

Mission Work without the Gospel?

By Bob Young

Is taking the gospel to the lost important? Mission work is struggling in the contemporary church.

In many local churches, fewer and fewer dollars are available for mission work as the focus shifts to maintaining the home base.

Fewer dollars are given for foreign mission work because “we need to begin at home, or in our own country.”

Even more dismaying – thousands, even millions, of dollars are spent on mission work that contributes little to the advance of the gospel and the growth of the kingdom.

Too often, taking the gospel to the unsaved multitudes that God wants to save is not a priority!

Do any these scenarios describe mission work in your church?

- Do you struggle to find works that are generating new Christians, new churches, and kingdom growth?
- Do mission results seem meager? Are results no longer reported? The number of new Christians, new churches, evangelists trained, leaders developed – are these no longer noteworthy?
- Or, are the results so meager that mentioning them is embarrassing?

I seldom think about some of the things I learned in graduate studies, but one phrase I frequently recall: **You count what matters!** Why does a church post the number of baptisms? Because they believe it matters! Why do mission reports not report the number of baptisms? The number of new Christians? The number of new churches established? The first church history book (Acts) gives specific information about numbers.

A Barna study suggests a likely reason for the changing shape of mission work.

In the minds of most U.S. Christians, the gospel message is no longer urgent. The saving message of the gospel gets lost in the midst of other mission work focused on benevolence and physical needs.

The Barna Group reported one finding of the study in this frightening phrase: **“Only 29% of Christians believe that reaching unreached people around the world is very urgent.”**