

Did you know they had computers thousands of years ago? Yeah, and one day Abraham bought a new computer. He was excitedly showing it to his son, Isaac. "See all the neat features on it? Look at all the software that came with it!" Isaac responded, "Yeah that's all really good dad, but I don't think you have enough memory in this new computer." Abraham answered, "Don't worry about it, son, God will provide the RAM."

There are different kinds of jokes. You have knock knock jokes, riddle jokes, light bulb jokes, red neck jokes, marriage jokes, and lots more. One kind of joke is the "I have good news and bad news" jokes. They go like these three examples. These three all involve pastors:

Pastor, I have good news and bad news. The good news is, the church women's softball team finally won a game. The bad news is they beat the men's softball team.

Pastor, I have good news and bad news. The good news is that church attendance rose dramatically the last three weeks. The bad news is you were on vacation those weeks.

This morning I want to say something about good news and bad news. This is no joke. Emmanuel Baptist Church is about good news and bad news. We emphasize the good news. We are living, sharing, and supporting the good news of Jesus Christ. But it rests upon the bad news.

The bad news is that we are all sinners and in need of a savior. We need to be rescued. There is a great penalty due unto each of us because of our personal sin. There is no hope of us entering heaven unless someone rescues us from that penalty. No amount of religious activity will save you. For example, going to church won't save you. Memorizing the Bible won't save you. Praying ten times a day won't save you. Teaching a Sunday School class won't save you. Singing in the choir or serving on a committee won't save you. Putting lots of money in the plate won't save you. There is nothing you can do to provide your own salvation. The bad news is, we each need a savior.

That is the bad news. But the good news is that Jesus is the savior we need and He will save us from the penalty of our sins if we put our faith in him. This is the good news that every person needs to hear. And God has a plan for getting this good news to the world. **We call God's plan to get the good news to the world: missions.** Let's read what it says in the Baptist Faith and Message about this. In this article we're going to see the word **regenerate**. It means born again or new birth. When you become a follower of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit makes you new.

## **XI. Evangelism and Missions**

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit

means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life, and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by personal effort and by all other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

*Gen. 12:1-3; Ex. 19:5-6; Isa. 6:1-8; Matt. 9:37-38; Matt. 10:5-15; Matt. 13:18-30,37-43; Matt. 16:19; Matt. 22:9-10; Matt. 24:14; Matt. 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-18; Luke 24:46-53; John 14:11-12; John 15:7-8,16; John 17:15; John 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2; Acts 8:26-40; Acts 10:42-48; Acts 13:2-3; Rom. 10:13-15; Ephes. 3:1-11; 1 Thess. 1:8; 2 Tim. 4:5; Heb. 2:1-3; Heb. 11:39-12:2; 1 Peter 2:4-10; Rev. 22:17.*

### **Missions has always been God's plan.**

See what God said to Abram the first time God revealed Himself to the man.

**Genesis 12:1-3 (NIV)** The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and 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 peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

This was over 400 years before God gave the commandments of the first covenant to Moses. Even then, God planned to bless all the peoples on earth through the Israelites, the Jews. God had a plan and was working that plan. And His plan included salvation for you and me. God established this plan before He created the earth. Jesus dying on the cross was ALWAYS God's plan. Missions has always been God's plan.

When is the last time you told someone you love him or her? If you love someone, you want what is best for them. And if you love them a lot, you are willing to help bring them that best. We learned this from God. One of the first missionaries wrote the following:

**John 3:16 (NIV)** "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son..."

This is God the Father. We know that Jesus so loved the world that He gave His life. And the Holy Spirit so loves the world, that He convicts people of its truth when we share it with them. Sharing it with others will become part of you following Jesus. **Followers of Jesus must care about people getting the good news.**

People have to hear the good news, or at least read it, in order to believe on Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins. Someone has to reveal the good news to them. This is the privilege of every Christian. Each of us who follows Jesus has the privilege and responsibility to tell others what Jesus has done for us and wants to do for them. It is like the early Christians said in Acts 4.

**Acts 4:20 (NIV)** For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.

Why could they not keep silent? They said this because of the joy of their salvation. When you have something really good happen to you, you want to share it with someone else. Their hearts were full of joy and then wanted to share the news.

They said this because they cared about those who needed to be saved. They wanted all their countrymen to hear and believe the good news about Jesus. They cared with God about those around them.

Who do you care about? **Who do you want to see become a Christian and know the joys of following Jesus?** Do you care enough to do something to get the message to them? Let me suggest that you do the following

> Write their names down and put them in your Bible.

> Be an intercessor for them. Pray for them to be saved. Pray for opportunities to share the good news with them.

> Be an encourager to them. (Romans 12:15)  
Point out blessings in their life to be thankful for. Comfort them when they are down. Celebrate with them when they are up.

> Be a helper to them. Be kind to them, doing good things to help them.

> As God provides opportunities, share with them from your relationship with Jesus. Give examples of how you are changing since knowing Jesus. Answer their questions. If you don't know the answer, promise to find out. Then do so. Contact me for answers. If I don't know the answer, I'll find out and get back to you.

The people in your life need to hear about Jesus. But there is more than just these who need to hear. There is a whole world full of people who need to hear the good news. God loves all the people of the world. Red and yellow, black and white they are precious in His sight. Therefore they must be precious to us as well. We must care about the billions of people we do not know and will not meet. We care for them through missions.

#### **Southern Baptists partner together for missions.**

The Southern Baptist Convention was formed for the purpose of missions. There was a time that there were no Baptist denominations in America. There were Baptist churches, but no organized groups. The churches were all independent from each other and everyone else. Gradually, Baptist churches started associating themselves with each other. Some did so for mutual encouragement. Most partnered together for missions. Partnering for the purpose of missions is value of Southern Baptists. Look at article 14 of the Baptist Faith and Message.

#### **XIV. Co-Operation**

Christ's people should, as occasion requires, organize such associations and conventions as may best secure co-operation for the great objects of the kingdom of God. Such organizations have no authority over one another or over the churches. They are voluntary and advisory bodies designed to elicit, combine, and direct the energies of our people in the most effective manner. Members of New Testament churches should co-operate with one another in carrying forward the missionary, educational, and benevolent ministries for the extension of Christ's kingdom. Christian unity in the New Testament sense is spiritual harmony and voluntary co-operation for common ends by various groups of Christ's people. Co-operation is desirable between the various Christian denominations, when the end to be attained is itself justified, and when such co-operation involves no violation of conscience or compromise of loyalty to Christ and his Word as revealed in the New Testament.

*Ex. 17:12; Ex. 18:17ff.; Judg. 7:21; Ezra 1:3-4; Ezra 2:68-69; Ezra 5:14-15; Neh. 4; Neh. 8:1-5; Matt. 10:5-15; Matt. 20:1-16; Matt. 22:1-10; Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 2:3; Luke 10:1ff.; Acts 1:13-14; Acts 2:1ff.; Acts 4:31-37; Acts 13:2-3; Acts 15:1-35; 1 Cor. 1:10-17; 1 Cor. 3:5-15; 1 Cor. 12; 2 Cor. 8-9; Gal. 1:6-10; Eph. 4:1-16; Phil. 1:15-18.*

Southern Baptists are about partnering for missions. **Emmanuel Baptist Church is about missions.** The purpose of this building, our programs, and our staffing is missions. We are here to proclaim the bad news and good news to each other, our children, our families, neighbors, and coworkers. In addition we have partnered with other Southern Baptist Churches for the cause of missions around the world.

**We are a Southern Baptist Church by choice.** The Christians who started this church decided to be a Southern Baptist Church. They could have decided to become an unassociated Baptist church or some other flavor of conservative evangelical Christians. We chose to be a Southern Baptist Church.

Yet, we are fully self-governing and independent of all outside authority. The Southern Baptist Convention does not control us or have any say in who we are, how we are organized, what we believe, or what we give to financially. The Baptist Convention of Maryland and Delaware has no authority over us. The Arundel Baptist Network has no authority over us.

Participants of Emmanuel Baptist Church give financially to this church, our network, and SBC causes by choice. No one outside of our church determines if we will give to these groups or how much. Our choice is to give at least 10% of our offerings to the Cooperative Program. **The Cooperative Program is a program of missions giving.** The money goes to the Baptist Convention of Maryland and Delaware who uses part of it for their ministries and sends the rest to the Southern Baptist Convention for various aspects of missions, primarily direct missionary support and seminary education.

At any time Emmanuel Baptist Church can make different choices about who and what we sponsor. There are many worthy missions causes other than those sponsored by Southern Baptists. For now, we have chosen to support the Southern Baptist missions efforts.

We are about missions because all people need to hear the good news of Jesus Christ. We are about missions because as we follow Jesus we grow to care about those He cares about. We are about missions because it was someone else doing missions that revealed the good news to us. We encourage you to join with us in doing missions together with Jesus.

The good news is too important to make it secondary to anything else. Jesus likened it to the greatest treasure in the world. If you want for you the forgiveness of the good news, then respond to Jesus' invitation today in prayer.