

TeachBeyond and the Church

Missio Dei, the Mission of God

Mission begins with God. It is rooted in the nature of the trinity and character of a God who loves the world he made (John 3:16) and longs for all things to be reconciled to him (Col.1:19). The Father sent the Son to save the world (John 3:17) and the Spirit to continue the mission of Jesus (John 16:7-11).

The Scriptures record the mission of God redeeming the world. God's universal saving intent was declared to Abraham, "All the peoples on earth will be blessed through you" (Gen.12:3). The exodus was the defining event in Israel's history that demonstrated God's intervention in human affairs to bring about salvation. Israel was to be an example to the nations pointing to the one true God (Isa. 60:3). Christ came as Israel's Messiah and Savior of the World. No longer were the people of God identified with one nation but the New Testament records the beginning of the church taking the good news to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). Revelation depicts the end result, people of every tribe and nation worshipping God forever (Rev. 7:9). All creation is restored in Christ (Romans 8:19-21) and subject to God who will be all in all (1 Cor.15:28).

The whole Bible renders to us the story of God's mission through God's people in their engagement with God's world for the sake of God's whole creation.

Chris Wright, former Principal, All Nations College

The Nature of Church

The purpose of mission is to bring people back into a relationship with God and ultimately to restore his creation to Himself. Mission builds the kingdom of God. The Church, the community of all those who acknowledge his reign, demonstrates imperfectly, by its presence and activity, the 'now but not yet' of this kingdom. The church is the fruit of the death and resurrection of Christ; it is both the means and the result of proclaiming the gospel. Mission and the church belong together, both originate in the heart of God. The church exists to serve God and to fulfill his desires as revealed by Jesus. He instructed his disciples, "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you" (John 20:21).

The church is the Body of Christ and equipped and empowered by the Holy Spirit to bring the nations to faith in Him. Mission is at the heart of the church and the church at the heart of mission. Mission is the task of all who belong to the church. Together we share the responsibility of extending the kingdom of God but recognize some people have particular callings which means they will be sent to serve in other places and will use their gifts in particular roles. Ordinary people are called to do extraordinary things by the grace and power of God.

The church in Antioch is a model of a local church fulfilling its role in mission (Acts 13:1-3). It recognized wholeheartedly the special call of God to Barnabas and Paul and commissioned them to take the gospel to fresh people and places around the Mediterranean. The two missionaries recognized the vital role the church played in their mission and returned to report what God had accomplished through them (Acts 14:26-28).

Today, it is still the task of the whole church to take the whole gospel to the whole world. Christ gave his church a mandate to teach and make disciples throughout the world (Matt. 28:19).

The Role of the Local Church

TeachBeyond is part of the Body of Christ, serving as a specialist ministry called by God to extend His Kingdom through transformational education and function as an extension of the ministry of local congregations.

Our special call is to education rather than other essential historical elements of mission. In order to fulfill this calling, TeachBeyond works with local churches around the world. Biblically based theology, mutual respect and best mission practice are the basis for happy partnerships between TeachBeyond and churches. We seek local church partners who are committed to the noble task of education and recognize the calling of Christian educators who wish to join us. We welcome the general prayerful and practical partnership of churches around the world that share our vision of transformational education.

Wherever possible and appropriate our missionaries and their families are engaged with local churches where they serve. The relationship between the local church and TeachBeyond is important for all team members but critical for our long-term workers.

Where there is no local church or where the existing church's tradition or doctrine is so different from that of TeachBeyond that cooperation is not possible, TeachBeyond will work together with others of like mind to establish a local community of faith. This is especially true in creative access countries.

"The goal of transformational education goes beyond the borders of the school and extends and transforms the local community of faith as well."

Relationship with the sending church

TeachBeyond is glad to inform and encourage local churches about local and global education outreach opportunities. We partner with churches to select and equip people to meet these needs.

We believe that a candidate's home church is generally in the best position to evaluate their character and calling and TeachBeyond's responsibility is to appoint the candidate to a position best suited to their qualifications, skills and abilities. Effective sending and the support of a missionary throughout their period of service requires the local church and mission agency working cooperatively; both have essential elements to contribute. We recognize that the degree of involvement of the local church during the period of service will be determined by such factors as the size, resources, inclination, and strategy of the local church.

Once a local church recognizes and endorses the desire of a member to join TeachBeyond we believe this should be demonstrated in pastoral, prayerful and practical support. By commissioning a mission worker, the local church accepts responsibility for their welfare and participation in their mission. We welcome the involvement of the sending church in discerning the will of God, the sending process, placement and working with us to enable our missionaries to function most effectively. TeachBeyond has the practical expertise in equipping and sending educators overseas to work in cross-cultural mission. We help workers with issues such as support raising, training, orientation, visas, contracts, medical care, insurance, travel, accommodation and on-field accountability. We work together to ensure that every missionary is prepared for the cross-cultural educational challenges and opportunities.

We are a mission agency and recognize the need to hold in harmony the spiritual calling and professional excellence of our workers. It is vital that our missionaries maintain their spiritual vitality as they serve in often pressurized cross-cultural situations. Their home church can play a role in carrying them throughout the period of service and upon their return. With modern communications both parties can be in regular touch at all times.

"Mission flows from God – from his nature, his love and his sovereign rule over the whole universe. If we lose this perspective, we become just another non-governmental organization trying to help people."

Tonica van der Meer, Brazilian missiologist