



Reformation Christian Ministries

What is Missions?

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In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness [was] upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. [Genesis 1:1-3] God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. [1 John 1:5]

There are all kinds of definitions that are set forth in answer to the question: what is missions? It was providential that I "stumbled" across this definition in the Scriptures when I was in the "dark continent" of Africa in 2003. I was reading Genesis 1 as a context for a discussion on the Old Testament Great Commission, which I considered at the time to be Genesis 1:26 (...have dominion...), when Genesis 1:2-4 struck me. There was darkness, and God said *let there be light, and light came to be*. Then, when you go onto verse 4, you see ***God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness***. What struck me was this was "a" most if not "the" most basic premise for the Great Commission. Furthermore, it was perhaps the most basic theme that runs throughout Scripture. **MISSIONS IS: light comes and makes the darkness go away.**

If you take the time to trace this theme throughout Scripture, you suddenly realize that everything throughout the Old and New Testament was simply a matter of God's light coming ever so slowly and gradually and shining forth amidst the darkness to make it go away. It is clear that this light, and not the sun and moon, is necessary for the existence of life because plants existed (Genesis 1:11-13) before the sun and moon were created (Genesis 1:14-19). During the Exodus, the pillar of light was darkness to the Egyptians and light to the Israelites (Exodus 14:20); the Lord is the Light of Israel (Isaiah 10:17) and will be a Light also to the Gentiles (Isaiah 49:6). Throughout the psalms (e.g. Psalm 18) note the contrasts of light from the Lord versus the surrounding darkness. Israel and the Lord are intended to be a light in the midst of all the surrounding darkness.

Then, when we come to the New Testament, we see that the personification of darkness unsuccessfully tempts Christ (the Light of the world—John 8:12) in the Wilderness (Matthew 4), while he is beheld falling like lightning from the sky (Luke 10:18) a while later having been cast out of heaven (Revelation 12:9) and no longer able to deceive the nations (Revelation

20:1-3) by holding them in darkness. Now, Christ, the Light to the Gentiles (Isaiah 42:6; 49:6; Luke 2:32) has told His church to go to all these Gentile nations and disciple them (Matthew 28:18-20). As a result, His Body (the Church) is to let their light so shine (Matthew 5:16).

And how is this light to shine within believers? First it must rise in their own hearts (2 Peter 1:19). Then it begins a process of pushing the darkness away in their hearts (Matthew 4:16; Luke 1:78; John 1:7, 8:12, 12:14; Acts 26:18; Ephesians 5:7-8, 6:12; Colossians 13; 2 Peter 1:19). What is to happen in our own hearts is to happen in the hearts of all God's people.

In the final day, darkness will be totally separated from the earth and have its own eternal place to exist along with all those who dwelt in darkness (Revelation 20:10-15) while light will exist without any darkness and no need for the sun, moon, or stars (Revelation 21, 22, esp. 22:5). Thereupon, the work begun in Genesis 1:2-4 shall be culminated in Revelation 21-22, when light will have permanently made all of darkness to go away.

This must first begin in our hearts, and then must spread to the hearts of many others in all the nations which are no longer able to be fully deceived by Satan as in the past. Reformation and missions is simply the shining forth of this light in the hearts of God's people and through them into the fabric of every nation (tribe, kindreds, peoples) of the world. Its progress within these nations will be no greater than its progress within God's people in those nations. The degree of success of light in making the darkness go away on this present earth is controlled by God. The ultimate success is without question and takes place in eternity. We thank you for the part you play in working as part of the RCM team in bringing the light that more and more of the darkness will be made to go away.

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