

Brandywine Grace Church's Global Missions Convictions **(Revised 12/26/2019)**

It's important that in the area of global missions, biblical convictions shape how we think and engage as a church. These convictions should be clearly defined, written, and communicated. This accomplishes several things, including: a) ensuring we're all on the same page as a church as we partner together; b) helping us answer questions about why and how we're serving or hope to in the future; and c) providing us with the needed biblical clarity and guardrails for all of our involvement in this massive endeavor.

Therefore, these twelve (12) convictions are held by BGC related to global missions:

1. God's great passion is to be known and worshipped by all nations.

In all of Scripture, from the call of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3) to the command of Jesus (Matt. 28:19-20) to the deeply-held convictions of the Apostle Paul (Rom. 15:18-21) to the conclusion at the end of the age (Rev. 7:9-10), we see compellingly that God is a missionary God who desires all peoples and nations (i.e. ethno-linguistic people groups, not geo-political countries) to worship Him (Rom. 1:5). This is God's greatest priority and the primary thrust of Scripture, and it's therefore the purpose and mainspring of missions. Chris Wright says, "Mission is what the Bible is all about; we could as meaningfully talk of the missional basis of the Bible as of the biblical basis of mission." Amazingly, God invites His people to partner with Him in His glorious mission, the *missio Dei* (John 20:21) – what a privilege to be **global Christians!**

2. Every disciple of Jesus is called to be a global Christian.

A global Christian is a disciple of Jesus who embraces God's heart for the whole world (Ps. 66:1-4) and desires to play their part in extending God's fame to the nations. They live strategically so that whatever they do and wherever they live, they are striving to see Him glorified among all peoples (1 Pet. 4:7-11), such as by engaging in the global Christian "habits" of sending, giving, welcoming, going, praying, mobilizing, and more. Our goal as a church is certainly not to make everyone or even most of us a missionary overseas, but rather to equip and encourage every Partner of the church to be a globally-minded and involved disciple wherever they live (Eph. 4:7-12), but to also have a heart for the **unreached and unengaged** - those who may never even have heard the gospel message!

3. Global missions should prioritize reaching unengaged and unreached peoples.

Paul-type missions focused on the world's people groups that are unreached (i.e. those with little or limited access to the gospel) and unengaged (i.e. those that lack church planting initiatives or disciple-making efforts) should be a significant priority in global missions (Rom 1:5, Matt 28:19, Rom 15:20-24, 1 Chron. 16:24), and this will influence all we do in this area. This does not mean that Timothy-type ministry among reached peoples is not also vital, because it is (2 Tim. 4:1-2), or that God won't call us to work in a more reached area of the world, because He certainly may. But as John Piper says about the unreached and unengaged, "There are a thousand needs in the world, but none is as important as this!" And today, unreached **nations among us** may be as accessible as our

neighbor next door.

4. Reaching the nations among us should be an intentional goal of our church.

Representatives of unreached and unengaged people groups (frequently called the Diaspora) are increasingly moving and living near us from all over the world, and this is a significant opportunity given to us by the Lord here in the U.S. These are immigrants, refugees, international students/business people, and others, which the church must be faithful to intentionally and lovingly seek to reach. This is often called the global Christian habit of “welcoming” (2 Chron. 6:32-33, Matt 25:35). We must be proactive to do at home what we hope to see accomplished overseas as God is sovereign in moving people/s as He wills (Acts 17:26-27, Col 4:5). But we must not stop there - it’s the starting point for cross-cultural ministry to the unreached and not the end game - since we’re called to be a **sending church** into the worldwide harvest.

5. Every church must be a sending church both locally and globally.

All local churches, not just some, are called to be sending churches, sending missionaries into the worldwide harvest field both mid and long term. A sending church is a local church that seeks to be prayerful, intentional, deliberate, and proactive by identifying, assessing, equipping, sending, and supporting their own people to go to the nations abroad in order to multiply disciples and churches both locally and globally (Acts 13:1-3; Phil. 2:25-30). The local church, not the mission agency or other organization, has the primary role and responsibility in sending, and it is vital that sending be done thoughtfully and well (Acts 11:19-22; 3 John 1:5-8). At times the sending will be in the form of **short-term missions** (Luke 9:1-2), building a culture of cross-cultural outreach and vision into the church.

6. Short-term missions must be done wisely to further long-term purposes.

Short term mission trips can have real kingdom value if done well, meaning wisely and strategically. This means that they fuel mid and long term going, are done in a way that serves and helps (versus hurts) long term work in the field, they use finances and other resources wisely, and they avoid various other pitfalls (Luke 10:1-12; Acts 13:1-3). Short term missions should mainly be intended to feed mid and long term going, to serve (i.e. help rather than hurt) long-term workers, and to envision and provide learning for those who go. The hope is that these short term goers will impact the rest of the church towards the mission, and result in more multiplication of disciples at home and abroad. We want to do short term mission in a way that helps and not hurts the long-term efforts of our partners and missionaries in the field (Rom 16:3-4). With short term mission trips and all global work, it is vital to **wisely partner with others**.

7. Fruitful disciple-making among the nations necessitates wise partnership.

Just as working on or among a team (whether thru a church-based team or otherwise) with other workers on the mission field is wise and even essential for the individual missionary, wise partnership with select mission agencies, other local churches, national indigenous churches, missions networks, and so on is vital for a local church in order to be effective in missions (Phil. 1:5, 2 Cor. 8:23-24). Much good can be done through such partnerships that can’t or won’t be done alone, and the expertise of others is also critical (Phil 4:15-16). However, the local church is the primary sending unit or entity and must always remain so.

Also, partnership must avoid fostering dependency among national partners in certain contexts where that is common and detrimental to the national church, and we also must avoid a “missions by proxy” mindset in our own church. Partnering well will require our church to be all in with our giving and living, adopting a **war-time mentality**.

8. The whole church should have a war-time mentality to advance the mission.

Reaching our neighbors and the nations - especially the unreached – is a challenging and difficult task that the Lord has given us, requiring us all to live with a war-time mentality. But He is always with us, and we have even been blessed by God so that we can use our time, finances, and other resources in a way that will cause all the ends of the earth to fear Him (Psalm 67). As we deny ourselves and live and give sacrificially with a global mindset (Luke 9:23), it will enable us to allocate more for missions in our church budget in order to advance God’s global glory. We want to send well, and that means providing a significant amount of the support for any we send (3 John 1:7-8). The global mission of the church, just like local disciple-making and evangelism, is not a program, and must be integrated into the very life of the church. The church must be called upon to both give and live strategically for the sake of **church planting and disciple-making**, which is the primary mission of the church.

9. Church planting and disciple-making are the primary goals of our efforts.

The multiplication of churches and disciples is the priority work of missions (Acts 11:19-26). Mercy ministry, social justice, evangelism, and other activities should ultimately be geared towards the planting of churches where they do not exist. This will always be the main focus - the goal or end game - of our involvement in the missio Dei (Acts 14:21-23). This church planting focus must remain regardless of the pathway taken to the field (traditional or otherwise, such as business as mission, tent-making, etc.), the organization/s being partnered with, or the specific activity/ministry being performed. The planting of churches through the making of new disciples is the way the Kingdom of God advances, regardless of the city, people groups, or other **specific focus that we adopt**.

10. Adopting a specific focus/s is needed to have greater global impact.

Maintaining a strategic focus as a church in terms of location/s or people/s abroad is wise and enables greater long-term impact and fruitfulness since we can’t do everything with finite resources. We must avoid a shotgun approach to missions, trying to do a little in too many places, being a mile wide and inch deep. Instead, we must opt for more of a strategic approach where we can be specifically focused (Acts 16:9-10), such as one or two unreached people groups, geographic regions, cities, or a certain religion within a particular country, etc. (none of which has been definitively determined as of this time). This means that not every good and commendable burden that a BGC Partner personally has will be something the church gets involved in corporately, and we may not directly support or help send people to a place we don’t feel called to invest in as a church (Acts 19:21-22). We may have different tier levels of support (financial, ongoing care, visits, sending short term teams, etc) depending on alignment with the church’s focus that we feel God has given us. This is a very similar approach to other churches and networks with whom we are connected. More than anything, we need **the guidance of the Holy Spirit** to continually show us what our focus should be as a church and to sovereignly adjust it as He so desires.

11. The guidance of the Holy Spirit is desperately needed in all we seek to do.

The leading of the Holy Spirit in who, how, where, and when we engage is most important (Act 8:26-27, Acts 13:2-3). He alone can guide our global involvement and make it fruitful for God's glory. We are dependent on His divine oversight and superintending of the mission, including how He wants us to fit into that divinely orchestrated plan (Acts 16:6-10). We must not be primarily pragmatic or results oriented, remembering that God may call us to serve in a field where fruit is very slow in coming – or not – and we must be rooted in biblical methods and practices. How the Spirit leads us as a church is what matters, and being faithful to this call is most vital. We believe by faith that the Spirit will lead us in large part through the **Word of God and prayer**.

12. The Word of God and prayer are vital for all Great Commission activity.

It's been said that prayer not only supports the work of missions, it is the work of missions (Luke 10:2). Indeed, we must always be reliant on prayer before, during, and after any effort on our part (Acts 13:1-3; 2 Thes. 3:1-2). Prayer is such a vital ministry that we must continually seek to grow as a church in this area, and it must undergird and empower all our efforts. This means we must build a culture of prayer corporately and individually for the unreached, for our partners, for our sent ones, and for our efforts to be global Christians (Col 4:2-4). And the Word of God must be the foundation for all we do; in global missions as elsewhere, theology really, really matters (Titus 2:1). Since in the whole Bible we clearly see **God's unstoppable desire to be worshipped by all peoples, nations, tribes, and tongues** (Conviction #1), we will press on in spite of obstacles, difficulties, and challenges! (Isa. 66:18-23)