

MAKING DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS

If we are to be effective in seeing the kingdom of God grow, we must do so with his strategy. God has revealed in the Bible that his plan for kingdom growth is for disciples be made of all nations.

God has promised that in Abraham all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

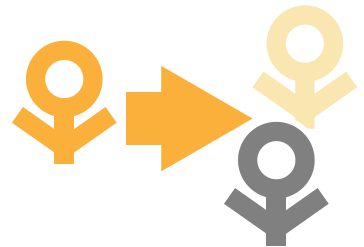


Genesis 12:1-3:

Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

When God called Abram, he promised that he will bring blessing to all the families of the earth in him. The Hebrew noun for “families” refers to groupings of people who are closely related, often larger than one household but smaller than a tribe (see Joshua 7:14, for reference). God has promised that in Abram all these smaller groupings of people will be blessed. God’s plan is for the blessing of Abraham to come to all the families of the earth through faith in Jesus (see Galatians 3:7-9).

Jesus has commanded his followers to make disciples of all nations.



Matthew 28:18-20:

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Jesus gives a clear command to his followers to make disciples of all nations. This command was originally given to the eleven disciples, and perhaps others present (see Matthew 28:16-17). But we know this command applies to disciples of Jesus today because the associated promise is valid until the end of the age. The “you” addressed in these verses must include disciples of Jesus until the end of this age. Further, it seems most likely that the Greek noun for “nations” refers to distinct people groups. (It seems less likely that the noun refers to non-Jewish peoples in general.) Therefore, Jesus commands his followers today to make disciples of all people groups.

Jesus has ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.

Revelation 5:6-10:



And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. And he went and took the scroll

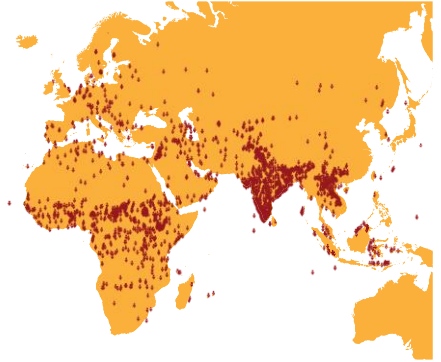
from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne. And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying,

“Worthy are you to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
for you were slain, and by your blood you
ransomed people for God
from every tribe and language and people
and nation,
and you have made them a kingdom and priests
to our God,
and they shall reign on the earth.”

John saw a revelation of Jesus Christ which included this vision around the throne in heaven. In the vision, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders worship the Lamb, Jesus Christ. The song they sing makes clear that by his blood Jesus ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. Through his sacrifice, Jesus has purchased people from all people groups to be a kingdom and priests to our God. Therefore, followers

of Jesus must make disciples those Jesus has ransomed from every tribe and language and people and nation.

Followers of Jesus must work to make disciples of all people groups.



God has revealed throughout the Bible that his plan for kingdom growth is for disciples be made of all people groups. At a minimum, this means that God's plan is for disciples to be made in a great many people groups. At a maximum, this means that God's plan is for many disciples to be made in every people group that has ever or will ever exist. Therefore, we must work to see the gospel proclaimed, disciples made, and churches formed among all people groups. People from all people groups should have opportunity to understand the gospel and become disciples of Jesus.

Substantial research has been done in recent years to identify distinct people groups, determine the number of disciples of Jesus in each people group, and collect resources for ministry in each people group. Having reliable, timely information for these things enables followers of Jesus to work toward making disciples among people groups with the greatest need. Two popular websites for accessing this information are www.peoplegroups.org and www.joshuaproject.net. This research has shown that there are currently thousands of people groups in the world with no known church planting consistent with evangelical faith and practice. This should affect our prayer and our strategy as we seek to see the kingdom of God grow. As we labor to see kingdom growth, we must do so with God's strategy, making disciples of all nations.

For Kingdom Growth

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Many thanks to all who have contributed to this material for kingdom growth. Your service in the Lord is never in vain.