

God's Heart for the Nations

1. Introduction –

- a. Revelation 7:9–10 (ESV) ⁹ After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation (ethnos), from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, ¹⁰ and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”
 - i. The book of revelation gives us a clear indicator that as God interacts with human history His intention is that people of all nations, tongues and cultures will be gathered around His throne in worship and will be counted among His servants and His people. God's heart is for all the peoples of the earth to be reached.
 - ii. The word for nations as used in this passage and other places in the Bible is the word Ethnos. Ethnos is a generic word for peoples and does not refer to nation states but to ethnic groups (tribes, peoples and languages)
 - iii. For example, 574 recognized Native American Tribes/Nations in the USA.

2. Back to the Beginning

- a. Gen. 12:1-3 ¹ Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ² And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families) of the earth shall be blessed.” Paul quotes this verse in Gal. 3:8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations – “ethnos”- will be blessed.”
- b. Every family on the Earth would be blessed (language, tribe and nation)

3. In the Gospels...

- a. Matt 24:¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations (ethnos), and then the end will come. Apparently, one of the key hurdles to the second coming of Christ, is the gospel making it to all the nations, all the ethnic groups.
- b. We see this confirmed in the following verse: 2 Pet 3:8 But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. ⁹ The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. ¹⁰
- c. Jesus is waiting for “the full number of the Gentiles (ethnos) to come in”. (Rom. 11:25)
 - i. At the time of Abraham there were 70 nations, today there are as many as 17,400 ethnics who speak 7,340 languages, plus 400 deaf languages.
 - ii. What is God's solution to this problem?

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4. Great Commission

- a. Matt 28:¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations (ethnos), 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."
- b. Just as God gave Adam and Eve a commission to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and rule over it, so has He given His re-created humans (the Church) a commission to be spiritually fruitful and multiply and to take spiritual dominion in the earth.

5. What does this have to do with us, here in Chico?

- a. The G.C is a commission that Jesus gave to all of us, not just a few professional ministers, apostles or people who feel called to join missionary organizations. The ends of the earth are our common problem. The return of Christ, and our enjoyment in the New Heavens and the New Earth seems to be, at least in part, connected to the completion of the Great Commission.
- b. The question is really a question of engagement. What is our part?

6. Where are we at now? After 2000 years what progress can be reported on the Great Commission?

- a. Some of the "Finish Lines" of the Gospel (Call2All.org)
 - i. Finish Line 1 Reaching all peoples
 1. There are currently only 146 unengaged unreached people groups with a population over 500 <https://finishingthetask.com/about-finishing-the-task/people-group-list> . 60 of these groups are in China.
 2. An unengaged unreached people group (UUPG) has no known active church planting underway. According to the [IMB Global Research Office](#): "A people group is engaged when a church planting strategy, consistent with evangelical faith and practice, is under implementation." An example of this is the Ainu people in China.
 3. An unreached or least-reached people is a people group among which there is no indigenous community of believing Christians with adequate numbers and resources to evangelize this people group without outside assistance. These groups may have churches, a Bible in their language, and other Christian literature and media, but the church is still very small. Example: Japan
 - ii. Finish Line 2: Bible Engagement in all languages
 1. At the turn of the millennium in the year 2000 Wycliffe estimated that it would take another 150 years to get to the final languages that needed translating. Due to unprecedented partnerships among mission agencies, churches and denominations that date has been advanced.

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2. The current goal is to have a translation started in all viable languages by 2025 and to have NT completed for all written languages and a story set plus a gospel for oral languages by 2033.
 3. Some statistics.
 - a. There are 7,360 known languages, plus as many as 400 deaf languages.
 - b. 704 languages have a complete Bible (5.7 Billion people), 1551 languages have a NT (815 million people), 1160 have portions of the Bible in their language (458 million people). This means that 7 billion people have access to at least a portion of the Bible in their mother language.
 4. There are currently 738 languages which have work in progress (65.4 million people),
 5. 2,014 languages need translation to begin (167 million people). Most of these are oral languages, which will require a different translation strategy.
- iii. Finish line 3: Proclamation - The gospel for every person
1. Approximately 1/3 of the earth's population has no access to the gospel (around 2 billion people). There are no churches or Christians that they might bump into to hear the Gospel. If someone does not go there intentionally, they will not hear.
 2. 2/3 of the world's population has access to the Gospel but don't often come into contact with the Good News
 3. Most people need to hear the Gospel 3x before they respond and most people come to Christ before they are 18.
 4. Research from missiologist Ralph Winter revealed the following.
http://www.call2all.org/Groups/1000090461/call2All/2012/About/Strategic_Themes/Establishing_Growing_Church/Establishing_Growing_Church.aspx#.U077HfldU6w
 - a. 100 ad – 1 in 360 people on earth were followers of Jesus.
 - b. 1000 ad – 1 in 220
 - c. 1500 ad – 1 in 69
 - d. 1900 ad – 1 in 27
 - e. 1950 ad 1 in 21
 - f. 2000 ad – 1 in 7 (www.call2all.org/finish-lines/proclamation-everyone/)
 - i. Today, there is one practicing Christian for every seven people worldwide who are either nominal or non-Christian.
<https://s3.amazonaws.com/files.frontierventures.org/pdf/FinishingTheTask.pdf>

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7. Conclusion

- a. We've taken a look at where we are going. The gospel being preached in every nation so that members of every tribe, tongue and nation become children, servants and worshippers of God.
- b. We see that the work of Christians around the world is resulting in the rapid advance of the gospel and Bible translation with the likely result that all the ethnic groups of the Earth will be engaged by Christian missionaries within the next 20 years.
- c. At the same time, 90% of the people of the Earth still need the message of Jesus Christ, not to mention all of the many social justice issues that need to be addressed.
- d. What do we do this morning with this message?
 - i. Be aware – The Great Commission is something Jesus gave all of us. Our level of engagement will depend on many factors, including our giftings and callings. But we can stay informed and be aware of what is happening.
 - ii. Pray – A portion of our prayer lives could be focused on some aspect of the great commission. As we become aware of needs and situations around the world we can pray. We might feel drawn to a certain nation, people, issue or form of engagement around the world we can be praying for.
 - iii. Be open – to things the Lord might share with you that you can engage with. You might be surprised at the way God would like to involve you in the story He is writing around the world.

- Cal2all.org
- Finishingthetask.org
- Joshuaproject.net
- Wycliffe.org
- Theseedcompany.org
- Ywam.org

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1. Introduction –

- a. I want to go a little different direction... Give you a “Global Perspective” that will stretch your thinking and, be an encouragement on the one hand and a challenge on the other...
 - i. I want to share with you about God's heart for the whole planet. This might be a challenge because we are often overwhelmed just trying to deal with our own lives in the here and now.
 - ii. I'd like to take you on a journey through some scripture about God's heart for the world and then to look at a few things going on around the world that are both encouraging and challenging.
- b. **Slides 6-7** - Revelation 7:9–10 (ESV) ⁹ After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation (ethnos), from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, ¹⁰ and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”
 - i. Middle of the book – Bride is made up of worshippers from every language, tribe, etc.
 - ii. God has a heart, a dream and a desire that people from all ethno-linguistic groups would be part of His eternal family.
 - iii. The book of revelation gives us a clear indicator that as God interacts with human history His intention is that people of all nations, tongues and cultures will be gathered around His throne in worship and will be counted among His servants and His people. God's heart is for all the peoples of the earth to be reached.
- c. **Slide 8** - The word for nations as used in this passage and other places in the Bible is the word Ethnos. Ethnos is a generic word for peoples and does not refer to nation states but to ethnic groups (tribes, peoples and languages)
 - i. For example, 574 recognized Native American Tribes in the USA.
- d. God's intention is that all ethnic groups would be with Him in eternity.

2. Where did this start?

- a. **Slide 9** - Gen. 12:1-3
 - i. ¹ Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ² And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families (Hebrew: Mishpachah – family, clan, LXX: Phyle – Tribe, family) of the earth shall be blessed.”
 1. (Gal. 3:8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations –ethnos- be blessed.”)
 - ii. Every family on the Earth would be blessed (language, tribe and nation)

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- iii. God's desire was to reach every family of the Earth (nation, tribe and language) through the descendants of Abraham (physical and spiritual).
 - 1. Table of nations has 70 nations
 - 2. Even though He disinherited the nations, it was with the intention that they would later be re-inherited.
 - a. God's plan is to reach the 70 by focusing on the one.
 - b. Various moments in the OT that keep this vision moving
 - i. Psalm 2:8 (ESV) ⁸ Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession.
 - 1. Other Psalms – Ps. 33:8, 67:1-2, 96:3, Ps. 117, 145:8-13
 - ii. Prophetic Writings
 - 1. Habakkuk 2:14 (ESV) ¹⁴ For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.
3. One more key thought
- a. **Slide 10** - Matt 24:¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations (ethnos), and then the end will come.
 - i. Apparently, one of the key hurdles to the second coming of Christ, is the gospel making it to all the nations, all the ethnic groups.
 - b. We see this confirmed in the following verse:
 - i. 2 Pet 3:8 But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. ⁹ The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. ¹⁰
 - c. Jesus is waiting until all people's have had a chance to hear.
 - i. Waiting for "the full number of the Gentiles (ethnos) to come in". (Rom. 11:25)
 - ii. **Slide 11** - At the time of Abraham there were 70 nations, today there are as many as 17,400 ethnics who speak 7,340 languages, plus 400 deaf languages.
 - iii. What is God's solution to this problem
4. Great Commission
- a. **Slide 12** - Matt 28:¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations (ethnos), 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."
 - b. Just as God gave Adam and Eve a commission to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and rule over it, so has He given His re-created humans a commission to be spiritually fruitful and multiply and to take spiritual dominion in the earth.

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5. **Slide 13** - What does this have to do with us, here in Chico?
 - a. The G.C is a commission that Jesus gave to all of us, not just a few professional ministers, apostles or people who feel called to join missionary organizations. The ends of the earth are our common problem.
 - b. The return of Christ, and our enjoyment in the New Heavens and the New Earth seems to be, at least in part, connected to the completion of the Great Commission.
 - c. The question is really a question of engagement. What is our part?
 - i. We definitely need to take responsibility for our local scene while at the same time having an eye on the nations
 - ii. Is our part must our local area? Or do we bear some responsibility for the ends of the earth, where the Gospel has not gone, as well?

6. Good news and bad news – Where are we at now?
 - a. A good place to start is to look at where are we at now?
 - b. Finish Lines of the Gospel
 - i. **Slide 14** - Reaching All peoples – Matt 28 – ethne - **show Table 71 video**
 1. **Slide 15** - Table 71 (Year 2000, Billy Graham Conference on Evangelism) (230 groups with a minimum population of 10,000)– further research revealed that there were still a few thousand unengaged unreached people groups
 - a. An unreached or least-reached people is a people group among which there is no indigenous community of believing Christians with adequate numbers and resources to evangelize this people group without outside assistance.
 - b. An unengaged unreached people group (UUPG) has no known active church planting underway. According to the [IMB Global Research Office](#): "A people group is engaged when a church planting strategy, consistent with evangelical faith and practice, is under implementation."
 2. **Slide 16** - There are now only 146 unengaged unreached people groups with a population over 500 <https://finishingthetask.com/about-finishing-the-task/people-group-list> . 60 of these groups are in China.
 3. Progress on previously Unengaged People Groups as of June 2021
 - a. The Finishing The Task Network reports the following since November, 2005.
 - i. 3,196 Groups engaged by 5,245 teams
 - ii. 43,475 Fully-focused vocational workers sent by 422 engaging ministries
 - iii. 89,782 Bi-vocational and part-time workers
 - iv. 157,125 - Churches planted
 - v. 3,614,098 - Reported believers

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- ii. Bible Engagement in all languages (Matt 28 – Teach them to obey...)
 - 1. Turn of century – Wycliffe estimate – 150 years till start of final Bible Translation – not good enough, mission partnerships
 - 2. Slide 17 - 7,360 known languages
 - a. 704 languages complete Bible (5.7 Billion people), 1551 languages NT (815 million), 1160 with portions of the Bible (458 million) – 7 billion people have some Bible in their language
 - 3. 738 languages have work in progress (65.4 million people),
 - 4. 2,014 languages need translation to begin (167 million people)
 - a. Most of these are oral languages
 - 5. Slide 18 - Goal is to have a translation started in all of these languages by 2025 and have NT completed for all written languages and a story set plus a gospel for oral languages by 2033
 - 6. Bible engagement – not just translation, but distribution and prayer.

- iii. The gospel for every person
 - 1. Around 1/3 of the earth's population has no access to the gospel (around 2 billion people)
 - 2. 2/3 have access but don't often come into contact with the Good News
 - 3. Most people need to hear the Gospel 3x before they respond
 - 4. Most people come to Christ before they are 18
 - 5. Slide 19 - Statistics from Ralph Winter
http://www.call2all.org/Groups/1000090461/call2All/2012/About/Strategic_Themes/Establishing_Growing_Church/Establishing_Growing_Church.aspx#.U077HfldU6w
 - a. 100 ad – 1 in 360
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 - d. 1900 ad – 1 in 27
 - e. 1950 ad 1 in 21
 - f. 2000 ad – 1 in 7 (www.call2all.org/finish-lines/proclamation-everyone/)
 - g. Practicing Christians as a Percentage of Total World Population Since 1900
0% 2% 4% 6% 8% 10% 12% 1900 1910 1920 1930 1940 1950 1960 1970 1980 1990 2000 2010
It took 18 centuries for practicing Christians to grow from 0% of the world's population to 2.5% in 1900, only 70 years to grow from 2.5% to 5% in 1970, and just 40 years to grow from 5% to 12% by the year 2010. Today, there is one practicing Christian for every seven people worldwide who are either nominal or non-Christian.
<https://s3.amazonaws.com/files.frontierventures.org/pdf/FinishingTheTask.pdf>
 - 6. Good news, 1 in 7 are believers, bad news, 6 in 7 are not
 - a. Much has been done, but there is still much more to do

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b. God does not want any to perish...

7. Slide 20 - Conclusion

- a. We've taken a look at where we are going. The gospel being preached in every nation so that members of every tribe, tongue and nation become children, servants and worshippers of God.
 - i. We are living in a day where for the first time in human history the vision of Revelation 7 is reachable. Likely, within the next 15 years.
- b. We see that the work of Christians around the world is resulting in the rapid advance of the gospel and Bible translation with the likely result that all the ethnic groups of the Earth will be engaged by Christian missionaries within the next 20 years.
- c. At the same time, 90% of the people of the Earth still need the message of Jesus Christ, not to mention all of the many social justice issues that need to be addressed.
- d. What do we do this morning with this message?
 - i. Be aware – The Great Commission is something Jesus gave all of us. Our level of engagement will depend on many factors, including our giftings and callings. But we can stay informed and be aware of what is happening.
 - ii. Pray – A portion of our prayer lives could be focused on some aspect of the great commission. As we become aware of needs and situations around the world we can pray. We might feel drawn to a certain nation, people, issue or form of engagement around the world we can be praying for.
 - iii. Be open – to things the Lord might share with you that you can engage with. You might be surprised at the way God would like to involve you in the story He is writing around the world.