

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF MISSIONS: AN INTRODUCTION

**A SEMINAR PRESENTED DURING
COMMISSION 2014 MISSIONS
CONFERENCE AT JKUAT
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Know Your Facilitator:

Thuo Mburu is;

- A growing disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ
- Called to the ministry of preaching and teaching in building the African Church on biblical foundations.
- A Pastor with Christ Is The Answer Ministries (CITAM) based at Valley Road where he oversees Missions, Outreach and Social Action.
- A former General Secretary of the Trinity Fellowship
- A Ph.D. holder (missiology) with speciality in missiological education.
- An adjunct faculty with Pan Africa Christian and Uganda Christian Universities.
- Married to one wife and a father to two daughters.
- Resident of Nairobi city where he lives together with his family.

He is Passionate about missions & missionary training, marriage & Family, ministry & leadership development, research & writing

SEMINAR BRIEFS

As Dr. Peter Kuzmic, distinguished Professor of World Missions and European Studies and a member of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, writes,

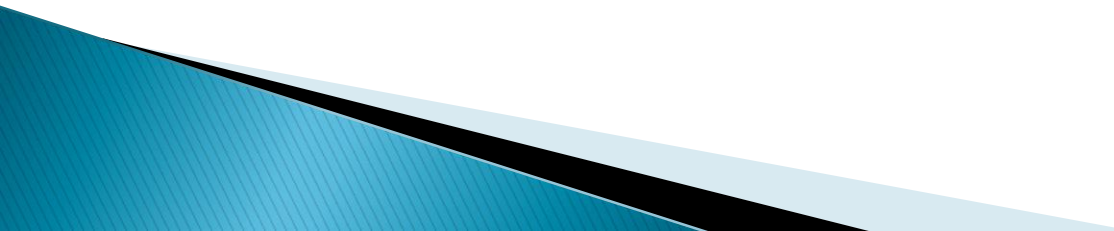
“We need a theologically grounded missiology and a missiologically focused theology.”*

SEMINAR OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this seminar is to help the delegates explore the biblical and theological basis of mission. It will take the delegates through a brief but comprehensive survey of biblical scriptures to establish the following Biblical assertions among others:

1. That the God of the Bible is a Missionary God and that mission is His agenda.
2. That missions is at the center of God's divine purpose for the human race, not just something peripheral or added on.
3. That the Church is God's missionary people as the transformative agent in the world, and therefore the mission of God should be the mission of the Church.
4. That God therefore expects from us (The Church) to obey the Great Commission and to practice the Great Compassion.

PREAMBLE: THE CURRENT MISSION STATUS IN THE AFRICAN CHURCH .

- ▶ Inadequate missiological conceptualisation.
 - ▶ An under-developed missionary ecclesiology.
 - ▶ Lack of contextually relevant models of missions.
 - ▶ A non-missionary theological education.
 - ▶ Complex dynamics in a rapidly changing global context.
 - ▶ An emerging indigenous missionary movement.
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WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

The African church;

- ⦿ Lacks an adequate biblical doctrine (theology of mission)
- ⦿ Lacks a significant history of missions engagement
- ⦿ Lacks contextually relevant models of doing missions – dependent on old ‘Western’ models

Thus, there is need to re-educate the African Church for mission through a biblical and contextually relevant model and to develop alternative models of missions

SESSION 1:

THE BIBLE AS GOD'S REDEEMPTIVE STORY

PREFACE: STARTING WITH/FROM A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

Please consider the following carefully and make an informed answer.

- ✘ Lions were once herbivorous - they ate grass. (Y/N)
- ✘ Kangaroos once lived in the Middle East. (Y/N)
- ✘ Which came first; the egg or the chicken?

- ✘ **INSIGHT:** Your level of confidence in answering these simple questions will tell a lot about your view of the Bible in matters of life and ministry. What does the Bible say about these three cases?

Beware: *The increase of information and the subtle decline of truth demand a return to Scripture in building a strong foundation for missions and other important doctrines.*

1. The Foundation: A Four-Phase Cycle of Biblical Revelation .

- 1. Creation:** God's Perfect Design and the 'Creation Mandate' (to reproduce, multiply, fill the earth and govern).
- 2. The Fall:** Entry of sin leading to distortion/corruption of God's Perfect design. Contrary to God's plan, the Fall resulted in the earth being filled with people who hated God rather than loving, serving and worshipping Him.
 - God had two problems and needed two programs in response: to reclaim His kingdom and to redeem humanity
 - *Pause:** But, did the Fall in Genesis Chapter three bring an end to the 'Creation Mandate'?
- 3. Redemption:**
 - Old Testament Covenants (Noah, Moses, David, etc)
 - New Testament Covenant in Christ
- 4. Recreation and the New Creation:** Removal of sin and Restoration of God's perfect design

2. God's Missionary Purpose .

- The Preamble (Gen. 1-11) – God's promise and purpose
 - Note humanity's pursuit for a name at the expense of the 'name' of God (6:4 and 11:4)
 - Note the Table of Nations and Significance of Babel 'Fiasco' (Gen.10-11)
- The Call of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3 cf. 18:18, 22:18, 26:4, 28:14) – Blessed to be a blessing
 - Note Gal. 3:29 – the Church as Abraham's seed in Christ
- Israel's Universal Missionary Calling (Exod. 19:4-6) – Called to be 'a kingdom of priests' on earth
 - Special Possession – God's portable Treasure
 - Kings and Priests – Mediators and Servants
 - A Holy Nation - Ambassadors
- Proving God's Purpose (Psalm 67) – Israel's longing for God to be known by all the peoples on earth [Cf. Disciples' prayer in Matt. 6:9-10]

- The Jewish dispersion (Daniel, Esther cf. Egyptian slavery and Jonah) – spreading the ‘fame’ of Yahweh among the nations
- Abraham’s descendants according to the promise (Gal. 3:29 cf. 1 Pet. 2:9) – the Church as God’s missionary agent
 - God’s redemptive promise has become the Church’s mandate

3. Let the Nations Be Glad!

The goal of Missions is to make Yahweh known and worshipped among all the nations. That is, missions will cease when Yahweh shall have worshippers among all the nations.

Therefore ...

- The Bible reveals a story of God's redemptive plan and His glory among the nations
- God is a missionary God
- God called Israel as His people and entrusted them with His mission to the nations
- The Church has become God's missionary people with a mandate to the nations **AND SHOULD NOT BE PASSIVE ABOUT IT**

**The Bible provides the missionary
MANDATE, MESSAGE AND
MODEL (METHOD)!**

Conclusion: The Christian Mandate

From a biblical perspective, the disciple of Christ is bound to one primary duty;

To obey the Great Commandment

(Thou shall love the LORD ...) **and**

to keep the Great Compassion

(Thou shall love thy neighbour ...)

NB: These two components of the mandate are however not separable as many Christians tend to view them!

SESSION 2:

**THE CHRISTIAN
MANDATE FOR
THE NATIONS**

1. A REDEEMPTIVE WINDOW .

- A Prophetic Vision: This gospel of the kingdom... (Matt. 24:14) - the task
- A Heavenly Vision: The great multitude in heaven... (Rev. 7:9) - the finished work

Between these two 'visions' is a window of opportunity

- The gospel can only be preached within the window
- The Church exists only within the window

This window shrinks or closes down every moment as time counts to Christ's return.

Note: The doctrines of Church, missions and second coming of Christ are inseparably tied together by God's redemptive plan

A REDEEMPTIVE WINDOW

- ◉ A Heavenly Concern: I have other sheep... (John 10:16)
- ◉ Strategic Concern: How shall they hear... (Rom. 10:14-15)
- ◉ A Heavenly Assignment: You are my witnesses (Acts 1:8) and Ambassadors (2 Cor. 5:20)

Notice that, in His wisdom, God has made every provision for His Church to fulfill His mission

But the Church seems too busy with ‘another mission’ - thus questioning her very identity

Conclusion: An adequate biblical theology of mission ...

- ▶ Is foundational to the believer's process of *becoming* (identity) which leads to *doing* (purpose) missions effectively and fruitfully.
- ▶ Is indispensable in building the Church as God's missionary people
- ▶ Missions practice outside of strong biblical theology can be a futile humanistic effort!

The Bible reveals a missionary God who sent His Son Jesus Christ to build a missionary Church as the divine agent of redemption.

GROUP RESPONSE

QUESTION

&

ANSWER

EPILOGUE

- Insight into God's mission design invites you to re-read the Bible with new eyes so as to solidify the convictions
- Proper understanding of the biblical theology of mission leads to one having the thoughts of God in life and vocation
- This subject can be pursued through further theological or missiological studies – Bible School (e.g. PAC University) or Seminary (e.g. AIU)