

Missions



contents

God of All Nations.....	2
God's Big Idea	4
Abraham's Spiritual Descendants - Heirs of the Blessing and the Responsibility	6
Is Missions the Same as Evangelism?	9
How to Be a World Christian...	10
List of Scriptures.....	20

God OF ALL NATIONS

Why did God, through Christ's atoning sacrifice, bless you with a relationship with Himself? Because God loves you so much.

This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. 1 John 4:10

But, is there another reason that you've received the blessing of His salvation?

In order to find the answer, you are going to read some verses in the Bible that, at first, might seem irrelevant to the question. But, follow the path of Scripture, and you'll see the answer.

◆ Read Genesis 12:1-5.

This is known as the Abrahamic covenant that God made. God, by miraculously allowing Abraham and Sarah to bear a son in their old age, made Abraham the father of the Jewish nation. The land God gave Abraham and his descendants is the land Israel claims today (Genesis 17:8).

What was the promise, or covenant, God made with Abraham?

- I will make you into a _____.
- I will _____.
- I will make your _____.
- You will be _____.
- I will bless _____.
- I will curse _____.
- Through you _____.

According to the covenant, for what purpose did God bless Abraham?

God's purpose in blessing Abraham was that, through him, all the nations would be blessed. Abraham was blessed in order to be a blessing.



➡ **Read Genesis 17:3-7.**

What did God say that He would make Abraham?

For whom is the covenant God has made?

How long will the covenant last?

God's covenant of blessing was with Abraham **and** all his descendants (of which you are one, as you will see later). How did God want them to be a blessing to the (non-Jewish - Gentile) nations? He wanted the Jews to bless the nations by telling them about their God. When the other nations saw how God was blessing the Jews, they would also want to know Him and take Him as their God.

Hear God's purposes: *For the LORD your God dried up the Jordan before you until you had crossed over. The LORD your God did to the Jordan just what he had done to the Red Sea when he dried it up before us until we had crossed over. He did this **so that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the LORD is powerful and so that you might always fear the LORD your God.***" Joshua 4:23-24 (emphasis mine)

*Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name; **make known among the nations** what he has done. **Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples.** For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the LORD made the heavens. Ascribe to the LORD, **0 families of nations, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength, ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name. ... 1** Chronicles 16:8, 24, 26, 28-29a (emphasis mine)*

However, rather than blessing other nations by telling them about their God, the Jews became proud, enjoying the fact that they were specially chosen and blessed by God. They gladly received "I will bless you... Genesis 12:2 and ignored "...and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." Genesis 12:3 They received the **blessing** of the covenant without carrying the **responsibility** that came with it.



God's BIG IDEA

God had a big idea in mind when He told Abraham, *“through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed....”* Genesis 22:18 One particular descendant of Abraham, the Messiah or Christ, was prophesied to come and bring the culmination of the blessing. *A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, **the son of Abraham:** Matthew 1:1* (the genealogy follows) *Thus there were fourteen generations in all from **Abraham** to David, fourteen from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Christ. Matthew 1:17* (emphasis mine)

The angel told Joseph, *“...She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because **he will save his people from their sins.**”* All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had **said through the prophet:** *“The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel”* --which means, *“God with us.”* Matthew 1:21-23 (emphasis mine)

In Romans 4:6-8, you can see how Christ brought the culmination of the blessing. *David says the same thing when he speaks of the **blessedness** of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works* (righteousness through faith in Christ's atoning sacrifice): *“**Blessed** are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. **Blessed** is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him.”* (emphasis mine)

How did Jesus Christ bring the culmination of the blessing?

•➔ **Read Galatians 3:8.** *The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: “All nations will be blessed through you.”*

What was the gospel message announced to Abraham?

The Blessing Defined

The blessing is to know God and to experience Him personally. God longs for all people to know Him.

...I will bless you,...and you will be a blessing.

Genesis 12:2 means to know God and make Him known.

◆➔ **Read 1 Corinthians 15:1, 3-5.** *Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.*

What was the gospel message that Paul preached to the Corinthians?

Put these two descriptions of the gospel together. What is your conclusion? (Hint: Who came through Abraham?)

This was God's Big Idea all the time. Christ made a way, through His death and resurrection, for all people (not just Jews) to be blessed by knowing God. The blessing, just as it was for Abraham, is to know God and to experience His intervention in your life personally.

God longs for all people to experience the blessing of knowing Him. *Is this **blessedness** only for the circumcised (Jews), or also for the uncircumcised (Gentiles – all other nations)?... Romans 4:9 Is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith (in Christ's atonement rather than their standing as Abraham's descendants) and the uncircumcised through that same faith (in Christ's atonement even though they are **not** physically Abraham's descendants). Romans 3:29-30 (emphasis mine)*

Abraham's spiritual DESCENDANTS

- Heirs of the Blessing and the Responsibility

Even though Gentiles, anyone who is not Jewish, are not physically Abraham's descendants, all that rely on (have faith in) Christ's payment for their sins become Abraham's spiritual descendants. ...**he (Abraham) is the father of all who believe** but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them. Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be **guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring** -- not only to those who are of the law (Jews) but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham (Gentiles who believe). He is the **father of us all**. As it is written: "I have made you a **father of many nations**." He is **our father in the sight of God**, in whom he believed – the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were. Romans 4:11, 16-17 (emphasis mine)

Who are the nations of whom Abraham is the father? (Physically, he was the father of one nation, the Jews.)

Who are Abraham's descendants in God's eyes?

Are you Abraham's descendant?

If you have received the promised blessing of having your sins forgiven in order to know God, you are Abraham's descendant. You have inherited the blessing of knowing God. *If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. Galatians 3:29*

According to the covenant, or promise, what is your **responsibility** as Abraham's offspring?

This answers the question from the beginning of this study: Is there another reason that you've received the blessing of His salvation? Yes! You have been blessed with knowing God in order to bring the blessing to other nations.



➤ Read Luke 24:44-47.

Jesus showed them in the Scriptures that God's plan has always been to bring all nations to Himself through Christ's sacrifice. The word "nations" (ethnos) refers to ethnic groups of people. Within most political boundaries (nations), there are many people groups defined by common language and customs. God wants every **people group** to hear about Him, to know Him, and to love Him.

What method has God chosen to inform the nations (people groups) of His desire?

➤ Read Psalm 67. (To fear the Lord means to reverence, honor, and obey Him.) According to this psalm, why would you pray for God's blessings on your life?

What will the nations experience as a result of receiving His rule in their lives? (verse 4)

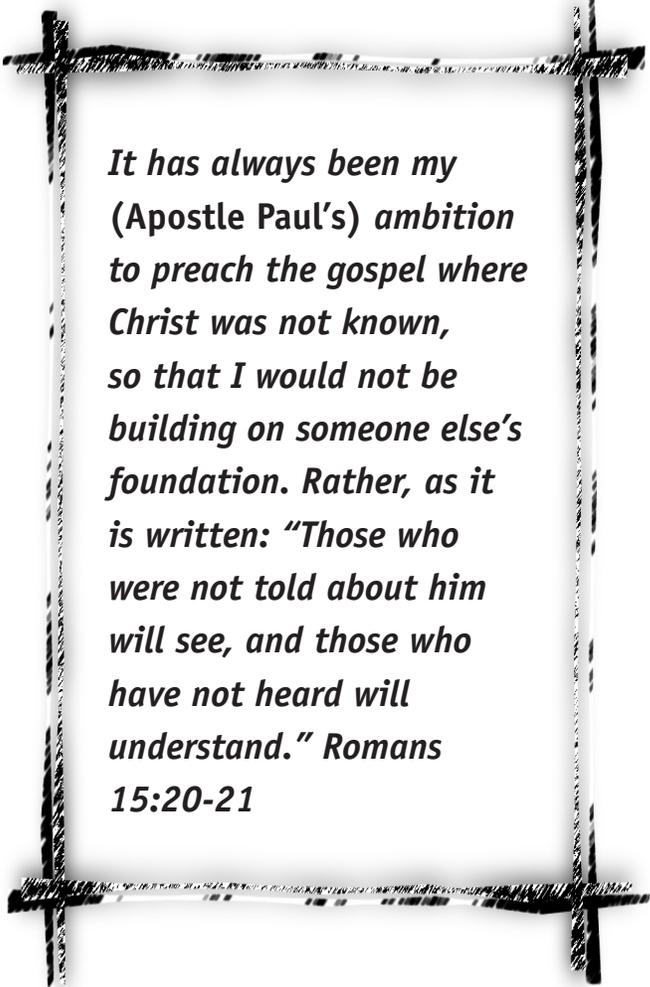
What is the circular effect of blessings revealed in verses 1-2 and 5-6?

What is the ultimate goal (after God's salvation is known and brings joy among the nations)?



The ultimate goal of missions is for God to receive the glory due Him by all the peoples on earth. *Ascribe to the LORD, O families of nations, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength, ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name.* ... *1 Chronicles 16:29* At the end of time, see the goal accomplished: the grateful, heart-felt joy overflowing in worship from all people groups. *And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth."* After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. *And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."* *Revelation 5:9-10, 7:9-10* (emphasis mine)

But the goal will not happen by itself. Jesus said, *"And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come."* *Matthew 24:14* Join with Christ in the great endeavor to bless the nations and, by your actions, hasten His return.



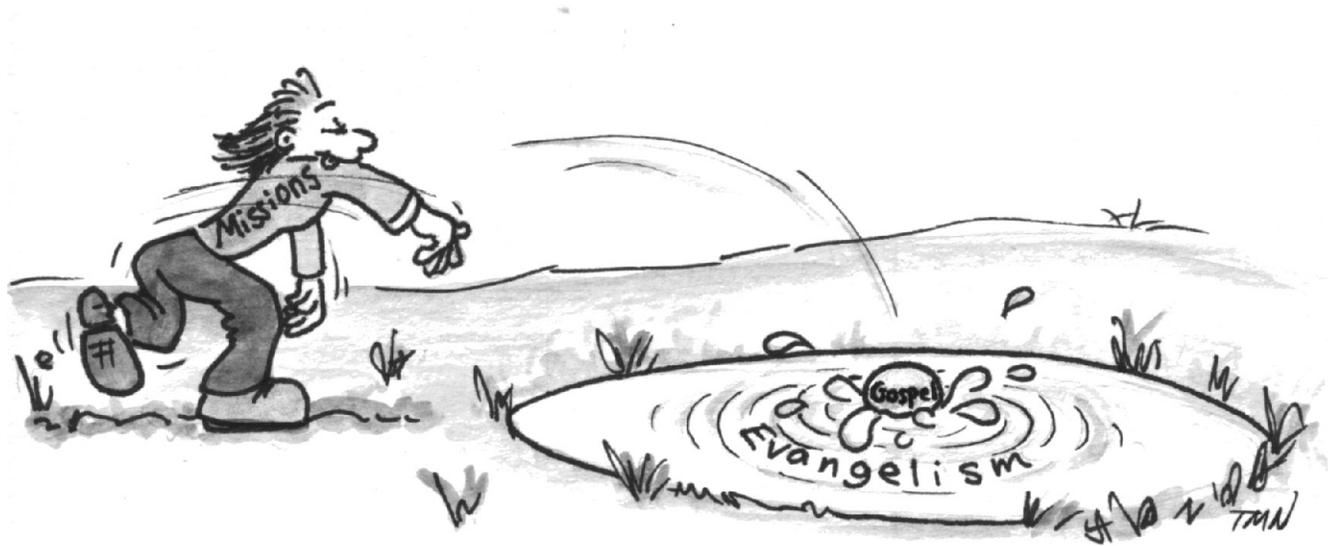
It has always been my (Apostle Paul's) ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation. Rather, as it is written: "Those who were not told about him will see, and those who have not heard will understand." Romans 15:20-21

is missions the same as EVANGELISM?

The purpose of missions is to introduce the gospel into a people group which lacks a culturally sensitive or appropriate expression of Christ – where there is no viable group of Christians yet. Missions efforts go where there is very little or no expression of the gospel, or the gospel is not being communicated in a way to which the people can relate.

Evangelism takes place when Christians tell the gospel to people within their own general culture and language. As people become Christians, they are to introduce others in their “nation” to Jesus.

Missions throws the gospel like a pebble into the “pond” of a people group. The ripples emanating from the pebble eventually reach the edge of the pond. The ripples are evangelism extending the influence of the gospel within the people group.



how to be a WORLD CHRISTIAN

Blessing the Nations

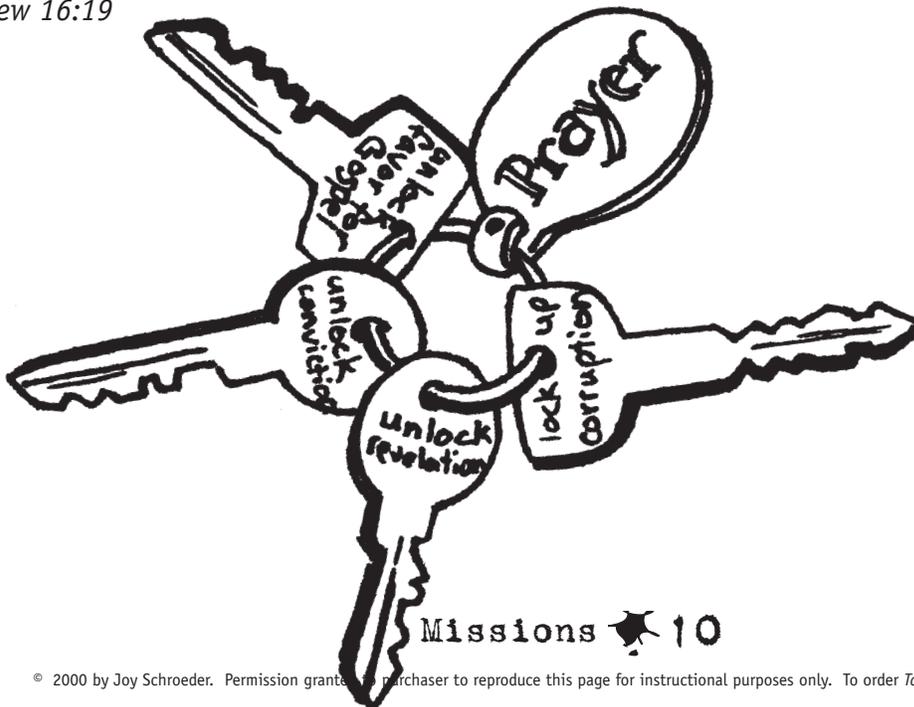
Pray.

The greatest impact you can have on all peoples coming to know God is to pray for them and lead other Christians to pray. Prayer is as limitless in power as God is – wherever God can go and whatever He can do is released when you pray. You can change a nation from your living room. Prayer is the one action on which all other mission endeavors depend.

Prayer is love at war. It penetrates the two ultimate barriers: unbelieving hearts of those far from God and the resisting powers of Satan seeking to keep them in darkness. Prayer attacks the strongholds keeping people in bondage. In prayer, you use the keys Christ has given to bind the evil spiritual forces and loose the captives. *“I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”*
Matthew 16:19

*He is the atoning sacrifice
for our sins, and not only
for ours but also for the
sins of the whole world.
1 John 2:2*

**How will the whole world
know that the way has
been paid to have their
sins forgiven?**



◆➔ **Read 1 Timothy 2:1-4.**

For what especially should you pray for a political nation or people group?

For what should you ask God?



Pray this Scripture. Pray that government leaders will allow Christians freedom to express their faith openly. Pray that they can live peacefully, without fear. Pray for leaders, and all people in that nation, to have a revelation of Christ. Pray for knowledge of the truth – that someone will tell them. God wants all people to be saved. So, pray into reality what is on God’s heart.



Pray for and Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering. Hebrews 13:3

Ask God to give you a nation, an unreached people group, or a religion (such as Hinduism or Islam) on which to focus prayer.

He told them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. Luke 10:2

For what should you ask God?

Are you willing to be part of God’s answer by going yourself or sending others with your finances?

Meet international students.

80-90% of the leaders and major people of influence in the non-Western nations have been educated in the United States. By meeting, assisting, and befriending an international student, you create an accurate impression of Christians and their God. He/She will be more apt to influence his/her nation toward tolerance of Christians there.



International students, away from their own environments, are at a time in life when they are most receptive to the gospel. One of your international friends may become a Christian, and then you will have introduced the gospel "pebble" into that culture. Mentor him/her thoroughly and prepare him/her to re-enter his/her country as a Christian.

Befriend international students:

Pick them up at the airport.

Take them shopping and help them find what they need in your community.

Give them rides to places they need to go.

Help them know what is considered good manners in your country, and learn what is appropriate in their culture.

Take them to church or campus ministry.

Invite them to join you for holiday celebrations and explain the meaning and history.

Be a language partner for them so that they can practice English.

Invite them into your home.

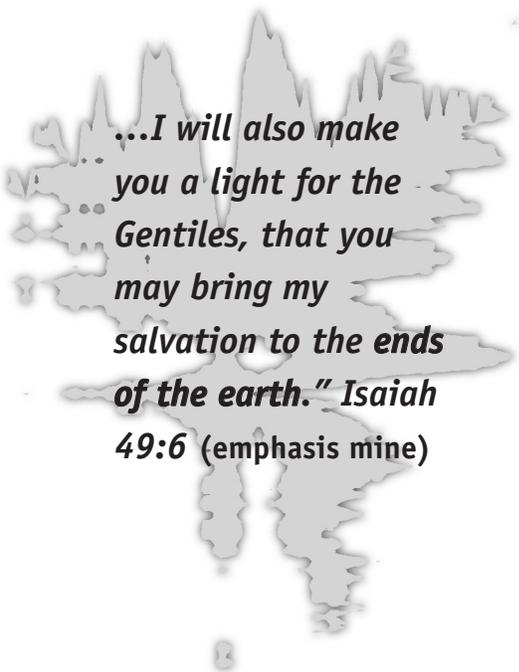
Overcome your awkwardness with the language difficulties. Silences are all right. They appreciate being invited into your world.

Pray for them and the countries they represent.

Allow them to cook native foods for you and show you pictures of their family.

Study their religion (Josh McDowell's books are helpful) so you have an idea of their worldview. Avoid challenging their beliefs directly. Be respectful of their religion while emphasizing basic Christian truths such as forgiveness through Christ's atonement.

You are an ambassador of the God of all people groups. By telling them about the Christian God Who has intervened in your life and made a difference, you are spreading the blessing. Remember that God is constantly looking for people from all the nations to whom He can express His love. He loves diversity.



...I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth." Isaiah 49:6 (emphasis mine)

Support missionaries.

Pray for open hearts in the people.

Pray for God's presence to uplift them, His wisdom to guide them, and His power to be shown.

Pray for strength in the face of fear, loneliness, danger, discouragement, or sickness.

Pray that they will find supportive friends and a sense of humor.

Pray for enough money to do the projects that will help spread the gospel

Pray that they can understand and appreciate the customs, laws and language of the people.

Pray for their marriage to stay strong, their children to have a close relationship with God, and that single missionaries find the support they need.

Pray that there will be unity, harmony, humility, and servanthood among all the other missionaries.

Pray for strength and favor as they come back home to raise more money.

Pray for perseverance and hope when they are in hard places where very few, if any, convert to Christianity.

Invite visiting missionaries into your home. Ask them to tell you about their experiences and show you pictures of the people with whom they work. Missionaries are some of the most intelligent, creative, courageous, adventurous, insightful people you will ever meet.

Giving just \$5 a month will make a difference. Get to know the missionary you support. Pray as you read his/her newsletter. Write to your missionary about your life and comment on his/her newsletter. *How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach **unless they are sent**? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" Romans 10:14-15 (emphasis mine)*

Many people are ready to go, but do not have enough financial support. Many are missionaries now but do not have enough finances to do the projects needed to expedite the communication of the gospel.

When you invest your resources in people who are giving their lives to sharing the gospel and making disciples, you are working together with them, partnering with them. And you will share in the reward Jesus will give them in heaven.

Would you be willing to contribute money to send one missionary to those who have not yet heard the message of Jesus?

Read widely. Learn.

Read biographies about missionaries such as Hudson Taylor, Amy Carmichael, Jim Elliot, George Muller, and books written by Don Richardson and Loren Cunningham. Read their stories with a purpose to learn from them vital leadership skills and character qualities. Let them teach you how to handle difficult people, bridge cultural differences, and access God's power. They will be your mentors if you let them.

Read the newspaper, or watch the news, paying attention to what God is doing and wanting to do in world events. Pray for the situations as you hear about them, asking God to relieve suffering, inhibit the work of evil people, and bring people to Himself.



Read about the religions and belief systems of other nations. As you pray for a nation that practices that religion, pray against the stronghold it has in the people's minds and hearts. Include philosophies such as humanism, materialism, Marxism, and so on. You can pray following the pattern of this Scripture: *The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. 2 Corinthians 10:4-5*

Read periodicals, such as *National Geographic*, to learn about different peoples and their countries.

Subscribe to *Global Prayer Digest*, a daily guide containing short, interesting write-ups and prayer guides for unreached people groups. It is fascinating and helps you be effective in strategic, informed prayer. (See resources list at the end of this section.)

Get in shape.

Do what is necessary to get in good physical condition. Establish a regular fitness routine. Eat wisely and moderately. This way you will be able to handle the rigors of a short-term missionary trip or a long-term commitment in a foreign country.

Study a language.

Choose a language from a nation or region that interests you.

Explain the gospel message.

Explain the gospel without using any words only Christians would understand ("saved," "repent," "born again,"). Think about a problem common to all cultures that Christianity addresses (suffering, evil, selfishness). Consider and think through how to explain the gospel as it pertains to that problem. Practice with a friend.

Learn first aid.

It might come in handy on a mission trip or hiking close by with an international student.

Take electives and learn skills.

If you are considering (even a little bit) going on a short-term mission trip or becoming a career missionary, take electives and learn skills that would make you more effective. These might include: first aid, carpentry, mechanics, art, plumbing, agriculture, teaching methods, electronics, public health, bookkeeping, linguistics, anthropology.



Start a Meet-and-Eat Prayer Group (don't eat the prayer group).

Pray for a specific people group and eat the food that they would eat. This could be done like an investment club. Someone could research a people group (instead of a company) and then present the people group for "investment" in prayer. The research would include food recipes to cook for the meeting.

Get out of debt - avoid student loans.

Then, you can support missions generously. You will be ready to go on a mission trip or send another. You will be ready to go as a career missionary. You will be free to obey God immediately.



Take a short-term mission trip, preferably to an unreached area (very little contact with the gospel).

Once you see the sights and smell the smells, you will pray for and finance missions the rest of your life. You will see how the rest of the world lives. The way you view your own life and culture will never be the same. God will have a chance to affect you deeply with His heart for all peoples.

Participate on a prayer journey.

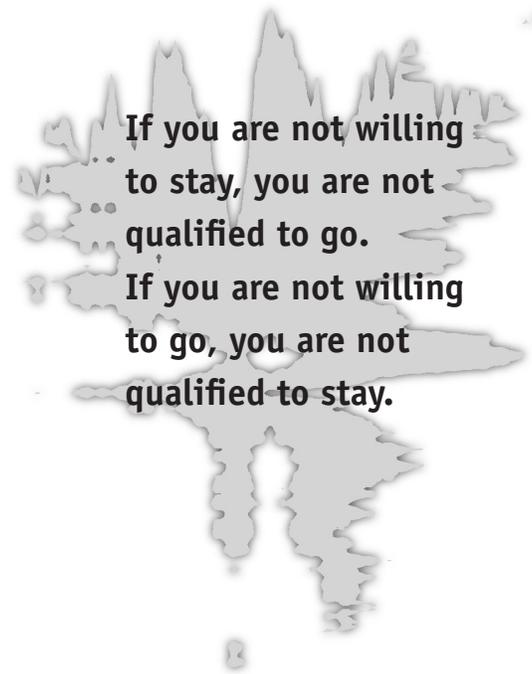
Participate in a mercy ministry outreach or building project.

Participate on an evangelistic outreach.

Youth with a Mission provides training and a cross-cultural missions experience in five months.

Seriously consider becoming a career missionary.

Maybe you are one that is to go to another nation and seek to explain the gospel to them in a way they can understand. Take time now to spend with international students and learn to view the world as they do. Learn to listen and think through another culture's paradigm. Make a five-year plan to get to the mission field, and stick to it. Consider using your occupation to find employment in another country for the purpose of influencing that nation with the gospel. *Today's Tentmakers* by J. Christy Wilson (Tyndale, 1981) is a great resource.



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John Holzmann, *Your Part in God's Plan*, Sonlight Curriculum, Ltd., 8042 South Grant Way, Littleton, Colorado, 80122-2705, 1992.

Rick Leatherwood, *The Unchanging Purpose of God*, P.O. Box 2033, Bozeman, Montana, 59715.

John Piper, *Let the Nations Rejoice*, Baker Books, P.O. Box 6287, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1993.

Resources:

David C. Forward, *The Essential Guide to the Short Term Mission Trip*, Moody Press, Chicago, 1998.

Belkis Lehmann, *Chi Alpha's Short Term Mission Trip Workbook*, Chi Alpha Campus Ministries, USA, 1445 N. Boonville Avenue, Springfield, Missouri, 65802-1894, 2000.

Barry and Alicia Chole, *Till the Whole World Knows*, a syllabus for a class on missions. Available from Onewholeworld, Inc., 3397 Liberty Road, Rogersville, MO 65742, <http://www.onewholeworld.com>

Global Prayer Digest, U.S. Center for World Mission, Frontier Fellowship, 1605 E. Elizabeth Street, Pasadena, California, 91104-2721. Write this organization for a catalog of many missions resources.

Voice of the Martyrs, P.O. Box 443, Bartlesville, OK 74005, <http://www.persecution.com>

To serve international students:

How To Survive In The U.S.: A Handbook For Internationals, Marcia Warkentin, International Students, Inc. (ISI), 1995. (719) 576-2700

Includes the following topics: finding a place to live, mailing letters and packages, shopping, health care, classroom helps, holidays, spiritual life, making friends, at someone's house, important phone numbers. 74 pages

Passport to the Bible: An Explorer's Guide, published by InterVarsity Press, 1999.

24 basic Bible studies for groups or individuals. They work well with internationals. 118 pages

Think Home, Lisa Espineli-Chinn, International Students, Inc. (ISI), 1987.

A practical guide for Christian Internationals preparing to return home. 53 pages

Manual for Ministry to Internationals, David E. Shamburg. Contact Chi Alpha Campus Ministries, 1445 N. Boonville Avenue, Springfield, Missouri, 65802-1894.

list of SCRIPTURES

➔ General References

Genesis 12:1-5	Abrahamic covenant
Genesis 17:3-7	Abraham father of many nations, covenant for descendants
Genesis 22:13-18	God keeps Abraham from sacrificing son and speaks the covenant
Deuteronomy 28:9-10	if keep God's commands, peoples will see you are called by His name
Joshua 4:23-24	God showed His might so all peoples know His power
1 Kings 8:54-61	if hearts are fully committed to God, all peoples will know He is the only God
1 Chronicles 16:8, 24, 26, 28-29a	make God known among all nations that they may glorify Him
Psalm 22:27-31	all nations will bow before God, proclaim Him to unborn, future generations
Psalm 67:1-7	bless us so God may be known, all peoples praise Him, nations be glad
Psalm 86:8-10	all nations will give God glory
Psalm 96:1-13	declare God's glory among the nations, all peoples should give Him glory
Psalm 98:1-9	God has made His salvation known to nations, shout for joy all the earth
Isaiah 25:6-9	God will destroy the sheet that covers the nations, swallow death, proclaim salvation
Isaiah 42:6	a light for the Gentiles
Isaiah 49:6	a light for the Gentiles and bring salvation to ends of earth
Isaiah 52:10	God will bare holy arm in sight of all nations, see salvation of God
Isaiah 66:19-20	God will send some to nations to proclaim His glory, bring peoples to God as offering
Jeremiah 33:6-9	God will heal so they will bring God renown before all nations
Daniel 4:1-3	Nebuchadnezzar tells all peoples about the miracles of God (Old Testament missionary spreading the blessing)
Daniel 7:13-14	Jesus given dominion over all peoples, eternal kingdom

Matthew 1:1, 17, 21-23	Jesus is Abraham's descendant, prophesied, save from sins
Matthew 16:18-19	gates of Hades not overcome church, keys of kingdom to bind and loose
Matthew 24:14, Mark 13:10	gospel preached to all nations, then the end
Luke 10:2	pray for laborers in harvest
Luke 24:44-48	Christ showed them Scriptures, gospel preached to all nations
Acts 26:17-18	sending you (Paul) to Gentiles to turn them from power of Satan to God, receive forgiveness
Romans 1:1-5	gospel promised through prophets, gospel defined, call the Gentiles
Romans 3:29-30	God justifies Jews and Gentiles by faith, God of all
Romans 4:6-9	blessed to have sins forgiven, for Jews and Gentiles
Romans 4:11, 16-17	Abraham father of many nations of believers
Romans 10:14-15	how can they hear unless someone sent to preach
Romans 15:15-21	priestly duty of proclaiming gospel to Gentiles so they are an offering to God, preach where Christ is unknown
Romans 16:25-27	gospel of Christ revealed through prophets so all nations believe and obey
1 Corinthians 15:1-5	gospel defined, prophecy fulfilled
2 Corinthians 10:4-5	demolish strongholds, arguments, take thoughts captive
Galatians 3:6-9, 29	children of Abraham if they will believe, gospel is the Abrahamic covenant
Ephesians 3:6	through gospel Gentiles heirs with Israel, in promise in Christ Jesus
1 Timothy 2:1-4	prayers made for authorities, live peaceful, godly, all saved
Hebrews 6:12-17	unchanging nature of Abrahamic covenant
Hebrews 13:3	remember those in prison, mistreated
1 John 2:2	atoning sacrifice for sins of whole world
1 John 4:10	God loved us and sent Christ as atoning sacrifice
Revelation 5:7-10	Jesus purchased men from every tribe, tongues, nation
Revelation 7:9-10	people from every nation worshiping

➔ **God's temple is a house for all nations**

2 Chronicles 6:32-33

foreigner comes because of Your great name, hear his prayer so all peoples know You

Isaiah 2:2-4

all nations stream to God's temple, many peoples will be taught, peace between nations

Isaiah 56:6-8

believing foreigners welcome in My house of prayer, house of prayer for all nations

Mark 11:7

Jesus says temple a house of prayer for all nations