

On Mission 2020

Topic Focus: Mobilization

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Why and How to Involve the Whole Church in His Mission

Hi, my name is Chris Conte. I'm in Lima, Peru, working with the mission SIM. I'm a mission mobilizer, just like many of you.

Today, I want to talk to you about how we can involve the entire church in missions. Now often we put limits on how some people can be involved than we think only in missionaries who go out. But we want to mobilize the entire church. So one thing that we've done in Latin America is we've created these graphics that are kind of like passport stamps that show how people can be involved in each part of the mission that God has for us. We have go, send, mobilize, give, pray and care. Now each one of these we talk about, we teach how someone can be involved in each one of these different graphics.

Now I have to admit and confess that I've taught this wrong when I first started teaching it. I would say, "Oh, if you're going to go, then you don't need to give and if you're going to pray, you don't need to care for missionaries." It's almost like multiple choice that they could choose which one they want to be involved in. And now I understand it differently, I think what God wants from us is that every person in the church is part of all six of these areas and we shouldn't limit them. It's going to look different. It's going to look different for each person, but each person can be involved in all of these areas and we should not limit them. We need to open up all the possibilities and help them be creative in serving God. Often as mobilizers, we want to focus on the unreached of the world and this is very important. But one thing I have found is that we need to mobilize the entire church and often that means mobilizing them to reach the reachable, the people who they are walking by every day. And as they are more involved in more interested in reaching the reachable, they're more interested in reaching the unreached. So, we want to mobilize the entire church.

So if we think of each of these graphics very quickly again, we can look at the idea of go. Often, we think of go is go to the unreached. But go is also to leave our comfort zone. Go is to go to your job and be a witness for Christ and where you work. Go is to be a neighbor, a good neighbor to someone and to witness to them. And so we don't want to limit it to only going and make it a mysterious romantic idea. Some people are called to go to those areas, but we're all called to go.

Another one was sending. Often we think of sending we think about pastor because he's very involved in that last segment before someone goes of selecting and discipling and matching him up with an agency. However, the entire church is part of sending. That Sunday school teacher that taught that young man 15 years ago, who is now going out was part of the sending process. So the entire church needs to understand that they are also sending.

With mobilizing, often we think mobilizers are people like us full time, with so much passion. But we need to teach that every person who is making a disciple is also mobilizing because discipleship is not done unless we are also showing people how they can be involved in God's Great Commission. And so everyone is called to be a mobilizer to some extent, it might look different than what we're doing, but they can still mobilize.

I think of giving. The first thing we think of giving is we think of someone who is a professional, who makes a lot of money. And sometimes these people don't like to enter church because everyone thinks they have money and everybody's going to ask their money of them, but we need to mobilize the professional to use their influence in whatever their job is, whatever their businesses for God's glory. And we need to teach everyone in the church. It doesn't matter how much they give but they need to give sacrificially and maybe creatively as well.

You think of prayer. Well, I often think of prayer and I think of those older -the older generation that is so faithful. And every week, they're in a group in the church praying. And that is amazing, but we don't want to limit it to only the older generation. We, first of all, we need to teach that everyone can be creative in finding time to pray. Maybe they can't make it to that weekly meeting, but they could be praying at home and we need to teach them creative ways to do that. For the older generation, we need to show them that praying, it definitely is so needed, but they can also have a lot of purposes and mentoring the younger generation. We need to teach them that the biggest trend right now in missions is sending retirees out to the utmost parts of the world and that's exciting. So we don't want to limit them to only praying, though praying is a very important part.

I think -when think of caring, and I think of this graphic, I think of a mom. Moms think of every detail from physical needs to emotional needs and that's great. Let's involve the moms in caring for our workers. However, we all need to be caring for workers and we need to show that mom that with her example, and her family, with her witness, with her friendships, she can also have a huge part in the mission of God.

And so what we see in some churches, at least in Latin America, we see two extremes. We have one extreme where missions is taught with children, and with youth, and it's always something fun and there's great foods and colors and parades in all of this kind of thing. Or the youth they all go on mission trips every year and they leave for two weeks and so they are very involved. And then the adults in that church they feel like, it's only for children. It's only for the younger generation.

And then you have other extremes, where only the adults are taught about the mission of God and they exclude the younger generations and the children, saying, "Not yet. Wait until you're

bigger." And neither is correct. We need to involve the entire church. No matter the age and so there's no limit. So, one of the other things we added is another stamp that is called, "Don't Impede," because we've all realized that as leaders, as pastors, as mobilizers, we can impede someone's calling and their involvement in mission. And we don't want to do that. This comes from like all our stamps have a biblical basis. This comes from First Samuel where God tells us that He sees the heart when other people see the outward appearance. And so we need to pray that we do not limit anyone. We do not see with our eyes. We don't look at someone, and say, "Oh, that person's too old." "That person's too young," "too busy," "too rich," "too single." Whatever reason is that we can have is that puts a limit in our thoughts or in our words. That God removes that.

We're all called to be part of God's mission, and it's going to be different ways. It's going to look different but in all these ways someone can be part. In most churches, we grew up with the idea that there is a spiritual ladder that exists. No church ever teaches this. I've never seen it taught anywhere, but we think that it's just in our being that we think that full-time Christian work is higher or more holy than other jobs that we can be doing. So, somebody who's a pastor or a missionary as higher on the ladder than someone who is a stay at home mom or has a job, secular job. But this is the wrong attitude, the wrong teaching and no church ever teaches that thankfully, but somehow as Christians, we grew up thinking that full-time Christian work is something better than doing a job than secular. But God doesn't see it that way. He has placed every person in their job, in their community to represent Him and we need to help mobilize them to realize that they can be salt and light where they are.

So they shouldn't just think that's going as a missionary to a very far place is more spiritual than having a profession or having a business and serving God with their ethics, with the way that they treat people, with their opportunities to share Christ with others. We need to teach the entire church and not limit anyone. And so we can pray that God helps us to mobilize the entire church. That every Christian, is called to the Great Commission. It's going to look different for each person and this is why we need to personalize it. This is why we need to walk with them to help them discover all the ways that they can serve God in the Great Commission.