



**WORLDVIEW MADE PRACTICAL**  
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**Live with Urgency! - Part 2**  
***Doing Effective Missions in the 21st Century***

By Tal Davis

Early in World War II, the United States Marine Corps fighting in the Pacific found they had a serious problem. They discovered that when various units were communicating back and forth over the radio, the messages were being intercepted by Japanese intelligence officers who understood English. They would then pass the dispatches on to Japanese military commanders who would use the information to counter American tactics.

Soon, however, someone in the Marines came up with a brilliant idea. The Marines went out and recruited a team of Navajo-Americans. Those men were assigned to communication units in the Pacific theater. American officers on one end of the line would write out a message in English and then give it to the Navajo "Windtalkers," as they were known. The Navajo Marines would then translate it and send the message by radio verbally in the Navajo language, what they called the Navajo Code. Other Navajos on the other end would receive it. They then translated it back into English for distribution to the intended audience. The Japanese still picked up the radio transmissions, but they had no idea what the Navajo Marines were saying to each other.

This historical snippet illustrates a basic truth about the importance of human communication. It is especially critical in the endeavor of world missions. It is an absolute necessity that missionaries be able to adequately communicate the gospel message to the people they are seeking to reach. That is why missionary candidates will often

spend months in language school before they go to their assigned location. If the missionaries are unable to communicate in ways the people can understand, then they will be no more successful than were the Japanese trying to decipher the Navajo Marines' messages.

In the first installment of this two part series, we looked at several critical reasons why Christians should live with urgency for reaching the lost and doing missions (to read Part 1 go to: <http://www.marketfaith.org/2021/06/live-with-urgency-part-1-why-missions-matter-tal-davis>). We demonstrated three elements wherein the Bible makes clear as to why missions and evangelism are crucial now just as much as in the past. We showed that: (1) God's character and love requires it; (2) Jesus commanded and commissioned us to go; and (3) the human condition of sin and lostness necessitates it.

In this Part 2, we continue our theme of living with urgency. We now examine four urgent and strategic keys for doing effective missions in the 21st century.

**1. We must live with urgency by knowing exactly who it is we are trying to reach.**

The first the key for doing missions is to know the people we are trying to reach. We need to investigate their culture, language, and perhaps most importantly, their worldview. Any good military collects intelligence on its enemy's strength, numbers, an ammunition in order to plan its attacks. In somewhat the same way, we must forge our strategy based on what I call "spiritual intelligence." That is, we must know the field

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where we are going in order to plot our tactics for sharing the gospel. Different kinds of people in different spiritual and worldview environments require different kinds of approaches. If you have been a regular reader of our MarketFaith Ministries' materials you know how much we believe determining a person's and people's worldview is foundational for reaching them for Christ.

The point is that we must reach them where they are: their culture, language, worship/music styles, age group. When it comes to missions, one size does not fit all! Those cultural factors are all variable.

This means the way a mission or church operates, and the styles of its worship, music, and preaching should reflect the local culture of the people. This is true in doing international and local missions. It would be foolish for a mission church to use a high church style with classical music in a community where most of the people listen to country music. For example, in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, there is a "Cowboy Church" where the music and activities are attractive to "cowboy culture." Another instance is in San Antonio, Texas, where the worship features a Mariachi band and Latin music. Likewise, in Los Angeles, a growing church uses contemporary music (i.e. Christian rock) and drama. This mission principle, called contextualization, is even more important when doing international missions. We can't hope to reach people in other countries if we come to them only with American styles of worship, music, and preaching.

Paul expressed this principle in describing his personal strategy for reaching people in his ministry:

*19 For though I am free from all people, I have made myself a slave*

*to all, so that I may gain more. 20 To the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might gain Jews; to those who are under the Law, I became as one under the Law, though not being under the Law myself, so that I might gain those who are under the Law; 21 to those who are without the Law, I became as one without the Law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, so that I might gain those who are without the Law. 22 To the weak I became weak, that I might gain the weak; I have become all things to all people, so that I may by all means save some. (1 Corinthians 9:19-22 NASB)*

Thus, contextualization is a critical part of doing missions. We must fashion our methods to fit the audience. However, that being said, we cannot compromise the essential message of the gospel! The basic truths of the faith are absolute and unchanging regardless of the time, place, people group, or anything else. The gospel is the same now as it was two thousand years ago, and is the same here as it is in China, Russia, or anywhere else in the world. We have to fashion our a strategy and tactics accordingly for the intended target group without diminishing the content of the core message. Learning their worldview in advance will go a long way towards efficiently communicating that message in ways they can comprehend.

### **2. We must live with urgency by utilizing all methods available to proclaim the message.**

We live in a unique period of time in world history. For the first time in the Christian era, we have the capability of proclaiming the gospel to the whole earth. With the modern technology now available, we can literally communicate with the whole world. Radio, Satellite TV, the internet, online video, DVD, cell phones, and a host of other 21st century advancements have created the greatest opportunities ever for

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taking the message of Christ to the world. Therefore, we should utilize every possible way to broadcast the message of Christ.

Sad to say, however, much of the mass media religious broadcasting now active features ministries that preach and teach distorted versions of the gospel. The Word-Faith preachers especially use television to increase the size of their incomes by promising health and wealth to those who give to keep their ministries on the air. Can you imagine what evangelical mission organizations and denominations could do with the hundreds of millions of dollars that are collected by the TV preachers just to pay for broadcast time. For example, one popular TV network collects more than 120 million dollars a year to just pay its staff's and preachers' exorbitant salaries, and to stay on the air. That same amount would probably pay the full salaries and benefits for more than 2,000 individual missionary families!

In any case, none of those technologies should and can substitute for sending real live missionaries to places where the gospel needs to go. That includes a lot of places right here in the United States. If we evangelical Christians don't do it, others with false gospels will. For instance, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (formerly known as the Mormons) now has nearly 100,000 missionaries spreading their counterfeit message worldwide. The Jehovah Witnesses report annually doing more than one billion hours of door-to-door proselytizing in more than 200 countries. There are now even "evangelistic" atheists who aggressively seek to convince believers in God to abandon their faith.

**3. We must live with urgency by supporting missions and missionaries with prayers.**

The third key element for doing effective missions is prayer. Missions can only be productive if they are supported in prayer by God's people. No amount of strategizing or giving money or anything else can substitute for the prayers of Christians for missions. Most evangelical mission boards distribute the names and locations of their missionaries for people to pray for them. Of course, some missionaries have to remain anonymous in countries where Christianity is suppressed (like most Islamic countries). Nonetheless, we can pray for them since God knows who and where they are.

Paul implored his readers to remember him in their prayers:

*30 Now I urge you, brothers and sisters, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me, 31 that I may be rescued from those who are disobedient in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may prove acceptable to the saints. (Romans 15:30-31 NASB)*

*10 who rescued us from so great a danger of death, and will rescue us, He on whom we have set our hope. And He will yet deliver us, 11 if you also join in helping us through your prayers, so that thanks may be given by many persons in our behalf for the favor granted to us through the prayers of many. (2 Corinthians 1:10-11 NASB)*

If Paul felt the need for prayers, how much more so do modern missionaries!

**4. We must live with urgency by supporting missions and missionaries with our financial gifts.**

Just as we support them with our prayers, we should likewise support dedicated missionaries, mission organizations, and other worthy ministries with our financial gifts. Of

course, that means we need to be good stewards and be sure the gifts are being used for legitimate purposes. Some churches designate a percentage of their income or budget for missions. They may also have yearly special offerings to support denominationally appointed missionaries and mission projects. Others send support directly to the missionaries themselves on the field who the church specifically helps sponsor. Many Christian individuals send gifts directly to missionaries or organizations they support.

Paul often encouraged the churches he led to make generous offerings and gifts for the furtherance of the Kingdom.

*1 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you are to do as well. 2 On the first day of every week, each of you is to put aside and save as he may prosper, so that no collections need to be made when I come. 3 When I arrive, whomever you approve, I will send them with letters to take your gift to Jerusalem; (1 Corinthians 16:1-3 NASB)*

*5 So I considered it necessary to urge the brothers that they go on ahead to you and arrange in advance your previously promised generous gift (lit.: blessing or bounty), that the same would be ready as a generous gift, and not as one grudgingly given due to greediness. 6 Now I say this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows generously will also reap generously. 7 Each one must do just as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. (2 Corinthians 9:5-7 NASB)*

So, in conclusion, we ask, how can we remain indifferent? We must act with urgency. There is only one solution for the nation, the world, and each individual: He is Jesus Christ. As believers, we must support missions and missionaries with our prayers and financial gifts. There are dozens of excellent mission organizations and mission minded denominations which deserve our monetary backing. More to the point, we must be willing to go ourselves. The doors are wide open for those looking for short term and/or long term mission opportunities. Maybe God is calling you. If so, or even if not, live with urgency!

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