



September
6, 2014

LAYPERSON EVANGELISM AND ADVENTIST MISSION EMPHASIS DAY

Mission and Evangelism

**OPENING
HYMN:**
*Seventh-day
Adventist
Hymnal,*
no. 368

BIBLE TEXT:
*Matthew
10:5, 6;
John 4:7-9*

**CLOSING
HYMN:**
*Seventh-day
Adventist
Hymnal,*
no. 373

SERMON

REVELATION 14:6 gives us a general picture of God's vision in terms of His mission. God's mission extends to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people. This is because sin has affected human beings of all nations, tribes, languages, and cities. We can define the mission as the act of communicating *the same* "message" or "gospel" to people of different languages, cultures, races, and nationalities. God's plan is that we cross social, economic, cultural, and racial barriers in order to communicate the "eternal gospel." God wants His mission to reach wherever sin has souls captive.

The universality of God's mission is a recurring theme in the Scriptures. In Genesis 3:15, the cosmic nature of the mission is announced. We can see that the mission is the universal struggle between Christ and Satan for the minds of the inhabitants of each nation. Genesis 12:3 sheds some light on the nature of the mission of God, "I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." This means that through the lineage of Abraham, Jesus (the Eternal Gospel) will become a blessing to the families of the earth. Other themes related to the universal mission in the Old Testament are: the captivity of Daniel in Babylon, the journey of Joseph to Egypt, and the

encounter of Samson with the Philistines. God has always facilitated the movement of His people toward other cultures and languages to communicate the message that "Jehovah, our God, Jehovah is One."

In the New Testament, this universal missionary theme continues. In Matthew 10:5, 6, Jesus sends His disciples to the "lost sheep of Israel." He sent the disciples first to their own ethnic group and language (the Jews), in order to prepare them to take the gospel to the Gentiles. After the Jewish nation rejected Jesus and His message, the Holy Spirit sent Peter to Cornelius, Philip, and the Ethiopian; and the apostle Paul to the Gentiles.

The encounter of Jesus with the Samaritan woman illustrates the scope of His mission. It was always God's plan to communicate the gospel to everyone. As we have seen, Jesus first restricted the work of the disciples to the lost sheep of Israel. In John 4, He begins to present the full scope of His mission. Salvation was not only for the Jews, but also for the Gentiles.

In Matthew 10:5, 6 and John 4, we see that the gospel is brought to different ethnic groups. The Jewish disciples were sent to the "lost sheep of Israel." On the other hand, Jesus testified to the Samaritan woman. The disciples were the first ones that were sent to testify among

their own people. Jews witnessing to Jews. They had a common ethnic origin, the same culture, and the same heritage. There were no cultural, ethnic, or language barriers to the gospel. The barrier that the disciples found among their own people was more theological than sociological. The work of the disciples among the Jews can be defined as evangelism. On the other hand, the work of Jesus with the Samaritan woman can be defined as a cross-cultural mission. Jesus communicated with a woman who had a language and a culture different from His Jewish heritage. The Samaritan woman reminded Jesus of these differences; by saying, "How can You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink, being that I am a Samaritan woman? Because Jews and Samaritans do not mingle with each other."

In the Inter-American Division, we want to take into account and celebrate this fundamental difference between evangelism and intercultural mission. The mission is the intentional crossing of cultural, language, ethnic, racial, and religious barriers in order to share Christ in a context different from the messenger. Evangelism, on the other hand, can be defined as sharing Christ in a field of cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and religiosity that is similar to that of the messenger.

Jesus is calling members and church leaders to pay more attention to the intercultural mission. People of all cultures, languages, tribes, and nations are coming to our cities. Many of the members of our church do not have the ability or the knowledge needed to carry out an effective cross-cultural missionary effort in their neighborhoods or cities.

It has been proven that a cross-cultural missionary effort gives a new impetus to evangelism in the church. When members participate in the novelty of the cross-

cultural missionary work, they begin to have new insights, skills, and encouragement to carry out evangelism among their own people.

It is time to resume the cross-cultural missionary work. Identify a potential intercultural project in the vicinity of your church. Is there any ethnic minority in your community? You can work with Hindus, Muslims, children on the street, people of high class, in the new residential areas, or in places where there is no Adventist presence. A missionary project will encourage members of the church to be innovative, relevant, flexible, and fluid. It is time to resume the cross-cultural missionary work.

Currently, the Inter-American Division provides several alternatives to the cross-cultural missionary work. We have the movements: One Hundred Students Establishing Churches, One Hundred Days of Mission, ASI Mission 2000 and More, Adventist Missionary Volunteers. Today, I invite you to call the office of Adventist Mission in the Inter-American Division to participate in one of these alternatives for cross-cultural missionary work.

You are the messenger who has been entrusted with the "eternal message," of taking the gospel of God to every tribe, language, city, and nation. Someone is waiting for that message! Yes, someone is dying within your city without this message! You are the messenger with this "eternal message"! It is your mission to spread this message! What will be your answer to the missionary call of God?

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