The Church: Where Missions Begins and Ends
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A mission-centered church understands that its mission begins with the **Great Commission**.
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. (Matt. 28:19)
A missions-centered church takes the Great Commission seriously. It is committed to making disciples everywhere. It is true that we are sent next door to share the gospel ("as you are going, make disciples"), but mission work usually involves sending gospel workers to distant places to share the gospel with the lost.

God's eternal plan for the world is humongous! The Great Commission captures some of Jesus' final words before his Ascension. Disciple-making is at the very heart of the church. We have the duty and delight to take the gospel not only to nearby neighborhoods but to faraway nations and into different languages.

You won't find the word mission in the majority of Bible translations. Our English word comes from the Latin *missio*, often translated "sent" or "sending." The concept of sending is throughout the New Testament. The book of Acts closes with God's salvation being sent to the Gentiles (Acts 28:28). The Lord called the Twelve and sent them out. The church in Antioch prayed for Barnabas and Saul and sent them off to share the gospel (Acts 13:3).

Missions involves church planting across significant barriers. Missions involves churches sending qualified workers across linguistic, geographic, religious, and cultural barriers to start or strengthen churches, especially in places where Jesus is not known. Missionaries are sent to establish and strengthen churches. They plant gospel seeds which mature into churches that share the gospel and raise up more workers to plant and water more gospel seeds.

Missions is not only about saving people. Missions is about planting and strengthening churches where Christians assemble to worship. Mission exists because worship does not. God's solution is the gospel preached, uniting people in worship, with disciples making more disciples. God's salvation mission and eternal purpose will produce churches. Those churches will become like Jesus, doing good works and helping others.

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There is no "mission" without a gospel to share, people to go, and a church to send. This is where the church and missions come together. The church has been described as God's "sending agency." Missionaries are sent out by the local church with the saving gospel. Churches are planted. New churches in turn send more missionaries to make the name of Jesus known in more places.

This means that the church is both the beginning and the end of missions. The church is the beginning in that churches send missionaries—missions originate in the local church. Churches are the end in that the goal of missions is more faithful, healthy churches. Because the church is the starting point and the end goal of missions, the church is the hope of the world! This church is the hope of a hopeless world! Will we answer the call?