

# GOD'S GREAT AMBITION: CAPTURING HIS HEART AS AN APOSTOLIC CHURCH

Bob MacGregor  
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## I. What Is God Trying To Do?

- A. Six thousand years ago, God began a salvage operation as the result of rebellion.
  - 1. Satan's (II Thes. 2:7; Is. 14:12-15)
  - 2. Adam's (Ro. 3:10-12; 5:19)
- B. To crush the rebellion, God chose love over cataclysmic judgment.

*"God's main intention in human history is to reunite Himself with a world that is estranged by sin. All that He is doing in space and time is an effort to further that desire." John M. Criswell*

- 1. The cross would destroy Satan's rebellion. (Col. 2:15)
- 2. The cross would redeem fallen man back to God. (Ro. 3:24; Ro. 5: 9,19; Heb. 2:14)
  - a. It was a desire for relationship that God devised the plan of the cross. (Jn. 3:16)
  - b. The cross and the re-established relationship between God and man is the mission of the Bible. (Ro. 5:10; II Co. 5:18-20)

*"If only we could see the value of one soul like God does." George Verwer*

*"Break my heart with the things that break God's heart." Bob Pierce*

*"He shall see the labor of His soul and be satisfied. By His knowledge my righteous servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities. Therefore, I will divide him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He poured out his soul unto death. And He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." Is. 53:11-12*

*"The mission of the church is missions." Sidney Carrell*

*"...every nation, tribe, people, and language." Rev. 5:9*

*"It can be done. It must be done!" D.C. Moody*

## II. The Whole Bible is God's Great Ambition to Re-Unite Himself With a Fallen, Estranged World.

- A. His plan involves all people. (Jn. 3:16; Heb. 2:8)
  - 1. God's plan is a global plan that requires a global strategy.
  - 2. It requires a global worldview that embraces all people, races, cultures, and economic classes.
  - 3. It requires global vision.

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*“We proclaim to others that God is the living God. Let us prove his livingness in the very practical realm of material things.” Watchman Nee*

*“We can choose to live more simply than others may simply live... live a lifestyle that reflects one's knowledge of the condition of the world.” Paul Borthwick*

### **B. It involves God's covenantal purpose.**

1. Edenic Covenant = God desires that man populate the whole earth with people who would be in a covenantal relationship with Himself. (Gen. 1:26-28)
2. Adamic Covenant = God promised that the seed of the woman would destroy Satan and his rule. (Gen. 3:15) The mission begins.
3. Noahic Covenant = God renewed His covenant purpose to have a relationship with all men and gave an assurance of grace that he wouldn't destroy the earth again with a flood. (Gen. 8:20-9:1)
4. Abrahamic Covenant = God promised that through Abraham's Seed, Jesus Christ, all the families of the earth would be blessed. (Gen 12:1-3)
5. Mosaic Covenant = This temporal covenant typified Christ and His work and gave us the law that served as a schoolmaster to lead us to Christ. Israel was to represent the one who rules over all the earth. (Ex. 19:6; Ps. 67:4-5)
6. Palestinian Covenant = God promised to bless Canaan land above all nations and strategically placed Canaan in the center between Africa, Asia, and Europe.
7. Davidic Covenant = The offspring of David would always have a king on the throne, fulfilled in Jesus Christ as the King of Kings. David's tabernacle typified the gathering of all nations to the Lord Jesus Christ. (II Sam. 7:16; Amos 9:6)
8. New Covenant = The fulfillment of all previous covenants, promising the blessing of salvation and sonship to the whole world through the shed blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Mt. 26:28; Heb. 8:7-13)
9. Everlasting Covenant = The pre-existent covenant in Heaven revealing God's eternal purpose for all nations. (Heb. 13:20)

### **C. It involves the Gospel of the Kingdom.**

1. Gospel of the Kingdom = The invitation that invites man to come into a relationship with Jesus Christ as Lord. (Mt. 4:23; 24:14)
2. The Gospel of the Kingdom is dynamic. It brings the rule of God where rebellion has existed in order to deliver from:
  - a. Sin
  - b. Death
  - c. Satan
3. The Gospel of the Kingdom announces the rule of God now in this present evil age and is fully realized at the second coming of Christ.

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4. The Gospel of the Kingdom involves penetration into unoccupied regions of the world.
  - a. The seed and the unplanted soil.
  - b. The yeast and unleavened bread.
  - c. The seed and the field.
  - d. The mustard seed spreading to a great herbal plant.
  - e. The dragnet and a mixed school of fish.
- D. It involves the Church.
  1. The Church is the instrument of the Kingdom. (Mt. 16:18; Eph. 1:22-23)
  2. The Church is local and universal. (Mt. 18:15-20)
  3. The local Church that extends the expression of the universal Church.
    - a. The Great Commission is given to the local Church. (Mt. 28:18-20)
      1. It was commissioned to go from Jerusalem. (Acts 1:8)
      2. It was commissioned to go from Antioch. (Acts 13:1-3)
    - b. The mandate goes beyond our immediate sphere of contact and influence.
      1. Local evangelism, church planting, and international church planting are all part of the same mandate given to the local church.
      2. The local Church must lengthen the radius of its influence.
    - c. Lack of global vision will eventually create spiritual malady in the local church.
      1. This lack of global vision will enhance a lifestyle of disobedience.
      2. This lack of global vision will place church growth above Kingdom expansion. (Mt. 13:24,37-38)
        - a. It is not either/or but both.
        - b. The expansion of one should not prevent the strategic expansion of the other.
        - c. God's ultimate purpose = His glory throughout the earth.
  3. This lack of global vision will limit our worldview. (Rev. 5:9)
    - a. View the Gospel through the lens of our own culture.
    - b. Develop compassion only in areas of personal contact.
    - c. The Father yearns for His special children – the poor of the world.
  4. This lack of global vision will fail to test God's resources. (Mal. 3:9-10)
    - a. Haggai's prophecy = Applies beyond building programs. (Hag. 1:9-11)
    - b. Supernatural resource awaits the church that sows in other fields. (II Co. 9:8)
      1. Grace extended.
      2. God's sufficiency in everything you do.
      3. Experience abundance for every part of your vision.
4. It involves the Apostolic calling of the church.
  - a. Apostle = One sent to represent the plan and purpose of

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the one who sent them, to send with a definite commission with a definite authority.

- b. Jesus was sent by the Father. (John 20:21; Heb. 3:1)
- c. Jesus places this Apostolic calling on the Church.
  - 1. The Church was birthed through the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of the “sent one.”
  - 2. The Church was established upon the 12 “sent ones” of the lamb.
  - 3. The Church was extended to the nations through Paul and other post-ascension “sent ones” of the Lamb.
  - 4. The Church today under that same Apostolic anointing continues “to send” church planting teams to extend the Kingdom of God around the world.
  - 5. Question: Are we functioning in the authority given to us?

*“See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out and to pull down, to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant.” (Jer. 1:10)*

### **III. Where Do We Go From Here?**

- A. Wait on the Lord to expand your vision to include the Apostolic mandate given to the Church. (Jer. 33:3)
- B. Strategize within the sphere of authority God has given you. (II Co. 10:12)
  - 1. Nations God has laid on your heart.
  - 2. Relationships that have formed by the Spirit.
  - 3. Invitations for help.
  - 4. Stay within the gift level of your church. (Ro. 12:3)
    - a. The gifting of your church.
    - b. The size and resource of your church.
    - c. Partner with other local churches.
- C. Take steps of faith to plant churches where Christ has not been named. (Ro. 15:20 adopting churches to reproducing churches that will reproduce churches.
  - 2. Cast vision for this in your congregation.
  - 3. Implement strategic equipping to fulfill this purpose.
- D. Learn from mission ministries that have specialized in frontier church planting.
- E. Develop an arsenal of spiritual weaponry through intercessory prayer. (Eph. 6:18-20; Col. 4:3)
- F. Implement a strategy that is simplistic and culturally relevant without discarding our values.

*“When you can put your church on the back of a camel, then I will believe Christianity is for us.” A Somali Camel Herder.*

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1. Simple church.
  - a. Underground
  - b. Among the poor of the world.
  - c. Indigenous
  - d. On the job training.
2. Contextualization
  - a. Synchronistic paranoia
  - b. Cultures are acceptable, but we must first be ready to reach out to that culture.
  - c. Indigenization = When a culture finds ways of expressing Christian meaning through created forms which are consistent with the culture.

### G. Count the cost. (Lk. 14:26-27, 33)

*“Whole families volunteered for the world, sold their possessions, and started for the field. They were possessed with a passion to go to the ends of the earth for their Lord, and no sacrifice seemed too great for them that the Gospel might be proclaimed and the coming of the Lord might be hastened.”  
(Horace McCracken commenting on early Pentecostals)*

*“If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice is too great for me to give for Him.” C.T. Studd*

1. Financially = Voluntarily change our standard of living to improve our standard of life. (III. Jn. 2: Gen. 12:2)
  2. Scheduling = Take time off of our domestic focus to focus on others.
  3. Personnel: Give your staff to other fields and send your best to the nations as an act of sowing. (II Co. 9:8)
  4. Persecution = Take the battle to the front lines and expect spiritual resistance. (Eph. 6:10-11; I Thes. 2:18)
  5. Martyrdom = Brace yourself for martyrdom as you invade the bastion of Satan. (John 15:20)
- ### H. Embrace an eternal perspective.
1. Redefine success.

*“Jesus never used the word success, but he did speak often about faithfulness.”  
Peter Maiden*

*“God has not called me to be successful; he has called me to be faithful.” Mother Teresa*

2. Draw close to Jesus. (Phil. 1:21-24; 3:7-10)
3. Detach from the world. (I John 2:17)

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4. Anticipate joining the triumphant church. (I Co. 15:55-57; Heb. 12:28)
5. Live courageously. (II Tim. 1:6-8; 2:3)

*"...it all comes down to the discipline of daring, of being willing to take risks for God. This is what the life of faith is by definition. ...we must be willing as Caleb to dare, to gamble and trust." George Verwer*

*"No one knows why they're alive until they know what they'd die for."  
Martin Luther King Jr.*

*"I love to live on the brink of eternity." David Brainerd*

*"Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory." II Tim. 2:10*