

Go Global Weekend

The Pulse of God

I. Hey there and welcome to Tab! I'm Pastor Craig and I am so glad you are here for the first of two very exciting weeks! Why is that? Because we will be talking about something so fundamental to our church, it impacts everything we do. What am I talking about? The Great Commission! And here's what I'm even more excited about. We are so blessed to partner with people all around the world as we fulfill the Great Commission. Today we are going to talk about the Great Commission, but we also want to show you the Great Commission and how we are actively sharing God's story from Norfolk to the nations.

A. There are so many opportunities that God has invited us into around the world that we want to take a weekend for us all to:

Go Global

B. There is no way to cover it all, but before we get into what we are doing around the world, I want to briefly remind us of: Why?

Why do we export the best by sending talented young leaders and a disproportionate amount of money to advance God's Kingdom among the nations?

1. Simply put, it's our job description!

After the resurrection, Jesus gathered the disciples and told them to go and reproduce themselves.

The primary focus of a disciple is to make other disciples.

And we all have a part!

a. We find that job description in Matthew 28:16-20:

Matthew 28:16-20 - 16 The eleven disciples traveled to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had directed them. 17 When they saw him, they worshiped, but some doubted. 18 Jesus came near and said to them, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

b. I'd like for us all to take two of our fingers and place them across our opposite wrist. If you're online or catching up on the podcast later, I know if you're playing along! O.k., I don't but God does!

Do you feel the pulse moving through your wrist? Isn't that such a cool feeling! When we take our fingers off our pulse, we can no longer feel it, but it doesn't mean that our pulse has stopped.

We've just taken our finger off the pulse.

2. The Great Commission is the job description of those who follow Jesus, disciples, but it is so much more!

It's how we tap into the very pulse of God! We are a church on mission because our worship of Jesus compels us into mission. The thrust of mission is worship. When we experience the worthiness of Jesus in our life, and we orient our life around Jesus, it will produce a:

Missional Life!

a. Not primarily for the task of mission, but because we experience the pulse of God when we join Him in where He's moving. Mission flows out of worship and worship is the aim of mission!

John Piper says it well, "Missions exist because worship does not."

When our mission is anchored in worship it reminds us of what is so central, mission is about our privilege to be a portal in this world of the presence and power of Jesus! Sharing God's story from Norfolk to the nations is how we come alive, because it connects us with the pulse of God!

3. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we have the privilege of connecting our lives with the pulse of God. There is no B Team in the Christian life. No one follows flawlessly, but we know when our lives are connected to the pulse of God, because we experience the presence and power of Jesus.

C. This is why we Go Global and Go Local!

1. Jesus begins His commission by stating that all authority has been given to Him.

Let's stop and think about the implications of this for a moment.

All authority has been placed in the hands of Jesus Christ! There is no greater authority! Nothing (I repeat no-thing) happens in our lives that doesn't fall under the ultimate authority of Jesus Christ.

a. The challenge is when we expect God to fulfill our personal agendas. If Jesus has all authority, then Jesus should use that authority to do what I want!

b. Jesus didn't save any of us to make us happy. Our salvation is certainly not at the exclusion of our happiness, but our salvation is about so much more!

We get the joy of being a portal of Jesus's power and presence in this life and for all eternity!

But God calls us to be a part of what He is accomplishing around the world.

2. Because of the full authority Jesus has we are to:

Matthew 28:19-20 - 19 Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Go! It's not a suggestion but a command. Go, in an intentional way and make disciples of all nations. A follower of Jesus is called to make other disciples. We make disciples wherever Jesus calls us to go. We often think about discipleship as a process, but I'd like to suggest we think about it more as an: Invitation

a. "Follow me and together let's follow Jesus." We place such high expectations on ourselves that we must know everything. That's not true. Discipleship isn't a college course or a curriculum we lead people through. Something that God has challenged me on through our initiative in Chad, Africa is seeing people who don't know a lot about the Bible, but they are great at inviting other people to join them and they learn together! We don't do the heavy lifting! We simply invite people into a relationship with Jesus and grow together.

b. Matthew 28:19 has two non-negotiables when it comes to making disciples.

(1) One is baptism in the name of the Triune God (literally in the Greek into the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit) and

(2) the other is teaching the Word with an emphasis on practice.

c. Why does Jesus emphasize baptism and teaching when it comes to making disciples?

(1) Baptism isn't an act that saves us. Jesus wasn't mistaken when He gave this command. The reason that baptism is such a vital part of discipleship is because baptism is how we declare our allegiance to the Triune God. It's an outward sign of an inward reality, but it is how we declare ourselves to be a Jesus follower and it connects us with the community of faith. This is why baptism is so important and one of the sacraments of the Church. We think of baptism as an individualistic ritual, but that's not really the emphasis biblically. Baptism should be one of the first steps of obedience we do as a Jesus follower, because it identifies us with His Church.

(2) The other non-negotiable in discipleship is teaching the Word with an emphasis on practice. We get sidetracked by the pursuit of knowledge and we substitute information acquisition for discipleship. Obedience as a disciple is about pursuing righteousness. We all fail forward, but that is the aim of a disciple's life: to increasingly reflect the life of Jesus through our lives.

3. We intentionally go out into the world, pursuing people and inviting them to become disciples.

Follow me as we follow Jesus together.

a. Next week we're going to talk more about our responsibility to make disciples in Norfolk or wherever we live out our daily life.

b. As a community of faith, we also have a responsibility to be a part of making disciples: Of all nations!

c. We all are called to pray. We all are called to give. And we all are called to be open to wherever Jesus leads us! If the pulse of God is among the nations, then why would we not want to be there?

(1) I'm so thankful to be the pastor of Tab Church for many reasons, but one is our commitment to Go Globally. As we are making disciples locally, Jesus calls some to leave family and home behind and go among the nations.

(2) We have a rich heritage that goes back to 1952 when Caleb and Loretta Cutherell were sent by God out of Tab to Qalandarabad, Pakistan to build a hospital that would serve as a light for Jesus among the people of Pakistan. Dr. Luke and Nancy are at Bach Christian Hospital right now serving their final two months and when they arrive back it will wrap up 72 years that Tab Church has supported a global worker or missionary in Qalandarabad, Pakistan.

d. Because of God's faithfulness and the generosity of Tab Church, there have been countless people sent out through the years connected to the pulse of God and through His power and presence have made disciples among the nations!

II. But today isn't about us. It's not even about those that have gone out among the nations.

It's about the power and presence of God when we are fueled by faith.

Let's celebrate Jesus through the testimonies of what God is doing around the world! [Video Testimonials]

Where is God calling us as a church to Go Globally and make disciples?

A. Chad Africa!

1. About 2 years ago, Mike Latsko approached the elder team of Tab with a crazy idea. Mike has dedicated the last remaining years of his career to the unengaged, unreached people groups of the world. To be an unengaged, unreached people group means there is no gospel presence. These are the people groups who can't respond to the gospel because they've never heard. There are about 1500 of those people groups remaining on the planet. 92 of them reside in Chad, Africa.
2. When Mike Latsko approached us, he asked what might happen if our consortium or network of churches could all channel our efforts toward these 92 people groups of Chad. Mike had a connection named Ken Smith who was already doing some work in Chad and knew of a few church leaders in N'Djamena Chad who God had given a passion to make disciples among these 92 groups.
3. In October 2023, a team from our consortium of churches headed to Chad, Africa to meet with Pierre Voundina, Assane Bella and a few other Jesus followers who desired to see these people groups engaged. When we went, we met with about 40 young people from N'Djamena and we trained them on a very simple discipleship model for a week.
4. We hoped that more of the trainees would engage the work, however, we soon learned that only one of the young men implemented the training. But Assane and Pierre, and this new trainee Joshue, decided to forge ahead. Their efforts heading north into the region of unengaged, unreached peoples yielded a handful of disciples in 5 of the tribes or people groups: Alwa, Barma, Ndam, Mobou, and Gadang.
5. When we returned to Chad in February of this year, there were 20 people representing these 5 tribes that had chosen to follow Jesus and wanted to make disciples among their people!
6. In each of these 5 people groups there are followers of Jesus. It might be 4-5 people who gather under a tree, but they are hungry to learn more about Jesus and continue the gospel movement!

B. What we are doing in Chad is unique.

1. We're not leading anything or telling the Chadian leaders how to go about the work. We're simply investing in them as leaders (and when I say invest in them, what they are asking for is training and equipment to spread the gospel). We're learning as much from them as they are from us.
2. We are not trying to build a bunch of churches like we think of. We're teaching a discipleship model that plants a simple church model. A group of believers who gather under trees or in someone's home to study passages of Scripture together.
3. In most cases people cannot read so we're working with another organization out of Atlanta that is providing solar audio Bibles for people to sit and listen to together. Our plan is to return to Chad in the next few months with these resources and get them in the hands of these leaders before the rainy season.
4. This is a unique opportunity that God has positioned us in and I'm simply sharing on a very high level.
5. Many of you are familiar with First Coach.In and there is an additional opportunity that God has provided through the game of basketball to give favor over the advancement of the gospel. I simply share this to express the many parts God is bringing together. The opportunity is bigger than Tab Church, but what a privilege to be a part!

C. God has positioned us as a church and consortium of churches to be on the frontlines of His kingdom work.

It's not an easy environment to share the gospel in though. The Sahel of Africa (in which Chad is front and center) is the line between the Muslim north and Christian south. There is an intense spiritual battle occurring in that region of the world.

We must pray for the people of Chad and that God would continue to forge a path to reach the remaining 87 unengaged, unreached people groups.

God's going to do it! I'm so glad He has given us the privilege. We have our finger on the pulse of God and it's exciting to experience His power and presence among the nations!