



Material Issue for World Mission Sunday

Please support our work with a donation on World Mission Sunday. On our facebook page you find reports from more than 20 projects. You can also donate towards any of these projects. Thank you!



Spar- und Kreditbank EFG, Bad Homburg

BLZ 500 921 00 | BIC: GENODE 51BH2

EBM INTERNATIONAL & EBM TURKEY

Konto 46868 | IBAN: DE 69 5009 2100 0000 0468 68

EBM AFRICA

Konto 33 316 | IBAN: DE89 5009 2100 0000 0333 16

EBM MASA (Latin America)

Konto 133 906 | IBAN: DE62 5009 2100 0000 1339 06

EBM INDIA

Konto 343 609 | IBAN: DE68 5009 2100 0000 3436 09



Visit us on Facebook or
www.ebm-international.org



Table of Contents

| | |
|---|------------|
| Foreword | 4 |
| Pattern flow | 6 |
| Ideas and comments on the pattern flow | 7 |
| Collection of songs | 13 |
| Sermon notes | 14 |
| Seeing the world with eyes wide-open | 14 |
| What is good and helpful | 21 |
| The victory of the power of the gospel | 28 |
| What is the essence of mission today? | 38 |
| Jesus and the children | 46 |
| Mission – Do not forget your prayers! | 55 |
| „Mission is possible– across cultural boundaries and beyond“ | 62 |
| As the Father has sent me | 73 |
| Discover Christ in others | 81 |
| Five essentials of mission | 83 |
| Justice as an essential of mission!?! | 95 |
| Proposals for Children’s parts | 103 |
| HIV und AIDS | 103 |
| „Mission“ experience it in quite a different way | 107 |
| Advent wreath | 110 |
| Mission overcomes frontiers | 112 |
| Creative parts | 115 |
| Illustrated meditation | 115 |
| HIV und AIDS | 116 |
| A girl from Bolivia | 119 |
| Recipes suggestions for a common lunch | 126 |
| Chicken and groundnut soup (Cameroon) | 127 |
| Chickpea soup | 128 |
| South African „pap“ with mfino | 129 |
| Mfino spinach | 130 |
| Lamb and beans (South Africa) | 131 |
| Jellof rice with meat/ Arroz Carreteiro (Brazil) | 132 |

President: Arild Harvik (N)
Vice-President: David Boydell (FR)
Mission Office:
Christoph Haus, General Secretary
Matthias Dichristin,
Mission Secretary Africa
Promotion
Carlos Waldow, Mission Secretary
Latin America Promotion
Gottfried-Wilhelm-Lehmann-Str. 4
14641 Wustermark
Telefon: 033234 74-150
Fax: 033234 74-145
info@ebm-international.org
www.ebm-international.org

Responsible for the content:
Christoph Haus
Matthias Dichristin
Carlos Waldow
Assistance:
Carola Walter
Translation into English:
Elsie Bongwa

Graphic Design:
Dietmar Reichert

Pictures:
Pictures if not stated otherwise
© EBM INTERNATIONAL

Foreword

Dear Pastors of our churches, dear service organizers,

Warm greetings from the Mission house of EBM INTERNATIONAL at Elstal. Once again, we cordially invite you on first Advent to celebrate Word Mission Sunday. In this respect, we have processed and drawn up proposals for the church service over the past years and sent to you. We want to break new grounds:

The booklet which you have received from us does not only contain information for a church service on the topic World Mission Sunday. Through the different sermon drafts, several different proposals for children's parts in the worship, a design for Sunday school, a wide range of songs and readings, as well as recipes for possible common meals, we want you to:

- have the choice of selecting what fits in your congregation's situation from this rich material.
- use this booklet as a quarry in the course of the year whenever you want to do something on the topic World Mission during a church service.

We would be pleased, if you would use this booklet so that the Mission work of EBM INTERNATIONAL is made even more popular in your congregations. We are looking forward to feedback and comments from your „World Mission worship service“.



Pastor Christoph Haus,
General Secretary of
EBM INTERNATIONAL

And in the coming years, we will certainly send additional and current information before first Advent but I believe that you have enough material with which you can organize World Mission worship service.

And we hope and pray that your community will not only be thrilled by the World Mission but that they will be motivated to pray for our projects, missionaries and to donate. That will connect brothers and sisters with many thousands of people in Latin America, Africa, India and Turkey.

God bless, protect and strengthen you and your congregations. Connected in Christ.

Yours

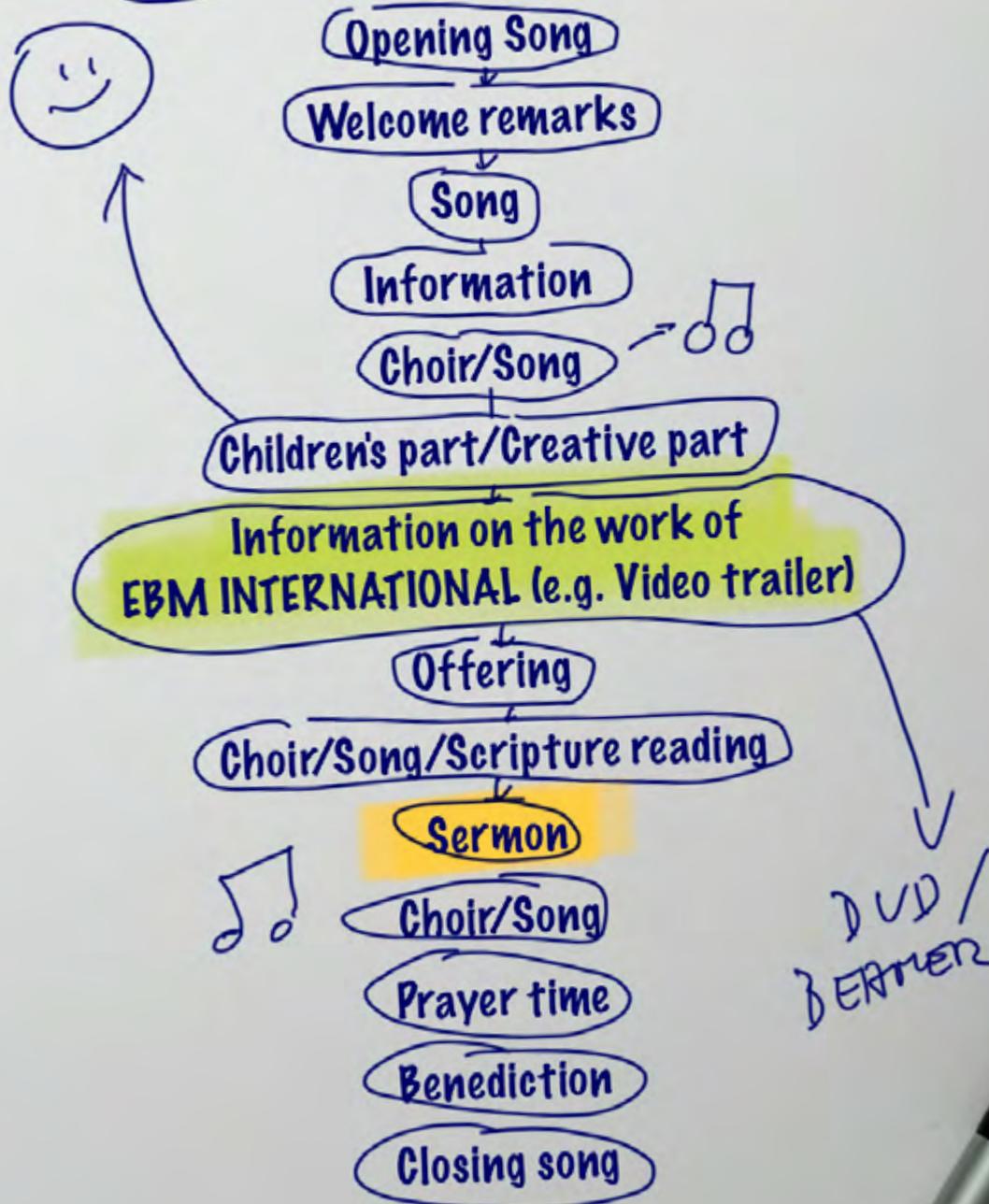


Pastor Christoph Haus | *General Secretary of EBM INTERNATIONAL*

The team of EBM INTERNATIONAL (2015)



Pattern flow of a worship service



Ideas and comments on the Pattern flow

Materials for **church service** can be ordered for free. Simply send a short Email to info@ebm-international.org. Carola Walter will gladly send you the required material.

The **DVD „Sharing life – giving hope“**, with 4 short films can also be ordered free of charge. The various tracks are an alternative to a piece of music or can be played as a piece of information before offerings.



Carola Walter

The **greetings** can be done together with the verse from the Herrnhut readings or with the help of another Bible verse. It is suitable for Advent for example from Zechariah 9,9 „Behold, your king comes to you, He is righteous and having salvation“. God does not abandon the World and people to themselves. He has an active interest in the lives and welfare of his creatures. He is „Righteous and a Helper“ and in this way, He is close to us: personally, in everyday life and also on this Sunday.

Every year there is a new prayer poster and booklet with our co-workers.



Introduction into the Church service – Central idea of Advent

Advent (lat.) means „arrival“. Although we celebrate the liturgical year like a cycle, this time in the liturgical year wants to take our life forward. During Advent, we are invited not only to take a look at the first coming of Jesus Christ as it has been handed over to us in the „Christmas story“. We are equally invited to look ahead, await the arrival of Jesus and start of a „New World“, that which we expect with the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are living in this suspense between the first and second coming of Jesus. During Advent, we are encouraged to discover Jesus who always turns towards us, approaches us and calls the people of the world to turn to him.

The Advent period is connected to an expectation and a concrete request: God wants to come to us, concretely in our daily lives and very personally.

Ever since Jesus came, the divine mission is a mission with a human countenance: Jesus Christ is the vision of God's mission. And since Jesus made his disciples a part of his mission, took and sent them out, this mission has many faces! As such, God come to us today through other people. Therefore, we are called upon to be considerate in our lives and to pay attention to the people around us.

God could appear to us, God may come to us! The church service is likewise an invitation to encourage each other into missionary work with a human face. To learn to identify people in difficult situations and perceive their needs. People in difficult circumstances wish and look forward to affection, closeness and hope. We ourselves are able to give Jesus's mission our personal face – by being there for others and doing good to them, through our concern, through our prayers and with our financial possibilities. And during this church service, we can particularly give them our



thought and support, experience God's mission in other climes and culture, in Africa, Latin America and India. The Advent season reminds us and indeed the people of this World of the coming of God!

This special church service offers the opportunity to make the offerings once again in a different way. In Africa, for example, you go forward to the altar and donate your offerings in a basket. Most often, this is done in groups (e.g. Women, Men, and youths). At the same time, a song could be sung or music played.

We equally invite congregations to pray for the World and most particularly for the concerns and plans of EBM INTERNATIONAL. Current information on this is available in our Reports.

A collective prayer can be closed up with „Our Father“ or another formulated prayer (see below).

Father, our God,
we thank you for the quiet time,
which has opened our eyes, and shown us what you
are to us.
You are our protector, Lord.
We can lean on you,
be our help in difficult situations,
give us inspiration during prayers, send helpful people
to us,
who can support us.
You are our deliverer,
Who makes himself small, so that we can grow
through that.
You turn situations around so that we can see clearly
where we stand.
Lord you are our light,
Give us daily, through your word, wisdom, valuable
understanding and comfort.
Lord, we await your coming

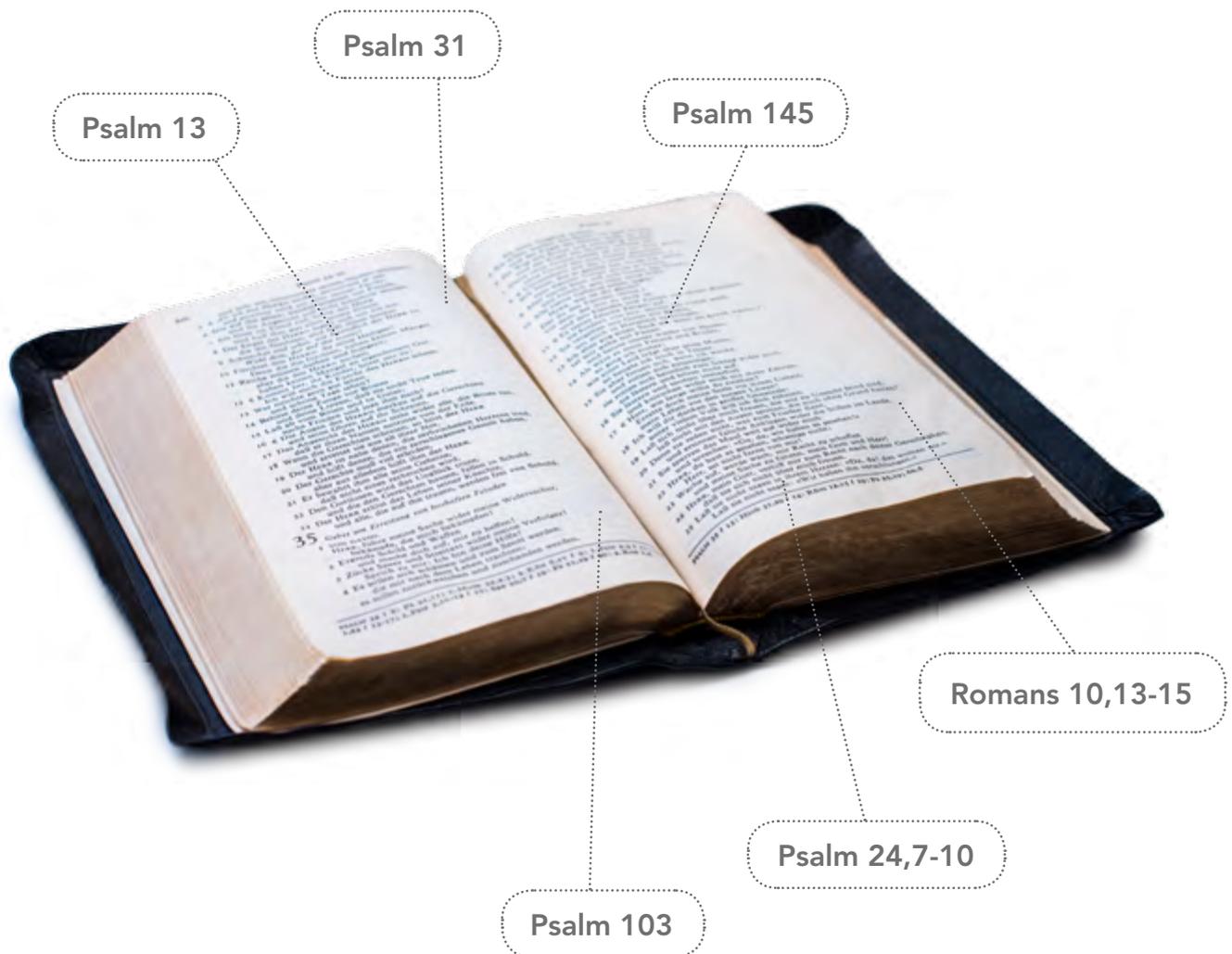


These Reports are available on facebook or under the following link: Link: <http://ebm-international.org/reports.0.html>

even when we know that you have always been there
and will always be there,
Yes ever since you had been there.
Make this our expectation from you a spring,
from which we can draw our daily strength.
Direct our thoughts and words,
protect our lives and those of our loved ones.
Give us the gift of togetherness
And make our thoughts and actions fruitful for others.
Amen.

GEORG RIEGER

The following Bible passages are suitable for a possible
text reading:



A prayer of blessing at the end of Church service:

May the Lord bless you: May He fill your feet with dancing and your arms with strength. May He fill your heart with tenderness and your eyes with laughter. May He fill your ears with music and your nose with fragrance. May He fill your mouth with exultation and your heart with joy. May He always give you new grace from the desert, calmness, fresh water and renew your hope. He always gives us a renewed strength to be representatives of the hope in him. The Lord bless you. Amen.

(from Africa)



We thank you God, our heavenly father, that through your word today, you remind us of your coming. You bring light in our darkness. Give us new confidence and strength where we have lost hope and courage. You change our standards and bring in healing, restlessness where indifference exists in us. We beseech you Lord to make us open and prepared for your coming. Enable us to put our trust in you. You are our light. You are our strength. Amen.

The peace of God which surpasses all understanding, will guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.
(Phil.4,7)

Other creative elements for a church service and Sunday school are found in the later pages of this booklet. Likewise, there are recipe suggestions for a common lunch and a draft for children's service.



Collection of songs

- Lord the light of your love is shining
- Lift up your heads ye mighty gates
- Blessed is the king who comes
- There is a redeemer
- Holy God we praise thy name
- Lord I come to you
- Give thanks with a grateful heart
- My Jesus my savior
- Joy to the World
- Amazing grace
- Blest be the tie that binds
- You laid aside your majesty
- Holy, holy, holy
- To God be the glory, great things he has done
- Oh Lord my God
- Great is thy faithfulness

African Songs

- Siyahamba
- A sante sana Jesu



SERMON NOTES

Inspiration for the preaching on Acts 3,1-10

Seeing the World with eyes wide-open

(Author: Pastor Volker Bohle)



Volker Bohle serves as a pastor in Berlin and was Mission Secretary within EBM INTERNATIONAL for many years

¹ Peter but also John went up together to the temple at the ninth hour to pray according to their custom. ² And there was a certain man lame from his mother's womb, who was carried and laid daily at the temple door, which was called „the beautiful“, so that he could ask for alms of those who entered into the temple. ³ Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple begged them for alms.

⁴ Peter and John looked straight at him and said: Look at us! ⁵ So he looked at the, expecting to receive something from them. ⁶ But Peter said to him: I do not have any God or Silver, but all I have, do I give you; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth stand up and walk! ⁷ Then he took him up by the right hand and held him up. At once, the man's feet and ankles

became strong; ⁸ he jumped up, stood on his feet, started walking around and went into the temple with them, walking jumping and praising the Lord.

⁹ And the people there saw him walking and praising God. ¹⁰ They also recognized him as the beggar, who had sat at the Beautiful Gate of the temple asking for alms and they were all filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him. (LBT)

The Acts of the Apostles describe the history of the world as influenced by Christ. That which Jesus Christ offers, should not be reserved just for a handful of people. What Jesus experienced can be put across through words and deeds and it therefore ensures that action is taken.

I do not know who amongst us has identified himself in a particular person or with a particular group of persons in this scenario. It maybe that I perceive this scene in front of the temple as an external and casual bystander. It may be that I have been touched by this sequence: perhaps I feel like this lame man seated at the edge eagerly hoping that people give me a bit of what they can offer: a little bit of attention and a bit of assistance. I can perhaps empathize with these people because I personally feel helpless and powerless at the moment, seeming to remain immobile without strength and courage. How good does it feel then when someone turns towards me, offers me a helping hand and assist me? Perhaps I now identify myself with Peter and James, who – by whatever means – always appeared full of enthusiasm.

Today we want to think about what can happen when people learn to live hand in hand. To be with Jesus and walk in his name, does not mean you should have limitations to your personal needs and desires. The „Christ enthusiastic and set on motion people“ turn towards the world and reach out to other people – with respite and opportunities – in the world affairs. The encounter between Peter, John and the Lame Man shows how we can be part of it. This text

includes several encouragements. The first encouragement is...

Take a look at the World with eyes wide open

Peter and John were on their way to the temple to pray. It is actually a reason not to allow yourself to be distracted by anything or anybody. To pray in the temple means, to surrender yourself totally and completely to God – just like Jesus did. Going to the temple to pray means to be there entirely for God, to listen to God's will and do that which serves HIM.



On their way to the temple – to pray – Peter and John noticed a lame man. His friends have brought him to this place. Not for him to be a disturbing factor but to enable him get some alms from those passing by to go to the temple. On the way to the temple they encountered „Afflictions of the World“ The lame man had no expectations and hope in life, other than the money for a couple of days' sustenance. There was no place for him in the temple, but at least out, in front of the temple. And so for almost forty years, month after month and day by day, he begged for some coins, for some love, for some attention, for a moment of togetherness ... Though the place was profitable for him, the temple was out of bounds for him. That makes his lot a special request. People with infirmity were banished from religious premises and thus from God's presence. Therefore he had to suffer not only for his infirmity, but – also from a more painful struggle – the social consequences, the circumstances of his disability.

He had to do without so many things. What actually hurts is that he is not recognized as a full human being. He is placed at the periphery. He lives a life without any real hope. The man was accustomed that the passers-by saw him only in passing outside, threw a coin in his hand, followed by a mechanical „thank you“ which slips out of his mouth meanwhile, the merciful donors wandered fast away with their thoughts. They were busy with other things, but not

with him, this man who really only distorts in the scenery of life!

The first thing that stands out in this event, is that Peter and John stood for a moment. They perceive the people at the corner and sought eye contact with him. „Look at us!“ says Peter. He asked the man to look up to him. The personal relationship with the man is important to him. Peter and John focused their whole attention and their interest on him. Do not refuse to look at the „Afflictions of the World“. Contact let alone the lame man. He who was rejected and set at the corner, is now a point of interest, at the center and is very important. „Look at me I do not have any Gold or Silver, but that which I have, do I give you; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth stand up and walk around!“

What is that? No money, no alms – in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth stand up and walk around?! Contrary to expectations, Peter responds to the desire and all the aspirations of the lame man: Stand up and walk around. That was not the lame man’s expectation. Eye contact led to love and devotion and from this devotion, healing occurs. „What I have, do I give you ...“

Peter reached out to him and helps him to his feet. The lame man leaps up goes and stands, walks around giving praises to God ...

Give the people of the world what you have – in the name of Jesus Christ.

Peter, the simple fisherman from the countryside, without any special education or training, is the extended arm of God. That which he has received from Jesus as a gift – the gift of healing – he passes it on in the name of Jesus. He heals the lame man in His name (with no ulterior motives to convert, without conditions) „without any ifs or buts“ – just like a gift.

Let us stop shortly at this point and reflect: What can we learn from this encounter? Perhaps this encounter sets a question in our minds or gives us an assignment like: Which

gift can you use or pass on? This may not be the „gift of healing“ but certainly another gift or talent which God wants you to pass on in His name. Possibly ideas, knowledge or special skills which can serve our fellowmen. Maybe it is your point of view, your perceptions, your energy drive, your determination, your faith, your hope, your confidence, that can help initiate a fissure or give a helping hand to others. Perhaps this means it should simply be our learning process and task: What I have, I give it in the name of Jesus Christ!

It is important to classify: This report does not have to do with a religious performance, not on distinct strength of faith, not on private power, confirmed by personal action, rather a selfless act in the power and authority of Jesus. To act in Jesus name does not mean to use magical spells, but that which is seen and experienced here, associates faith and trust in Jesus Christ: The people who deal with faith are aware of the fact that they cannot force God to do anything, but rather live and give out that which God has granted freely to the benefit of others.

Therefore, we are encouraged to act out of faith in Jesus Christ. Faith is at the same time no philosophical attitude or a theory about God. The faith to which we are encouraged here, keeps to God's promises and takes them more seriously than all his opposing facts and leads to a soothing action in this world, to the people of this world, to those who are marginalized. These could be my family members or people in my town. That could equally be a group of people or people in other continents of the world. We may encounter them and they come into our lives and hearts through the television or radio.



When people get up to their feet in Jesus name, that is a sign of God's grace today to show that God always addresses people even the less privileged – and always through humans.

The goal: to praise God together!

We are encouraged to live in our world with open eyes, with a closer attention and give a listening ear, listening – and helping out. Peter reaches out his hand to the lame man. And the result is – in actual fact – an obvious success: „The lame man jumped up and was able to walk and stand and went with him into the temple, walking around and praising God!“

At least – it was of course obvious – for the man who was healed that he should praise God. It was clear to him to whom he owed his gratitude: it was not to the stars, a good twist of fate, it was not to people he owed this appreciation. His praises go to the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, who has glorified his servant Jesus, through whose name the lame man was made strong.

And it is no coincidence that the healed man went into the temple together with Peter and John, which is also a house where the community of faithful Christians came together in devotion to God. The lame man consciously abided with Peter and John. He seeks and finds with them the long-awaited communion with the Lord.

He wants to be there so as to say thank you, to the one who turned to him through people, the one who had eye contact with him – beyond silver and Gold – and brought total healing to his body. His life became an exemplification of God's praise.

This encounter between Peter, John and the lame man can be a serious challenge for us: moved by Jesus, to be on the way, to live in our world with open eyes, to listen, to help ourselves and to be of help to others. And to pay attention to those close to you in the moments when we seem helpless, motionless and unconscious learning to apprehend

and take hold of a helping hand. Perhaps it could come from Africa!?

This encounter from the New Testament encourages us in our lives to do what we say, what helps and what sets motion, is life and salvation. And it is indeed:

If we live in our world with open eyes and we care about the less fortunate and marginalized people. Affection and personal interest has become for the lame the first step on the way to salvation.

To give to the people of the world what we have – in the name of Jesus Christ. We should not be concerned or worried about the gift that we do not have but rather to pass on and use what God has given to us. Share what you have.

And if it occurs that you personally „feel paralyzed“: This encounter gives me courage to take hold of the hand that is stretched out to me and to be able to accept help.

If we „Learn to live hand in hand“, our goal is communion with God and man. God does not want to sanction the catastrophic conditions of the world. The world must be healed. God takes us into this healing process. And if the healing power is present and is experienced, this can lead to the common glorification of God. That it is made clear who God is: the Savior and Redeemer of the world through Jesus Christ.

AMEN.

Inspiration for the preaching on Matthew 9 verse 35-38

What is good and helps

(Author: Pastor Dietrich Weiland)

³⁵ And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in the synagogue, preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every sickness and all diseases among the people. ³⁶ And when he saw the crowd, he had compassion on them; because they were sweltered and scattered like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷ And he said to his disciples, the harvest is truly plentiful but the laborers are few. ³⁸ Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into the harvest.



Pastor Dietrich Weiland was until his retirement the Mission Secretary for Latin America within EBM INTERNATIONAL

Towns and villages

„And Jesus went round about all towns and villages ...“

So begins our story. Did the cities and villages of Israel needed this? What do cities and villages have from Jesus? Leave us alone with Mission! People are happy without God.

Is that true? How happy then are the people, in whose life god meaningless is, just one name among many? Who plays no role in their real life. They can eat, drink, work, rest, celebrate, mourn, talk, and remain silent, without God

being of importance to them. One does not also know of what importance he could be. That such a thing exist! No one knows about it, from someone who has known it different, through whom they could have a clue.

However, Jesus then appears „And he preached the gospel of the kingdom...” What then did he preach to them? He showed them how it is when God suddenly is the center of life. Thus, he said, it is particularly in this realm. „The kingdom of God”, e.g. „is like a treasure in the field, which a man found. And he goes and sells everything he has and buys the field.” This is the great discovery. Thus, God came close to these people like never before. And that invades their thoughts. God is conceivable as never before. God’s presence is felt, like never before. There is power and vision from this name. The Lord’s name is holy, but still felt very close.

And as if this was not enough, he led them yet to another reality in mind that confirms this: „He healed every sickness and every affliction.” In this way, the people can even physically experience that the kingdom of God has drawn near. So it did happen to a Mapuche family from Cholila which I (Dietrich Weiland) got to know on my last missionary trip.

Example 1: Cholila means a Patagonian Mapuchen village. A woman came from there with her terminally ill child and consulted the doctor of Esquel. But it gave her no hope. So she went to our missionaries Pedro and Noemi Boretsky „Pray for my child she whispered.” They did so. It was the beginning of a wonderful story. The girl recovered and came to Cholila the unique kingdom of God. A congregation began to grow in her house.

We experienced the mission over and over, especially in pioneer situations. Hence, people learn even physically that the kingdom of God is at hand. There is no distance anymore. Because the body feels it!

He had compassion

Of course something else happens again. It seems as if the people started becoming suspicious of the fact that they lack a center. This miraculous center. They feel how all what was of high value to them is gradually cheaply being substituted. They have no resources. Jesus sees them that way, and perhaps they equally see themselves that way too: „And had compassion ...“. Why? „Because you were harassed and scattered like sheep ...“ since there is no center, and that is how it appears in their soul. Where God is not the center, the soul languishes because it has to deal with constant alternatives.

They are faced with the situation: without consolation, without confidence, without faith, without love, without hope. They have nothing from God. For them, He is a dead concept. Their souls are empty. Nothing quenches their inner hunger. And they have just realized that. And Jesus sees it that way. People who are spiritually starving.

Example 2: Astrid Eichler is Priest in Brandenburg. She comes from a place which is spiritually dead. However, individuals begin to comprehend: „A prayer group is created but the few people who come together have problems with prayer. They often breakup after half a sentence into tears. Why do we begin again, to cry? They ask.“My feeling: dried out, arid soul comes in contact with the love of God, so much that so many hearts are broken, because many paths melt. Hence, tears are normal (Aufatmen 1/2003, S. 14).“

No one can sympathize like Jesus. All his thoughts and actions, his entire vision for the world is fulfilled through God. He once said, „That is my food, that I should do the will of he who sent me.“ That is why he can merely have profound compassion on the needy. He knows, what they lack. There is no supercilious view like the Pharisees. They could only shake their heads at the ignorant public. They even say to the people „You know nothing. Cursed are you.“ This is their perspective, the perspective of all statutory people.

„And with compassion towards them.“ If you look at the original text, it says: „He felt it in, up to his bowels“. We would say that it turned his heart in his body around. This is Jesus’s perception which he also transmits repeatedly to his disciples. It can even be a very important indicator! In the past it was known as „to have a burden“.

When it comes to such topics, I have to think e.g. of our senior missionary:

Example 3: Alba Montes de Oca is our Argentinean senior missionary. A few years ago, she was in Peru in search for a working environment. Changed in Chimbote, the ugliest city throughout Peru. From there she went on the bus to a holiday region high up in the Andes. And as she drove out of the bus station in Chimbote, she looks at the people. And out of a sudden, she vividly thought of what Jesus had in store for them. She had deep compassion over these people and their empty or hounded faces. It was the beginning of a missionary work which led to the creation of two congregations.



It had a lot to do with mission. It often happens that Jesus transmits this to his disciples. The same feeling! It is something like a sign for a specific order. This may be the beginning of God’s wonderful story!

The Harvest

However, let us return to Jesus. There he stands in front of these people and looks at them in their godforsaken state. And as he takes a look at them, he suddenly has the image of a huge harvest in mind. The view goes far beyond those that can be seen here. It is the harvest amongst all people and in all generations. They are the people who stand in front of him, opening his eyes to a great global harvest. „The harvest is great“, he says.

What does Jesus then behold there?

He sees people who can be won over for the kingdom of God. They are like stems, which must simply be cut. He sees people who are prepared for it, even though they are not yet aware. When someone finds his way to God through Jesus, then he is harvested! He belongs to God's harvest. But you need a view for that. The disciples did not yet have it. Later they got it!



Example 4: Recently, the couple Boretsky wrote to me, how they went 400 km deep into the Patagonian Pampa. There works a couple, both doctors, in a hospital. At first, this couple opened their doors for children and then for adults from the surrounding. In the course of visiting the Boretskys, 15 Mapuches and other persons became believers. A similar thing happened in other places in the Pampa when they stopped on their way back. So they got an impression of an area in which less than 15 people lived per square kilometer, but many cattle, sheep and ostriches. They saw the harvest.

We can also recognize here how one can perceive God's harvest: through the harvest in situ. As soon as the first stalks are cut! There are pivotal moments that lead us to see God's harvest. Without this vision for God's harvest, we will not make ourselves available. Then the panorama opens. „The harvest is great!“ It is tremendous. Jesus wants to open our eyes for that. Me too!

What are we able to do then?

The petition

Jesus says: „Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest!“ He does not say: „Go into all the world...“ He says that later. „Pray ye therefore the lord of the harvest.“ We are not the Lord of the harvest. The lord of the harvest is Jesus. It is the Lord of the harvest who deploys his people. And he gives them precise instructions:

Example 5: In the high Andes, there are small fields, and sometimes I wondered if there had ever been a harvest there. Yet one sees the harvest workers carrying their bundles on their way downward. They got their place orders for places no one else is thinking of. I can still see this harvest worker in front of me, who happily carries his bunch of harvest down. It is not so much a question of to which field the „Lord of the harvest“ sends us. It is necessary that there is a field for us at all and even if there are only two blades there. It is a pleasure to discover his field.

Example 6: Heinrich and Frieda Liebich had a small farm in the south of Brazil. It yielded just enough that they and their own children could live on it. They had no great visions for their lives. However, some children came up time and again begging for a piece of bread. Then they would have a look at the children and to one or another they used to say: „We can give you bread. But if you want you can stay here.“ For them, it was a command from God that moved their heart. This should become their harvest field. And what a field! How many children could be assisted with their immediate needs and how many of them could also open up for God’s love and gospel.

The place order matters. We do not know which place we will get. We do not know either which harvest fields exist in our town. God is the Lord of the harvest!

How good is it when we open our eyes and when we implement his words: „Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he may send forth laborers into his harvest!“

That is the key for a vision that a congregation can have:
For their city, for their country, for the whole world! We
do not know in detail what HE does with it. We only know
that this is the key for the harvest process which Jesus had
planned. We are bestowed to be a part of it. And there will
be a big move, if we start requesting for workers from the
Lord of the harvest.

AMEN.



The victory of the power of the Gospel

(Author: Pastor Carlos Waldow)



Pastor Carlos Waldow is Mission Secretary for Latin America within EBM INTERNATIONAL

The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor; He has sent me to proclaim freedom to prisoners and to the blind that they shall see again, to send the oppressed to freedom, to announce an amenable year of the Lord ... This scripture has been fulfilled today before your ears.

Introduction

If we walk along with Jesus, if we live a faithful relationship with God and we contribute in his congregation and to his mission, we would wonder or should ask ourselves what is essential? There is no doubt about the very clear vision and mission which Jesus himself has given us on our way! What he himself experienced but also what he has entrusted to his disciples at the time and to us today.

The next question is then: How can we implement this? How is that possible? Does it depend on our abilities, our commitment? First of all, we will leave these questions in space and come back to them later.

Now another key point: The mission which we have received from Jesus is the center of Christian life. Mission is the center of the church of Christ. Mission is the reason for our existence. It is the heart that beats in this „body“. Death comes if the heart does not function properly. There are enough examples in our immediate environment therefore.

In this sermon, we would personally consider the text from Luke four, then talk about some obstacles and conclude with an example from the New Testament.

1. The mission of Jesus is the mission of His church.

In the text, Jesus introduces himself as the Messiah and introduces the strategy of his mission: „The spirit of the Lord is upon me... to preach good news...“

We only need to look around in our neighborhood, or look into the reality of the world and we will immediately notice: The lack of hope in the world is much larger than the economic deficit. The world needs a clear proclamation of the Gospel, the word of God, in all its truth more than ever before. And that in word and deed.

Lately, I noticed that the preaching of the Gospel is increasingly diluted. We are often too willing to compromise and not profiled enough. The world desperately needs the proclamation of the only way through which man can find peace, hope, guidance and eternal life. Jesus Christ! The mission of Jesus was: Hope for the poor, liberty to the captives, sight to the blind, help and hope to the crushed and depressed so that they should be free. I want to encourage us, to bring this joyous and liberating message and reality into the world, near or far.

In his priestly prayer (John 17.18) and shortly before he ascended to heaven (John 20:21), Jesus says: „As the Father has sent me, I also send you.“ That is tremendous! What a privilege! But also, what kind of responsibility. The question that we face here is of course, how it is then to be sent by him as he was sent by the Father? It means at least the following:

- 1.1. To be a personal messenger of Jesus. Not sent by anyone, in the first place, not by an organization, not on your own initiative, but sent by God himself and that entirely personal.
- 1.2. When we are sent by our Lord himself, then we are not alone and do not rely on us and our strength, rather we walk along with His power and authorization. „The Holy Spirit is upon me...“, to implement that, to effectuate the change. To accomplish the mission. It is God’s spirit that acts and wants to act. Do we still reckon with that?
- 1.3. We are ambassadors with a clear vision that is unmistakable. The vision of the mission of Jesus is at the same time ours.
- 1.4. The success of this mission depends on the obedience of the messengers. Jesus himself set an example to us. Shortly before his death as he prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane and talks to the father, he asks: „Is it possible that this cup passes me by?“ The chalice means the full measure of suffering, guilt and punishment he had to bear for us humans through his death on the cross for mankind. I find it fascinating that he immediately prays in the next sentence: „But not as I wish, but thy will shall be done.“ We should learn to pray this prayer more often.



1.5. There is no doubt about what our duty is in the mission entrusted on us: To bring people the gospel in its full extent, to share God's love, to show them the way to eternal life through Jesus Christ.

2. To overcome, to skip the barriers?

Through the Church of Jesus being on its way, to bring the gospel to the people in their environment, but also worldwide, huge obstacles must be overcome.

During the EBM INTERNATIONAL Mission Council, 2006 in Budapest, we had 2 Samuel 22,30 as our master text: „With my God I can leap over walls.“ If that is true, and I am convinced of that, then we of course wonder, which walls we are talking about when we have our missionary task in view? There are many but I will name a few:

2.1. Nationalities, languages, social differences.

2.2. Political – Many Christians suffer great persecution. In many countries, freedom of religion is stated in their constitution, but it is not concretely experienced.

2.3. Religious and clerical – We often make our lives difficult with this.

2.4. Financial – Mission cannot be accomplished successfully without money. There are enough resources, but sometimes on the wrong counter. One day, Jesus was preaching to thousands of people (five thousand men; if we add women and children it were probably 10,000), when evening came, he said to his disciples. „Give them something to eat“. It is highly interesting to see what the disciples do immediately. They count the little money they have in the cash box and are dismayed how Jesus can demand for something like this when he knows how much they have in their congregational cash box. In the best case, this amount may be enough to buy food for a small group. Thus,

Jesus's disciples did what we all often do: In order to support a mission we often look at how much money we have in the community treasury. And sometimes, we do not want to do too much advertisement for the Mission's donations in order not to reduce the money due for our own expenses. What an error! One thing is clear: The more a congregation invests in the mission, the more resources they will have for their own community work (and not only finances but also other resources, such as people who personally commit themselves). This is God's mathematics. On that day it needed only a teen to deliver into the hands of Jesus what he had brought for himself, a few rolls and fish. And Jesus made the miracle. Everybody was allowed to eat and there was still much left (12 baskets full). I wish for us that we can experience also today this miracle with Jesus, over and over again.

- 2.5. Inter- / intracultural barriers – I know missionaries who have come from other countries to Brazil, who work already for more than 20 years in the country and still cannot adapt. We need to become „one of them“, so as to be taken seriously, accepted, understood, so that they are willing to open their ears and hearts to what we want to convey to them.
- 2.6. Personal „Walls“– These are the worst and most resisting:
 - a) Self-satisfaction – People who can afford to do without the Holy Spirit.
 - b) Selfishness – Here, the lack of love to the next has taken root.
 - c) A lack of vision – Vision is everything. Without a vision we do not know which way to go, we cannot set priorities, we are not able to find strategic ways, and we do not achieve our goal.
 - d) Despondency – There is a lack of conviction that we have the best offer for the people. Or we are just

exhausted from unsuccessful initiatives, might also have lost love and joy. Jesus himself can help us to get out of that.

- e) Little love and no unity with other believers (church). In the above mentioned prayer by Jesus, in John 17, he also prays for unity amongst his disciples at that time and for us today. It is of paramount importance that he says, „...that they maybe one, just like you and I are one so that the world will know (believe) that you have sent me.“ (V. 21)
 - f) No willingness to, „pay the price“. Most often, we find it very difficult to break out of our comfort zone.
 - g) Arrogance / lack of humility – If there is a lack of attitude in the servant everything gets more complicated. Consequently, often unnecessary discussions arise, when it comes to personal vanities and the spiritual power and authority are lacking.
 - h) Fears – of various kinds.
3. An example of the victory of the power of the Gospel – the church in Antioch

(Acts of the Apostles 8,1-4; 11,19-30; 13,1-3; 11,26)

At that time, Antioch was a large center of perversion. Culture and life values were tightly tied to some gods of the Greco-Roman pantheon who were associated with sex and prostitution (A people is always similar to the gods that they worship). Juvenal (a satirical poet at that time) described Daphne, which was 12 km away from Antioch, as the „moral cesspool of civilization“.

The church in Antioch was founded and built up in the midst of a perverted culture, spoiled life values, rampant principles and a prostitution gutter. In spite of all these, and actually for this reason, the Lord has planted his church there to prove that no city is too ruined, no culture is too perverted and no social context is

too strong to withstand the power of the Gospel. It is apparently one of those divine ironies, but in this city was founded (somewhat later) the center of the church of Christ – to a certain extent an even better example than Jerusalem (more open, with more perspective, more missionary, generous, effective).

How did the gospel get there? Through the conversion of the heathen at Pentecost and later through the persecution in Jerusalem – the Christians were „sown“ by God. They began to preach the gospel and a great number of people repented. There was a strong spiritual thirst in the city. The text says, „the Lord’s hand was with them“. Here, the followers of Jesus were referred to as „Christians“ for the first time.

The true gospel changes people and their environment from the scratch. The gospel is like a viral infection. If people are touched by it, experience it, get infected by it, it is hard to be stopped. Very often, I have the Impression that Christianity, as it is sometimes lived today, is nevertheless significantly different from Christ himself.

The question that I would like to ask is: Why are the Christians in Antioch an example, a model, also with regards to the mission?

- 3.1. They had a „preaching“ life style. They proclaimed with their daily lives, what Jesus was for them and what they experienced with him. The faithful relationship with Jesus and the new life in him influenced everything: marriage, relationships, ethics, affairs and simply everything. When you live like that you do not go unnoticed. Other people will see what we are talking about.

3.2. Historians say that the gospel „improved the morality of the city“. What is the meaning of this?! This reminds me of our mission work in a slum in Havana, Cuba, where apart of the catastrophic miserable circumstances in which people lived, there were also several assassination attempts each week. The gospel, the church of Jesus that emerged there (in five years, there was already a congregation with more than 100 members), effected a change in the whole neighborhood. The crime rate was largely reduced, human dignity could be restored through the introduction of several activities. This was possible because many have found their faith in Jesus Christ, their lives have completely changed and they could share the love of God with other people. This creates changes and influences the entire environment.



- 3.3. During the period when the historian Chrisostomos writes, the nation that was once the cesspool of civilization was already half Christian. This is the victory of the power of the Gospel!
- 3.4. This spirit, this daring, this obedience overcame the walls and pulled them down and set off the center of Christianity from Jerusalem to Antioch.
- 3.5. The Christians, the church of Jesus in Antioch, possessed:

- Social sensitivity and love – Despite their own financial problems a sacrifice was offered for Jerusalem.
- Intercultural Mission Work – Paul and Barnabas, the main pastors of the church, were sent out to the mission. They did not only empty their own pockets, but also their own pulpit, because they sent their two best preachers out into the mission field.
- They held on to the sound doctrine – thanks to Peter and Paul. The fundamental doctrines were not discussed. – The salvation by grace has properly been thought here for the first time (Gal. 2,11 – The story of the conflict between Paul and Peter, where it was about the basis, the foundation of faith).
- Healthy charismatic teaching – Prophecy and teaching were present every day in a sound way. The spiritual gifts were lived with tremendous balance.
- Universal commitment to the „body of Christ“ – the Christians of Antioch were not interested first in their personal belongings, origin, culture, languages, etc. It was very interesting to see how the leadership of the congregation was put together in Antioch. Did you ever notice? There were: Barnabas – from Cyprus, Simeon – a black man, Lucius of Cyrene – another one from Africa; Manaën – a member of the aristocracy (who grew up with Herod), Saul – Jew. Impossible to be more colorful and different. This works the Holy Spirit, this is the result of a love for Jesus and his mission, which stands out above all other things. The conclusion from this? Christ alone can achieve it! Hallelujah! There isn't any distinction in Christ, no skin color, gender, social levels, nationalities, languages etc.

Do you want to be a part of this congregation? For real? It will cost a lot, an amount of work but it is wonderful!

As the church of Jesus, let us experience also in the 21st century and over again the victory of the power of the Gospel and help to share it!

AMEN.

Why should we still do missions today

(Author: Pastor Hans Guderian)

„First of all, then, I urge that petitions, prayers, requests, and thanksgivings be offered to God for all people; for kings and all others who are in authority, that we may live a quiet and peaceful life with all reverence towards God and with proper conduct. This is good and it pleases God our Saviour, who wants everyone to be saved and to come to know the truth. For there is one God, and there is one who brings God and human beings together, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself to redeem everyone. That was the proof at the right time that God wants everyone to be saved, and that is why I was sent as an apostle and teacher of the Gentiles, to proclaim the message of faith and truth. I am not lying; I am telling the truth!“



Pastor Hans Guderian was the General Secretary of EBM INTERNATIONAL until 2009

Mission work in our days?

In this service, we celebrate the „Sunday of World Missions“. We are learning about projects in Africa and Latin America, listening to reports from far-away countries and seeing pictures of people in need, who we can help, thank God! So, as a church, we support the work of our Baptist

world mission in Africa, Latin America and India, we support the work of the “European Baptist Mission”.

A good thing, which, however, is by no means the obvious thing to do nowadays, not even by Christians, nor by our churches. It really is not – even in our churches, many have come to ask: “Why should we still do missions today?” Is

that not a thing of long ago? World missions, foreign mission, mission to the gentiles – aren’t they a thing of a fusty and long-gone past?

Yes, indeed, it used to be quite normal in every church to collect for the gentiles in Africa. When leaving the assembly room, you passed by a collecting box, and when you threw your mite into it, the “negro nodded”, thanking dutifully for the alms.

Well, I agree – this way of doing world missions is really outdated. This is certainly not the way we should do missions today. In such a condescending and patronising way. Today, we must meet one another in a different

way: work as partners, respect one another and remind ourselves time and again that in the countries of the southern hemisphere, self-assured and big churches have arisen everywhere, with many qualified national workers. On this point, I believe that today, we all agree in principle.

Yet the fundamental questions remain, the question why we should still be committed to world missions today. And with what goal should that be? And what should it be good for?



Approaching the text

When hearing „missions“, we Christians think of the so-called “Great Commission” (Matth. 28,18-20) – at least those who have a certain amount of biblical knowledge:

Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them...and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you...

Or let us remember Jesus’ commissioning the disciples after his resurrection in John 20,21:

As the Father sent me, so I send you.

These are good and important words from the New Testament which might certainly help us to answer this one question: Why should we still do missions today? But I believe that the passage we are going to consider today is even more pivotal, especially verse 4 from the 2nd chapter of the first letter to Timothy:

[God] wants everyone to be saved and to come to know the truth.

Exposition of the text

It is God who wants it! This is the first answer as to our question: Why should we still do missions today? It is his declared intention! At all costs, God wants people, every person, all his creatures, all those in his image, to be saved. It is God’s will.



Right at the beginning of our questioning, our text confronts us with a fundamental decision we have to make here, i.e. the decision on how to live our lives:

→ i.e. either following the tune „How can I get my own way?“, „How can I profit?“, „What’s in it for me?“;

→ or following the motto „What does God want for my life?“, „What are God’s thoughts, plans or tasks for me?“

God wants mankind, all people and every person to come to know Christ Jesus the Saviour, to find out about redemption, about deliverance from enslavement to the ego, about life guided by God.

But our text takes us a step further and confronts us with a second decision of principle, which this time we do not have to make as individuals but collectively as a congregation:



→ whether as a church, we want to live above all and basically for ourselves, staying away from the world, anxiously keeping others at distance, or – another variety – living happily and sociably to ourselves – in a „comfort zone church“ which is more or also less intact,

→ or whether we want to live as a church with a perspective on others, whether we want to live for the world, for other people, for our neighbours, for the young people, for the seniors, for the marginalized, for the unsaved people around us.

The church has often been compared to a family, to a warm nest. And there is something true and positive about it, isn’t it?

But this comparison is totally wrong if we want to live these warm, affectionate and cosy relationships behind closed doors so to speak, secluded, isolated, just living to ourselves. If we are no longer aware that the Church of Christ Jesus is not, in the first place, a place to rest but first and foremost God’s rescue team for a lost world.

From God's perspective, the church is in fact something like a "life-saving association" in order to save those shipwrecked. It is a "ship called church" (the title of a German song!), true, but, as already mentioned, it is not meant as a pleasure boat but as a rescue boat which is desperately needed on the high seas.

How strange, how absurd would it be to imagine a crew of the „Life Rescue Association“ that would see the reason for its existence in gathering once a week in order to have nice fellowship, to play skat and, maybe from time to time, to apply fresh paint to the boat.

No, the crew must be on the high seas. Regularly, without interruption, every week, every day.

And this applies just as well to Christ's church, because here, too, human lives must be saved.

Saving human lives?

Well, this is what we find, literally, in our Bible text: "[he] wants every one to be saved" (some older German translations say "helped", but this is not correct).

This leads us to the third fundamental decision we have to make on grounds of our Bible text:

- i.e. whether we want to just make the people a nice, social, cultural, medical or whatever offer through our church work or also through our mission work, for that matter,
- or whether we want to go beyond and talk above all about Jesus, about his sacrifice of love for us, about guilt and forgiveness, about salvation from the realm of sin and evil and death into the realm of life, of healed relationships, of redemption through our Saviour Christ Jesus.



Why missions? We see the purpose is above all saving people from the realm of death, saving them to enter the realm of life.

By the way, in many countries of the southern hemisphere, in Brazil for instance, millions of people are quite aware what such rescue means. Millions of people who have experienced being saved from the realm of death by love, from demonic bonds, occultism, from alcoholism, drug addiction, enslavement and perversions – into the realm of life and God-given love.

And, being saved, they may come, step by step, to the knowledge of the truth, whereby nothing mysterious whatsoever is meant, nothing aloft and theoretical, but, quite the contrary, something very practical. For, whenever the bible talks about knowledge or knowing, it does not refer to philosophy but to a very deep-rooted and intense fellowship in life.

Thus, we read in the creation narrative, e.g., that Adam knew Eve, which means that they gave themselves to each other in the most intimate communion as man and woman.

Let us summarize: Through Jesus, people are saved from a life of inability to relate to others into a life full of knowledge, where they can fully relate:

- relate to God's creation,
- relate to other people, and
- relate to God himself.

Only such a life, i.e. life in relationship with other people and with God, can be defined as life in the true sense of the word according to the great Jewish religious philosopher Martin Buber: it is life in relationships.

Why should we still do missions today – here and world-wide?

This is our answer: Missions is the calling into God's rescue operation, so that all people may be saved, can live, live in relationships – with one another and, above all, in an orderly and good relationship with God.

God's advance-guard

Whether missions is still the order of the day, whether it makes sense or not – this does not depend on any apparent needs of people, not on the acceptance of Christians in society nor on the availability of funds, be they abundant or scarce.

Missions is the order of the day because God wants it and because he does missions. With us – but also without us if need be.

For this Bible verse from I Timothy is not a command, it is a mere statement: „God wants everyone to be saved and to come to know the truth. That is the fact. God's wants that. God does that. And we are privileged to take part in this rescue operation that God has launched to save this world.

Here, we must make a small addendum, a small but very important addendum.

It concerns us, the Christians, the churches, God's missionaries. It concerns us, as despite this very clear mission, these clear intentions and despite all the fundamental decisions we have made, we sometimes feel rather ill at ease, strangers, as if we were people from a different world and age. It concerns us, as we sometimes perceive ourselves not so much as "lights of the world" but rather as "tail lights" in this world.

In the end, our biblical text can and intends to encourage us to overcome these wrong perceptions:

- We, the small flock of Christians in our country and all over the world should not perceive ourselves as the „tail lights“, the „last Mohicans“, the remnant of a doomed group of people;
- but we should rather see ourselves very realistically as a small flock of Christians in Germany and worldwide who are, from God's perspective, by no means the remnant out of a doomed group of people, by no means those at the rear but, quite the contrary, an advance-guard, a group of front runners, the very first of a large and victorious army, of a large peace-keeping force – rather a peace-bringing force who announces peace for all people, peace and salvation and communion with God.

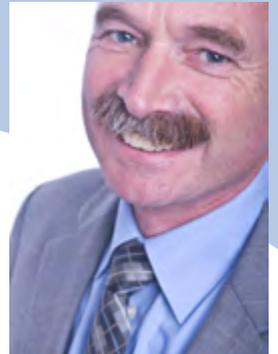
God Himself is the Lord, guaranteeing his mission. And we may know: Jesus precedes us on the way, and the decisive victory has been his since long, long ago.

We may follow him because he has given his life for us and because he now takes us on his „rescue operation team for this world“. For one thing is certain: „God wants everyone to be saved and to come to know the truth.“

AMEN.

Jesus and the Children

(Author: Pastor Christoph Haus)



Pastor Christoph Haus
is General Secretary of
EBM INTERNATIONAL

¹³ And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. ¹⁴ But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. ¹⁵ Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." ¹⁶ And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them.

This encounter between Jesus and the children is reported in the first three gospels. As for the relationship between Jesus and the children, these texts are always used as positive examples. And we often willingly quote this text during the benediction of children. Has this text got anything to do with mission or „World mission“ at all? Most certainly.

- Jesus uses the children to show us how we can gain access to God's kingdom.
- Jesus gave particular significance to the children.
- Continental Baptism began mission work among children.

- In the World mission, children deserve particular attention from us.
- By means of the children Jesus turns to his disciples – and with that he speaks to us. And what Jesus tells his disciples and us is ground-breaking and challenging.
- Through Jesus's actions and words, he invites each one of us to be his followers. This is His mission.
- Who does not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will not enter it.

We ask ourselves: And what about my sense? And what about the many injustices, the many needs, the suffering people that I see every day with my own eyes? Close your eyes and feel like a child and believe that everything will be better in heaven? Throw your mind overboard? Must I become naïve, childish, uncomprehensive, in order to be able to live a faithful live with God? – No.

There is a key that unlocks this text for us. There is somewhat a main point, a reference point, where this text aims at. And this main point is not: Become childish, regress. Forget reflection. Sit down like a child in the playpen of Christian faith and let prescribe yourself everything and personally do nothing at all.

The key point herein is something totally different: It has to do with the kingdom of God. It is about God's new world.

The person who does not receive the kingdom of God like a child ...

Anyone who does not admit God's kingdom, God's new world, like a child does not enter into it. Jesus has recruited the children to illustrate something. It is about receiving the kingdom of God. It is about accepting God's standards, God's love and God's attention. It is about being able to confide oneself to God.

He who does not receive the kingdom of God like a child ...

Allowing to receive presents. Entrust Jesus unconditionally – like a child, this is the focal point in this example. This is what Jesus estimates in the children that they are able to accept. This is what Jesus likes in the children that they accept to receive presents. Therefore, he says: The person who does not receive the kingdom of God like a child ...



Children are accustomed to receive.

They survive from what others give to them.

They pose no questions to whether this is good or bad.

They do not dwell on questioning things. They do not check out for long.

They are accustomed to take and to receive presents.

On a weekly market, a dealer had sold almost all his bananas just before the closing of the market. Happy that he didn't remain seated on his goods he wanted to give away the last thick banana bundle. „These bananas do not cost five, not four, not two... they do not even cost one Euro. They are for free! I give them away. Who wants to have them?“ All the people who were standing around his stand were confused first. So many bananas for free? A publicity ploy? Does he want to attract me? Something is wrong here!

And before many of the adults could reconsider their thoughts, a little boy came up and says: I want to have them. He proudly went back home with a pack of bananas.

Something for free? There must be something wrong. Something for free – that neither fits to our society nor to our work ethics. Anyone who wants something, must pay for it. Nothing goes for nothing. The child found it pretty obvious that something could be gotten for free. Give it to me!

„Future by receiving gifts“ that is how the slogan would be with Jesus. With us it is known as „Future through hard work“.

Jesus uses the example of the children for saying: He who does not receive my gift will be nothing in my eyes. He who does not receive the kingdom of God as a gift cannot progress. Anyone who thinks he would have to earn everything from God, has not yet grasped the standards in God's kingdom. The kingdom of God is a gift. I can't do anything for it.

The kingdom of God for others is a gift. I do not have to set any entrance conditions for them. God's attention, his standards, his love are unconditional.

The fact that I am redeemed, is a gift. I can do nothing beforehand. That one day I will be in heaven and perhaps have fear: Man! For sure there is a tremendous file about me bearing all information about everything I did not achieve in my life.

And then I will arrive and Jesus will say: your file has been treated. Therefore I personally stand up. I have straightened out everything. That is a gift. I cannot do anything about it. I just have to receive it as a gift.

The fact that you are saved, a gift. That at the end of your life you will stand in front of God and Jesus will say: You are ok. I stand up for you. You cannot do anything for it. That is a gift.

With the example of the children, Jesus clarifies what Paul later develops in Romans as a doctrine of justification: he who is ready for receiving is at the right place with God. God is always present for those who are able to show that

they need help and attention. Believing in God means: To be bestowed without any preparatory efforts. Accepting the kingdom of God like a child also means seeing how God bestows me. Because God blessed me, he forgives me, therefore I believe in him, I trust in him, I can live differently, and my life is new.

Jesus gives children a very special place. By means of children's personality, Jesus explains to us how we can find our way to God. But beyond that the great attention which Jesus gives to children in some of the miracle tales becomes apparent in our text, the so-called „Children's Gospel“. Fully instantaneous three different attitudes towards children are colliding: The women (or were there any men present?) that simply want to know their children to be close to the Messiah Jesus.

Jesus's disciples who abruptly rejected the children thus displayed a completely different attitude towards children. And Jesus who himself responds very angrily to his disciples' conduct, who lets the children come to him, puts them in the focus, hugs them, blesses them and reassures them that they belong to the kingdom of God. How high Jesus ranks the position of children also becomes evident in another incident, in the so-called „rank dispute amongst the disciples“ (Mt. 18, 3 par). Jesus opposes a child against those disciples who were striving for „the best positions“. A child amidst the hierarchy-oriented disciples puts the prevailing concepts upside down. Jesus sides with the children because they stand for the marginalized, those who can't achieve anything but yet belong to the kingdom of God. Jesus's approach towards the children is a clear prove of what happens when God's kingdom spreads. Children and babies are therefore ascertained that they have a more intuitive grasp than theologically educated adults: Mt. 11,25: It is revealed to the under-age what remains hidden to the wise and intelligent. We can



therefore draw the conclusion and assign the importance to children,

→ just as Jesus had done

→ Win a new perspective of the common neediness of children and adults before God.

The Continental Baptist teaching began their work with children.

It is not by chance that Johann Gerhard Oncken, founder of the continental Baptist teaching, started his work with children and above all for children. Nine years ago, before he formed the first Baptist congregation in 1834, he founded together with the protestant pastor Rautenberg a Sunday-school in Hamburg's suburb St. Georg.



The motivation for founding the Sunday-school was a holistic understanding of the mission. The words of Jesus in Mark 10,14 can be read in the documents and the correspondence for establishing Sunday-schools over and over. Children should get to know Jesus.

But the social distress of thousands of children from poor backgrounds was equally important for Oncken und Rautenberg. They could and should have gone to public schools. Due to the poverty in their families they were forced to start earning a living at a very early age. It was being touched by the social distress of these children, by the dramatic lack of education and the identification of a vicious cycle: Poverty leads to a lack of education and a lack of education is ending up back to poverty. These children were taught how to read and write on Sundays and they were introduced to the gospel.

„Many children have to earn their living fully or partially from the time they become able for the first school teaching and therefore can't attend school on weekdays. On the day of the Lord these children should have the opportunity to learn beneficial things so that they receive a twofold blessing, indeed a twofold Sabbath blessing. O you

dear ones, who wish with all your soul, that the kingdom of God comes also amongst our children. Let us not stop by praying! Come along with us and invest time and energy for a good purpose! He who has love and teaching skills should come and teach even to the abandoned youth to understand the pure words of the Lord." Pastor Rautenberg in his call for the foundation of the Sunday school in 1824 to which J. G. Oncken joined.

Children have a very special rank in the world mission.

For EBM INTERNATIONAL it implies a theological and a historical obligation to allow children to get a very special rank.



The same thing is not done today, like Oncken und Rautenberg did. But together with the partners in India, Africa and Latin America a look inside is taken and some questions are posed: Where are the children, what do they need and what can we do?

We see children In India, children of day laborers who are forced to go with their parents to brickyards and work there. We support the preschools of our partners which provide education and gospel to the children and equally prevent them from child labor.

We see street children, half and full orphans in India and Latin America who found a new home in children's homes and in families of the congregation. We see AIDS orphans in South Africa, who are admitted in nursery schools belonging to small Baptist churches. We see children in Cameroon, getting access to education and the gospel in primary and secondary schools belonging to the Cameroon Baptist Union in small and remote villages. And these children are part of our world mission work. They experience a new life with a future because we help them.

And we can learn from them: as grateful as these children accept our help, so willing to receive a gift, so we can gratefully be bestowed with God's forgiveness and salvation. Just like children.

Finally, an example for Advent and Christmas season: Walter Füllbrand tells in a „Word on Sunday“ about a nativity scene which children of his congregation put on stage at Christmas. At the point of the nativity play where Mary and Joseph asked if there was still a room at the inn for a young man and his pregnant wife the little boy who played the host answered: Yes, yes get in. There was much laughter in the audience. They all smirked. Then the adults helped the little boy to get back into his role and made it clear to him that there was of course no room for Mary and Joseph.

Let us therefore without any reservation be bestowed just like children would do. And let us bestow the children of the world with our help.

AMEN.

Theological key sentences from Luke 1, 5 – 79

This chapter deals with people who are involved in God's salvation plan. Zechariah und Elizabeth are people like you and me. Normal people. That is why the narrator retelling the story wants to present Zechariah's experiences and make him more feasible to us. A single small man is part of God's salvation history – Zechariah makes this experience. And we with our apparently so unimportant life are a part of God's story with the world and men.

A missionary life begins with „praxis pietatis“ (personal piety). In the everyday expression of devotion, in the daily relationship with God, and how we express them. The hymn of praise: Zechariah tells the people of his time who Jesus is to him. Without that he himself would have seen Jesus. He describes his hope in the Messiah.

Mission – Do not forget your prayers!

(Author: Pastor Christoph Haus)



Pastor Christoph Haus
is General Secretary of
EBM INTERNATIONAL

I would like to introduce myself: I am Zechariah. Yes, exactly him, the father of John the Baptist, husband of Elizabeth. More about me can be found in the report of Luke chapter one. It is Advent once again and my story fits quite well to this period. I tell it to you today from my own personal point of view.

My wife and I, we both originate from an old traditional priesthood family. And because old priest nobility obliges, we lived, as it is beautifully expressed in Luke's gospel, in strict accordance with the laws and prescriptions of the Lord.

For example, I had to go regularly to the temple in Jerusalem. There was a roster, and at certain intervals it was my turn to perform the priestly duties. Some duties were also distributed randomly to the various priests. But not all.

I come from a priestly family – was the eldest son and automatically became a priest. Priest nobility obliges. At the beginning, I was very proud because after all to be a priest is of course something special. Then you are somebody. Then you are a missionary at the forefront. However, over time, my life as a leading clergyman became at a certain point unexciting and not thrilling. With time, so many things became a routine.

I was pretty busy to perform burnt offerings and saying the respective prayers during certain festivals and occasions. This mostly happened at the temple courtyard, where all the pilgrims and believers were assembled too. And whenever I was on duty, I had to ensure that the fire for the burnt offerings would never expire. And I had to offer sacrifices with incense. This was in the holy of holies, which was the closed-off temple area with the holy books and the tablets of the law. Hence I was one of the few who were allowed to enter there. In some cases, I also had the duty to declare the state of the pilgrims as pure and impure according to the law. Otherwise, I had to keep the emporium clean. Because no cleaning woman was allowed to enter the holy of holies. Therefore we the priests had to do that. The table of showbread always had to be nicely prepared and I had to clean up all the devices.

At that time, being a priest was so much connected with manual labor. Castellans were not yet in existence. Hence one had a lot to do. But I must say, the job went on well for me. It of course involved a lot of routine and everydayness. But although it was sometimes boring, I was basically not dissatisfied. It was an opportunity to get away from home, and in Jerusalem there was always something exciting going on. I remember that some years ago, we had some personal problems for which my wife and I had been praying for a lot. In fact we had no children. And that was quite a humiliation for me as a priest.

Because especially me as a priest should have created progeny in order to enable to continue the priestly tradition in our family. We prayed a lot for it. Also together with friends, relatives and colleagues. But we had then eventually stopped praying and also did not expect that we will still have children. Because at some point the biological limit was reached and we had come to terms with it. And we did not really think of our prayers. My fellow priests quite often mocked about me. They always had their beautiful photo albums crowded with children. And when I have shown my photos: Instead of a family with children there were



only pictures of me and my wife Elizabeth: Elizabeth in our small house, Elizabeth with my mother-in-law in the Negev desert, Elizabeth at sunset and at the Dead Sea, Elizabeth in front of Solomon's copper mines ... So, that was it with us.

A long time ago, I had bequeathed all my savings to the association for the renovation of the temple forecourt. Thus we just went on living like that. We knew what we had. And as a matter of fact, we were basically not doing badly. I do not want to complain in any way. Well, I do not want to get lost in the old memories. Anyway, one day, I was again on duty in the temple. Therefore I had my prayer book from which I had to read prayers at certain times and occasions. This all went on like a clockwork. I knew all the prayers by heart. I knew when I had to burn the incense. Every movement fitted.

In the retrospective I realized that all our pre-formulated prayers also have a disadvantage: Because sometimes I sat there mumbling my prayers and my mind was wandering elsewhere. You may have experienced this too. It is prayer time during worship and your mind is busy thinking what may be there to eat when you get back home again. Or who might be elected to the church board this year. Honestly, – I have often gone into the house of the Lord without reckoning the least with the fact that I could have an encounter with God. How often have I made prayers in the temple without reckoning with an answer from God.

And in exactly such a situation I had encountered God. There I was standing in the temple, duly performing my priesthood duty and thinking about nothing evil, and then I encountered God.

Suddenly, there was an angle, and he spoke to me. I was totally frightened. At first I thought – Zechariah, you are getting old. You see ghosts. But this angel of God said he was sent by God to tell me that he had heard my prayer.

I had to think first which prayer he was referring to. It could certainly not be the Psalms I had just finished recited mechanically. Then the angel meant God would give us a son. For a moment I thought that maybe someone has crept in from outside and wants to make fun of me.

And I said to him that he can talk. We and a child? I asked whether he knew how old I am. Hey, I said, I had the highlight of my manhood at 21, like all other men. I will soon retire, I said. Nothing works anymore. And if he meant that we should adopt a child, I said, we would have thought of that alone. And anyway he should prove to me first that he is a messenger from God. Everyone could come with that. And then the angel of God beholds me very sadly and says: „Zechariah, I am so disappointed that you do not trust God. No – I do not mean that you should adopt a child. God has indeed heard your request. You will have a son, and God has great plans with this son. He should prepare the coming of the promised Messiah. You ask for signs and proofs that I am really a messenger of God? You shall have them: Firstly, is that what I told you in the name of God already written in the prophetic history, and you should actually know it. Isaiah 40,3: „A voice is calling: Prepare in the wilderness a way for the Lord.“ This will be your son. The time has come. The promised Messiah is sure to come soon. And your son shall prepare his coming. And you can also read again Malachi 3. It is written therein too.

And secondly: Zechariah – you are here in the temple and you know that the temple is the place of God’s presence. And you priests have always been thought to be the mediator between God and man! You are a messenger of love and of the rule of God to the people who are supposed to know God. You are God’s missionary among the people. And you sit here counting on nothing. This is a shame, a proof of failure for your faith and above all for your mission and your consignment. How do you



want to tell people credibly about God's love when you yourself do not count with God's action in your life? And if you still want another sign that God has sent me to you, here you are: You will remain speechless until what God has promised you comes to pass."

That was a smash hit. It was not just my doom that I had never taken my prayers really seriously, but also there where God encountered me, where He spoke to me, I first didn't notice it. Because I had actually never expected a personal encounter with God.

It was also quite good for me, that I had lost my speech. I would have certainly been inclined to rush out, having many arguments, facts and figures trying to prove my encounter with God. But I could not because I was speechless.

It is also not so easy, this Issue with personal encounters with God or experiences with God. How can you prove whether it was an experience with God or not.

And on the other hand, this encounter with God effected a great change in me, so that all my friends and colleagues spontaneously said: Zechariah has encountered God. They noticed it as soon as I came out of the holy of holies. Everybody sensed that on me. I did not need to talk. It is I couldn't even.

And when our son was finally born and when I was able to speak again, I did not even start to decorate my experience with huge evidence and proofs of the existence of God. I basically and simply went on telling how I have experienced that fully personally. And the people have noticed that I had changed and sensed that on me how deep the encounter with God had changed me.

After the birth of our son I spontaneously composed a psalm of praise. Definitely, all people sensed that this encounter with God had touched me in the depths of my soul. And this is what I told the people in this psalm of praise: Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel! For he has visited his people and brought about salvation: He has born us a strong savior arising up from the house of his servant David. That was his promise of the old through the mouth of his holy prophets. He has delivered us from our enemies and from the hands of all those who hate us; he has accomplished the pity of our fathers on us and remembered his holy covenant, the oath that he swore to our father Abraham; he has bestowed us, that we, liberated from the enemy's hands, shall fearlessly serve him in holiness and righteousness before his face all our days. And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest; for you shall go before the Lord and prepare the way for him. You will bless his people with the experience of salvation in the forgiveness of sins. Through the merciful love of our God the light arising from the heights will visit us to shine to all those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to direct our steps to the path of peace. And without that I knew Jesus, I was able to express in my prophetic psalm of praise who Jesus is for me. Because I knew it at once: I am with my life, with my prayers and my personal experience with God a part of his mission and his consignment. If I may give you a piece of advice from my experience: You must not forget your prayers. Take that for which you pray with you into your life. And take your life with you into your prayers.

And then the people will sense:

Yes – this man is a witness for a living and acting God. And when you go next time to church service, then go with your entire life, and reckon with that God wants to encounter you there. And if you have the feeling that God has spoken to you, then do not longer search for evidence



and great arguments. God does not need arguments, but confidence. And I have also learnt to fill all the old prayers and forms with new life. My faith and my relationship with God had again something to do with my everyday life. My prayers had again something to do with my life. And this life became a part of the announcement of the coming of the Messiah. The savior of all men. My life became part of the best, the greatest good news for all people in the world that Jesus is about to redeem the humans, to forgive, to release and to bless them with eternal life.

My wish for you is that: You should not forget your prayers. Bring your prayers back to life and your life into the prayer.

And if you also have experienced Jesus, just as I have described him: then share this with people in your life. And you will be a part of God's mission!

AMEN.

„Mission is possible regardless of our culture“

(Author: Pastor Issac Zokué †)



Pastor Issac Zokué †, former President of the Baptist Union (UFEB) in the Central African Republic. He passed on after a long disease on September 14th, 2014.

We are told that culture is something that remains after you have forgotten everything else. This is to say that culture is part of yourself. The way you think, you act, you live your life is the expression of your culture. Since culture is a natural thing, there is no hierarchy in culture. I mean there is no culture superior or inferior to another. It is just different from one another. The beauty of humankind is seen through the diversity of culture. Each culture has its own values and principles. But none equals the standard of Christian life.

This preliminary remark allows me to say that you cannot carry out Mission without bringing at the same time something of your culture. Nobody expects you to be different from what you are, because you cannot depart from your culture. It is true that in the past, some earlier Missionaries did ignore the basics of cultural anthropology. This ignorance led to a lot of frustration and preconceived ideas. But today the situation has changed. You should free yourself from this narrow minded idea of a perfect Missionary. A perfect Missionary does not exist. There are normal or ordinary people, men and women, called by God and sent by Him. We all have to face the challenge of a culture that is different from our own. Everywhere you go as a Missionary, you enter into a new process of learning.

Learning of how you can better communicate the Gospel of salvation to people you are not acquainted to. Some people talk about contextualization. This means bringing the Gospel down to the context, so that it meets the people where they are, so that their life is transformed by the word of God. Jesus Christ should not appear to them like a foreigner, but the incarnate Son of God who came to dwell among them. In the light of all this, let us affirm that Mission is possible regardless of our culture.

Introduction

Let me now move to the Scripture. First of all I would like to reaffirm the fact that Mission has a solid biblical and theological foundation. Let me just mention few biblical references in this regard: Matthew 28,18-20; John 20,21; Acts 1,8; Acts 13. Jesus Himself is the One who sends His disciples. Therefore, Mission is not an option; it is a divine command. The Lord who sends is the One who commits Himself to make the Mission possible. He will fulfill His promise for anybody regardless of his or her culture. Our Mission today is the continuation of the Mission of Jesus Christ Himself. He was sent by the Father; so He came and through His death and resurrection, He led the foundation for our salvation. Then He returned in heaven. But when Jesus said this to the disciples: "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you", He makes clear that our Mission is connected to His Mission. It is the follow up of His Mission. Therefore Mission will never fail, because it is Jesus' Mission. By sending the disciples to the world, Jesus took into account the diversity of cultures. He knew that He was sending Jews to the different cultures of the world. Indeed, soon after resurrection, He sent Jews to the rest of the world. But today, you and I come from all over the world, and the Lord is sending all of us back to the world.



Remember that at Pentecost, Mission was born in the context of the mixing of culture. The Holy Spirit came down when “there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven ... Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the part of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs” (Acts 2,5,9-11).

So the mixing of culture started right at the beginning of Christian Mission. As you see, culture should not be taken as a hindrance or a barrier to Mission.

Matthew 24,14 reveals the fundamental theological dimension of Mission. Jesus said:

“This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come”.



Obviously, Mission does not have a deadline until the End of the Age. It is very important to take notice of this truth. And in order to help you understand the point I am trying to make, let me add to Matthew what the Apostle Paul said about Mission:

“For ‘Everyone who calls on the name of the lord will be saved’. How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news’.” (Romans 10,13-15).

Salvation is based on the belief in Jesus Christ. Therefore, Missionaries are called to take the gospel of the kingdom and preach it in the whole world as a testimony to all nations before the end would come. For the end will come together with the final judgment. And the final judgment will decide who is saved and who is not, depending on their acceptance or denial of Jesus Christ. This judgment will be fair, just and equitable if everyone has been given opportunity to hear about Jesus Christ.

Before this eschatological deadline, Mission should be perpetuated. My commentary of this verse is coherent with what Jesus declares in John 12,48:

“There is a judge for one who rejects me and does not accept my words; that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day.”.

What is at stake here is so crucial that Mission should be a concern for every single Christian. This is to say that every single Christian does have spiritual obligation toward Mission support, because in so doing, he or she contributes to take the gospel to all nations. Yes, Mission is possible regardless of our culture, because if we do not go ourselves on the field, we can make Mission possible by supporting it. Mission has primarily to do with preaching the Gospel. As we talk more about holistic ministry today, let us make sure that we keep a sound biblical balance between spreading the word of God and promoting development projects.

Three perspectives of Mission:

I remind you of the biblical and theological basis of Mission so to underline the fact that no human thinking can be held as a valid argument against Mission. Let me now focus on Acts 1,8, mainly on the second part of the verse where Jesus said,

“You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth”.

I would like to explore some perspectives we find in this verse and draw practical applications. In Acts 1,8, the Great Commission implies intra-cultural Mission, inter-cultural Mission and trans-cultural Mission. I borrow Latin words to render what I would like to say. Intra means inside. Mission can be inward oriented, focus inside the culture and carried out by native missionaries. Inter means between. I want to speak of the Mission between two different cultures, usually a culture across the border or in the same linguistic area. Finally, Trans means beyond. I use it for a Mission beyond the cultural zone or region of the missionary.

First perspective

Mission started at Jerusalem, the city of Jerusalem. Jesus declared it, and it occurred at Pentecost. As you can see it, the urban ministry is not a sprung out modern idea. It has its roots in the Great Commission. This is what I call intra-cultural Mission. In sending the disciples to the world, Jesus does not bypass the city where they live. He does not minimize their culture. He makes clear that their fellow citizen also need the good news of salvation; so they should start with them. The practical application for us of this reality is this: A genuine missionary vision should include your own people. Mission to your own people is part of the Great Commission. Maybe you do not think of it. But secularism today in the western societies opens new avenue for internal Mission. This implies new strategy, new paradigm shift. Yes, we believe that missionaries could come from the Majority World. But do not forget that western governments today become more and more restrictive in letting foreigners enter their countries. Majority World missionaries will not solve your problem.

What are you doing today for your Jerusalem? Time has come for us to develop a new strategy for internal or intra-cultural Mission. If we miss the point, we may wake up tomorrow with a Church alienated from her own people. Intra-cultural Mission is a challenge not only for western countries, but for all of us. For instance in the Central African Republic, local missionaries are working among Pygmies and Fulahnies . It is possible in our countries to identify some categories of people for whom a special mission's effort is necessary. If we look at Mission through our classical glasses, maybe we will not be able to see or to identify those new categories created by the contemporary societies. Do not escape from your responsibility toward your own people.

Second perspective

Starting from Jerusalem, Mission extends to Judea and Samaria, two neighbor countries to Jerusalem. Jesus did not jump over Samaria to mention Galilee which is more familiar to the disciples, but He mentions one familiar country, Judea, and one hostile country, Samaria. Jesus and His disciples have knowledge of Samaritan's people, their religion (a mixture of Judaism and paganism), and their culture. For the disciples, going for a missionary work in Samaria is not simply going in a context of a different culture, but facing a hostile culture which reject them. And we know that the antagonism between those two cultures is stronger from the Jewish side. Remember the reaction of the disciples when Jesus was refused hospitality in a Samaritan's village, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?" they asked. (Luke 9,54).

But we know that Jesus did have a different and a positive perception of Samaritan's people: In one of the parables, He has shown that a Samaritan can be a good man. He opposed His positive view to the negative view of the disciples. A Good Samaritan did exist. He also brought good news to a woman, then to a whole village in Samaria. In one of the healing events, Jesus singled out the Samaritan out of ten lepers who, solely, was thankful to Him, contrary to the nine Jews. In a sense, Jesus was the first missionary to the Samaritan's people; and He showed the way to His followers. Now, what can we learn from this? Samaria is a good example of a country of which we have a negative idea on the culture of the people. Is it possible to love people and at the same time despise their culture? The answer is no. You may be sent to people you do not like, because you do have a lot of preconceived ideas on their culture. If this is your case, then you need sanctification, a transformation of your own attitude, a change of your mind. Yes, Mission is possible regardless of our culture, whether antagonist or favorable. I dare not mention names of countries; but I know of two neighbor countries in Africa where

the image of one is always bad for the other. If you are sent to a place like Samaria, don't hesitate to go.

Third perspective

Trans-cultural Mission is the extension of Mission up to the ends of earth. The "ends of earth" in the context of the Great Commission is not only a geographic reality. Remember the blessings from the Creator: "Fill the earth and subdue it" (Genesis 1,28). The earth is given to the human being to be his living space. So when Jesus



talks about the earth, He refers to everywhere a human being can be found. Today some people do not live in a house built on the ground but in a ship floating on water. In the future, as we are told, some people in the Nederland will live on a floating house. Anyway, they are still related to the earth. Even cosmonauts who are able to spend few months in the sky are still terrestrial inhabitants. The point I want to make is that Jesus sent the disciples to go even to the more remote place, provide a creature in God's image is there as potential receiver of the good news. The challenge in trans-cultural Mission is even greater, because it includes the unknown. There is something of the experience of Abraham.

By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going" (Hebrews 11,8).

Today, with the network of communication covering the world, we are not exactly in the situation of Abraham. There is opportunity now to see pictures or to read about the people we are going to serve. Nevertheless, the challenge of the unknown is still there. For instance, the perspective of learning a new language in a new context is a challenge. I know of a missionary who served in Africa for couple of years, then, his mission asked him to go to the Philippines. But he refused, arguing that he can no more take the challenge of a new apprenticeship. Recently, just before the change of political regime in the Central African Republic, a team of religious leaders, including myself, we visited several regions of the country. I was amazed to see how catholic priests are so fluent in Sango, our national language. We met them in different places, coming from Congo, from Uganda, from Italia. I can see how they invest themselves in learning the new culture. Trans-cultural Mission may call for more cultural sacrifice.

As the apostle Paul put it, after he has explained that he became like a Jew, Greek, slave, weak, he concluded "I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some." (1 Corinthians 9,19-22).



Conclusion

Yes, Mission is possible regardless of our culture. But we have to pay a price for it. Are we ready to abandon the pride of our culture, so that we could become servant of another culture? Are we ready to say, Yes Lord, I commit everything of mine to you, including my culture so that you may use it everywhere you want, whenever in a favorable or in a hostile context? The momentum for Mission should not be dictated by public opinion on Mission. Lord Jesus Christ, the sender, does not ask us to seek human permission or blessings before we go, apart from the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Surely God can speak to us through His servants, like in Acts 13; but I am saying that human opinion should not be determinant for Mission's enterprise. My deepest conviction is that this is time for a renewal of Mission. This renewal will begin with a fresh biblical understanding of the Great Commission.

AMEN.

Impulses for a sermon

John 20, 20-23

As the father has sent me, I am sending you

(Author: Pastor Dr. Andrea Klimt)



Pastor Dr. Andrea Klimt is a lecturer at the Baptist Theological Seminary in Elstal/Germany

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, „Peace be with you!“ After he said this he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed, when they saw the Lord. Again Jesus said, „Peace be with you! As the father has sent me, I am sending you.“ And with that he breathed on them and said, „Receive the Holy spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.“

Sermon EBMI-Mission Council 2014 in Orsay/ France. The sermon has intentionally some „mistakes“ in grammar and orthography as it reflects the beauty and the spirit of the moment it was preached for the first time 2014.

Imagine: A group of anxious people – men and women – sitting in a small dark room – windows closed – doors shut – filled with fear – maybe shivering and trembling – remembering what has happened during the last few days – thoughts coming and going – was it real or was it a bad dream? – what happened? – what happened to them? – and what happened to him?

A few days earlier: That must have been cool, to be with that Jesus-Gang – that group of diverse people: disciples – followers – healed people and sick ones – rich and poor – men, women, children – entering Jerusalem before Passover – Jesus: Friend – Brother – Master – Rabbi – on their way, many expectations accompanied that group – many hopes went with them – Jesus! he was teacher – healer – ... – and? – maybe a king – or maybe more – did he come to set up his kingdom? – would he come to change the balance of power? – did he come to start a revolution?, to fight against roman oppression? – did he come to release his people? –

A few days earlier: entering Jerusalem, that was a good feeling – to be with Jesus, when all the people welcomed him as their king.

But now? Everything has changed – in the past few days everything turned out to be different – expectations were not fulfilled – people were disappointed – the expected king turned out to be a criminal and was put to death – hope had come to an end.

Now: they were sitting in their small dark room in fear of other people – after they had seen their expected king dying – they expected to die themselves.

Things have changed and change causes fear: we can relate very well – if we think about ourselves – we may also have had that experience: Change causes fear – if there is a change in our lives (... job situation – new job – family constellation – relocation – changing the country you are living in).

- ...⇒ But if there was no change it would be worse, because there would be no progress – we would be standing still.
- ...⇒ Leaving the country can cause fear – but staying home would be equally frightening.

➤ Being sent out as a missionary can be scary – but staying home is not an option any more.

➤ You have reached the point of no return.

➤ What kind of change were the disciples facing?

For them it was the death of Jesus – they still believed he was dead – but in reality it was His resurrection. They just didn't know it yet.

Resurrection – the greatest change of all – nobody could have expected that.

And suddenly he was among them – he was standing in their midst – and said: “Peace be with you!”

In the midst of fear the resurrected comes and says: “Peace be with you!”

Peace be with you – as you sit here thinking about what is to come – peace be with you – as you think about what will change when you leave your home and your country – when you enter your new life, when you start your new ministry – peace be with you.

The followers of Jesus – women and men are sitting behind closed doors – but now, again, things have changed – what nobody could have expected has happened – the resurrected appears in their midst – and grief turns into joy – the people inside the room were “overjoyed” – more than joy – in that moment, when they recognized the risen Christ and identified him with the Jesus they had known – joy and even more joy overwhelmed them.

They recognized Jesus by his wounds – these wounds, speaking of deep suffering – speaking of Jesus as a vulnerable human being – wounds telling of a God who suffers, because of his love for all mankind – wounds that can be seen and even touched – and suddenly the followers of Jesus recognize him – they do not recognize him by his face or stature, by his movements or his voice – the wounds let them know that it is HIM – God is recognized through

human suffering – you haven't seen God? – you can find HIM in the poor and needy persons – God is vulnerable – he suffers and is wounded –

„Um dem lebendigen Gott zu begegnen, ist es notwendig, zärtlich die Wunden Jesu in unseren hungernden, armen, kranken und eingekerkerten Brüdern und Schwestern zu küssen.“

If you want to encounter the living God it is necessary to kiss gently the wounds of Jesus in our hungry, poor, sick and imprisoned brothers and sisters.

Papst Franziskus

Dear future missionaries: You will have the chance to see God day by day, every day! And you will recognize Jesus by his wounds! And maybe when you have recognized him by his wounds – maybe you also will be “overjoyed” – because at the same time you see and touch the wounds you will be reminded that the resurrected is among you!

And at that time closed doors are not longer needed – the followers of Jesus are confined within (a small room) – no coming in, no going out – but now with the resurrected in their lives things have changed – they themselves have been changed – not only from fear to joy – but also from discouragement to encouragement – they have been encouraged, empowered – Christ, the risen, gives no attention at all to the fear of his followers – he does not say “oh, poor you” – no pity – he just gives attention to the potential he sees in them – he gives attention to the future, the coming change – the change that happens because the kingdom of god, which he started is going to keep on growing –

„Peace be with you! As the father has sent me, I am sending you.“

This is a clear instruction: I am sending you –

- closed doors are no longer needed – open the doors and go – the room is far too small – you have to go – you have a duty – you must continue what I started – what the father started, by sending me
- and then there is a real “em-powerment” – new power for everybody in that room: And with that he breathed on them and said, „Receive the Holy spirit“.

John’s Pentecost on the day of easter – the same day Christ rose, he was among his followers – men and women – and he did what the Creator did on the first day of humankind.

Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. (Gen 2)

New life – the risen Christ breathes new life into his disciples – they are not longer discouraged and anxious – now they have power, new power, are em-powered.

Dear future missionaries: you are empowered by the breath of Christ, the holy spirit is inside you – and he is going to extend your limitations – the disciples were limited by their fear – but now, there is more joy and power inside them – they cannot hold it for themselves – it needs to be spread out – the Spirit of the risen Christ draws them to go and tell and ... forgive!

As the father has sent me, I am sending you.

As followers of Jesus we have the same task, the same duty that he had – to set people free – here is the real passover – (if we had been reminded of the creation before – now we are reminded of the Exodus) – Jesus came to set people free – to release all mankind and now he instructs his disciples to follow him with that – to be his successors – take his inheritance – what do they have to do to forgive – release – set people free – we, as followers of Christ have the power to bind and to loose –

„Receive the Holy spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.“

We are authorized to forgive and we also have the duty to forgive.

This also reminds us of the words in the Lord's prayer: "And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who have trespassed against us."

Here we clearly see the need of forgiveness – we are not asked to forgive eventually – forgiveness is self-understanding – it is the heart of our belief – I am forgiven – I naturally forgive others who have trespassed against me.

„Peace be with you! As the father has sent me, I am sending you.“

And with that he breathed on them and said, „Receive the Holy spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.“

This is quite a surprise – here Jesus does not say: preach – teach – heal – make disciples – baptize – he reminds us to set forth what he has begun – to reconnect human mankind with God himself – he took away the sin of the world – he did it – and our duty is to remind ourselves and others that our sin is forgiven, our debts are already paid and we are free to love God and one another – through Jesus, God and mankind has been reconciled – Jesus fulfilled this order – and now it is on us to be servants of this reconciliation – to tell everybody what has happened and encourage them to love.

But what are we doing instead? – from time to time – telling people that they still are guilty – do not do enough – are not holy enough – are doing wrong – when we do not remind the people of the grace and forgiveness we received through Christ, then they still have a burden on their shoulders – still do not understand the grace and love of God

reconciliation – that was the mandate of Christ and now is still the mandate for his followers (2. Co 3,18-20):

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

If you ever have doubts about your ministry – now you know: it is all about reconciliation.

This is a nice picture: the keys to heaven – these keys are there to open doors, not to close them – it is easy we have only one task – one thing to do: open up the doors of heaven – telling all the people, that they are invited to come and step in.

Christ breathed on his disciples – men and women – gave his holy spirit to empower them to open the doors of heaven – no restrictions – everyone is invited to come and enter – Christ empowered his disciples to be ministers of reconciliation.

This is his inheritance – this is your duty – this is your mandate.

„Peace be with you! As the father has sent me, I am sending you. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven.“

So what are we going to do with this: “if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.“

I think it is a serious warning – do not forget about reconciliation! – if you are going to forget to forgive – people will be still asking themselves: will I be okay – will I be loved by God – they will still be unsure if the death and resurrection of Christ has an impact on their own lives and personalities – so, preach the gospel – be an ambassador of Christ – God is making his appeal through us – take the key – open the doors: implore them on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

It is easy – there is only one thing to do – it is our priority- and it can change so much – for every single person and for our world.

Nothing more – nothing else – nothing less!

God bless you in your ministry!

„Peace be with you! As the father has sent me, I am sending you.“

AMEN.

Discover Christ in Others

(Author: Matthias Dichristin)



Matthias Dichristin
is Mission Secretary
for Africa within EBM
INTERNATIONAL

⁴⁰ When Jesus came to the other side of the lake, the people welcomed him, because they had all been waiting for him. ⁴¹ Then a man named Jairus arrived; he was an official in the local synagogue. He threw himself down at Jesus' feet and begged him to go to his home, ⁴² because his only child, a girl of about twelve years old, was dying. As Jesus went along, the people were crowding and pushing him from every side. ⁴³ Among them was a woman who had suffered from severe bleeding for twelve years; she had spent all she had on doctors, but no one had been able to cure her. ⁴⁴ This woman forced herself in the crowd behind Jesus and touched the edge of his cloak, and her bleeding stopped at once. ⁴⁵ Jesus asked, „Who touched me?“ Everyone denied it, and Peter said: „Master, the people are all round you and crowding in on you!“ ⁴⁶ But Jesus said persistently: „Someone touched me, for I knew it when power went out of me.“ ⁴⁷ The woman saw that she had been found out, so she came trembling and threw herself at Jesus' feet. There in front of everybody, she told him why she had touched him and how she had been healed at once. ⁴⁸ Jesus said to her, „My daughter“, „your faith has made you well. Go in peace!“ ⁴⁹ While Jesus

was saying this, a messenger came from the official's house. „Your daughter has died“, said the messenger to Jairus. „ don't bother the teacher any longer!“⁵⁰ But Jesus heard that „You do not need to be afraid!“, he said to the official of the local synagogue. „Just believe, and she will be saved.“⁵¹ When he arrived at the house, he would not let anyone go with him except Peter, John, James and the child's father and mother.⁵² The house was full of people mourning and crying for the child. „Stop crying!“, Jesus said, „She is not died, she is only sleeping.“⁵³ They all laughed at him, because they knew that she was died.⁵⁴ But Jesus took her by the head and called out: „Get up, child!“⁵⁵ Her life returned; and she got up immediately, Jesus ordered them to give her something to eat.⁵⁶ Her parents were astounded about it all. But Jesus commanded them not to tell anyone what had happened.

Discover Christ in others – unimagined models

Jesus was a very busy Rabbi. He performed so many wonderful miracles. Also in the context of this story: the death were raised, storms became calm, sickness was conquered and people regained their dignity. Jesus was close to people and their destinies. And that is why he had so many people following him. And a little side note: Luke noticed at the beginning of the eighth chapter explicitly that women were also amongst. And Jesus also had them as his followers.

The following can be established again at this point: Jesus had a very strong attraction force. Perhaps it had to do with the fact that he perceived and took people and their actions seriously.

A man named Jairus turns toward Jesus. His daughter is sick. As a ruler of the synagogue, he was certainly an important personality. An important man with even more important concern. And so Jesus together with many others set out for Jairus' house. He takes his concern seriously. Although the number of people and their concerns almost crushed him down. And among these number of people and their concerns is also a woman: She suffered with bleeding for 12 years.

It is very difficult for us to get the real picture of what it meant in the culture and time during which this woman lived:

- Isolation. No participation – not even in the social, and certainly also not in the religious life.
- Untouchable. A leper, an outcast. Unclean. Whatever she touched was impure. And no one could help her.

Today she dares to go again in the crowd. Once again among the people in order to make use of the present opportunity. She sets out to dare something. How often had she done that before? How often had she exposed herself for nothing? She must have been a very brave woman. And of great faith as we shall further see.

She dares to do the unthinkable. She touches Jesus. She is confident enough to mess up the Rabbi. She dares to transfer her uncleanness on Jesus. A picture of what happened on the cross? And therefore the story starts differently: It is not about this woman. It is about the „important“ Jairus.

To sum it up at this point: Jesus perceives two people. For an outsider, it seems to be an interruption. He makes a stopover during an important task in order to notice the woman. Those who actually submerged...

To get engaged with people... brings about new discoveries! Surprising discoveries. Unimaginable perceptions. That is the simple lesson that you have to draw from this story. A lesson that, is important for Jesus. So important that he „showcases“ the woman. She is very important to him, so much so that the healing just occurred. He makes the woman to be almost the focal point. And he does this, so that you can learn from her.

- Jesus: Who touched me? (Verse 45) – (This contact was actually a taboo!)
- The disciples: „The people are crowded“ (Verse 45) – or it could have been anyone!
- Jesus: „Someone touched me; I felt it, because power has gone out of me“ (Verse 46)

Jesus knows this woman, he knows her suffering. He knows her faith. Therefore, his primary concern is probably that others get to know her. That others can recognize how much faith she has. Jesus dignifies the woman, because it is

part of his nature that he appreciates people. How important this encounter with Jesus is can be detected between each line: He allows himself to be interrupted, he permits her to touch him, and he stops to have an encounter with her. He gives her the possibility to tell her story.

Jesus says to her: peace be with you.

And at the end of this sermon remains one challenge, that shows how approachable this Jesus was: While he should only have the



case of Jairus' daughter in mind we read that he keeps on talking to this women.

„While Jesus was still speaking with her...”

He does it again. He is simply not to be restrained. He talks to the woman. A taboo at that time. And how approachable we are remains the silent challenge to us. How much can we restrain ourselves? Are we willing to accept everybody in all truth and seriousness? Allow interruptions in our – oh – so pretty busy everyday life? Do we have faith, which can be set as an example for outsiders? Do we value others and have respect for their story? Can one approach us? Following this woman's story, we should ask ourselves so many questions ...

AMEN.

Bringing all suffering to an end!

held at the Bible study Mission Council in Dorfweil in May 2015

Justice as an essential of mission!?

Revelation 21

(Author: Matthias Dichristin)

³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." ⁵ He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." ⁶ He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life. ⁷ Those who are victorious will inherit all this, and I will be their God and they will be my children. ⁸ But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death."



Matthias Dichristin is Mission Secretary Africa within EBM INTERNATIONAL

Introduction

Honestly speaking it is a little paradox:

Part of our mission activities is aiming to end or at least limit the suffering of people.

And people around us are suffering a lot. There is war, catastrophes, diseases, terror. You name it. Who do we think we are, that we believe it is part of our mission to end all this?

How important do we think we are?

It is the other way round:

We need to be saved. Jesus has saved this world. We are not able to save others. To save is Gods' job. So why should we deal with all the pain in this world. It is not our job.

There is no hope. Or at least there is no job for us to do. Let's go home!

The bible text I was just reading is speaking also a clear language:

GOD will wipe away all tears. He promises to make all things new. He is the beginning and the end.

Unfortunately we cannot see it right now, can we? The world is full of terror and horror. A German word for that ("Schrecken") is used many times in the book of revelation (e.g. chapter 18).

Terror and more terror. „Schrecken über Schrecken“.

We could be frustrated easily – or paralyzed. Hopeless. There seems to be nothing we can do in the middle of all of this.

But Revelation is considered as a book of comfort.

It was written to seven churches in the area that we call Turkey today.

Smyrna, Izmir, where Ertan Cevik is doing church planting work, was one of the addressees of this book of the bible more than 1900 years ago.

In the countries around Turkey people are suffering a lot. They need help. They need a divine intervention.

Many churches in Germany, German Baptist Aid, EBM INTERNATIONAL, the German Baptist Union have tried to help the Syrian refugees from the terror of the ISLAMIC STATE and the pain of the civil war in this country.

There is solidarity. The wish to help. Reduce the suffering as a part of mission. Restore justice.

But honestly speaking: We would become crazy if we were thinking it is all our responsibility... we are limited. We cannot help everybody. We do what we can, don't we?

And in Central-Africa there is the terror of the BOKO HARAM sect in Nigeria with thousands of refugees in Cameroon coming from Nigeria. Horrible pictures. People are praying in front of burnt churches and also burnt mosques. Those radicals are fighting peaceful people in both religions: Christians and Muslims.

Revelation is a book of comfort: During the times of the early church and also today. And the book is threatening to people who persecute.

Let us read those threats as words of prophecy speaking into our times:

As motivation to fight all forms of persecution! This includes all forms of discrimination and stigmatization.

People are shedding tears in our world because they are persecuted: With acts or with words. And let us be honest. Often we as the church persecute ...

But God invites all humans: We do not persecute! Never. We keep peace! Always.

One inspiring example from my last trip to Cameroon: During the staff devotion of the Technical Centre in Garoua one Evangelist was saying: "As Christians we preach love and peace in all times". To preach like that in the midst of the threats of the BOKO HARAM has inspired me deeply.

This is our mission – to preach Jesus as the Prince of Peace to everybody, isn't it?

Well, Revelations remains a book of secrets. It plays with contrasts and opposites. It refers to the old prophets and it leaves space for a bunch of interpretations. It is an apocalyptic book, prophecy and basically a letter to churches. It remains very relevant for us today.

The signs and wonders, the events in this book are unveiling partly several times throughout history. They remain relevant!

A German theologian, Thomas Weißenborn, states the following:

"Revelation speaks not only about the end of times, but it unveils also lines and structures for the times in-between, that would have been hidden otherwise. In this way the Revelation is one of the most relevant books in all times. Its prophecies fulfill partly now and then until the final fulfilment will bring all former events together."

(Translated from the Book "Apostel, Lehrer und Propheten, Seite 189)

We live in something like an interim period.

We can see the fulfilment of prophecies like in our bible text partly today.

And we wait at the same time for its completion. We wait for a time where all suffering is ending. No more tears.

In the light of this let me ask you one question:

What kind of comfort is God speaking in your situation today?

Or phrased as a statement:

God wants to comfort you today. During this time of bible study. He wants to comfort your church. Your ministry. He knows all your activities. All the help that you are bringing to your communities.

He knows where you are fighting for the rights of people. He knows and sees all your efforts. He values all the things you do.

The first point:

1. God's dwelling place is now among the people

This part of our bible text reminds us obviously on the text in Philippians 2:

He (Jesus) made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness (Phil. 2, 7b).

The kingdom of God, the dwelling of God amongst us, has started already. It is nearby. What we read here in the book of Revelation has started.

God sets the captives free. Blinds will see. The lame will walk around and jump (the first words of Jesus in Luke 4).

God dries the tears. Today. Already now. He takes away our pain.

So let me ask all of us today:

Where can we see today that God is powerful ministering in our surroundings?

Where can we see today, in the midst of our challenges that he is able?

Where can we see that the death has lost its sting that all this pain around us is no longer a threat to us?

Revelation 21 encourages us to discover that God is hearing the cries of his oppressed people. He is a God of justice. He has been a God of justice always.

And this is my personal recurrent theme in the bible: God wants justice.

This is an essential of mission. Bringing justice to the people. This should be the motivation of our actions.

And yes, the text challenges us to believe that the world is saved already. The old order (verse 4) is gone. Salvation is here. God has taken action and every day is a part of his new world.

Every tear that you cry today will be wiped away. And all suffering will be recognized in eternity. You will experience justice.

Every tear that you wipe away will be remembered eternally because you brought justice to someone.

Your prayers will resound eternally. There will be beauty arising from your ashes. God will restore all things. Your words will remain.

Goodness and mercy will follow you all days
(Psalm 23, 6).

Already today. Believe it. Can you?

It is here. The old order is gone. In the midst of this interim time we are all living in. The kingdom of God is amongst us.

And here is already the 2nd point:

2. I am making everything new

He, the one who is seated on the throne (verse 5) – Jesus, the one who has left the throne to dwell amongst us in the middle of our suffering (a small paradox) says: I am making everything new.

And he says (Verse 6): It is done. It has started and you can observe it already today. The beginning and the end. Although we can only discover what we can see with our eyes this is an invitation to open our eyes for the invisible:

See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland. (Isaiah 43, 19)

I am convinced that we need to search more for these invisible things instead of trying to save the world on our own. God is the one who is acting. He performs his new things every day. His mercies are new every morning. My sisters and brothers from the global south: We need to learn this from you! We need to learn that HE is more important than US.

HE > I (He greater than I).

Let us start to be real believers: Let us proclaim that this world IS saved. We believe that God has made a new thing. God is far bigger than our sufferings. Let us believe that God is willing and able. We are not limiting him because we are limited. No, God is not limited by our experiences. He is far bigger.

Yes we need to deal with our limitations. Yes, we are not yet living in paradise.

But we need to trust that Gods' "water of life" is running through us and reaching others:

In the midst of our challenges. Right in the suffering. In our weakness. Through our pain.

These are not questions! These are statements. We ask ourselves too often "if things with us and God are alright..." They are! He is alive in us. Living water is flowing through us!

And the last point:

3. What about our disbelief

Unfortunately the text is spoiled with the judgment at the end. But in this bible study there is enough space for this.

Good theology has to measure with the words of Jesus.

And the most famous words of Jesus on judgment are probably found in Matthew 25. And here people are judged according to their actions – this is weird to us Baptists, isn't it?

Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.
(Matthew 25, 41)

The sheep in this text clothed the naked. They invited the strangers. They shared their food. And most important: In these actions and in the situation of suffering they discovered Jesus in their neighbor.

The goats overlook that Jesus is found in the midst of suffering.

I believe the judgment is awaiting cowards and disbelievers who are neglecting the suffering in this world. Judgment is for those who say that God has forgotten the world. For people who think that they have always to act themselves instead of trusting God and others. Goats trust in money and they tend to oversee their neighbor because of their own interests. Goats have no sympathy – they proclaim that everybody is responsible for himself ... help yourself or no one will help you.

And goats persecute people who suffer. The poor. Those who believe in other Gods. The sick. The destitute. Other races. Goats are racists.

With these challenges you can ask yourself who will be judged. It makes me usually very humble not to judge so that I will not be judged in the end.

Do not judge, or you too will be judged in the end
(Matthew 7, 1)

So let us believe that we are the sheep. The ones who discover God in every single act of kindness. The ones who believe that God is right amongst us. And therefore we value others higher than ourselves.

God is acting through others all the times. And he is acting through us.

Again – no question. A statement. We are sheep. We believe it, don't we?

We encounter God at all the times. In our neighbor. And this is according to Matthew 25, this text on the judgment, in the weak, the sick, the destitute, the stranger, the captive.

We discover God in others. All life is relationship. God is therefore everywhere to be found.

Let us believe it! Let us preach it. Good News. God is found amongst us.

And therefore we are no liars and we are not going to be judged.

We believe that God wants healing and redemption for all people.

We believe that he has saved the world.

We believe that he has made a new thing.

We believe that he will end all evil things.

We believe he will dry tears.

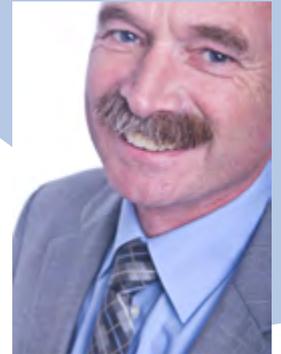
And it is in the light of this believe that we can confirm like John at the end of the bible:

Amen. Come Lord Jesus.

Bible study on Marc 6, 35 ff held at the
Mission Council in Dorfweil in May 2015

Five essentials of mission

(Author: Pastor Christoph Haus)



Christoph Haus is
General Secretary of
EBM INTERNATIONAL

We are challenged to think about the five essentials of mission in these days. Prassana Kumar from India gave us an introduction yesterday evening.

Even although the word "Mission" does not exist in the bible, the phenomenon of mission is truly there in its various aspects:

- Mission is proclaiming the gospel
- Mission is teaching
- Mission is worship
- Mission is fellowship and communion
- And mission is sharing, helping, supporting, social impact (diakonia)

I want to focus on the last aspect this morning: diakonia; sharing what I have with others who don't have.

Let me read for you from the gospel of Marc 6 which will be the base of my bible study.

Jesus withdrew himself. With a boat he drove over the lake to a remote place to be alone. The crowd from all the towns heard of this and followed him on foot. When he lifted his eyes, he saw how many people were assembled around him and how many were still coming. And he had compassion on them and cured those who were sick.

In the evening, his disciples came to him and spoke: „Master, the time has passed, it is late. Dismiss the crowd. They don't have time and we do not have time either!“ Then Jesus consulted his disciples: „Why should they go away? Give them time, give them of your time!“ Then they said to him: „We have no time and with the few we have – how shall it be enough for everyone and at the end for every single one around us?“ But it came to this that one of them had five appointments left – at a pinch – not more, and to this two quarter hours.

And Jesus smiled and said: „Well, that's something! We will provide this to the people!“ And he let the crowd take a seat once again. And he took the five appointments that they had left and to this the two quarter hours. He looked up to the heaven and spoke a blessing.

Then he divided up what was available and distributed the precious time they had through his disciples to many people. And the few they had was enough for everyone. Not one went away empty handed. And at the end, twelve days were filled with what was left of that time. Even though there were about five thousand men, not even counting the women and children.

It is reported that the disciples were astonished. Because everyone saw: Even the impossible gets possible through him. (Lothar Zenetti)

Remarkable story, isn't it?

Oh – you think this wasn't the true word of God?

Ok – there have been some slight changes.

Here comes the right version (reading of Marc 6, 35-44)

³⁵ *By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. "This is a remote place," they said, "and it's already very late. ³⁶ Send the people away so that they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat."*

³⁷ *But he answered, "You give them something to eat."*

They said to him, "That would take more than half a year's wages[a]! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?"

³⁸ *"How many loaves do you have?" he asked. "Go and see."*

When they found out, they said, "Five—and two fish."

³⁹ *Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. ⁴⁰ So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. ⁴¹ Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to distribute to the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. ⁴² They all ate and were satisfied, ⁴³ and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish. ⁴⁴ The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand.*

Jesus at the beginning of this passage actually wanted to withdraw to a quiet place with his disciples. They wanted to spend the evening alone together.

But the people found out very quickly where Jesus was. They ran after him.

They went where he went. And Jesus let the people come to him. He let the people approach him. He didn't cut himself off. He was there for those who needed help, care, and healing.

Jesus preached to them about God's Kingdom.

But Jesus didn't just preach, he was acting, too. He healed people. He cured them.

And his disciples, between in a bit impatient, waited the whole evening that they finally could be alone with Jesus and share some time among themselves.

They approached Jesus and said: master, it is late. Well done for today but now, please send the crowd home. They must be hungry. Dismiss them and let them find something to eat.

There was no idea at all, that they might have a social responsibility for the people.

And in consequence they were astonished, when Jesus instructed them: let the people stay here and give them something to eat.

So the disciples got the ball rolling.

Jesus did not send the people away. After hearing about God's Kingdom he wanted them to experience what he had just explained. He wanted them to get something to eat. Jesus sermons and words were always supported by his actions.

Jesus' instruction to his disciples to give the people something to eat is an instruction to fulfill God's mission here and now.

Not only speaking but acting through God's power. Jesus pointed out that we only can understand God's Kingdom if we experience it.

What was Jesus exactly doing when he told the disciples: Give them something to eat?

Why did he ask them?

For the disciples this was a demand that could not be met. Perhaps even a disappointment. They wanted to have an evening off with Jesus. Enjoy some rest with him alone. Having a kind of private audience. And now Jesus says: "You give them to eat."

Hey – Jesus didn't have to ask them. If Jesus had wanted to, then he could have fed the people without the disciple's assistance. But he asked for their help anyway.

Jesus preached about God's Kingdom. And now he points out how God's Kingdom should be carried out:

The disciples, we are supposed to put God's standards into practice in this world ... to be more precise, with all of our abilities. This is our mission.

And the first reaction of the disciples is typically for us as well: Master, we don't have enough money to buy food for the crowd.

And Jesus gives the ball back to the disciples: what do you have?

The disciples say, what we have, that isn't sufficient.

We have nothing. What we have isn't sufficient. We are so poor!

And Jesus has to force them to look what they have. And finally they come back with 5 loaves of bread and 2 fishes.

And now it comes: in the version in the gospel of John it is told, that it was a small boy, who had those 5 breads and 2 fishes.

Dear EBM-family: this is our challenge.

A small boy, so to say the poorest of the poor, shows up with some very small resources: 5 breads and 2 fishes.

After this, no individual Christian and no local church can say: we are poor; we don't have anything to participate in God's mission.

This story tells us: every body, every church has something to participate in God's mission.

Nobody has everything. And: Nobody has nothing!

I have had the privilege to visit many churches and mission projects of EBM since the last 6 years.

I saw a church in Tallarevu, India. A poor church, we would say. Linked to this church they have a children home. And at the Sunday worship service, I attended, they made an offering. Some people gave some money. But many of the church members are poor land laborers without any financial resources. And something happened that I will never forget.

An old women came with a small cup of rice. This was her offering.

Others came with some fruits and vegetables during the offering.

And then a small boy came in front. He had two chicken. Alive. And he attached them at the lords table. This was his offering for the children home.

Here in this story Jesus challenges us: he says: every body, every church has something to contribute. Nobody can say: we don't have anything to contribute in God's mission.

And he puts a small boy in front of us and says: this is your example.

There is a second thing: The teacher asks his students for help. And simultaneously he tells them: "You can do something!"

And with that Jesus tells his disciples: you can contribute to the realization of God's Kingdom on earth: "You give them something to eat."

This is a great challenge but also words of encouragement, confidence. Jesus takes us seriously. He wants our cooperation.

He believes that we can contribute with our methods that God's Kingdom grips room.

And then finally the miracle happened. Although the disciples had little, it was enough under the prayer and the blessing of Jesus.

The miracle of this story is that Jesus is not performing miracles like pulling bread out of an empty hat. Jesus doesn't begin at zero. He begins with his disciples. He begins with us. He begins with any local church which belongs to the worldwide EBM family.

... We have something. If we share what we have, even though it seems so little to us, we will be astonished, how much we have

... out of what we have, Jesus makes much.

And in this respect this story is also a counterpoint against a fatalistic religiousness that limits itself saying: I am nothing, I am useless, I have nothing.

We have more than we think.

And if we entrust to Jesus what we have, he will multiply our gifts.

At the end of the story we hear: they had 12 baskets of bread. Not only, that it was enough, what the disciples shared.

No: at the end they had more than enough. They had even too much.

“Give them to eat”, how does that sound today?

How does that sound for our living together in our church?
How does that sound in view of the social problems in our town?

“Give them to eat”, this has a lot of different aspects today.

This morning Jesus stays in front of us and he challenges us:

- I want you to give them from your time
- I want you to share your spiritual experiences
- I want you to share your technical abilities
- I want you to give them to eat

So let's remember our own encounter with God's standards first. Then we will begin to share our gifts and goods of any type by ourselves. And then we will notice:

There are goods, gifts, abilities that we learn to appreciate only then, when we share them with others.

We have gifts, abilities and possibilities which we are maybe not aware of. Only if we provide others with them we will learn to appreciate them more and more.

Jesus believes you are capable. He takes you in into the spreading of God's Kingdom on this earth. He takes you seriously. He trusts you. He believes you are capable.

Each of us has something. Time, talent, ability to listen, money. Let's begin to share.

Amen

Suggestions for Children parts.

Children Part on the topic

HIV and AIDS

(Author: Volkmar Hamp)



Volkmar Hamp is Secretary of Publications within the German Baptist Union Youth Department

1. We start with a riddle

Part of earth/Continent: **A**FRICA

Pathogens: **V**IRUS

African Country: **SÜ**DAFRIKA (South Africa)

Son of God: **JE**SUS

2. Informationen

AIDS is a disease. You have certainly heard about it or seen posters, which inform or invite you to protect yourselves from this disease.

But what do the 4 words from the puzzle have to do with the word AIDS?

AIDS is an immune deficiency disease. This basically means that the body of the people who have AIDS can no longer defend them against other diseases, usually not a

life-threatening diseases. It is caused by a virus, the HI virus and it is transmitted through infected blood: for example through unprotected sexual intercourse or when drug addicts use the same syringes. Children can also become infected in the womb before birth if the pregnant woman is HIV-positive.

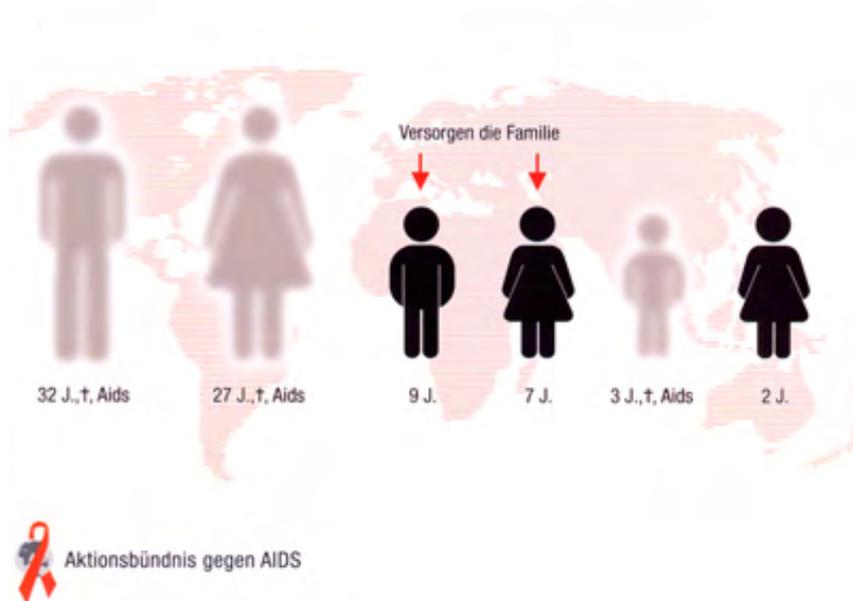
It is a disease which soon or later leads to death once attached by it. There is (still) no cure and no vaccine against it. But with the help of appropriate medications one can now live HIV-positive for many years. For this reason, it is very important that you are tested for the virus, since there are drugs in the countries where the virus occurs frequently.

These drugs are widely available in the industrialized countries, including Germany. On the other hand, in the so-called developing countries, many thousands of people still die daily from AIDS. About 40 million people are affected worldwide. More than 2/3 of them live in the southern parts of the Sub-Saharan Africa.

South Africa is one of the most affected African country. According to UNAIDS statistics* , up to 6 million people were HIV-positive in 2013. Through improved education, intensive health test and a broader drugs distribution spectrum, the life expectancy has risen to over 60 years. An essential step in order to hinder the number of AIDS orphans from blowing up.

***UNAIDS Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS**

3. Thereto an image:



This image has been printed on postcards a few years ago by the „Action against AIDS“. It shows a family situation which is typical of many children in Africa. The parents have died of AIDS. The older children have to look after their younger siblings.

4. And what does that have to do with Jesus?

Jesus has always taken care of people who were not doing well: He took children, whom adults wanted to keep away from him into his arms. He ate with custom officers and sinners and forgave them of their sins. He had healed the sick and lepers. And he said: „As the father has sent me, so I am sending you!“ (John 20, 21). This most certainly implies that we should act in his name, on his behalf as he has acted: may the good news of God’s love for us humans continue and challenges us to take care of the weak, the sick and the marginalized people! That is why we celebrate this church service and World Mission Sunday.

Children part in worship / Plenum in children's services

For a children's part in the worship, it makes sense to conduct an interview with an African, South American or Indian, if that is possible. Alternatively, tell a hand puppet story of a visit, a vacation or an imaginary journey. Anyone who is creative can also let the children lead him along on an imaginary journey.

Possible travel stations (a fantasy journey):

- What should I pack in my suitcase?
- How do I get to the airport and what are all the things I am going to experience out there?
- What happens on the flight?
- How does it feel to get off the plane in a foreign country?
- What kind of children do I come in contact with there?
- What kind of food do I eat?
- What's the weather like there?
- Which animal and landscapes do I meet there?

Possible interview questions for a guest:

- Where were you born?
- How did you live as a child?
- Why did you come to Germany?
- What did you particularly like in your country of origin?
- What do you like about Germany?

It could be framed into a children's song.

„Consignment“ get to experience it in quite a different way

(Author: Pastor Volker Bohle)



Pastor Volker Bohle serves as a pastor in Berlin and was Mission Secretary within EBM INTERNATIONAL for many years

1. Play: „instruction for the mission“

Objective: Playfully, children get to experience what it means to be sent by fulfilling a small and very specific task.

Procedure: The children are divided into two groups. Each group will be assigned a coordinator / an employee. Every child in each of the groups now gets a specific assignment (bring a spoon from the kitchen, learn a quatrain by heart, paint a picture, etc.). Which of the groups finishes up its task first?

2. Puzzle to John 20,21

Objective: To get to know the word of Jesus in the book of John 20, 21

Material: The words „As the Father sent me, so do I send you!“ shall be written individually on a DIN A4 sheet of paper.

Procedure: The sheets of paper with the words of John 20:21 are placed in the middle of the floor. Which sentence can be formed from these words?

Variation: The whole thing can also be played as a betting game in groups of two.

3. Collection of ideas from John 20,21

Objective: A collection of ideas in preparation for a discussion about Mission can also be used as an introduction.

Material: John 20,21, flip chart sheet and an edding pen.

Procedure: The phrase „As the Father sent me, so I am sending you!“ from John 20,21 is placed at the center or written at the center of the flipchart sheet of paper. We first of all start reflecting together, what this phrase might actually mean: Jesus was sent by God into the world. For what reason? What was his assignment? How did he carry out this assignment? And what could it mean, if we – were sent – like Jesus to repeat the same assignment?

On the left column of a large flip chart, we write out the part of Jesus' mission which had to do with preaching, healing people, the cross and the resurrection ... On the right column of the same flip chart, we reflect on each term of his commission and write down what each aspect of Jesus's mission could mean to the people (telling people about God, visiting the sick, comforting the afflicted; supporting people in the world mission...).

5. Memory verse (John 20,21)

- Objective: The memory verse (John 20,21) impresses and is of high value..
- Material: depending on the selected method, an A 2 Paper, wool, newspapers.
- Procedure: Every child can write the phrase „Just as the Father sent me, so I am sending you!“ from John 20,21 for him or herself on a large sheet of paper. This can be done in the form of a beautiful designed „font – image“, „wool thread“, collage – or whatever design you think of ...

Children's part on the topic:

Advent wreath

The children come forward and tell us how the wreath looks like in their homes. But they also take a look at a typical Advent wreath (as the case may be) in the congregation:

A wreath with pine boughs and red candles. The first candle is burning.

- What are the components of this advent wreath?
- What significance may they have?



© shutterstock

Impulse/Explanation

Wreaths are from time immemorial, and in many cultures a sign of triumph. Also, the wreath is a symbol of the victory of Jesus Christ over suffering and death. The green of the pine branches is a sign of hope. The evergreen pine bran-

ches are a sign of hope in the life that we get paid in Jesus Christ. On the advent wreath are candles. They point to Christ, „the light of the world“. Red candles are often used. The color red stands for love, especially for the love of God that can be bestowed upon us in Jesus Christ.

During the advent period, if a candle is lit every day, then it becomes brighter and warmer as each day passes by and we therefore celebrate each day warmer until Christmas Eve, the coming of Jesus. Advent means arrival, and refers to the coming of Jesus, at that time in the manger at Bethlehem. Advent also refers to the coming of Jesus in my life and in our lives today and when he comes back in all his power and glory to complete the world. That is why we celebrate advent season with a Christmas wreath. It is a symbol of hope for the people in need, for which EBM INTERNATIONAL advocates particularly in Africa, Latin America and India.

Mission transcends borders

Main thought

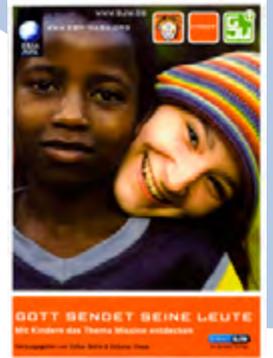
„Each and every one must come to Jesus, as he or she is. Especially those of us who are often excluded, marginalized, or are thought of not meeting the relevant standards in life, and of course those who have sinned, or done wrong. He wants to be our friend and work with us through life.“
(ebd. page 52)

Relationship to the sermon/Content of the church service:

Mission started with the fact that God made his way to us through Jesus. He now sends us to bring this good news on to the people. Since humans are very different, we have to be willing to approach each other, even if others often seem strange to us.

Bible text

And Jesus departed from there, he saw a man seating at the tax gate named Matthew; and said to him; follow me! And he got up and followed him. And it came to pass as Jesus sat for a meal in the house, behold many people and sinners came and sat at the table with Jesus and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they spoke to his disciples and asked; why does your master eat with tax collectors and



taken from: Volker Bohle and Volkmar Hamp, Gott sendet seine Leute, from page 51

sinners? When Jesus hear this, he said, those who are strong and healthy need no physician, but those who are sick. Therefore go ye and learn what is meant by (Hosea 6,6): „I desire mercy and not sacrifice.“ I did not come for the righteous but for the sinners,

Ideas to retell this story

Jesus already went through this place so many times. To indicate that there is nothing strange to him. He had no wealth. I would like to get to know him. But everybody here have a common salutation method. Always trouble. „Very much duty!“, say the people. Compromises with one another. But a friend? Getting to know friendly people here? You can forget about it!

I took up my head and turned it off, away from the custom book... Jesus stands directly in front of me. My thoughts wondered for a moment: I, a tax collector! Placed on the same level like robbers and murderers. No right to testify in court. Bound from going to the synagogue. And Jesus took a look at me! And said the following four words: „Come, go with me!“

I stood up immediately. No further thoughts about my regular income or what others will say. Left the chair behind me, the cash-box too and followed him. Forever!

Later Party! It's getting real serious. All colleagues are there and I have to introduce Jesus.

Pharisees come. Here?! Jesus looked at them, just in the same way he looked at me this morning, with a look that sees through everything. Then he made two sentences and was done with talking: Those who are healthy do not need a physician, but the sick!“Logical. The doctors have enough work to do, rather than visiting those who are healthy.

Yes, it was somehow „sick“, to pull out money from people's pockets, to be hated and isolated. I am presently

healthy! I can count, write and do have a good memory ...
Maybe I am up to the task. Let me ask Jesus.

Postcard Campaign

Jesus makes Mathew his friend, although no one actually wanted to have anything to do with him. Even today. It is quite normal that we are surrounded by people similar to us. Many of our friends are like us. It is very different with Jesus. He also goes close to those people who seem to be very different and have no friends. All children are God's children no matter how they look like and it doesn't matter where they come from.

Possible questions with respect to postcards which could for example be projected on the wall using a beamer:

- What do you notice in the pictures on the postcards?
- Why do the children look different?
- What do you think, is important in their lives?
- How can I make new friends?

Closing song



You can download and order the postcards under the following link:n: <http://www.ebm-international.org/postkarten-hilfsorganisation-ebm.0.html>

CREATIVITY PART

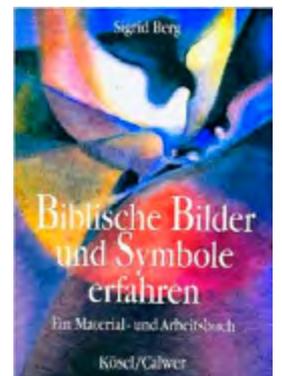
Picture Meditation



The image is copied to all church service participants or projected through a projector onto the screen. This is followed by personal comments relating to the image. Then the following text can be read:

Hands – They look very different from each other. There are big and small hands, strong and tiny. Hands exist in several different skin colors. Dirty and clean hands. Hand act and often react in different ways

God's Hands
they hold
they comfort
save with a mighty arm
Human hands
dark and bright hands
they attack one another.
they tremble
they warm each other
they carry
they connect
they hold
and ...
my hand?



Taken from: Berg, Sigrid,
„Biblische Bilder und
Symbole erfahren“,
Kösel/Calver 1996, peite
87

HIV and AIDS

(Author: Pastor Dr. Andrea Klimt)



Pastor Dr. Andrea Klimt is a lecturer at the Baptist Theological Seminary in Elstal/Germany

Preliminary remark

The biggest problem with HIV and AIDS is the taboo of the disease. People who have become infected quickly notice that others become afraid of them. Fear of contact. Afraid to talk about the disease. Fear of contamination. Fear of, what happens if they are infected. Hence those affected often remain alone in their fear are mostly isolated. The fear that news of the disease will be wildly spread is greater and more dangerous. If sensitizations are not made on the topic HIV and AIDS, then it is not possible to advice and work on it. The possibility of further being infected knowingly is greater when a person does not reveal that he or she is infected. In Matthew. 9, 19-22 (Mark 5,25-34; Luke 8, 43-48) we encounter a woman who suffers from constant bleeding. Due to this disease, she is excluded from the society. She is „unclean“. People are afraid to touch her and do not want her to touch them. The fear of contact between the person and her / or her blood and its secrecy are related to our topic of worship.

Layout

Material: We need a red „scarf“ or a piece of cloth from which many little read bands (red ribbons – AIDS ribbons) can be cut (or plucked). This scarf is placed during the service (in the form of an AIDS ribbon or hung) at a position where it could be visible at all times. When the creative part

begins, a woman comes on stage. Someone now hangs the red scarf around this woman. She stands still while someone reads. If there is a cross in the sanctuary / area around the stage, then the woman can turn her body to its direction and face the cross.

Reading

A voice reads:

Here she comes
secretly she sneaks through the crowd
she does not want to be seen
she knows, that she should not be here
nobody is allowed to touch her
and she should not also touch anybody
she is alone
she cannot really talk with anyone
she is afraid
but her courage is greater than her fear
she wants to touch him
she wants to touch Jesus
she comes close to him from behind
she touches him
and... (short break)
he turns around
he sees her face
He talks to her
he permits her to touch him
he can be touched by their suffering
he is not afraid
of affliction nor isolation
conversation nor taboo
Faith rather than fear
whoever believes
is able to touch him
whoever believes
is able to touch him

Conclusion

After the text has been read, another person comes up and cuts small strips of the red scarf from the woman and distributes them to the congregation. Each and everyone gets a piece of it. This is intended to express the fact that we are on one hand all affected and on the other hand, that we should work together with our prayers, words and actions in the fight against the spread of HIV and AIDS. Everyone can then fasten the small strips each by using a plug or a safety pin. It would be good to have already prepared many small strips that can be distributed. By cutting some strips from the woman's scarf portrays the relationship and experience we share more clearly.

Subsequently, the scarf is draped either as an AIDS ribbon on the possible existing cross (which then reminds us: He bears our sickness and carries our burden and pain – Isaiah) or in the form of an AIDS ribbon placed on the alter table or floor.

While the small strips are being distributed, it can be clarified to every one (it should not be the one reading the text) that the „red ribbon“ is a sign of our solidarity with those who suffer from HIV and AIDS. Declaring that we are in solidarity with those suffering means: We should be concerned about them – we should pray for them – we see that Christ suffered for them (Matthew 25, 40) – we do the best in our ability to ensure that the HIV and AIDS pandemic is curbed.

A girl from Bolivia

(Author: Claudia Weiland)



www.claudia-weiland.de

Claudia Weiland designed this concept for Sunday school children and her target group is „primary school children“. All parts of this unit are to be understood as a suggestion and should be freely adjusted according to the needs of the group. If you enjoy singing with children, then you will find three proposals in this section. The songs could be sung in the middle, just at the beginning or adjusted to fit your groups program. The copyright of these material belongs to EBM INTERNATIONAL and can be freely photocopied and used during Sunday-school hours.

Objective: The kids will gain an inside into the life of Adelaída from Bolivia. And they should understand that God creates new out of old things and that miracles still happen today.

Material: Carton/box
an old piece of garment/a new garment
clothes line (String)/ Clothespins
scissors/pens
copies of material sheets (clothes)
Pictures of Adelaída

Introduction: (torn clothes, for example, torn trousers etc.)

Just imagine, there is a washing machine... because we put all the worn-out things in here. (pieces of clothes in a cardboard carton, carton closed) Suddenly, they look new. Yes of course they are even more beautiful!!!

How? Is that possible at all??? (Open the carton and show the old trousers)

Right: This cannot be made possible by any machine in the World. But: God can perform such miracles. And not only with clothes. He can make even people new!!!

There is a verse in the bible which says: If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, new things have come.

(Explanation of terms: Creature = Creation)

That is pretty difficult to understand ... perhaps we need Adelaída's help in order to understand the term.

Story

I want to tell you a story ... which sounds like a fairy tale and yet it is really true! It is about a poor girl, a wicked step-father and – a miracle!

There was once a girl, called Adelaída. She lived in a distant, faraway country called Bolivia. She lived there with her brother and grandmother. I deliberately say here „Grandmother“, and not grandma or even granny. Because Adelaídas grandmother was not interested in her grandchildren at all. She beat them up whenever she got angry, they did not have enough to eat, no bed, barely enough to wear. In short: Adelaída and her brother were simply a burden for their grandmother.

(show picture of „Hopelessness“)



Adelaida did not know anything else. After all, before she came to her grandmother, she previously lived with her mother and stepfather. And even there, they were also being beaten up, had to beg for food and nobody cared about them.

Hence, she continued to live in poverty day after day, month after month, year after year, for almost 13 years: experiencing no kindness, no loving words, always having very little to eat, in constant fear of people that they would not want to have around them.

In a fairy tale, a fairy godmother would show up, or perhaps a brave prince ... And behold in my story, something wonderful also happens:

At the same time when Adelaída and her brother Limberth lived this miserable life, a couple also lived in a big city in Bolivia. To whom God had placed a great request in their hearts: They wanted to take care of children who did not have a real home – not even parents, who are not loved – just like in the case of Adelaída and her brother. Together with other volunteers, they founded an orphanage at the outskirts of this city of La Paz.

One day, God sent a missionary (this is a person sent by God, to tell the people about him) throughout the village where Adelaída lived. He saw the two children, and what he saw made him very sad. Without further ado, he took them to the big city and brought them into the orphanage.

You cannot imagine, what an incredible miracle it was: (picture of „joyful life“ placed next to the picture of „Hopelessness“)



At the pick of dirt, hunger, beating which Adelaída and her brother received, they suddenly came into a clean house, with friendly people, a bed for each child, and enough to eat. The couple took the children with them and became a real mum and a real dad to them! They were not tormented and beaten up here, instead, they met and got to know people who loved and cared for them. It was a real miracle for Adelaída. Of course she could hear the stories of Jesus Christ and how her new parents prayed with them. She now gradually understood that it was he, who had sent somebody to rescue them from their small village and bring them out of their misery into a real home. Since then, she has gained great confidence in Jesus Christ. When she later on understood this mystery and experienced it even more, she was baptized.

Adelaída was still a child, when she experienced this miracle. (Show a picture of Adelaída)



Adelaida

She is now a young woman. She completed school and a few months ago, she opened up her own hair dressing shop. In case you visit La Paz, she can even cut your hair, and most probably tell you more about their family fairyta-
le! About a little girl, whom God has transformed her life!!!

*If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things are passed away; behold new things have come 2.
Cor 5,17*

We can now understand the verse a little better: Adelaída had learnt and got to know Jesus Christ! Who had taken her out of her old life and given her something completely new! Instead of sadness: Joy, instead of darkness: light, instead of bad conscience: forgiveness. Instead of evil thoughts: good thoughts. It was as though her heart got new clothes.

Although we do not wish ourselves such a thing, perhaps we do not even have torn clothes but yet we hope for something different and better in life. New heart desires! Something that God can change!

Sometimes, it is very urgent that God completely changes something in our lives and give us something new, just like it was with the clothes which Adelaída initially had.

What do you want God to do NEW in your life? What do you „wish“ from God? (Friendship, broken relationship with parents, spoiled toys, dead budgie ... anything)

You can now choose a new garment, cut it out, paint it and write whatever you want God to make new.

Creative Unit:

Children cut a garment, paint and write on it (anyone who has nothing in mind during this moment may perhaps wish something for others: good health for Grandpa, wish that his school friends may accept Jesus).

All these clothes are then hung on a clothesline and attached with a clothes-peg. At best when it reaches out across the room. Also hang three pictures of Adelaída together with the bible verses.

If anyone is in Christ, therefore he is a new creature; the old has passed away and behold he is now a new creation. 2. Cor 5,17

Conclusion: Common Prayer

Children can pray for their own concerns or for those of others. If the option of saying a prayer is not common in the group, then the group leader can say a prayer.

In the following weeks, the clothesline can still be considered from time to time. To whom has God already fulfilled his or her „desired clothes“?

Song suggestions: see page 13

Recipe suggestions for a common lunch

Hospitality and eating together are of very high value in other countries. That is why our proposal on this World Mission Sunday is to invite all the participants to a common fellowship meal: You will find on the following sides recipe suggestions from different countries.

A cooking book in english can be ordered in the mission office



Chicken in peanut butter sauce (Cameroon)



Ingredients for 8 Persons:

750 g chicken meat or a whole chicken

3 big onions

500 g tomatoes

1/3 liters of water

3 teaspoons peanut past (Peanut butter)

Salz, Cayenne pepper or ,‘Sambal Oelek’

Preparation:

Chicken is cut into pieces and fried in portions or cook chicken soup with vegetables and then cut up afterwards.

Diced onion and sauté in a pot. Add diced tomatoes, fill with water and cook for 10 min. Add peanut paste and salt, cayenne pepper or sambal oelek spice. Finally add meet to the sauce. Serve with cooked millet or rice.

Chickpea soup



© fotolia

Ingredients for 4 People:

250 gr. of chickpeas

4 cloves of garlic

1 Lemon, squeezed

4 tablespoons olive oil

1 teaspoon cumin

1 teaspoon spice paste, (Harissa)

1 tablespoon salt

Bread, Butter

Preparation

Soak chickpeas overnight. Cook peas in 1.5 liters of water until they are soft. Peel garlic, crush it with cumin and salt and add to the soup with Harissa. Season with olive oil and lemon juice. Stale bread cubes and fry in a little butter until it is brown, spread in a dish and pour soup over it.

South African „Pap“ with Mfino



© fotolia

Serves 4 – 6 people

750 ml water

1 pinch of salt

250 ml corn flour

10 g butter.

Preparation

Boil water in a pot. Add salt and flour with whisk while stirring vigorously. Once the flour turns into a rough paste, cover it and reduce the heat. Cook for approximately 30 minutes and stir at intervals of 3-4 minutes (It is normal that some of it settles at the bottom of the pot). The butter is added when the pap has become a smooth paste.

Mfino Spinach



© fotolia

Ingredients for 4 – 6 People:

1 onion, finely chopped,
30 ml oil,
½ head of Cabbage,
ca. 600 g Spinach, chopped,
1 pinch of salt

Preparation:

The onion is sauté in the oil (in a large saucepan) the cabbage is cooked and stirred until it becomes tender. Add the spinach and salt. Cover, turn the heat down and cook for a few minutes. Can be eaten hot or cold.

Lamb and beans (South Africa)



© fotolia

Ingredients for 2 persons:

250 g Lamb,
250 g white beans,
1 Onion,
1 clove garlic,
¼l Water,
1 green pepper,
liquid cream,
curry powder,
salt,
oil

Preparation

Diced onion and fry until soft in oil. Chop lamb and add to it. Pour the water into it and boil. Add the beans alongside with a teaspoon of curry and crushed garlic to the pot. The hot pepper is cut into 4 pieces and added into it. Finally, 1-2 tablespoon of cream is added. Season with salt.

Arroz Carreteiro (Brazil)



© fotolia

Ingredients for 4 People:

1 kg smoked meat

2 Onion

2 Tomatoes

300g rice

Oil for frying

Salt and Pepper

Preparation

The pieces of smoked meat are boiled two or three times with salt water. The water is changed every time. Peel the onion and dice. Then, oil is added into a pot, heated and the onion is fried in it until translucent.

Then add and fry the meat. Peel off the tomatoes skin and dice. Add the meat and stir until the tomatoes are over-cooked. Then stir the rice.

Add much water until everything is covered. Cook till it boils, then simmer on low heat, until the rice is tender (about 20 minutes)

At last, season with salt and pepper.