

For the Sake of His Name

January 28, 2016

by David Schrock

In the New Testament evangelism was propelled by an overarching concern for the glory of God. As Paul writes in Romans 1, he was an apostle of God's gospel . . . "so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, *to the glory of God*" (Romans 1:5).

This glorious passion was also foreshadowed by the Old Testament. For example, Psalm 67 recruits God's blessing for the sake of the nations, and Psalm 96 commands God's people to worship God in public as a means of declaring the gospel before the nations.

God-centered glory stands at the center of missionary labors. And thus, everything that increases the display of and delight in God's glory, should be pursued with biblical fidelity and spiritual zeal. But does that mean cross-cultural, global missions glorifies God "more" than local evangelism?

I think so, and for at least three reasons.

The Greater Glory of Global Missions

There are three ways global missions glorifies God in ways local missions does not.

First, cross-cultural missions diversifies God's praise, thereby increasing the expansive beauty of his glory.

Like a prism creates a rainbow of colors when light shines through it, so the light of the gospel creates multi-colored praise as it goes into different parts of the world. Evangelism confined by geographic and ethnic boundaries fails to take seriously the heavenly hue of multi-national worship. Revelation 5 and 7 speak of the throne of God surrounded by worshipers of every tongue, tribe, people, and nation. If we love God's glory, we will labor to see the nations know him, so that his glory is spread abroad and echoed by all the nations.

Second, cross-cultural missions endangers the witness, thereby displaying the value of the glorious gospel.

If we are honest with the Bible's message, we soon realize the call to pick up our cross and follow Jesus is only half-metaphorical. We may not literally carry a Roman cross on our shoulders, but all who will reign with Christ will suffer for Christ (Romans 8:17; 2 Timothy 2:12). And if we are imitating Paul, that suffering is meant to lead to the salvation of the elect (2 Tim 2:9--10). In other words, suffering for Christ's sake displays the worth of our king. And how much more, suffering so that others may know him as their king.

In truth, this kind of suffering can be done without crossing geographic boundaries. The peoples of the earth, many hostile to Christ, live all around us. Going to China or Afghanistan doesn't require a visa, just open eyes and a willing spirit.

The nations will not be reached without the church stepping over oceans and into ethnic enclaves for the sake of Christ. Those who willingly leave their country and their kindred *and* those who embrace a sacrificial lifestyle to support them are demonstrating the value of Christ, the gospel, and the kingdom of God. God's glory is amplified when people expend themselves so that others (current enemies of God) may hear the message of Jesus and be saved. If we care about God's glory, we will join the global mission of going or sending those who go out for the sake of the name (3 John 7).

Last, cross-cultural missions demands strategic planning and sacrificial giving, hence displaying the centrality of his glory.

Currently, in 2016 when everyone reading this post has instant access to "infinite" information and bountiful access to grow in Christ, there are more than 1.365 billion people who are ["unreached"](#) with the gospel. Dwell on that: 1,365,000,000. Well over a billion people with eternal souls who are not merely unconvinced by the gospel—they *have never heard the gospel*.

How are these people, made in God's image for his glory, going to hear the gospel? How will they glorify their Maker, unless we the redeemed of the Lord go to them (Romans 10:13–17)?

This is why global missions amplifies the glory of God. It's not just the end result of salvation that glorifies God; it's also the labor-intensive process that brings the gospel to the lost.

When a man like Jacob works 14 years to gain his bride's hand in marriage, it glorifies love more than the man who gets married fourteen months after meeting his wife. In both cases, love is magnified through marriage, but clearly the former story is more glorious.

God is doing the same thing in the world. The Author of Faith isn't a commercial baron collecting as many saints as he can with the least effort possible. No, God is a story-teller who glorifies his Son's death and resurrection by calling his children to lay down their lives in the pursuit of others. Such counter-cultural gospel strategy displays the primacy of God's kingdom and hence amplifies the glory of God on earth.

The Glory of God in Missions

John Piper famously said:

Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn't. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man. When this age is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. But worship abides forever. So worship is the fuel and goal of missions. ([Let the Nations be Glad](#), 15).

Those who care most deeply about the glory of God will be equally passionate about global, cross-cultural missions. By no means does this imply that we neglect neighbor-love and local

evangelism. It does mean that such gospel labors are insufficient to bring all the glory that God deserves.

In our pragmatic culture, it's easy to believe all that matters is the number of converts won to Christ. But that only gets half of the story. God is calling his sheep from every corner of the earth and he is looking for shepherds and sheep-herders who will leave the 99 to find the 1.

May God be pleased to raise up a generation of saints and an army of churches who are not only reaching their communities, but who are also making strategic plans to reach the nations *for the sake of his name and the international praise of his glorious grace*.

Soli Deo Gloria, ds

[A longer version of this post, with further biblical support, can be found at Pastor David's blog: "[For His Name's Sake: Why the Church Must Do More Than Local Evangelism](#)".]