

On Mission 2019

*The State of the Global Gospel:
Present and Future Trends*

Kent Parks - Beyond

Missions in a Dangerous World: Missiological Myths vs. Biblical Patterns

My name is Kent Parks, President of Beyond. We're focused on catalyzing movements among unreached peoples. Movements of disciples who reproduce disciples, and churches who start churches, and leaders who reproduce leaders. Since we moved to this focus and began implementing 6 years ago, we've seen over 57,000 churches launched, and almost half a million new believers. As you would imagine, we're working in some of the most dangerous parts of the world and one of the things that many of us have seen in mission discussion, is what I call "Missiological Myths" about serving God in a dangerous world.

And so, I want to speak to four of the myths and speak to the biblical patterns that I think are the accurate way, the right way to approach those issues. In Matthew 24, we often jump to verse 14, "and this Good News of the Kingdom will be preached in all the world to all peoples and then the end will come." If you read the first part of the chapter, it goes through a long list of all kinds of disasters, man-made and natural disasters that will happen and then it goes ahead to say, and the love of most -and the context is clear- the love of most believers will grow cold. Many will fall away from the faith. Many believers will betray each other. And then it says, "and this Good News of the Kingdom..." It doesn't say "but". It doesn't say "in spite of." It says "and." And I'm convinced that it is in the middle of the worst things going on in the world - human disasters, natural disasters. We will bring the Gospel to everybody in the world.

And so, let me address the first missiological myth - many will say, "The safest place in the world is in the center of God's will." I've heard people used this to recruit missionaries. If you'll go, you'll be in the safest place in the world because you'll be in the center of God's will. If that means spiritually, yes. If that means the safest place in the world physically, it is completely false. Jesus was dead center, 100% in the middle of God's will, he got killed. And we must be very aware. We will suffer. The biblical pattern is, we will suffer while we're in the center of God's will. In 2 Corinthians 11, Paul goes through this long litany - he faced multiple floggings, shipwreck, stoning's, imprisonments, bandits, dangers in every possible place, every possible type of person, hunger, thirst, nakedness. And of special note, his daily pressure of concern for the churches that God had birthed through his ministry. And yet, there's this joyful victory because churches have been birthed, disciples had been raised up. And so, the biblical pattern is we will suffer in the center of God's will. And we will rejoice at the disciples that he raises up in our faithfulness.

The second myth - If we're careful in our identity, have a good business platform, avoid missionary identity, using very good electronic security measures, the governments and religious authorities of the world will let us continue the work and we might be effective. The biblical pattern is, we need to acknowledge and understand, we are being watched, and we need to be bold witnesses. We are being tracked. We are being watched, there's no way to avoid it. And there's no way to be effective by hiding so well that nobody knows what we're doing. One of the other passages of Scripture talks about being wise as serpent's innocent as doves. We're to be boldly wise. We're to be not guilty of wrong-doing, innocent as doves, but unless we're willing to be bold, we will have no impact. And a lot of mission effort has been so well hidden that we've had no impact. And so, we must avoid this myth. and follow the biblical pattern. In Luke Chapter 12, it doesn't say, "IF you're called before the authorities," it is as, "WHEN you're called before the authorities." Just this last week, one of our teams, reported to me about a young woman, mid-twenties, she had started some multiple groups in a very restricted area, and she was called in and inter- interrogated actually, would be the better word, for hours by seven Police Officials who surrounded her. Here's this young woman, being totally intimidated, and she said, "Inside I was fearful, but outside I was peaceful." And I would have said it in reverse, but that's how she said it. She basically said, "and I'm going to keep going," and what an incredible opportunity to follow people like that. Jesus taught the apostles this principle, and in Acts 5, we see the apostles saying, "the story of the Apostles brought in made appear before the Sanhedrin, questioned by the high priest who said, 'We gave you strict orders, not to teach in his name. And yet you fill Jerusalem with your teaching and you're trying to make us guilty for this man's blood.' And Peter and the other apostles replied, 'We have to obey God not humans!' And then they were flogged, and then they were sent home, and then what do we see them doing later in the chapter? Rejoicing that they were worthy to suffer. And so, we need to be wisely bold and be willing to suffer if we're going to be effective.

Myth 3 - We as the outsiders, as the missionaries if you will, can escape suffering if we're careful enough and still effectively help our local partners learn that they must be prepared for suffering. You see the contradiction. If we're careful, we can still train them, they don't have to be careful, and you have to be ready for suffering. Well, they're going to see us modeling it. And they're going to imitate us, and nobody would be affected because we're dodging suffering. Instead of this message is so valuable we will risk whatever, we will pay whatever price for the joy of seeing people come to faith. It is in this modeling that movements breakout. 1 Corinthians 11 Paul says, "Follow my example as I follow the example of Christ." If we go in and are unwilling to suffer, we will not raise up disciples who are able to launch movements.

And finally, Myth 4 - A little bit different, "We will not be able to launch a movement unless we live in the culture," is the myth. Paul and his teams went through four major cycles of ministry, 15 to 20 years, we call them, "four missionary journeys." It really is "four cycles of ministry" and he kept moving, he kept catalyzing, he kept coaching, but he kept moving. Because a key to a movement is that, the movement has to rise up locally. And we will coach, and we will help those leaders. But they will be the key to that success. And so, are we willing to give up the pleasure, frankly, of being or live in that setting, if it brings more effectiveness? And so, one of the challenges is, I may have to be transient, I may have to keep moving in order to be effective and

that's not fun, but it's worth it. And so, the myth is, "I've got to be there." No, the pattern is, God is there, we help people learn to listen to God and we keep moving to bring the Gospel to new places. I pray, that we will be bold in living a mission life in a dangerous world and quit ducking and hiding like so much missiology tries to teach us to do. Let's follow the biblical pattern of rejoicing if we're worthy to suffer, and in paying the price, having the joy of seeing people come to faith by the thousands, and by the tens of thousands. And some of our people are seeing exactly that.