

## Why Missions?

Have you ever wondered why someone like Mary Kenny would leave the comforts of the U.S. and her career as a food scientist to live with a primitive people group in Papua, New Guinea? If you ask Mary that question, she will probably tell you that it's not because God has given her special abilities. Nor is it because she has some special calling; rather, she would tell you that it's all about God's heart for people. She would tell you that God desires that all men and women have the opportunity to hear about Jesus Christ and that unless someone goes and tells them, they will never know.

And so the story goes. Dozens of FBCers over the last 50 years have done the same. They've caught God's contagious heart for people who have never heard, and changed the course of their lives to make sure that they have the opportunity to hear.

Our FBC missionaries could never do what they do without us. We are their sending church. We seek to support, encourage and care for them from a distance as they represent us amongst the diverse people groups they reach out to. This week, we learn about why they do what they do, and we also will look at our part in what God is doing to reach the world he loves.

### Monday – Contagious Commission

*"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."* Luke 4:18-19

1. Yesterday in the sermon, we heard about Jesus the missionary. Do you think of him as a missionary? Why or why not?
2. Please read Matthew 28:11-20. What do you notice about Jesus' commission? What verbs are included in the instructions of verses 19 and 20?
3. What does Jesus promise, and why is this promise an important part of the commission?

**Prayer Focus:** Mary Kenney is trying to recruit another member for a team before she returns to her Bible translation and discipling in Papua, New Guinea. Please pray that God would guide and provide for her and her partners in this process.

### Tuesday – Global From the Beginning

*"[M]issions... is the extension of the mighty work that Christ embodied as he restored God's reign on the earth—atonement for human sin on the cross and conquering sin and death in the resurrection...It is God-originated, Christ-centered and Spirit-empowered."* James Engel and William Dyrness, "Changing the Mind of Missions"

1. Please read Genesis 12:1-3 and Isaiah 66:19-21. God's heart from the very beginning was for the whole world. What do we learn from Genesis and Isaiah about God's plan for the world?
2. How does Jesus fit into God's long term plan? How do we?

**Prayer Focus:** The Caters (FBC missionaries) are transitioning from a State-side support ministry to a difficult cross-cultural ministry overseas. Pray for their transition as they move to the "ends of the earth."

### Wednesday – "To the Ends of the Earth"

*Mission begins with an explosion of joy. The news that the rejected and crucified Jesus is alive is something that cannot possibly be suppressed. It must be told.*" Leslie Newbigin, "The Gospel in a Pluralist Society"

1. Please read Acts 1:6-9. Imagine being with Christ right before he ascended. What was on the minds of the disciples? What answer were they hoping to receive to their question (in verse 6)?
2. Given their interest in the restoration of a national kingdom (verse 6), why might they find Jesus' reply startling in verse 8? We know what was on the minds of the disciples. What was Jesus thinking about?

**Prayer Focus:** FBC has 18 people preparing for three different summer mission trips to Italy, Kenya, and Peru. Pray for team unity, physical health, and Divine opportunities to serve.

### Thursday – The Advancing Church

*"Missions-Minded churches are realizing that to fulfill their apostolic mission responsibility they need to think in terms of starting a sister church, not merely 15 miles down the road, but perhaps 13,000 miles down the road (where Christian witness does not currently exist)." Greg Livingston*

1. Please read Acts 13:1-5. What was the environment like in the church at Antioch?
2. Was the "calling" of Paul and Barnabas personal, corporate or both?
3. What lessons might we learn from this model of early church mission? How do these lessons apply to cross-cultural missions at FBC?

**Prayer Focus:** FBC has five members currently trying to plant a church in a region with no known Christian community. This work is challenging and has been costly to each individual. Please pray for wisdom, strength, favor, and healthy relationships as they engage in this difficult calling.

### Friday – "Easter Overtones"

*"It is impossible to stress too strongly that the beginning of mission is not an action of ours, but the presence of a new reality, the presence of the Spirit of God of power. The whole New Testament bears witness to this, and so does the missionary experience of the church throughout the ages."* Leslie Newbigin, "The Gospel in a Pluralist Society"

Please read 2 Corinthians 1: 8-11.

1. How were things going for Paul "in the province of Asia"? What kind of pressure was he under?
2. Paul is comparing his situation with Christ's death and resurrection. What redemptive purpose did God accomplish through Paul's sufferings in Asia? Why does Paul compare his situation with Christ's death and resurrection?

**Prayer Focus:** FBC has several missionaries who are facing difficulties and are feeling hard pressed. One is trying to reform a team; several are in transition; some are hoping to overcome political hurdles; some are dealing with serious family health issues; and some are "under great pressure." Take some time to "help them by your prayers."

### Weekend

Consider choosing a missionary to incorporate into your regular prayer time. Perhaps contact him or her and ask how you can pray and support his or her work.