**Why mission?** dkm Mar 2023

In the study of Christian mission, the question inevitably arises, ‘What about people who never hear the gospel? Do they all go to hell?’ It is a challenging question and one that in a sense only the Lord himself can answer. But the Bible makes it clear with regard to Jesus Christ of Nazareth that there is no other name given under heaven among men by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12), and, ‘Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God’ (Rom 10:17).

Jesus sent his disciples into all the world to preach the gospel. If people can be saved without hearing the gospel then why bother! Unbelievers, of course, tell us to leave the heathen to their own beliefs, and false teachers tell us that if they are sincere in what they believe they will be accepted by God. Anthropologists scorn the missionaries who brought the gospel to the head hunters of NE India, but the people themselves are very pleased the gospel came to their violent tribal communities! The missionaries who brought the gospel to the indigenous people of Australia did much good, even if they made some mistakes- just ask an aboriginal believer!

It is the will of God for all people to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ. He has his elect in all nations, tribes, peoples, and languages, who will be around the throne in heaven (Rev 7:9). And it is the will of God for us, his people, to bring this gospel to all people. Jesus said, ‘This gospel will be preached in all the world as a witness to all nations, and then the end will come’ (Mat 24:14). He did not say that all will be saved because only the elect of God will be saved, but he wants all to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The work of missions continues because the basis for judgment, God’s judgment, is truth, and Jesus Christ is ‘the way, the truth and the life, and no one comes to the Father except through him’ (John 14:6). The gospel came to Europe through the preaching of the apostle Paul and others. The gospel came to Africa, Asia and the Pacific through missionaries going and preaching the gospel.

How will they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? (Rom 10:14,15) Faithful missionaries of a previous generation in the PCEA have gone to their heavenly home in this past year. Who will continue this work? The work has changed since their day, and thankfully the Lord has raised up local preachers and teachers. But many unreached people remain to be reached with the gospel.

Many unreached people are now here in Australia, right on our doorstep. Are we bringing the good news of Jesus Christ to them- as individuals? -as a church? When was the last time you invited a neighbour or friend to come to church? Do not listen to those who tell you that the day of mission is past. Pray for the Lord to raise up workers because the fields are ready for harvest (John 3:35).

GO INTO ALL THE WORLD AND PREACH THE GOSPEL