

Acts 17:16-34: A Strategy for Gospel Work

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 13 June 2010

Preacher: David Helm

- [0 : 0 0] Our scripture reading is found in Luke's book entitled The Acts of the Apostles. I would encourage you greatly to find a biblical text near you and to be prepared to follow along.
- It will be much easier for you over the course of the next 30 minutes and a great help to me. Really, this message today is the second sermon from these verses where Paul was at Athens.
- And so if you've come in the middle, namely missing last week, you'll have to listen to the MP3 to get caught up. And there would be a great argument for spending even more time in this text than we are today.
- And I might do that over the course of the summer. As you turn to Acts 17 then, I encourage all the children who are yet with us to be dismissed for their children's program.
- The mass exodus is underway. I love being in a city church that is thriving with children. May their tribe increase.
- [1 : 1 5] Acts 17. Last week, verses 16 to 21. The setting of Athens.
- This week, verses 22 to the end of the chapter. Paul's speech at Athens. So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said, Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious.
- For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription to the unknown God. What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you, The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, Does not live in temples made by man, Nor is he served by human hands, As though he needed anything, Since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.
- And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, Having determined allotted periods in the boundaries of their dwelling place, That they should seek God, In the hope that they might feel their way toward him and find him.
- Yet he actually is not far from each one of us, For in him we live and move and have our being, As even some of your own poets have said, For we are indeed his offspring.
- [2 : 4 8] Being then God's offspring, We ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, An image formed by the art and imagination of man, The times of ignorance God overlooked.
- But now he commands all peoples everywhere to repent, Because he has fixed a day, On which he will judge the world in righteousness, By a man whom he has appointed, And of this he has given assurance to all, By raising him from the dead.
- Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, Some mocked, But others said, We will hear from you again about this. So Paul went out from their midst, But some men joined him and believed, Among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite, And a woman named Damaris, And others with them.
- This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Well, I want you to know that, If you're not aware already, There is an intense debate, Raging, In certain think tanks.

Particularly think tanks, That are governed by Christian missiology. And the debate especially involves, Recent converts to Christianity, From dominant Islamic countries.

[4 : 21] Let me frame the debate. To what extent, Must the speech, And actions, Of these new Christians, Be required to conform, To historic, Christian, Categories.

After all, The minute such, Conformity, Begins, Almost certainly, The new convert, Is excluded, From their community, And the subject of intense, Relational, And perhaps even physical, Persecution, At times in the world today, Even death.

Or, On the other side of the debate, As some in these think tanks, Are arguing, And suggesting, Is there not another way? Can't recent converts to Christ, In these countries, So the argument goes, Remain insiders, Even continuing, In the practices, And their attendance, And the etiquette, Of the local mosque, Including, And giving them freedom, To determine for themselves, To what degree, At this point in their life, Muhammad will play, An ongoing role.

The debate was sparked, Mostly by an article, Put out in 2006, In which there was a scale, A scale of C, What they called C1 level, All the way to C6 level, And this article, Was written under the pseudonyms, Of John and Ann Travis, And it was called, Maximizing the Bible, Glimpses from our context, It's raging, It's important, Yet the essence, Of contextualization, For that indeed, Is the issue, Underneath the present debate, Is not new, In every age, Christians, Find themselves, On the horns, Of the contextualization, Dilemma, On the one hand, We ought to avoid,

An articulation, Of our message, That is consistently, Hostile, Toward the context, In which we live, Or, Belittling, Of the beliefs, And practices, Of our non-Christian, Friends, Neighbors, And family members, After all, Wherever, Christianity, Sets itself up, As always being, Against the world, It diminishes, Its chances, Of ever gaining, A hearing, By that world, For God's word, And yet, On the other hand, We must also avoid, Accommodating, Our message, To such an extent, That it is gutted, Of any meaning, And undermines, Any real, Lasting, Eternal usefulness, That we might bring, To the world, Now this is very important, Theoretical, Yes, But practical, Too, For in the broadest sense, The challenge, Of contextualization,

[7 : 44] Is as simple, As this, If we are ever, Speaking, Speaking, Against the world, We run the risk, Of, Never having, The opportunity, To bring the gospel, To the world, Yet, If we are ever, Assimilating, Our message, To the world, We forfeit, Any sense, Of faithfulness, To the gospel, And we are, Impotent, In our ability, To bring lasting change, And so, With that, Real, Discussion, In play, We turn to Paul, In Athens, What, Lessons, Are there, Here, For us, To learn, And by that, I mean, This local family, Holy Trinity Church, On this corner, In this neighborhood, With this great, Unchanging gospel, And the breadth, Of contextualized life,

Which is around us, How did Paul do it? Or, Luke's portrayal, Of Paul's message, Seeing as how, Paul was on his own, In Athens, What can we learn, From Luke's portrayal, Of Paul?

How did he take, God's fixed, Unchanging, Glorious, Message, Of the gospel, And plant it, In this kind, Of a world, A world like ours, With all of its, Confusing, And contradictory, Notions of truth, And ours, Like his, Filled with a citizenry, That is void, Or, Or naturally, Depleted, Of historic, Christian categories, They didn't have them, In Athens, And they don't have them here, Your friends, Family members, And neighbors, Are growing up, In a world, That is, Depleted, Of, Known, Identifiable, Shared, Articulate, Christian, Characteristics, How did he do it?

Lessons, On the characteristics, Of his approach, First, Something I would call, He was interpersonal, Interpersonal, Look back, Just briefly, At the text, From last week, Verse 17, For he reasoned, In the synagogue, You can even look forward, That word reasoned, Appeared back in 17, 2, Where he reasoned, With them, From the scriptures, He was interpersonally, Engaged with them, You can look forward, Into chapter 19, In verses 8, And 9, And see this, Even more clearly, He entered the synagogue, And for three months, Spoke boldly, Reasoning, And persuading them, About the kingdom, He was interpersonally, Engaged, Using logic, Scriptures, The force of persuasion, And rhetoric, He was in discussion,

Let me show you, Another verse, Back to our own text, In 17, And again, Verse 18, Where it says, Some of the Epicurean, And Stoic philosophers, Also conversed, With him, He was in conversation, Take a look, Even further, In verses 19, And 20, Of our same chapter, They took hold of him, And they said, May we know, What this new teaching is, That you're presenting, For you bring some strange things, We wish to know, He was in dialogue, Take a look, Even at the very end, Of chapter 17, Where we have a listing, Of names, Dionysius, And Damaris, Actually known, People, By name, Not, Not Christian principles, Thrown out, Into the community, This is highly,

[12:10] Instructive for us, There was no sense, Of presumption, With Paul, He was, Interpersonally, Engaged, Now, I want to, Just as an aside, Put something, To your attention, That I think, Is a bit fascinating, Some of you, Are familiar, Of course, With, Plato, And Socrates, And the republic, And the introduction, To that work, Which really puts forward, How life would be orchestrated, In the Greek civilization, The introduction, That there's an interesting, But puzzling, Aspect, That takes place, For Socrates, After he had been, At Athens, For the day, For the particular purpose, Of offering, To a new God, He is on his way home, And the introduction, Reads like this, We had said our prayers,

And seen the show, And were on our way, Back to town, When Polomarchus, Son of Cephalus, Noticed us in the distance, Making our way home, He sent one of his own, Running on ahead, To tell us to wait for him, And that one, Caught hold of my coat, From behind, And said, Polomarchus says, You are to wait, Now, What's interesting about it is, Socrates, Like Paul, Was willing to talk about his ideas, To anyone, Anywhere, At any time, Yet Plato, Introduces the great republic, In the terms of one, Who caught hold, Of him, And said, Please, Speak with us, About these things, The very term, In the republic, Took hold of my coat, Is the same, Term, Where it says,

In our own chapter, Of 17, Where they, Took hold, Verse 19, And they, Took hold of Paul, And brought him, To the Areopagus, Now, Why I mention that, Is because it's a matter, Of being, Interpersonally engaged, This is instructive, For us, Paul doesn't walk, Into Athens, And demand, That everyone hear him now, No, This great, Athenian, Speech, Before the Areopagus, Comes, Naturally, As a, Consequence, Of his, Ongoing, Life, And ministry, And discussion, In other words, In these terms today, We would have said, Well, How did you get to speak, In the Areopagus?

And he would have said, Well, It was a God thing, That's how you'd put it, You wouldn't, He wouldn't have said, Well, I had plans, To get it done there, You know, Couldn't wait to do it, Saw my way clear, Schemed my way in, Took advantage, Of the opportunity, No, No, No, No presumption, Within the personality, Of Paul, His great speech, Was nothing more than a God thing, Because his natural thing, Was ongoing, Name to name, Discussion, Conversation, Reasoning, Logic, And opening up, Of the scriptures, He was, Requested, Then, For this great moment, Now, We could use a little bit more of that, That's the first lesson, For us at Holy Trinity, How will we,

Bring this great, Glorious gospel, To this contextualized setting, Interpersonally, And so I ask you, Are you in, Relationships, In which the gospel, Is being conversed, Are you in, Relationships, In which you are, Reading the scriptures, With another, And in dialogue, There's no great, Areopagus moment, Without, Interpersonal, Life, Already being, In play, And so this, Then, Is something, For us, To learn, The first, Lesson, What is characteristic, Of our approach, Of our approach, In this day, It ought to be, Interpersonal, By name, I'd ask you, To begin praying,

[17 : 04] About that even, Those of you, Who have come to faith, In Christ, Who should I be, Daily, Regularly, Naturally, In conversation, With, On the claims of Christ, Or God in general, Or spirituality, Indeed, That is what Paul did, His way forward, Is our way, We ought to follow him, Second, It was not only interpersonal, But it was integrative, Notice, Luke's portrayal of Paul, Distances him, From some traditional, Conservative, Iconoclast, In other words, He doesn't adopt, In his speech, Early on, Such hostility, Toward his context, So as to jeopardize, His hopes of ever, Having the opportunity, To share this word, In this context, Let me put it differently, He steered clear, Of impaling himself,

Or his message, On the horn, Of the right, No, He's not, Iconoclastic, He's integrative, In two ways, The second of which, I want to spend more time on, The first is, Simple of course, Look at the illustrations, He uses, He quotes from their own, Philosophers, He's integrative, He's aware of what they read, And what they know, And who they, Learn from, And, He's aware of, Epimenides, And, His great tradition in Athens, And the purification of the city, And even, Indeed, Capable of, Quoting, Those, He's integrative, Are we?

How well read, Are we? In this, Athenian age, Or are we so, Parochially inclined, That we never, We'd, We'd, We'd, We'd, We'd, We'd, We'd, We'd, We'd, We'd, We'd, reading, He was integrative, The, The, The, The level of integration to me that demands so much time, And probably I'll take five or six minutes on it, Five or six minutes, Is in regard to what he does with idols, I mean, Take a look at 17, 22, And 23, So Paul, Standing in the midst of the Areopagus, Said, Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious, For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with an inscription to an unknown God, What therefore you worship as unknown, This, This icon, This altar, To a plethora of unknown gods,

Well, I proclaim to you, This, Is my God. That's integration. He's not a traditional conservative iconoclast.

I mean, Can you imagine what would have happened if Paul had made his way into Athens, Up from the harbor, And its four to five mile journey into the city, Breaking all the idols that he saw.

[20 : 23] His, His storyographers, Archaeologists tell us that there might have been as many as, Thirty-three thousand, Altars and statues and, Gods and divinities.

He doesn't arrive like, Well, In the, I know Cromwell it's debated, You know, Those of you who are in church history, But at the popular conception, He doesn't arrive like Cromwell, Or even his, Ancestor or predecessor by name, Thomas Cromwell, Under Henry VIII.

He doesn't arrive and say, I am so provoked, By the Athenian worship of idols, That I'm going to tear them all down. And I'm going to preach against them.

And I'm going to organize a boycott. And I'll probably start it from the synagogue. For indeed, They will know above anyone else in Athens, That there is to be no graven image.

Paul doesn't do that. Do we? How integrative is our approach? How different is the approach here, To what we read of in church history, Or what we even see on the scene today?

[21 : 41] Iconoclastic Christians, May rid the world of its external symbols, But they will never win the heart and mind, Of those who live and walk among them.

When will conservative Christendom Come to understand that very simple point? Are you capable?

Not only as we mentioned last week, Of recognizing idols in our culture, But are you capable of taking that, And turning that, To a discussion on the living and true God?

That's the only way forward for us, In Hyde Park. No walking up and down the streets, Of 53rd Street, With baseball bats, Looking for every external idol to be found, And smashing it to smithereens.

No organized boycotts, Against all the travails of the world. No. This, Which you worship, I proclaim to you.

[22 : 54] It's like judo, you know, Taking all the weight, And just throwing it to your advantage. Now let me just stop there for a moment, Because some of you are probably thinking, Well, There's a lot in the Bible about idolatry, And getting rid of it.

And how does that square with this, Sunday afternoon approach, On being missional in Hyde Park? Let me put it this way, When idols in the scriptures, Are found to reside, Within the context, Of the people of God, That is a source for great hostility, From the church, And even to the point, Where they ought to be overthrown.

The church must always stand against idolatry, Particularly when it is in the family of God. There's no room here, For integration.

When the church begins to integrate, Idolatry within its cultic worship and life, It's just another word for accommodation, And assimilation, And a rejection of the one true God.

This accounts for why the Old Testament texts, Speak so clearly, Between that which was a good king, And a bad king. And the good kings, Watch the idols in the high places, Rise within the people of God, And they threw them down.

[24 : 25] No place, For idolatry here. We ought to be rigorously, Against idols here, Whatever they are in our midst.

Remember, An idol isn't something merely, That you bow down to externally, It is anything, That ultimately, You find your satisfaction in, Other than God himself. So what do you find your ultimate satisfaction in?

Is it vacation? Oh, I live for vacation. Really? Really? You live for escape? You live to be out of the natural, Normal, Working ways of life?

That could be an idol. I live for financial freedom. Really? Is that what you find your ultimate satisfaction is? In? That ought to be thrown from our midst?

I live for pleasure. Really? It ought to be overthrown in this house, In your house, In the homes of those who claim to follow Christ.

[25 : 33] Christ. But when we see it in the world, When we see it outside the family of God, It is there particularly, That we ought to, Think of how do we throw down, Not merely the external, Symbol that I'm looking at, But I'm actually after something else, Aren't I?

An internal change of heart. And that's the third aspect, Of Paul's characteristics. The characteristics of his approach, He was interpersonal.

He was integrative. And he labored for an internal, Change of heart. That's how he overthrew idols in his day. Paul adopts a strategy of integration, Regarding idols, Not because he thinks, Idol worship is okay.

Rather, He is out, Not for some shallow, External, Conformity, In his neighborhood, To the ways of God.

He could care less about that. He was out, For the internal, Change of heart. And so notice, How he tears down idols, In our own text.

[26 : 54] In one hand, Early on, He is speaking, That which you worship, I proclaim to you. But then later, He cuts to the core of the matter, Doesn't he?

In verse 29, Being then, God's offspring. We ought not to think, That the divine being, Is like gold, Or silver, Or stone, An image formed, By the art, And imagination of man.

The times of ignorance, God overlooked. But now, He commands all people, Everywhere, To repent. He doesn't say, He commands all people, Everywhere, To start smashing, The external symbols, Of idolatry.

No, He's out, For an internal, Change of mind, And thinking. That the Athenians, Would begin to live, Differently, Under a recognition, That God has revealed, Himself, And to all of humanity, Through His Son.

And that He won't put up, With anything else, That you want to be satisfied in, Beyond and above Him. So He labors, For an internal, Change of heart.

[27 : 59] You see that very clearly, Don't you, In 1 Thessalonians. We probably don't have time, But if I can find it quickly, We'll take a look.

Just a couple of verses, 1 Thessalonians, 1, 9 and 10, For they themselves, Report concerning us, The kind of reception, We had among you, And how you turn, To God, From idols, To serve the living, And true God.

That's what Paul was out for. A turning, A mental, Turning away, From idols, To God. That's what conversion is. It is moving away, From one kind of relationship, In which people, Are finding satisfaction, And bringing them, Into relationship, With the living God.

And when that happens, When that conversion, Takes place, Well, Idolatry is over. It's been supplanted. It's dethroned.

He was out for an internal, Internal change, Change of heart. The times of ignorance, Were over. God was now commanding, Everyone to repent.

[29 : 11] So, What are we learning, From his approach? Interpersonal relationships, Are key. An integrative, Understanding of life, Is critical.

And we must be out, For an internal, Change of heart. Let me put it differently, And this is maybe, One of the areas, That we would stick on, Here in Hyde Park, Especially those of us, Who think about, Trying to reach, Anyone with, Kind of socioeconomic, Upward mobility, Quite an educated, Individual.

Is that sometimes, We would rather, Just be part of the discussion, And the dialogue, Rather than actually, Laboring for an internal, Change of heart. Hey, Paul was not here, To be part of the dialogue. That wasn't enough for him.

He was out, For an internal, Change of heart. Repent. The day is fixed. God commands, Everyone to turn. He got there.

And many times, We don't. And if we're honest, With ourselves, And we look within our heart, We must ask ourselves, Am I trying, To turn, The minds and hearts, Of the citizenry, In Chicago.

[30 : 31] Or, Have I accommodated myself, To the notion, That I'm just happy, If Christianity is in play. Enough of that.

If Holy Trinity Church, Is going to make, Any missional impact, In this neighborhood, It won't be, Let's throw a party. Because people are discussing, Christianity.

No, It will be governed, By men and women, Who go home, And pray, And ask the living God, To turn the hearts, Of men and women, Out of relationships, That they are looking, To satisfy themselves in, And into a relationship, With the living God, Through the death, And resurrection of Christ, While there is yet, Time for them, To enjoy him, And all that he's given, Forevermore, Fourth, And I've already decided, I'm not even doing, The second point today, Aren't you happy?

I just saved you, About, 20 minutes, And I've just leveraged, My way into another sermon, From this text, For those of you, Who have fallen asleep, I'm now limiting, My comments today, To the characteristics, Of his approach, That will help us, I will return, Again, Regarding the content, Of his apology, Or his actual defense, And what we learn, From his preaching material, So, Now that you're relaxed, And realizing, You won't be here, Till 530, I'll make my final point, Not only must we be, Interpersonal, In relationship, Is what I mean by that, Integrative, Aware of how to, Dialogue and use things today, In ways that might advance, The gospel, Intent, On seeking, Internal change of heart, But Paul was also well aware,

That of the implications, That would come, And this will scare people off, Who are Christians, If they don't squarely face, The implications, Of a speech, And a life, That is fully devoted, To the gospel, What do I mean?

[32 : 56] Well, are you ready, For the response of mockery, In verse 32? Are you ready, For outright rejection, Of your message?

Are you ready, For those who would, Just as soon, Talk about things, Ad nauseum? Take a look, Down the line, At what happens, To Paul in Ephesus, If you really want, To get to the point, Acts 19, Turn over the page, Paul, In Ephesus, What happens, At verse 21?

Well, There's a riot, Verse 24, For a man, Under, Named Demetrius, A silversmith, Who made, Silver shrines, Of Artemis, Brought no little business, To the craftsmen, That's a fine way, Of saying, He was bringing, A lot of money, Into the economy, Through his, Fashioning of, Altars, Idols, Shrines, Verse 25, These he gathered, Together with the workmen, Now you're with the tradesmen, In similar trades, He's actually cutting, Across the guilds now, And said, Men, You know, That from, This business, We have our wealth, And you see in here, That not only in Ephesus, But in almost all of Asia, This Paul, Has persuaded, And turned away, A great many people, Saying, That gods made with hands, Are no gods, And there is danger, Not only that this trade of ours, May come into disrepute, But also that the temple,

Of the great goddess Artemis, May be counted as nothing, And that she may even be deposed, From her magnificence, She, Whom all Asia, And the world, Worship, And when they heard this, They were enraged, That's the implications, So, Don't think, Holy Trinity, Wow, If we can really, If we can just craft ourselves, Just right, We can just, We can really think this out, I can be in relationships, With people, Learn how to be, Exercising discourse, In integrative ways, Hoping and praying, For their conversion, Without any negative implication, That's not true, Don't believe it, Paul didn't, For when, Take 10% of Hyde Park, Hyde Park's what,

About 30,000 people, What's 10%? 3,000? Am I correct on that, Mr. Reynolds? Yeah, Well, You're probably, I'm probably wrong, But at any rate, I don't do math, Imagine what would happen, If 3,000 people, On our streets, Came to know Christ, In the next three years, What would happen, In business?

[35 : 52] What would happen, To idolatry? What would happen, To all the venues, That we are presently, Finding our satisfaction, In other than God? It may have, An implication, And the implication, May be negative, For those who are, Supporting the message, Of the gospel, So while we don't, Make a thing, About tearing down, External symbols, Of idolatry, No one here, Is confused, Into thinking, There will be no implications, For when a heart, Is turned, People begin to find, Their satisfaction, In God, They begin to seek him, They begin to want him, They begin to come, Into the doors, Of churches like this, And listen for his word, And lift up their voice, To him in praise, And they begin to change, Their speech, And their patterns, And their spending, And their behavior, And it has an impact, And not everybody,

Will be happy, That is, Those are, The lessons, To be carried, Concerning his approach, In, Athens, You know, I was thinking, About Holy Trinity, I've been thinking, About us a lot, Who are we, Where are we going, And what are we doing, And I got to tell you, That I've really felt, That these last, Weeks, We need to begin, Crystallizing for ourselves, Some foundational, Moments, I think, Holy Trinity Church, Should seek, To become, A missional church, A missional church, Is one that never, Relinquishes its hold, On God's unchanging gospel, That will always keep you, From, One of the horns,

Of the dilemma, Of contextualization, If you never, Relinquish your hold, On God's unchanging gospel, You'll never succumb, To accommodation, And assimilation, To the world, But, That's not enough, A missional church, Not only, Holds fast, To God's unchanging gospel, It recognizes, That in an ever, Changing world, We find ourselves, Amidst a citizenry, In which, The Christian categories, Of speech, And knowledge, Are nearly gone, So that when I speak, Downtown, To business men, And women, And I speak, Of Peter, And his threefold denial, And there are 80 business people, Out there, And a woman, In her 50's, Comes to me, Upon the conclusion, And says, You never told us, What happened to Peter?

I said, What are you talking about? Well, He denied him three times. What happened? I said, Well, You'll have to come back next week. Because, Because next week, He gets reinstated, And good things happen to Peter.

And then I realized, This woman is in her 50's, And for the very first time in her life, Is hearing, Christian categories, Christian categories, And stories, Like a baby, In the room in the back, Listening to a Sunday school teacher today.

[39 : 25] Had no idea. Now you would think, Given the world in which we live, Even the Roman Catholic Church, And St. Peter, And the apostolic tradition, You would think that someone would know, That Peter became a Christian.

But in Chicago, In this day, They do not know. And what a joy, To see her, Come to a belief, In the forgiveness of Christ, That was afforded to Peter, And to her, Over the context of, Ongoing discussion.

You see, It's not enough, For us to, Never relinquish, Our hold on the gospel. We have to begin, Recognizing that we live, In a world, Largely depleted, Of any, Historical understanding, Of Christian categories.

In a missional church then, What we ought to be together, As a family, We ought to commit ourselves, To recalibrating, Everything we do, Everything we say, To develop you, Those of you who are following Christ, To become truly, Mature in Christ, And capable of walking, Through those doors, And reaching, Your particular context, For Christ, And thereby advance, A movement of the gospel, That has not been known, For some time, In this city.

That's what we need to become, And it's going to require, Personal relationships, And an ability to integrate, Thought in life, And an understanding, Of what people are finding, Their satisfaction in, And how I might, Communicate the gospel, How I might speak, Of the resurrection, Let me put it this way, I do not want to pastor, A mainstream church, That is pulled along, By the prevailing currents, Of culture, I have no interest, I do not want to pastor, A maintenance church, Whose power, Is limited, In its capacity, That it can only reach, People who came from, Historically known, Christian categories, Because those people, Are not very many anymore, I don't want us, To become a marginalized church,

[41 : 50] That is known, For some staunch opposition, To everything that goes on, In an ungodly way, In our culture, In fact, I don't even want us, To be a missions church, I don't want us, To think that somehow, The part we play, In the Christian movement, Is relegated to sending, Semi-Christian professionals, To other parts of the world, Where they can do, Cross-cultural work, No, We need to be, A missional church, That seeks to present, All of you, Mature in Christ, Capable of developing in him, Knowing him, Living for him, Articulating things for him, So that when you go, Out through those doors, Onto these streets, The gospel goes forward, In all of its fullness, May God, Bring us that kind of church, May you commit, With me, That we would,

Prayerfully become, That kind of a church, Let's pray, Our heavenly father, We thank you for, This time, In this word, And we commit, These weeks to you, As we celebrate, Our life in the gospel, Indeed, It is a treasure, A gem, A precious stone, That has been set, Deep within our hearts, On the basis, Of the resurrection, Of Christ, I pray, Lord, Now that we would, Learn from our setting, And that we would, Take lessons, Concerning our approach, And in the future, Lord, Even help us, To understand, The importance, Of the message, That we deliver, In Jesus name, Amen, Amen, And that we,