

LESSON 3 IT'S TIME...For Churches to Discover and Fulfill their God Given Mission.

LESSON AIM: To teach pupils what a missional church is and begin thinking about what our church mission is.

NOTE: Materials on pp. 22-30 of this chapter are studied more in depth in lesson 7.

TEACHING AIDS: World View Handout, Being Missional Cards

SCRIPTURE RESOURCE: Matthew 28:18-20

CREATING LEARNING READINESS: There are a lot of terms that are beginning to float around in religious and non-religious circles that are nebulous to us. One of those words is "World View."

World View- A person or a group's outlook on culture. It's the historic lens through which we see things. In the recorded history of **Western** mankind there have been four eras of time that historians and scientist have labeled and a new one just begun. (This chart is available as handout in church office.)

Era	2500BC	1 AD	500AD	1500AD	2000AD
Name	Prehistoric	Ancient World	Medieval World	Modern World	Post Modern
Communications	Writing on tablet, papyrus, vellum	Paper Invented	Hand Written	Printing Press	Computer
Weapons	Clubs	Great Armies		Guns/Artillery	Nuclear
Focus	Clans	Empires	Isolation	National Pride	Individual
Transportation	Foot	Horses	Boat	Mechanical	Space
Worship	Fire/Weather	Mythology	Catholic Christianity	Protestant Christianity	Amalgamated

(Chart adapted from material by Brian McLaren)

Call particular attention to the focus row and talk about how we have moved to the focus on the individual rather than the group. Also the change in worship/religion which is now a mixed bag for our country.

How these things have affected the viewpoint of various groups of people or nations varied to some extent but all were influenced by world view of their time.

We can narrow this down more. For most of its existence the United States has had a Christian world view...and primarily a white Christian male world view. The principles of Christianity were the basis for interaction between the citizens themselves and the principles upon which the country reacted to other countries. We have a colonial world view attitude. The colonial attitude was that a colony should be settled and then the

natives there should adapt to our culture and do things our way....for all practical purposes become white Christians with a masculine viewpoint.

ASK 1. What's different about culture today than what it was 50 years or so ago?

Much more accepting of looser moral standards, individualism, cultural diversity. Faster pace, mass communication

ASK 2. So we're moving into the Post Modern era. The world is different, the culture is different. What kind of problems is that causing in the church?

We expect people to respond in the way they always have: We preach, they repent and join the church. People don't respond to that approach very well any more

We can't "guilt" people into church.

Church membership and attendance were basis for judging a person's faith so we struggle to find a basis on which to judge our success as a church.

Worship styles have changed because of the "entertain me" syndrome.

Christians have different standards as to what is acceptable behavior. Example what to do about divorce, women's liberation, homosexuality, acceptable dress, people of other races.

People live a more isolated existence than they used to...away from family...so they are looking for support systems as opposed to programs.

God used to be the "absolute truth" by which we could live. Now many people have no "absolute truth." What's right for you many not be right for me.

ASK 3. What's happened to denominational loyalty in the past 25 years? Why?

Churches are moving away from denominations and their labels. Unquestioning loyalty to big institutions is a thing of the past. "What's good for General Motors is good for everyone" is no longer accepted as the country's philosophy. What good for the SBC is not necessarily the philosophy of our church. Some churches are at odds with what denominational leadership promotes. They don't want to be labeled even to the point of dropping Baptist or Presbyterian from their name.

The resources once provided by denominations are not needed as much. More options for resources.

Denominational unity requires more conformity than some churches are willing to do. Churches have learned they can do mission work on their own.

COMMENT: Dan Vestal list ten missional trends that he sees forthcoming in congregational life. LIST these on chalk board and discuss the implications:

Denominational to partnering Churches are looking less for direction from the top and for more help finding ways to do practical missions.

Program-based approach to missions to lifestyle missions. People are more interested in participating in missions than in going to a program to learn about them.

Delegated to participatory We used to give our money and prayers to support missionaries. Now people want to participate in missions.

Clergy led to People of God Instead of the clergy telling people what missions to do, people discover what their own gifts are and how to use them for missions.

Fragmented to holistic Instead of thinking of winning people to Christ (evangelism) and not going past that, the new approach is to deal with the whole person- Care for their needs in other ways as well as win them to Christ.

Geopolitical to ethnolinguistic. Because ethnic groups are all over the world, we will think of doing missions with ethnic groups instead of nations. Walk the streets of most cities and you will find huge conclaves of ethnic groups who have lifted their culture out of their country and moved it elsewhere.

Numbers vs transformed character Success will be measured in terms of transformed character and culture instead of membership numbers and attendance.

Monological to dialogical Instead of having our faith voiced for us by church leaders, we will voice our own faith, especially in our missional actions.

Prayer support to prayer as missions Prayer will go beyond words at specific occasions to living prayer- interceding for others by action

Law to Love. We will think of missions not as a duty but a privilege and something to be enjoyed and anticipated.

ASK: 4. Where do you see our church in relation to some of these changes?

SAY: Let's apply the term missional to the church. What is a **Missional Church**? Two weeks ago you received a card with a definition of Being Missional on it. We talked about what that meant for an individual. Let's look at it for a definition of Being Missional as a church. **It is the church carrying out the Great Commission in the manner that best uses the capabilities, cultural uniqueness and resources of its members. It may be in an organized, purposeful endeavor or it may be the collective results of its members as they put their faith to work individually.** It's a church that empowers people to discover and use their passions to reach people outside the institutional church by meeting their needs and building relationships with those people which will example for them who Jesus Christ is and ultimately bring them to a saving relationship with Jesus. It's a church driven by its call not its purpose. Churches – like individuals- are uniquely gifted for certain tasks. Each church needs to discover for itself what its tasks are.

READ Matthew 28:18-20. (The Great Commission)

ASK: 5. What methods does Jesus give about how to carry out this Commission?

He gives NO instructions as to how. He simple says to do it. He leaves it to his followers to choose the methods which best meet the cultural situation of the era and the milieu in which the church is working.

ASK 6. What are the implications of that for us?

We have to deal with the culture in which we live. As times change we have to change with them. As people change we have to find techniques which are effective for them. What worked in the past may not and probably won't work in the future. Sunday School was a brain child of the middle 1800's. It was designed for its time. As long as it is effective we need to keep it but when it isn't we need to can it. Revivals met a need in the rural and small town society of the 20th Century. For most situations they are a thing of the past. We have to find out what works with today's society.

READ THE THEME PASSAGE FOR THIS WHOLE STUDY: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view: even though we once regarded Christ from a human point of view we regard him thus no longer.

Therefore, if any one is in Christ he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold the new has come. All this is from God who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting their sins against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. So we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

**Ask: 7 How successful would you rate our church reconciling the world to Christ?
Are we on target? Why or why not?**

CONCLUSION: Read this to the class

**The missional church makes mission its passion,
not tradition and the past,
not success and the future,
not is building,
not its music,
not its preaching
and not its program.**

**It's passion is the mission of God-the mission of God in Christ reconciling and
recreating the world entrusted to us.**

If the definition of being missional is reconciling the world to Christ and then each one of us needs to be missional. It's time to begin thinking about how we are going to be or continue to be missional.

CLOSE WITH A PRAYER THAT EACH OF US WILL FIND OUR WAY TO BE
MISSIONAL.