

Acts 1:1-11  
World Missions Conference  
IM1702

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Missions

“Final Observations”

INTRODUCTION: Mike Miller and our Outreach and Missions Department have asked me to speak tonight about my observations about missions ...

1. ... at the closing of my 35 years as a pastor, deeply involved in world missions.
2. **Most probably, this is the last time I will preach to you about missions as your senior pastor, but ...**
3. Hopefully, *not* the last time I will preach to you about this *great passion* of God. (Hint!)
4. My heart for world missions goes back to 1962 when I was about 12-years-old.
  - a) Attending a R.C. parochial school in Columbus, Ohio; in my home parish.
  - b) A visiting Priest, who was a member of the order of *The Divine Word Missionaries* spoke to our 8<sup>th</sup> grade class.
  - c) The *SVD (Societas Verbi Divinae)* stands for “*The Society of the Divine Word*”
    - (1) largest missionary community in the world-wide Catholic Church (today over 6,000 priest and brothers)
    - (2) Founded in the Netherlands in 1875 by **Fr. Arnold Janssen**, a parish priest.
    - (3) Drawing then from mostly German priests (hence: I studied German for 3 years in minor seminary)
    - (4) Three “fields”: inner city, education, and 50 foreign countries
      - *Togo*
      - *Papua New Guinea*
      - *Argentina*
      - *Australia*
      - *Botswana*
      - *Zambia*
      - *Brazil*
      - *Taiwan (China)*
      - *Canada*
      - *Philippines*
      - *South Africa*
      - *Japan, etc.*

- (5) In all: *12 Countries in Africa, 9 nations in Asia, 23 European Countries, 12 Caribbean/N. American Works, 4 in Oceania and 9 missions in S. America*
- d) The SVD is known for its “*Four Dimensions of Mission*”
- (1) The Bible
  - (2) Communication and Education
  - (3) Mission Animation (promoting support for Missions)
  - (4) Justice, Peace and Integrity of the Creation
- e) Its 6,000+ members are now 90% from the Global Majority (“Third World”) Countries in which they serve.
- f) As a *junior and senior* in H.S. (minor seminary) I served as the Chairman of the “Missions Society.”
5. When I was attending *Central Church*, in Memphis as a “seeker,” I actually made a *Faith Promise* to their missions program **before** I was converted, became a member at Central Church, or began to tithe!
6. Jane and I set off for *Columbia Biblical Seminary* to pursue a *certificate in Missions* – a 1-year program, and then ...
- a) Head to Italy with *Greater Europe Missions (GEM)*
  - b) That 1-year morphed into 3 and the certificate grew into a Master of Divinity
  - c) In my second year, I switched from the foreign missions track to the North American Ministry track.
  - d) When I went to talk about this with **Dr. Terry Hulbert**, Dean of the seminary, Dr. Hulbert said, “*Mike, we need mission-minded pastors more than we need missionaries. Without them the vision for world missions will die in one generation.*”
  - e) I’ve **never** forgotten Dr. Hulbert’s comment.
  - f) I have developed and expanded the missions endeavor at all three of my Pastorates.
  - g) *Surfside PCA, Trinity PCA – Jackson* and now *Christ Covenant* are known as “mission-minded” churches.
7. **All this to say**, *That I have been committed to world missions for most of my life, since age 12, for over 55 years!*
- a) Building up/ expanding solid mission programs
  - b) I have personally visited 26 countries in this world.
  - c) And preached/ taught in 14 of these nations.
8. For me Christianity revolves about **Five Great Callings**:
- a) **The Cross**: Christ crucified and personal faith in Him.
- I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Gal. 2:20)*

b) **The Bible:** The Inspired and Infallible Word of God’s Revelation

*All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. (2 Tim. 3:16-17)*

c) **The Church:** The Bride of Christ and God’s people in this world.

*I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth. (1 Tim. 3:14-15)*

d) **The Mission:** The Great Commission – the heart-beat of God

*And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matt. 28:18-20)*

e) **The Calling:** Christ’s challenge for every single person to serve as his witness.

*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. (Acts 1:8)*

9. I simply **cannot** be a true Christian – a genuine and obedient follower of Christ unless ...

- a) *Place my faith in Jesus Christ as my Savior and Lord,*
- b) *I receive the Bible as the Word of God and allow it to change my life,*
- c) *I commit myself to a lifetime of both love for and service to the local church.*
- d) *I embrace Christ’s Great Commission as my mission, and,*
- e) *I find my small place in world evangelization and faithfully do my part in this grand enterprise.*

10. So ... as I look back on 40+ years of mission investment and involvement, as an *Evangelical Christian* and as a *Reformed and Presbyterian Pastor*, I’ve reached some conclusions.

11. And I’ve arrived on some convictions.

12. These can be summarized using **Acts 1:1-11** as our text ...

I. JESUS AND THE MISSION OF GOD (Acts 1:1-3)

*In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. (Acts 1:1-3)*

1. It is important for us to distinguish between 2 words:

- a) *Missions:* The task of reaching people for Christ by crossing cultural and national boundaries (Doing missionary work)

b) *Mission*: The Comprehensive way the church points to and leads people into the Kingdom of God.

2. Jesus Christ was God's great *missionary*, sent into the world:

*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)*

*And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. (John 17:3)*

*Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." (John 20:21)*

3. Jesus was obsessed with a grand passion, which we could rightly call *Missio Dei*: the mission of God.

a) *Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." (Mark 1:14-15)*

b) *And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. (Matt. 24:14)*

c) The *Missio Dei* is **The Kingdom of God**.

4. Notice how strategically prominent this Kingdom of God was in Jesus' life, mission and message:

a) The first words out of his mouth as He began His ministry:

(1) *In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt. 3:1-2)*

(2) *Now when he heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee. And leaving Nazareth he went and lived in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, so that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:*

*"The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,  
the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—  
the people dwelling in darkness  
have seen a great light,  
and for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death,  
on them a light has dawned."*

*From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt. 4:12-17)*

b) Most of His parables began with these words: *"The Kingdom of God is like ..., or To what shall we compare the Kingdom of Heaven?"*

c) His Gospel is: *"The Gospel of the Kingdom"*

*And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. (Matt. 24:14)*

d) What He taught us He called *"The mysteries of the Kingdom"*

e) For Jesus to become a Christian was ...

(1) *to enter the Kingdom of God*

(2) *to become a disciple of the Kingdom of Heaven*

(3) *to inherit the Kingdom of God.*

f) This was His whole life and mission –

*And when it was day, he departed and went into a desolate place. And the people sought him and came to him, and would have kept him from leaving them, but he said to them, “I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for I was sent for this purpose.” (Luke 4:42-43)*

5. So, it stands to reason that for the 40 days between His resurrection and his ascension into heaven, Jesus would intensify His kingdom teaching of the Apostles –

a) *In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. (Acts 1:1-3)*

b) **“speaking to them about the Kingdom of God”**

c) And they **get** the message!

d) *But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. (Acts 8:12)*

e) *When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God. (Acts 14:21-22)*

f) *And he entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God. (Acts 19:8)*

g) *But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. And now, behold, I know that none of you among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom will see my face again. (Acts 20:24-25)*

h) *When they had appointed a day for him, they came to him at his lodging in greater numbers. From morning till evening he expounded to them, testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets. (Acts 28:23)*

i) *He lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance. (Acts 28:30-31)*

j) The Book of Acts opens and closes with the same Vision: *The Kingdom of God.*

6. **Gary Corwin, Scott Moreau, and Gary McGee:** *Introducing World Missions* warn us about *Ten Misconceptions* about “missions” and “missionaries”
- a) First: *Missionaries are super-spiritual*
  - b) Second: *Missionaries are misfits in their own culture (“geeks”)*
  - c) Third: *Missionaries are little more than adventure-seekers*
  - d) Fourth: *Missionaries are always good with languages*
  - e) Fifth: *Missionaries always have a strong call from God*
  - f) Sixth: *Missionaries are (bigoted) cultural imperialists.*
  - g) Seventh: *Missionaries are no longer needed.*
  - h) Eighth: *Missionaries always go overseas.*
  - i) Ninth: *Missionaries live in “the bush.”*
  - j) Tenth: *Missionaries sign their life away forever.*

7. Every Christian has a **part** to play in the Great Co-mission we share with God and His Son.

8. **Gary Corwin** and Associates correctly write (p. 22-23)

*God’s call to ministry can be fulfilled in numerous ways, of which traditional missionary work is only one. Those who seek to follow God’s leading into cross-cultural missionary service face a more rapidly changing and dangerous world than ever before. This is a time in North America when the willingness to sacrifice in the service of Christ is harder to find than in centuries past. There also are greater opportunities than ever before. Missionaries know of and can have access to literally millions of people who have yet to hear the claims of Christ through a variety of means – radio, satellite, Internet, video – that the apostle Paul never could have imagined.*

9. I may be wrong about this, but here is my “take” on how Acts 1:1-3 applies to us:

- a) Luke was saying: *What Jesus began in His Kingdom mission we have been called to continue ...”*

(1) Volume 1: *Jesus’ mission in the world* (Gospel of Luke)

*Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.” (Luke 24:44-49)*

(2) Volume 2: *Our Mission in the world* (Book of Acts)

*Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.” (John 20:21)*

10. There are **Ten** strategic ways Christian can (should) personally involve themselves in the *Missio Dei*:

- a) Medical Missions: Doctors, Dentists, Nurses, Technicians, etc.
- b) ESL: teaching English (here or abroad) as a second language
- c) Campus Ministry: to the emerging world's universities
- d) Community Development: Health, safety, organization
- e) Justice: Immigrants, the Persecuted, Displaced persons
- f) Emergency Relief work: famine, disease, war, disasters
- g) Education: teaching overseas or teaching teachers.
- h) International Students: 886,000 in USA, going "home" as witness
- i) Communication: Radio, TV, Internet; mission w/o borders
- j) Seminary Work: Pastors teaching indigenous pastors.

11. **Jesus has a place for you to serve in the expansion of His Kingdom, to foster the spread of the Gospel, to enter into the *Missio Dei*. It is up to YOU to discover how you fit ...**

- a) Full-time, as at least a temporary venture
- b) Part-time, alongside or out of the calling you now have
- c) As a seminary-trained Pastor-teacher
- d) In the capacity of a PhD professor.

12. "Missions" has changed in my lifetime, as the world has, and you and I need to change with them!

## II. JESUS AND THE SPIRIT OF GOD (Acts 1:4-5)

*And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." (Acts 1:4-5)*

1. **John Stott's** commentary on the Book of Acts (a favorite) is titled: *The Message of Acts: The Spirit, the Church, and the World (BST Series)*
  - a) *Thus Jesus' ministry on earth, exercised personally and publicly, was followed by his ministry from heaven, exercised through his Holy Spirit by his apostles. Moreover the watershed between the two was the ascension. Not only did it conclude Luke's first book and introduce his second (Acts 1:9), but it terminated Jesus' earthly ministry and inaugurated his heavenly ministry. What, then, is the correct title for Luke's second volume? Its popular name, especially in the United States, is 'the Book of Acts', and this is justified by the fourth-century Codex Sinaiticus in which it is headed simply Praxeis, 'Acts'. But this neither tells us whose acts Luke is portraying. The traditional title since the second century has been 'The Acts of (the) Apostles,' with or without the definite article. Others have proposed the title 'The Acts of the Holy Spirit.' This, is to be sure, is a healthy corrective. Throughout Luke's narrative there are references to the promise, gift, outpouring, baptism, fullness, power, witness and guidance of the Holy Spirit. It would be impossible to explain the progress of the gospel apart from the work of the Spirit. (pp. 32-33)*

- b) The **Spirit**, the **Church**, and the **World ...**
- c) The Spirit (working through) the Church (in) the World.

2. **Dr. William J. Larkin, Jr.** was a beloved seminary professor of mine, at Columbia Biblical Seminary (1979-1980)

- a) He taught us Greek, Exegesis and Acts-Rev. Epistles.
- b) We worked our way through the Book of Acts, passage by passage, in Greek, over 2 years of time.
- c) Later, in 1995, he wrote the *IVP New Testament Commentary on Acts*. In that commentary, he wrote this (pp. 31-32)

(1) *The Holy Spirit is the promised gift from the Father and from the exalted, reigning Son. He is first poured out at Pentecost on all who repent and believe in the Lord Jesus for salvation. The Holy Spirit's presence is a key salvation blessing. In the church's life the Spirit provides power in witness. When Christians full of the Spirit testify, there is enabling, boldness and conviction. There may also be a power encounter in which Satanic opposition to the gospel is routed. The Spirit further supplies guidance, especially for the advance of the church's mission. He may give specific instruction in combination with supernatural communication in order to overcome ethnic hesitation and move a Philip or a Peter to preach the gospel to Gentiles. He guides Paul into his Gentile mission, both in its inauguration through the Antioch church and in its further thrust into Macedonia. The Spirit can indicate God's purposes both positively and negatively. He can warn of negative circumstances surrounding an action. Finally, the Spirit's guidance promotes church unity.*

(2) *For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay on you no greater burden than these requirements: that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell." So when they were sent off, they went down to Antioch, and having gathered the congregation together, they delivered the letter. And when they had read it, they rejoiced because of its encouragement. (Acts 15:28-31)*

(3) *In church life, the Holy Spirit also facilitates edification. He fills leaders for serving, shepherding and prophesying. Accountability to the Spirit is central in church discipline. No better picture of the Spirit's role in the church's growth and maturity can be found than in Luke's summary statement about the church in Judea, Galilee and Samaria.*

(4) *So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied. (Acts 9:31)*

3. As Dr. Larkin, I, and my classmates studied the Book of Acts, three things happened to me:

- a) First: *The Book of Acts became my favorite book in the N.T.*

- b) Second: *I learned a way to study the Bible that I use to this day.*
- c) Third: *I came to the conclusion that the Holy Spirit was as crucial to my life and ministry as (1) the Word of God, and (2) the Cross of Christ.*
- d) The Church and the world desperately need the Holy Spirit ...
- e) ... and so do I!

4. And *how* the Holy Spirit primarily works through us is through

- a) The *spiritual gifts* he sovereignly gives to us
- b) The *ministries* in the local church in which we worship and work
- c) Unique *opportunities*: “doors” that the Spirit opens and closes ...
- d) *Now the apostles and the brothers who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcision party criticized him, saying, “You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them.” But Peter began and explained it to them in order: “I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision, something like a great sheet descending, being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came down to me. Looking at it closely, I observed animals and beasts of prey and reptiles and birds of the air. And I heard a voice saying to me, ‘Rise, Peter; kill and eat.’ But I said, ‘By no means, Lord; for nothing common or unclean has ever entered my mouth.’ But the voice answered a second time from heaven, ‘What God has made clean, do not call common.’ This happened three times, and all was drawn up again into heaven. And behold, at that very moment three men arrived at the house in which we were, sent to me from Caesarea. And the Spirit told me to go with them, making no distinction. These six brothers also accompanied me, and we entered the man's house. And he told us how he had seen the angel stand in his house and say, ‘Send to Joppa and bring Simon who is called Peter; he will declare to you a message by which you will be saved, you and all your household.’ As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?” When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, “Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life.” (Acts 11:1-18)*
- e) *And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. And when they had come up to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them. So, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” And when Paul had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them. (Acts 16:6-10)*
- f) *I will visit you after passing through Macedonia, for I intend to pass through Macedonia, and perhaps I will stay with you or even spend the winter, so that you may help me on my journey, wherever I go. For I do not want to see you now just in passing. I hope to spend some time*

*with you, if the Lord permits. But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, for a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries. (1 Cor. 16:5-9)*

5. Reformed and Evangelical Christians need to *yield* themselves to the Holy Spirit, *discover* and *develop* their spiritual gifts, get involved in the Spirit's ministries, and *pray* for guidance from the Spirit into the *open doors* he affords for Gospel Mission.

*Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. (1 Cor. 12:4-7)*

*All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills. For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. (1 Cor. 12:11-13)*

6. In my lifetime World Missions has been handled by the American Church as a *Big Business*, without the Holy Spirit's guidance! Consider these facts –

- a) The 20<sup>th</sup> Century was the age of the *Faith Mission*; i.e., the Independent Mission Boards unaffiliated and unaccountable to the local churches and denominations.
- b) Results? *Wycliffe's debacle about the Son of God controversy and the Insider movement of "secret" Christians!*
- c) Of the 140,000 Protestant Missionaries in the world 64% are from the USA (approx. 90,000)
  - (1) 74% work among *nominal Christians*
  - (2) 8% among *tribal peoples*
  - (3) 6% among *Muslims*
  - (4) 3% among *Buddhists*
  - (5) 90% among Reached peoples; 10% among the Unreached!
- d) The vast majority of U.S. "Missionaries" work in an office in the USA or Europe.
- e) 25% of U.S. Missionaries are doing *evangelism*, while 75% do *administration or other support work*.
- f) **Hear this:** *Indigenous missionaries do 90% of all the pioneer work, church planting and evangelism with 10% of the mission funds of the church; while USA missionaries do only 10% of the pioneer, church planting, or evangelism ministry with 90% of the monies given for world missions!*
- g) Indigenous church-planters will plant 3 churches in 5 years.
- h) 99% of the potential audience of the world can now be reached by Christians Radio.
- i) What country in the world *received* the most missionaries in 2010? The U.S.A.! 32,400 foreign missionaries in America!

7. I believe that *The Holy Spirit* is calling us to follow Him, go through open doors He is creating, and give up old ideas and fruitless paradigms we've held onto since 1900! **Four Re-evaluations** –

- a) Don't go overseas, for years, if you see no conversions, no churches planted, no lasting ministry, or no Christian network developed. Be honest. Come home. Change callings!
  - b) Don't work in some mission office in the U.S.A. because you don't want to do anything else. Find a new ministry.
  - c) Don't go overseas to plant churches or start seminaries. Let the nationals do this. Support them. Allow them to lead.
  - d) Don't tie US dollars to US culture. If we have 90% of the funds and they do 90% of the work, fund them, on their terms, and support them where we can and in what they need.
8. The Holy Spirit is **changing** the world, **changing** world missions and is **changing** us. Those who won't/ don't follow Him, will be left behind and will spend their precious lives doing busywork.

### III. JESUS AND THE WORLD (Acts 1:6-8)

*So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." (Acts 1:6-8)*

1. Jesus Christ divides the world into four parts ...
  - a) Not North, South, East and West
  - b) But rather ... geographically ...
    - (1) *Jerusalem*: our home town (Charlotte)
    - (2) *Judea*: our region (The Carolinas)
    - (3) *Samaria*: other part of our country (Michigan or California)
    - (4) *The end of the earth*: far away in foreign lands (China)
  - c) But I think Jesus was also speaking culturally ...
    - (1) *Jerusalem*: people I like (Conservatives, suburban, white, evangelicals)
    - (2) *Judea*: people like me (Republican)
    - (3) *Samaria*: people I don't like/ they don't like me (prejudice)
    - (4) *The end of the earth*: people who aren't like me at all (immigrants whom I may fear)
2. Jesus' view of the kingdom of God is not the Apostles initial view.
  - a) *He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. (Acts 1:7)*
  - b) **Key**: *The kingdom to Israel ... to us ... to America?*
  - c) Jesus answers: "No! This is God's kingdom and it will not come to America alone, but America will help me spread the kingdom *to the end of the earth.*"
3. The *Global Majority* should now be in charge of World Missions, because the kingdom of God has shifted from West to East ... and is still moving.

- a) in 100 A.D. ... *Jerusalem*
  - b) in 1,000 A.D. ... *Rome*
  - c) In 1700 A.D. ... *London*
  - d) in 1900 ... *USA*
  - e) in 2000 ... *East Africa*
  - f) in 100 years ... *China*
4. Our old ways of seeing the world, thinking about “who’s in charge,” and the best way to invest our lives **must move** with the Spirit!
5. Permit me to make **Twelve Final Observations:**
- a) *Short-term* mission trips are most effective when
    - (1) The National pastor plans and leads them
    - (2) The National pastor specifically requests certain people
    - (3) The fewer who go the better.
  - b) Don’t get caught up in the *Romance of Missions*; study and become a “missional realist.” This is a calling to Kingdom warfare. (Look at the huge % of missionaries working in home offices who found out the hard way that romance can’t sustain you in the field!)
  - c) Don’t feel any *stigma* in saying, “I gave it my best shot, but it’s time for me to go home and do something else.”
  - d) Come *home* from the field if (1) you’re miserable and (2) see little fruit. Missions is a ROI venture.
  - e) Reconsider what the *Majority World* needs from us: not “classical missionaries” but professors, seminary teachers, educators, medical personnel, specialists, businessmen and technical support.
  - f) Church must be *brutally honest* about how we spend our Missions Money. We can’t treat F.P.’s any different than pastors’ salaries or church overhead.
  - g) This one is difficult: *If you are a missionary are you able to stand before a supporting church, and without any avoidance, spin or misrepresentation justify your annual salary, benefits and retirement? Missionaries are not off limits for the church to look at ROI.*
  - h) Some mission *agencies* die out, for lack of vision. All have a “shelf life.” Only the church is timeless. If the mission agency can’t captivate the heart and vision of younger people, it will (and should) die.
  - i) Retired People: Pick some mission work and invest yourself in it. (*Example: For me – teaching national pastors and the Persecuted Church*).
  - j) Young people: Throw yourself into *supporting* missions with your gifts, your *technology*, your concern for the downtrodden and oppressed. Let the Spirit use you to open up new doors for world evangelization. *Don’t pit ministry to the poor in Jerusalem against the masses at the end of the earth!*

- k) Campus Ministers: deliberately open this *side door* for your ministry: the 866,000 foreign students on our campuses. Lead them to Christ, disciple them, partner with them, send them home as missionaries.
- l) Singles: Use this unique *window in time* for world missions. Commit to 1, 2, or 3 years overseas; then come home, get married, start your careers and your families. You will be immeasurably enriched and irrevocably changed by your time abroad ... in “the world.”
- m) Everyone: *Give a portion of your wealth, above and beyond your tithe, set aside for foreign missions only. We can (should) give the majority world what we possess: 90% of the Kingdom of God’s money!*

Conclusion: When Jane and I were engaged – one month prior to our wedding – we hopped in two automobiles, with 5 other friends ...

1. two couples – one older, one our age – and Jane’s roommate and we drove the 2,232 miles (one way) from Memphis, TN to Guatemala City, in Central America.
2. We rode all through the length of Mexico, from cacti and deserts to jungle forests in mountains; stayed in Mexico City (25 million) and in Guatemalan villages.
3. We gave our testimonies, ate with villagers, played with children, and saw first-hand the ministry of ministers and missionaries – nationals and Americans.
4. That trip changed our souls, gave us a mission-center to our marriage and shaped the course of our lives as a couple.
5. One night, in Vera Cruz, Mexico, I read these verses:
 

*And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.” (Acts 1:9-11)*
6. And I thought: *Jesus has left us to complete His world mission, and He won’t be back until it’s done! We are in the final act of God’s great drama of saving the world: from Ascension to Second Coming:*
  - a) On the third day he rose again from the dead, and ascended into heaven, where He sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, and from there he will come to judge the living and the dead (*Apostles’ Creed*)
  - b) *And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. (Matt. 24:14)*
  - c) Time is passing. My life is short. Jesus is coming ... soon!
  - d) *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matt. 28:19-20)*
7. What an exciting time to be in Christ, in the world and in the Church: *The Spirit, the Church, and the World*. What else makes life worth living?

