out and make disciples, he told us to teach disciples to "observe all that I have commanded." The church exists to obey Christ and to lead others into obedience. A church on mission teaches its members to submit their will to Christ and teach the world to say, "Not my will but yours be done."

Yes, there is much work to be done and much we need to engage in, but first we must be the church that Christ has called us to be. And to be the church is to be on mission.