

Our Missions Emphasis Month begins this coming Sunday. During October, we will welcome 7 guest families to our church who are involved in some capacity in missions. This Sunday missionaries Henry and Molly John (India) and their children Joshua and Sharon will be with all our junior high / senior high teens and our adults in the Sunday School hour. Dr. Kevin Bauder, former interim pastor at our church and current faculty member at Central Seminary in Plymouth, will preach in the worship service. It's going to be a good day. This last Sunday I preached from Acts 12:24 – 13:5 on why we are involved in world wide missions. [You can listen to the message here](#). For me a most important idea I conveyed last Sunday was the definitions of evangelism and missions. ***Evangelism occurs when a person gives the gospel within her natural web of relationships. Mission occurs when a person intentionally crosses cultures locally, nationally, or internationally to give the gospel.***

There is so much more to say about missions than what I said on Sunday morning. For example, Today, there are more than 1.1 billion Roman Catholics in the world. In our country, there are 63.6 million Roman Catholics in 19,544 parishes across our land. There are 218 seminaries for the training of priests who will take the place of the more than 46,000 priests currently in Roman Catholic pulpits. There are another 7,000 elementary schools, 1,600 high schools, and 235 colleges and universities enrolling a total of 3.5 million students. These think they are being saved by penance, flagellation, contrition and impoverishment.

There are more than 1.38 billion Muslims in the world. These people say, "There is no God, but Allah and Muhammad is his prophet." They study the Koran. They seek daily to fulfill the five pillars of Islam to secure their eternal destiny in the presence of Allah.

There are another 915 million Hindus. There is no more sad life than that of a Hindu. They go through meditations and personal deprivation in their endless cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. They do everything they can in the hope that the gods will not send them back in the next life in a lower life form. Imagine thinking to yourself that in the next life you might be a cockroach, or a crow, or an armadillo. That is the life of a Hindu.

We have a Missions Emphasis Month because these worshippers need to become worshippers of the Creator God, having been forgiven and made righteous by the shed blood of Jesus Christ.

What can our church do? I do not know that we can state a goal of how many missionaries we should send out. I think we should ask the Lord to use faithful, gifted people in our congregation in both evangelism and missions. Further, I do think we can set a goal for finances committed and sent out. We have 17 vocational missionary families. Our stated goal is to support each mission family at 5% of the total the family needs for support. At present we are not doing that with any one of our supported mission families. Within three years, I'd like us to make that happen with one-third of our supported missionaries and for all of our supported missionaries within eight years.

To do that we have to take care of business at home first. We cannot raise support for missionaries when we cannot fulfill our responsibilities here. Evangelism and missions requires sacrifice. For many missions requires the sacrifice of family. For others evangelism requires the sacrifice of discretionary time to develop a relational web that fosters gospel presentations. Either way the norm is sacrifice to accomplish gospel work. In that regard I am intrigued by [Faith Promise Missions](#) because it asks people to sacrifice for the support of missions. While I am neither suggesting nor pursuing that method of missions support, I am asking our church, "How much sacrificing do we do for the work of the gospel?"

That will be more than enough to muse on for the rest of the day.