

## **Missions Primer**

March 10, 2013

I had a conversation with some young adults last week. Both consider themselves to be Christians. Both said their faith was important to them. I asked each, separately, what their faith was. They did not know how to answer the question. So I asked a different question. I asked them, "If you died today and tonight were standing before God's throne and He said, "Why should I let you into my heaven?", What would you say?"

Neither gave a Christian answer to that question. The first told me that he believed in God. That's why he should get into heaven. The second told me that she was a good person and was trying to live according to God's teachings. And that's why she should get into heaven.

I shared with both of them the bad news that believing in God and being a good person does not make you worthy of heaven. None of us is worthy of heaven or can become worthy of heaven. We are lost in sin and unless someone rescues us we will be condemned to hell. We need someone greater than ourselves to rescue us.

The Bible says that God loves us so much that He sent us the rescuer we need. Jesus is that rescuer, that Savior. Jesus died to save us from the consequence of our sins. It is only by trusting in Jesus as our rescuer and turning our life over to Him as our Lord that we can be forgiven of our sins and receive eternal life in heaven.

### **Romans 10:13-15 (NIV)**

"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord (Jesus) will be saved."

How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent?

Everyone can be saved. But to be saved, individuals must call on Jesus to save them. You must call on Jesus to be saved from the consequence of your sins.

But in order to call on Jesus, people must hear about Jesus. The news that we are sinners in need of a savior, and that Jesus is the Savior we need, must be communicated to people. Otherwise people won't know they are sinners in need of Jesus. And if they don't know they are sinners in need of Jesus, they can't call on Him to save them.

Doing all it takes to get the Good News of Jesus to all people on this planet is missions. **Missions includes ALL that is required to take the Good News of Jesus to all people.** It involves churches, pastors, evangelists, teachers, missionaries, Bibles, teaching materials, disaster and hunger resources, seminaries, and mission boards. It requires money and prayer.

God created the church to be the conduit for the money and prayers to do missions. The church is the basic organization of the Christian faith. The church, not the denomination, is the basic unit of Christian organization. The church, not the association or mission boards, is the basic unit of Christian organization.

Churches existed before all of these others were started. The Southern Baptist Convention, the state conventions, the mission boards, and the associations were all started for accomplishing missions. These were created to help the churches, not the other way around.

**Baptist churches, including Southern Baptist churches, are autonomous, self-governing.** No other organization has authority over the local church. Some people picture the hierarchy of Southern Baptists like this:



Note the direction of authority, from the larger organization to the smaller. This is a totally wrong picture. Below is the correct one.



Southern Baptist Churches are autonomous, which means self-governing. We own our land and building. We hire our own staff. We design our own budgets. We decide how much money to give to other organizations. The only person higher than our church is Jesus. There is no organization over our church. The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) has no authority over our church. Instead, we, in cooperation with other churches, have authority over the SBC.

I say all that to make the point that before the Southern Baptist Convention was created, all the churches were independent. They were not connected to each other. They chose to partner with each other to do missions more effectively. They built a partnership to do missions. In the early years the first partnerships were on the local level, in associations. As churches and associations multiplied state conventions were formed and then the Southern Baptist Convention was formed.

Before all these partnerships were started the churches were independent. After these partnerships were started the churches were still independent. Our church is an autonomous church. We are independent of others. But we partner with others for the sake of doing missions better.

The reason we partner with other churches is to do missions more effectively. We can accomplish more together than we can separately. The Southern Baptist Convention was created for the purpose of missions. The Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware was created for missions. The Arundel Baptist Association was created for missions.

**Our church is about missions.** Emmanuel Baptist church was started because of missions. Thirty five years ago, the projected growth in population in western Anne Arundel County became the impetus for starting our church. This land was purchased with missions money. The original building was built with missions money. The pastor's salary, in the early years, was supplemented with missions money. Missions is who we are and what we are about.

Our church has always given at least 10% of our non-designated income to missions, channeling money to the Arundel Baptist Association, the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware, and on to the Southern Baptist Convention. On the national level we support six seminaries, the North American Mission Board, and the International Mission Board.

**Missionaries:**

**IMB: 4,894; NAMB: 2,488; Student Missions: 1,122; Chaplains: 3,597**

As of February 27th, we have 4,894 International Mission Board missionaries serving around the world. We also have 2,488 missionaries serving with the North American Mission Board. In addition, last year, 1,122 college students served either during the summer or for a semester, sponsored by the North American Mission Board. And the North American Mission Board endorses 3,597 chaplains serving in the military, hospitals, police and fire departments, and other contexts.

As Southern Baptists, Maryland/Delaware Baptists, Arundel Baptist Association churches, and as Emmanuel Baptist Church of Gambrills, we are about missions. We exist to *Change Lives with Christ*. Jesus is changing lives here, in our community, in our state, nation, and around the world. And we are working with Him, doing the work of missions.

Missions is where we came from. Missions is who we are. Missions is what we do.

Be a part of missions with us. Be a part of what Jesus is doing. Missions requires us to give. We must give to missions. We must give of our money. This money pays for education, training, travel to their mission fields, salaries, and materials. A portion of each dollar of your regular giving goes to missions. In addition we sponsor three special offerings each year, in March, September, and December, highlighting with each a different location of missions work. Currently we are emphasizing the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions.

( For more on Annie Armstrong go to: <http://www.anniearmstrong.com/whoisannie/> )

You who have heard and accepted the good news and chose to call on Jesus for salvation, you were enabled to do so because others gave. Now, as a follower of Jesus yourself, give to help others hear of Jesus. Give to missions.

**Give to missions. Give money. Give prayer.**

Missions also requires prayer. Our missionaries are very aware of this. Time and again they stress that of the two, prayer is more important. If there were no money, they would still need our prayers. Missions work is spiritual work. It is work in the hearts of people. Spiritual work takes prayer. Money doesn't open hearts or give gospel understanding. It takes prayer and the Holy Spirit to do this.

So pray. Please pray for our missionaries. Your prayers make a difference. You may never see, this side of heaven, how they make a difference. But they make a difference. They make a difference for the missionaries serving far from home.

We are not just about missions during March, September, and December when we highlight the three special offerings. Every week we have prayer requests from missionaries. These requests, one from an International Missionary and one from a North American missionary are on the back of the bulletin each week.

There are other ways to be informed about missionary needs.

Weekly NAMB prayer requests:  
<http://www.namb.net/prayerrequests/>

Featured Missionaries  
[http://www.namb.net/Featured\\_Missionaries/](http://www.namb.net/Featured_Missionaries/)

Other ways to pray  
<http://www.namb.net/prayer/>

IMB Prayer Resources page  
<http://www.imb.org/main/pray/>

IMB Daily Prayer Requests  
<http://www.imb.org/main/pray/prayerrequests/todaysprayer.asp>

IMB Weekly Prayer Requests (can be emailed to you)  
<http://www.imb.org/main/pray/page.asp?StoryID=7957&LanguageID=1709>

( Invitation )

I have good news and bad news. The bad news is that all people are sinners and will be condemned to hell for their sin. You are a sinner. You cannot solve your sin problem. You need a rescuer, a savior.

The good news is that God loves you and sent the Savior you need, Jesus. He died to pay the consequence of your sin. You can be forgiven and inherit eternal life through Jesus.

Today, won't you call on Jesus to save you? Won't you trust in Him, in His death for you? Won't you receive Him as your personal Savior? Won't you turn your life over to Him as your Lord and live for Him? Do it today. Do it now.