

What part of your life reflects God's heart desire to be known among all people on the planet?

So how many people are there? Last Sunday morning I used the number 6.8 billion to indicate the number of people alive on planet earth. That morning on the front page of the local newspaper was an article announcing that the world's population is closer to 8 billion people. Either I had picked up some older statistics or the world's population is growing a bit faster than anticipated. Regardless, I am anxious to see today's paper. Regardless, the numbers remain both staggering and almost impossible to grasp. It is a challenge for the follower of Christ to stay alert and involved in missions when our world is so big and change is so rapid. How do you fight the tendency to drift regarding your involvement in reaching the world?

One organization that serves the church of Jesus Christ by mobilizing efforts toward Muslim peoples uses the terms engaged and unengaged to sharpen our thinking about our mission of reaching the nations with the gospel. Engaged describes a people group where there is a team of believers telling the good news of Jesus in that group's language and seeking to establish a culturally relevant reproducing community of believers. Unengaged describes a people group where there is no witness at all to God's great love manifested in Christ Jesus. This organization's website says that in one region in SE Asia, nearly 100 million people live without an active testimony of the gospel.

Not diminishing at all your responsibility to reach the person across the street or the family next door, these statistics about the unengaged are rather disturbing and provocative. The website lists a few possible reasons why these 'pocket' regions of Africa and Asia present such a challenge to the global church of Christ:

Hot temperatures and history of war.

People groups perceived as more difficult.

Governments want neither outside attention or interaction with groups.

Spiritual forces of darkness combined with lack of prayer.

Reaching across the divides and rising to the challenges of language, climate, culture, opposition, oppression, geography and sometimes danger with the gospel is called missions. A missionary, generally speaking, is one who goes to another people group to proclaim the gospel and assist in the building of a church that can reproduce itself in that culture. Faithful obedience to Christ requires that we as a community of Christ followers engage in and mobilize ourselves for the task of reaching the nations with the good news of Christ.

This summer the Missions Team met several times and drafted biblical mandate and mission statements to clarify for us what our biblical assignment is. Both of these helpful statements are copied on the back of your bulletins.

This morning we again want to take a look at this assignment and encourage each other to excel in this effort. The key terms from these statements drafted by our Missions Team to serve us are the active verbs 'join in the effort' and 'mobilize.' The Missions Team for some reason did not choose to say that our church, you and I, need to be held back because we are caring and doing too much. They did not use words saying we should simply appreciate what God is doing in the world or even support more people who want to go. These statements that they have written to guide our combined efforts to obey God call for you, every member, to join an effort, be mobilized for action,

experience missions personally, send people from among us and give of our resources to support those we send. Who is this Missions Team and from whence do they come? They have served us well by articulating the teachings of Christ and the scriptures regarding the heart of God for all people.

Let's find and read Psalm 96 together.

A simple definition of mobilizing God's people for the task of world evangelism is to help you see God's great story and then find ways to be part of it. That's what we are asking God to help us accomplish this morning. I want to mobilize you. I want to help you see, awaken to and be overwhelmed by God's great story and then urge you to greater and growing participation in that story. Hot temperatures, wars, challenging cultures, government opposition and spiritual oppression are only overcome by those who know God's new song and are convinced that everyone must have a chance to sing it.

1. Awake . . . see God's great story!

Psa 96

Psalm 96 is a song written for and sung by the people of God. It calls the entire world to join them in song and worship because of the greatness of the one true God. It is a bold, energetic and exclusive reminder that there is but one true God and all peoples must worship him. It stirs the sleepy soul of the faithful to God's heart for the nations of the earth. The objective of history is that the nations know and worship God. The destination of history is a time of judgment when all the earth will appear before God to be judged in righteousness.

There are about 12 references to the people outside the faith community of the Jews to whom this Psalm was given. Seeing God's story is in large part seeing the greatness of God manifested in a global manner. Here's the song of the church that both reminds us and invites them.

God is worthy of universal praise.

1-6

'declare his glory'

The Lord is great. V.4 sing, tell, declare

His salvation, his glory, his marvelous works, his supremacy over not gods/idols, his creative power, his splendor, strength and beauty – all establish him as supreme throughout the world.

Recognition of the supremacy of God motivates outreach and energizes action.

God is worthy of comprehensive worship.

7-9

'worship the Lord'

Give to the Lord. V.7 give (3x), bring an offering, worship, tremble

God's glory, strength and absolute holiness – all set him apart as the one to whom all the earth will give worship. God's uniqueness demands, requires and invites all the earth to get low before him. Cf Psa. 95:6.

Recognition of the supremacy of God defines our message and perspective.

God is worthy of joyful submission.

10-13

'the Lord reigns!'

The Lord reigns. The world is established only because God reigns. V.10

Our announcement of joyful submission is rooted in the good news that God has in Christ defeated the enemy and is now ready to come in righteous judgment.

God reigns, the world is established (rescued) and God is coming . . . submit with joy.

Recognition of the supremacy of God focuses our affections and preparations on his coming.

2. Act . . . be a part of God's great story!

Psa. 96

A quick reflection on Psalm 96 will show that there at least 10 separate active verbs used to define and call the worshiper to global action. The repetition and emphasis of the song describes some of the active involvement . . . sing, bless, tell, declare, tremble while the song itself serves as a reminder that we need reminding. Finding ways to be a part of God's global enterprise and staying on course to make a difference are two separate things . . . both important for the mobilized world Christian.

This response of active obedience is at the heart of Christ's command to make disciples of all nations. The death, resurrection and exaltation of Christ marks a huge development in world and redemptive history. Psalm 96 is closer to being a reality in every way. We have a more detailed story to announce when we cross barriers to tell people 'the Lord reigns!'

Let's address your participation in global missions by asking and answering two questions:

a. What should you be doing?

Several from our church family recently completed a challenging 15 week class called 'Perspectives on the World Christian Movement.' A lot of reading, lectures and learning with a huge impact. In this course, we were exposed to one ministry that encourages believers to act in the following six ways to effectively reach God's world. These can be explored further at www.6ways2reach.org.

Learn	Increase your understanding and awareness – read, classes, host, web
Go	Exposure to cross cultural ministry – short term trips, business & ministry
Send	Use your resources to team up with goers – give, encourage, support
Pray	Seek God's power and protection for fellow workers – prayer letters, groups
Welcome	Loving those from other cultures in our town – hosting, friendship, studies
Mobilize	Encourage others to participate – do what you do with you, advocacy, trips

b. How can you keep doing that?

Most of us are aware that the larger problem regarding world missions is not getting excited or energized about what God is doing, but it is actually staying energized through the multitude of distractions that come our way. A quote from the World perspectives class reader says is well: (p728. Life on Purpose – Hickman, Hawthorne, Ahrend)

We all tend to drift. No one sets out aiming for smallness. We've all let life and the waves of social pressure carry us along. It is easy to get caught up in the mainstream and find ourselves

too weak to fight the current. Passive defaulting to the world's crosscurrents in the everydayness of life produces small people living for small things.

To fight the drift, we need to keep making key choices over and over again. The word Christians have used to describe regularly setting yourself to make small but vital lifestyle decisions is the word 'disciplines.'

The small, daily and vital decisions you must make every day to be a world Christian include:

Time with God – the Word and prayer.	Source of power and perspective.
Time with others – growing with others.	Meaningful relationships; No one gets very far going alone.
Strategic simplicity – learning to give.	Investing in God's work pays huge dividends.
Push you perspective – grow what you know.	Be a lifelong learner of what God is doing in his world.

The question we began with . . . What part of your life reflects God's heart desire to be known among all people on the planet?

Has your soul been stirred or awakened in any way to God's desire for the nations? Will you act on that this morning?

Let's read Revelation 5:1-14.

Study Questions

1. What impressions, observations or questions do you have from this study of Psalm 96 and the call to mobilization? Read/review the church statements printed in the bulletin.
2. Read Psalm 96 together and comment on what God is teaching you through this passage.
3. Check out www.6ways2reach.org and watch the video together as a group. What tools do you use to keep your mind and heart sensitized to global awareness and need for the gospel?
4. What part of your life reflects God's heart desire to be known among all people on the planet? Considering the task of global missions, what are the areas you think you know and do well as a world Christian? What are some ways you need to learn and grow?
5. As a group, without looking at a church directory, write out a list of the names and locations of every KSBC missionary partner. Don't allow one or two members to dominate, make people think hard.
6. Share your experience of daily, small, vital choices that you make that keep you energized about God and his supremacy. Ask the group to pray for and encourage each other in specific ways.
7. Share the most effective experience you have had that has increased your understanding and changed your behavior regarding world missions.
8. Spend time in prayer for each other that God would unite our hearts around his amazing, universal and blessed authority so that we will continue to join the effort of world missions.