

“Making My Life A Ministry”
A Study in the Practical Meaning of Ephesians 2:10

12 Supporting the Global Work

Ephesians 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for **good works**, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Ministry - The Essential Questions: What does the NT in particular say about good works, ministry and service? What is the Christian’s purpose? How does the Christian’s purpose relate to the purpose of the Church? How does the individual Christian find his own purpose? What kind of skills or abilities does the Christian need to be used purposefully by Christ for good works?

Teaching Goals and Objectives:

- a. To set forth a biblical view of good works, service and ministry which unifies their usage and meaning.
- b. To set forth the broad patterns of good works, service and ministry designed for believers.
- c. To set forth the priorities and principles that underlie the Christians purpose
- d. To set forth the most common biblical practices that guide the Christian into service of good works and ministry.

Priority #3: THE WITNESS AND OUTREACH OF BELIEVERS TO THE WORLD: That all believers would be equipped to share the gospel, from one’s own evangelistic testimony to friendship dialogue, as *one’s personal part of the vision to see the world evangelized and disciplined.*

Main Thesis: Every believer’s good works with respect to world evangelization begins with understanding the significance of the Great Commission within a biblical theology of missions.

Matt 28:19-20 - Go therefore and make disciples of all nations (pan & ethne), baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Pan & Ethnos: The concept of “pan-ethnicity” - the Greek prefix “pan” indicates “all” and the Greek root “ethnos” indicates “nation” – but not politically defined so much as culturally and especially religiously defined.

The Great Commission’s central principle is pan-ethnicity. Biblical missions is pan-ethnic in its foundation, development and application.

Foundation Principle: the Pan-Ethnic Promise – Gen 12:3.

In and through Abraham God would bless all the nations.

How was this passage and promise interpreted in the New Testament?

- a) Peter’s Interpretation - Acts 3:11-26 – the promise is interpreted Christologically (Messianically).
- b) Paul’s interpretation – Gal 3:8 – the promise is interpreted evangelically – that the Gentiles (nations) would be justified by faith.

Development: the Pan-Ethnic Purpose of Israel – Exodus 19:4-6

God gave to Israel a priestly mandate – whole nation set apart as priests, thus as mediators on behalf of God for the nations – distinction God sets forth: “although the whole world (all nations) is mine, you shall be. . .”

How was this perspective and purpose interpreted in the NT?

- a) Peter's interpretation – I Pet 2:9 – Peter interprets the this Priestly Purpose/mandate Christologically – scope of whole passage
 - a. Priestly Purpose = Proclamation of the God of grace – Gospel centered – purpose conceived evangelically
 - b. Thus, this direction - missionary mandate of the NT church
- b) Paul's interpretation – Rom 15:15-16 – Personal appropriation and interpretation of priestly mandate as a gospel proclamation duty – what essentially defines Paul's church planting and missionary efforts – where the Gentile converts become the spiritual sacrifices.

Development: Pan-Ethnic Theology – Ex 20:1-6; Dt 6:4; Gen 1:1.

God is the ultimate and exclusive and unique object of worship. God is the creator of all created reality, and the sole Being of uncreated reality - Unique nature and existence of God, as the only God.

How was this perspective is interpreted in the NT?

- a) John's interpretation – John 1:1-3, 18 – John interprets the original creation account Christologically – establishes Christ with God and as God.
- b) Paul's interpretation – Col 1:15-16 – Paul does the same
- c) Hebrews interpretation – Heb 1:1-3 – Author does the same
- d) Jesus interpretation and self-understanding – John 14:9, then 6 – Jesus interprets the reality of God in his own self-identity and disclosure.

Summary Point: If God is God of all nations, then Christ is Christ of all nations – “There is one God and one mediator between God and man.” (I Tim 2:5)

Foundation Principle: Pan-Ethnic Spiritual Bankruptcy – Dt 13

It was a capitol crime to pursue other gods, to follow other religions: Deut 13:7 “of the gods of the peoples who are around you, near you or far from you, from one end of the earth to the other end” - to pursue other gods and religions was spiritual suicide. The earthly death penalty was a forewarning of an eternal death penalty. All the nations, who did not have the true God, were spiritually bankrupt.

- a) Ps 115:1-8 the Psalmist presents the emptiness of bankruptcy.
- b) NT - Paul – Rom 1:18-32: all peoples have participated in the rejection of the true knowledge of the true God, to pursue gods of their own making, to their own spiritual bankruptcy.

Summary Point: Neither the OT nor the NT give any idea that some people somewhere are practicing a religion that is acceptable to God.

Development: Pan-Ethnic Imperatives and Predictions

In God's revelation to Israel he commands all the nations to worship him, and he makes predictions that such worship will include all the nations of the world someday.

- a) Psalm 96 - Worship imperatives imposed on all the nations: sing, declare his glory, to fear, to ascribe, to bring offering, to worship, to tremble, to say among the nations, etc.
- b) Isaiah – the time of the Messiah will bring salvation to all the nations and the worship of God:
 - 56:1-8 house of prayer for all nations
 - 52:15 Messiah to sprinkle many nations
 - 52:10 all nations will see the salvation of our God
 - 42:1,6 justice to the nations, light to the Gentiles.
 - 49:6-7 light for Gentiles, salvation to the ends of the earth; kings and princes will do homage.
 - 11:10 nations will rally to him.

Development: Pan-Ethic Missionary Mission of the Messiah

- a) Luke 19:10 Jesus' self-understanding of his mission, to seek and to save them who are lost. But who are the lost?
- b) Luke 4:14-30 God's concern for Gentiles is what alienated Jesus
- c) John 10:16 The other sheep are non-Jewish
- d) John 17:18-23 disciples sent into world as Jesus was; Jesus prays "that the world may know" that God sent Jesus.

Development: Pan-Ethnic Atonement

The sense in which Jesus died for the world, and thus died for all, is not individualistic, but according to all nations and all peoples. This is the universal nature of the atonement.

- a) John 1:29 – John the Baptist – takes away the sin of the world – not for Jews only but also for the Gentiles.
- b) I John 2:2 – the propitiation that is not for Israel only, but for the whole world, that is, for all the nations, all peoples.
- c) Rev 5:9 – Christ purchased men from every tribe, tongue, people and nations. He did not purchase all of every tribe or even every tribe, but "from every tribe" meaning some of all tribes, tongues, peoples and nations.

Summary Point: the extent of the atonement matches exactly nature of the missionary enterprise from its beginning with Abraham.

Application: Pan-Ethnic Commission

Matt 28:19-20 Jesus commissions the church to the nations; each of his commission statements reflect the pan-ethnic dimension.

Mark 16:15 – preach the gospel to all creation

Luke 24:47 – repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached to all nations

Acts 1:8 – in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, uttermost parts of the earth

Conclusion: If we see any major difference between the Old and New it is that the missionary momentum was expected to be inward, toward Israel as the people of God, in their calling to be corporately a priestly nation mediating the revelation of God. In the New the momentum is outward, not from one nation, but from Christ's Church scattered about in the world. In Abraham, through Christ's redemption, all the nations of the earth will be blessed.