

What's the Biblical Model for Missions and Church Planting?

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SPEAKERS

Matthew Fletcher, Program Director, Steve Lonetti, Martin Manten, Sponsor: Samaritan Ministries, Host: David Wheaton



Host: David Wheaton 00:07

What's the biblical model for missions and church planting? That is the topic we'll discuss today, right here on The Christian Worldview Radio Program, where the mission is to sharpen the biblical worldview of Christians and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. I'm David Wheaton, the host, and our website is TheChristianWorldview.org. A special thank you to our very supportive listener base and also our national sponsor, Samaritan Ministries. They offer a biblical solution to healthcare. Now, with all the transformative events taking place right now, COVID-19 and injection mandates that are becoming all the rage, government and big business teaming up together in this authoritarianism partnership, the fall of Afghanistan to radical Islamists, the very tragic deaths of 13 US Marines by suicide bombers just the other day, the utter ineptness and godlessness of this current Biden administration, one might consider a topic on missions and church planting to be slightly irrelevant. It seems clear that the world is not going to be saved in its headlong rush to the End Times. But individual souls can be. So what Christians should be focused on right now, even more than current events, as important as they are, is obeying the parting words of Christ, the Great Commission where he said Matthew 28, Go therefore, and make disciples of all the nations. I'll read that passage in full just coming up in a second. This is an imperative command from the Son of God. This isn't a suggestion, or optional, if conditions on the ground make it seem of lesser

importance than, "Really big geopolitical issues." In fact, what could be more important in these latter days than working diligently to evangelize and disciple others, whether you are a missionary or not, and planting churches in a biblically sound manner, but that's the caveat, biblically sound missions and church planning. Our guests today on The Christian Worldview are Stephen Lonetti, missionary church planter and pastor of Beacon of Hope church in St. Paul, Minnesota, and also Martin Manton, church planter, and pastor in Switzerland. They will exhort the call for missions and church planning at this time, especially in light of the unbiblical, what's called the church planting movement, or the disciple making movement, you're going to find out about those today, which are so prevalent, and unbiblical. And just as an aside, Beacon of Hope church in St. Paul is hosting the upcoming 2021 Lifegate Worldwide Conference on September 23, to 25th, where pastors and church planters from the Middle East, Europe and North America will speak on missions and church planting. And you can find out more about that and register at LifeGateWorldwide.org. Let's get straight to the interview with Steven Lonetti and Martin Manten. Thank you both for coming on the program today. Steve, I want to start with you by reading a passage of scripture. These are the last words of Christ recorded in the Gospel of Matthew, Matthew chapter 28, is known as the Great Commission. And Jesus came up and spoke to them there were these disciples that met him in the region of Galilee, saying, here's what Christ said, all the authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you. And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Again, that was the last words of Christ recorded in the Gospel of Matthew. And I'll just make a point that this wasn't a suggestion this was an imperative, a command to go and make disciples and baptize them and teach them all that I commanded you. Steve, let's start off with this question. Why is this important to discuss today on this program?



Steve Lonetti 04:27

First, I think in the present context, and world affairs as they are, they brought about a lot of confusion, fear and apprehension to so many people, due to the so called World pandemic. There's a distinct temptation, I think, for God's people to pull into themselves and to protect themselves and their families from whatever this is that we're experiencing today. But we need to realize that Jesus Great Commission, which you just read has not been rescinded, and his passion for the nations has not been abated. Our usefulness in his hands to continue to be engaged with Him in it hasn't ended. We hear a lot about mandates today, don't we? Well, we still have his mandate and we need to be faithful to fulfill it as best as we can.

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Host: David Wheaton 05:15

One more question for you, Steve. You had an extensive missionary background. Tell us about what that experience was like for you and your wife married, and how that led to where you pastor now, Beacon of Hope church.

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Steve Lonetti 05:31

I was saved off the streets of St. Paul at 19 years old, and really didn't know very much about anything biblically. I was raised Catholic. But I ended up in a Bible school that was run by New Tribes Mission. A few years after going to Bible school there, Mary and I found ourselves on the island of Borneo, Indonesia learning Bahasa Indonesia, the language of Indonesia. Shortly thereafter, we found ourselves on a remote island. It was peopled by a group called the Taliabo. They were monolingual. Nobody else spoke their language but them. For the next four years, we studied their language and culture, preparing to bring the gospel to them. At that time, when we finally had some proficiency in the language, we began to teach from Genesis all the way through to the life of Christ, basically, giving background because they had no idea who the God of the Bible was. We then preached the gospel after six months of preparatory teaching. There was a great turning to the Lord amongst those people. Well over 400 people came to Christ at that time. And I got to see firsthand what Biblical church planting is all about, because we just used the simple principles from Acts, and throughout Paul's 13 epistles in planting that church and we saw God do wonderful things there. Present day, there's a church well over 400 that have planted over seven other churches. And since 1995, the church has basically been without missionaries on site. And so that puts something in my heart that has never left. And that's the love for Christ's church and for church planting. When I came back to Minnesota, some folks applied to me and asked me Would I be willing to consider planting a church in St. Paul. And that's how Beacon of Hope got planted. We started from scratch with three families about 11 years ago, and we're presently a very healthy church operating on the east side of St. Paul. I would say it goes back to that beautiful experience with the Taliabo and God showing us what he can do through His Word.

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Host: David Wheaton 07:48

Steve Lonetti, and Martin Manton join us today, here on The Christian Worldview Radio Program. We're talking about the importance of missions. Martin, briefly introduce yourself to the audience. Tell us your background, your faith story, and what it's like having a biblical church in the midst of secular Europe and just what the response is from from that area.

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Martin Manten 08:12

Yes, as you mentioned, I was born and raised in Switzerland, growing up in the land of the reformers Zwingli, yet never encountered the gospel until the age of 18. By that time, I was a long haired hippie, and another long haired hippie friend, I met him, really had no intention of getting saved that evening, actually had a lot of other things on my mind. But he got saved a few months before. And this is the first time somebody exposed me to the gospel. And believe it or not, we sat there for seven hours. And by God's grace, I got saved that very evening, at the age of 18, right off the streets. I got involved in church, things were going well. But unfortunately, there were some theological issues that sent me on a spiritual detour, age 20 to 25. Nothing glorious happened in those five years. And it's only by the grace of God that He brought me back and kind of gave me a second chance. Age 25, getting my things in line, getting biblically sound teaching, and I'm married, age 29. And now I'm a dad, a father of six children. By the age of 33, I left my regular job here in Switzerland, and we moved to Berlin, where I became part of the EBTC. It's a Bible Training Center. I just went there to help the guys. That was my job description, just help them. And from there, God did amazing things that I never had planned, never had it on my map. I started working as translator. When you hear John MacArthur preach in German, that's my voice. I became his translator predominantly. I was there when Steve started his church plant in St. Paul, I remember it vividly. The need of planting healthy biblical churches grew on us, the whole group there in Berlin. And through training and talking to Steve, I became the first church planter out of that group and planted a church here in Switzerland, out in the country. We're a small community of about 5,000 people started six years ago. And it's just been an amazing journey. Just like Steve, we started with three families from scratch, out in the sticks, didn't know if we're going to be three families for three weeks, three months, three years, but by God's grace the church grew. Now we are about 80 adults on a Sunday and 50 children, even though according to all the newest and truest church planting methods, we're doing everything wrong. But hey, I think you're always on the safe side if you follow Jesus and His word and His Bible. And that's what we're doing. So we are very happy and blessed to have this church here, in Switzerland, in the heart of Europe, and it's just a pure joy to be involved in church planting.

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Host: David Wheaton 11:32

Well, as I listened to both of you, it's just amazing how God works in totally different circumstances in two different lives. But the one similarity is bringing you both to saving faith in Christ and giving you a heart to shepherd God's people if you're planting churches. And all believers should have this. Again, we go back to the Great Commission. Go. This is the only way people are going to hear the gospel and be able to be saved is when we go, when we tell them through missions, then also planting churches, sound

biblical churches. Now, there's the caveat, and both of you mentioned this in your answers, that missions and church planting isn't all created equal. There's a lot of wide spectrum of methodologies and so forth used, lots of different mission agencies. I just want to read Lifegate Worldwide. This is, Steve, the organization you founded for missions and church planting. You have a conference coming up, where you're going to be featuring a number of speakers from around the world, not only Martin from Switzerland, but Christian Andresen who pastors and church plants in Berlin. You're having the pastor of literally the only church in the Gaza Strip, Hanna Massad is going to be speaking at the conference as well as Brad Buser. Lifegate, again, a missions and church Planting Organization. The vision is that it's devoted to the effective advance of the gospel of Christ by equipping and mobilizing biblically qualified pastors to plant strong local churches in their own countries. You partner with pastors at home and abroad to plant theologically sound, self supporting churches, and then providing supplemental theological training to church planting pastors to ensure biblically sound theology and methodology. Now, the words I'm hearing over and over throughout that description of what Lifegate is, is biblically sound, theologically sound, biblically qualified pastors. What makes Lifegate, this missions and church planting organization, different than the mainstream of these kinds of organizations today?

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Steve Lonetti 13:40

The way that God led me to plant the church in Taliabo was through training of New Testament Church principles directly from the New Testament. There are so many other methodologies that are out there now being used. Seeker friendly churches, emergent churches, and, you know, the church planting movements and the disciple making movements that are out there now, I think most other methodologies, and I would make that distinction from what we do, which is basically biblical ministry. We just take it right straight from the Word of God. And I often say, you know, there's nothing super special about what we're doing here. But I'm sure that a lot of the really motivated energetic methodologies that are out there would just kind of laugh at us and call us fuddy duddy

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Host: David Wheaton 14:39

Do a comparison. Because I think you brought up the church planting movement or disciple making movement. Those are actually kind of like registered trademarks for that particular methodology. So just do a little compare and contrast between what Lifegate does and what's very typical now in this church planting movement or disciple making movement, they have acronym CPM or DMM, to compare those,

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Steve Lonetti 15:02

With those other movements that you just mentioned, I think they're nothing short of the demise of biblical missions, to be honest with you. Those movements, they really emphasize speed and rapidity, they want it to multiply rapidly. And so consequently, they have to water things down. They have a different gospel, they promote unconverted people to live in obedience to the Word of God, if you can believe this. And as they live in this way, they will experience a gradual conversion. So they teach them to obey principles from the Word of God, without them ever even being converted. And that's just not what the Bible teaches about conversion of a soul. Not even close. They have a different definition of the church. They encourage the development of communities that are followers of Christ. Now listen to this, okay? That is, they teach them to be obedient to the Word of God as Christ followers, not the way you think of it, but just following after Christ, and often without understanding the gospel or even being converted. And if you think that I'm, I'm just really putting up a straw horse, let me quote from a book written by some of these guys. And they say this, "You begin to see the DNA of healthy churches in the lives of the people who have not yet even come to an understanding of their need for salvation." The book is *The Kingdom Unleashed*. And it's by Gerry Trousdale and Glenn Sunshine. It's a very, very popular book in these movements, and everybody in that movement would know about that. Speed has never been God's way, David. Never. He took a millennia to write the Bible. When God wants to make an oak, He takes 100 years. But when he wants to make a squash, he takes six months. There's a lot of squashes being produced.

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Program Director 16:52

The Christian Worldview with David Wheaton returns in just a moment

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Sponsor: Samaritan Ministries 16:56

At Samaritan Ministries, our members are passionate about being part of a Christian community that shares one another's medical needs without the use of insurance. But for Samaritan members, Tony and Ginger Malik, that passion to share health with others is a way of life. It was my wife's dream to come back to the farm. She wanted to be able to do sustainably raised vegetables and teach people where their food comes from. We want to try to provide the healthiest possible produce for our neighbors and our friends and the people that we are able to touch in their lives. Samaritan Ministries is a perfect fit for us because we feel like we can actually partner with other Christians and other people to help them provide for their medical needs. We're Tony and Ginger Malik and we are Samaritan Ministries members. For more information, visit us at [Samaritanministries.org/tcw](https://samaritanministries.org/tcw).



Host: David Wheaton 17:54

David Wheaton here to tell you about a special offer on My Boy, Ben. Ben was a Yellow Lab and inseparable companion back when I was competing in the pro tennis tour. I invite you to enter the story in its tapestry of relationships with Ben and my aging parents, with a childhood friend I would eventually marry, and ultimately with God, whose gospel and grace caused all things, even the hard things to work together for good. Order a signed and personalized copy for yourself or for a friend who loves dogs or someone you know who needs to hear about God's grace and the gospel. My Boy, Ben is owned by The Christian Worldview. It is 264 pages, hardcover, and retails for \$18.99 plus shipping. For a limited time we are offering it for a donation of any amount to The Christian Worldview. Go to TheChristianWorldview.org or call 1-888-646-2233 that's TheChristianWorldview.org.



Program Director 19:02

Welcome back to The Christian Worldview. Be sure to visit our website, TheChristianWorldview.org where you can subscribe to our free weekly email and annual print newsletter, order resources for adults and children, and support the ministry. Now back to today's program with host David Wheaton.



Host: David Wheaton 19:18

How widespread is that methodology, this church planting movement, disciple making movement methodology? How popular are these evangelical churches that do this? Is this a prominent methodology today for missios, Steve?



It's very prominent. And I think with the dumbing down and lack of teaching sound doctrine in the churches, the evangelical churches of the United States, what you're getting now is missionaries and mission organizations that are watered down and not promoting sound biblical doctrine. So yes, it's very widespread and very acceptable in a lot of churches that we would call, "Evangelical."



Host: David Wheaton 20:00

Steve Lonetti and Martin Manten with us today on The Christian Worldview talking about the importance of missions and church planting. That church planting and missions, the

types of methodologies being used are certainly not all created equal, and certainly not all biblical. Martin, what is your perception of what Steve just talked about. You're in Switzerland. Certainly you've seen over your lifetime missionaries come over there from all different kinds of churches, from different missions sending agencies, parachurch agencies, you've seen these different methodologies. Give us a European or a Swiss perspective on what the United States Evangelical Church is sending over to Europe.

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Martin Manten 20:42

They're also sending some good guys, okay? And we're very thankful about that. But um, I agree with Steve, that a lot of that's being imported comes from a business kind of thinking where you got to make profit, so to speak. Rapidly. So you see a lot of actually missions agency as missionaries come over here, stir up a lot of dust, then they're gone. Actually, the average lifespan of a foreign missionary in Europe is three to five years, then they're fed up. Maybe it didn't work, or it worked for a moment, but it was not lasting. They're frustrated, and they go back. So unfortunately, we see that quite often. And they leave a lot of damage.

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Host: David Wheaton 21:36

A lot of disillusioned people. I can imagine a lot of churches that don't survive. Martin Manten and Steve Lonetti with us today on The Christian Worldview. Steve, talk about first century time of Christ after he left the earth. How did they do missions and plant churches? What is the biblical basis for it?

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Steve Lonetti 21:56

I think it's obvious that when we veer away from biblical principles, we're gonna go sideways. Biblically speaking, we don't find many of the causes that missionaries have taken up today and that are popular like we mentioned in the Bible. And it's not dissimilar to the church here at home. When missions becomes focused on social issues, and political engagements and things like that, they're headed in the wrong direction, or when they emphasize just the rapidity of getting work done, their in the wrong direction. Agricultural projects, water projects, all those things are worthy endeavors. But they shouldn't be identified as missions, at least not from a biblical perspective. Missions biblically, involves evangelism, preaching the gospel, that men are sinners, and helpless to save themselves under the wrath of God. But God is merciful and loving and sent his son Christ to die in their place, taking the punishment for their sin, as their substitute on the cross. And then he rose from the dead three days later, and whoever believes in that will become saved. That's the gospel. And that is what we're to be about. Preaching that news

to people. That's missions, biblically speaking. And I realize that's narrow, but the Word of God is narrow in many places as well. And we can't abandon it just because we want to get things done quicker, or in a more, "Efficient way." The rest of the involvements that were just mentioned, are promoted by missions. And there's something else, sadly. And hundreds of millions of dollars go to that kind of work. And that's a tragedy.

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Host: David Wheaton 23:43

Steve Lonetti you're listening to today on The Christian Worldview, the senior pastor of Beacon of Hope church in St. Paul, Minnesota. Our other guest is Martin Manten. He's the founder of a church plant in Turbenthal, Switzerland called Hope and Light Church. It's a beacon of light over in secular Europe, which America is becoming much more like with every passing year. Steve, you mentioned there about the finances behind missions and church planting and anyone listening today who goes to a church, there's always a missions budget, there's a missions department sometimes in the church or missions pastor, people in the church go on short term missions trips, they support missionaries around the world, church planting and so forth, millions and millions and millions of dollars go into this and I think most people in the church just assume, you know, things are proceeding well and their money's going and being well spent. One of the key distinctives of Lifegate I think is very unusual. I don't think I've ever heard this before. That there's a maintaining a high standard of theological and fiscal accountability for every pastor supported by Lifegate worldwide. You keep financial support proportionate to the local economy, okay, so American dollars are usually worth a lot more in some of the places they are going. You support pastors for a short period of time, four to six years. This is when you decrease the level of support each year to dissuade the pastors from an unhealthy dependence on North American finances, and to encourage each church to become self supporting. That really is amazing. You need to be self supporting. This needs to be growing, because you're not forever going to be on a dependency type relationship with a church in North America. Talk about why that's so important, Steve, to have that kind of fiscal responsibility for Lifegate and for missions.

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Steve Lonetti 25:43

Well, David, I find it amazing that that's amazing. Because to me, that's just missions 101 indigenization. When we worked with the Taliabo, we worked to the end where we would be able to leave the church, we didn't want to stay there the rest of our lives. And as you see Paul's model in Acts, he would plant the church, or evangelize, gather the people together in a church planting ecclesia, and then he would teach them and teach them and teach them, establish elders, ordain them, and then go on to the next church. Self support is so important, because each church is autonomous, they have their own

responsibility to their own leaders. Being dependent upon North American resources, or a group, say, a mission organization or whatever, there's nobody that guarantees that North America will remain standing, and certainly no guarantee that certain mission organizations will remain standing. What happens if a church is completely dependent, or a church planter is completely dependent on those outside resources? When they dry up, the church dries up.

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Host: David Wheaton 26:53

And Martin, talk about another distinctive of how Lifegate worldwide approaches missions from a biblical standpoint. Is that the aim is to have local or national or indigenous, so to speak, pastors and church planters, you know, someone who's in Europe, instead of having you know, an American, come over there and you know, lead a church in Switzerland or another part of the world, Africa, Asia, wherever else? What do you see as the benefit of someone who's a local, who speaks the language, who knows the community, rather than trying to train in an American to come over to a place where a language that person doesn't speak, into a culture that they didn't grow up in?

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Martin Manten 27:33

Become proficient in a language to the point where you can teach and preach takes quite some time. If you take a local, he knows the language, he knows how to communicate, he knows how to interact, he's integrated in the culture, is integrated in the community where he lives. He likes the food they serve. You know, food is a good thing. And there's a lot of fellowship happening around food. When it comes to finances, he knows how to get through, he knows where to shop, he knows his way around. A local being supported usually costs much less than someone who's being sent over.

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Steve Lonetti 28:16

David, let me cut in here just quick, Martin. Okay, we can support 30 Filipino church planters for the cost of one North American.

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Martin Manten 28:26

Yeah, that's shocking, isn't it? That's true. Another thing too is if you support a local, he's most likely here to stay. You know, he's not gonna say I can't do this, I can't do that, or I don't like this. And you know, he's off the scene. Also a local doesn't do furlough. Not saying furlough is all bad in itself. But let me tell you, I found that quite often locals are irritated when a guy takes off every so often, some of them every two years for three

months or six months, because quite honestly, no one here can afford to leave his job and just go someplace and do well. Let's hope he does something reasonable. It's just not a good thing. You're disconnected, you lose touch with people, your language skills won't improve while you're on furlough. And quite often, this kind of life is perceived as a luxury life. No one lives in the country where I'm at for example. So I think there's a ton of good reasons to support a local guy. And especially, you know, he can do what a guy can do that comes in from the outside. I mean, there's pioneering missions where you go where there's nothing. But Europe is not a place where the gospel is not existent. So I totally root and I'm very thankful for the approach that Lifegate takes in missions and church planting.

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Host: David Wheaton 30:02

Now Steve and Martin, one of the reasons we wanted to have you on today is to focus on a topic that we often don't, to be honest, don't discuss that often on The Christian Worldview, missions and church planting and how to do that a biblical way. But going back to the very first moments of the interview, talking about the Great Commission, this is something that we should be focusing and thinking about and doing, going, as it says, and so Steve, another aspect we wanted to feature today was the fact that you have this conference coming up, and so for, so for pastors and church leaders who are listening today or anyone, anyone who has that love for missions, this is a conference that I think you would be interested in either attending if you can get to the Twin Cities, or perhaps you'll have other ways for people to get the content of the conference, Steve. You can tell us about that. But it's the 2021 Lifegate Worldwide Conference, the organization, Steve, you founded. Of course Martin was a beneficiary of that. The other speakers who are coming, Christian Andreesen, who has the church planted in Berlin was a beneficiary of Lifegate. Hanna Mossad. It will be very interesting to hear from him what it's like to have a church, and the only church, the only Christian Church, in the Gaza Strip, one of the toughest neighborhoods you used to put it lightly, in the world, coming to this conference. It's on September 23rd to 25th right at your church, Steve. Beacon of Hope in St. Paul. Just tell us briefly about the conference, who you'd like to attend, how people who can't attend can be impacted or can obtain the information that's presented so maybe they can bring it back to their own church that may be involved in this church planting movement or disciple making movement. The methodology is not a biblical one to be pursuing missions with. So their own church can be impacted by the biblical principles from the book of Acts that you implement into Lifegate.

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Steve Lonetti 31:58

This is not a conference for just church planters, or pastors, or missions leaders. This is a

conference for believers. And we are deeply concerned with the way things are going in the world. We want to encourage people to strengthen what remains. And believe me, we have been doing mission work for over 150 years, in many of the nations that Lifegate works in. And there are qualified men there, nationals or locals as Martin said, I like that term. Locals. I've heard one man in Brazil tell me this, David, he said, Steve, we don't need any more fathers over us. We need brothers, that will literally come alongside us and work shoulder to shoulder with us. So we're passionate about helping people to understand how they can do that, and how they can be involved in fulfilling the Great Commission in that way. We do have an enemy that thinks globally, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. Are we thinking globally? As local churches do we think globally? We want to help people to understand that we can't allow the blessings that God has poured out on us in North America, all our freedoms and all of our wealth and the peace that we enjoy, to rob us from the needs of the nations, because they're still there. Might I encourage you to watch what's happening in Afghanistan right now? As a church and the people of God, we must leverage all these marvelous blessings for His glory, and do everything within our power to ensure the gospel goes out into all the nations so that others may glorify God and enjoy him forever. We trust God will use this conference to awaken his people, to the exceedingly rich and wonderful opportunity of being engaged in something larger than ourselves. Only one life to live and it'll soon be passed, only what's done for Christ is going to last. I believe that with all my heart, and I want to pass that message on to who's ever listening. Come to the conference, you can register at LifeGateWorldwide.org. Or you can check out the website at LifeGateWorldwide.org. We will probably have the sessions available online for you to look at there. But right now we have just registration. It's very inexpensive for a two and a half day conference. So I just encourage everyone, pastors, mission workers, mission pastors, whoever can, come on and join us. We're going to have a great time. The speakers that we have, I've referred to them as dusty warriors, working in some of the toughest neighborhoods in the world. So you're not going to get ivory tower type presentations. You're going to have very practical, down to earth presentations by men that are on the ground.



Host: David Wheaton 34:53

But it's going to be a fantastic conference. The website is LifeGateWorldwide.org to find out more.



Program Director 34:58

The Christian Worldview with David Wheaton returns in just a moment.

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Host: David Wheaton 35:02

David Wheaton here. Volunteer host of The Christian Worldview Radio Program. Listeners are often surprised to learn that we as a ministry pay for airtime on the radio station, website, or app on which you hear the program. The primary way this expense is recouped is through listeners like you, donating to the ministry or becoming a monthly partner. Our aim is to have each broadcast outlet fully supported by the listeners to that outlet. If you are a regular listener, we would be grateful if you made a donation or became a monthly partner of any amount. To do so, go to TheChristianWorldview.org and click on Donate. You can also call 1-888-646-2233. That's 1-888-646-2233 or [The ChristianWorldview.org](http://TheChristianWorldview.org). And be sure to specify in which station, website, or app you listen, as that helps us decide whether to continue on a given outlet. Thank you for your support. I struggled with my identity all the way through my life, lived eight years as Laura Jensen, until I found the Lord Jesus Christ. . . The issues are unavoidable. . . They're on the news. . . The White House in rainbow colors. . . They're in our legislation. . . The Texas Bathroom Bill. . . In our schools. . . Drag Queen story hour. . . They're even reaching into our churches. . . Let us be the church together. We're not just talking about issues, we're talking about people. The proceeding is from *n His Image*. A 103 minute documentary film that biblically and compassionately addresses the issue of transgenderism. You can order the DVD for a donation of any amount to The Christian Worldview, call 1-888-646-2233, or write to Box 401, Excelsior, Minnesota 55331, or visit TheChristianWorldview.org. That's 1-888-646-2233 or TheChristianWorldview.org.

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Program Director 37:08

Thanks for joining us on The Christian Worldview. Just a reminder that today's program and past programs are archived at our website, [The ChristianWorldview.org](http://TheChristianWorldview.org). Short takes are also available. And be sure to share with others. Now back to today's program with host, David Wheaton.

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Host: David Wheaton 37:23

You mentioned Afghanistan, Steve. And you know, we hear reports now that over the last 20 years, the US being there, of course it's been a debacle the way the whole exit was and people are dying. The Taliban is going to take over, but there's been a stronger missionary presence from what we hear in Afghanistan these last 20 years when there was a little bit more freedom. There are now these missionaries, these Christians who are there and are going to be likely facing severe persecution, if not death. There are reports of that already coming out of Afghanistan. Tell us what that is like for these missionaries who go. You know, one of your speakers at the conference, I'm sure pastors in the Gaza Strip, I think another one of your speakers is also in some very dicey areas where there's a severe cost

of proclaiming the gospel. What is that like, Martin?

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Martin Manten 38:19

David, that is a hard question to answer because honestly, we who live in the Western world, what we call persecution, people in Afghanistan will probably laugh at that. I think the winds will get harsher in the years to come. And we all have our theological convictions of what we should do. But honestly, I pray to God that he'll give us grace that will stand fast. That we won't just for our own benefit, be weak on the gospel, go into hiding. I can only pray for those brothers who are in this situation, and pray for the church and actually, I spend a lot of time thinking how to prepare our church, our community for most likely, hard times to come. Times that we can not imagine. And as I said, may God give us grace that we stand fast when they do come.

S

Steve Lonetti 39:19

Steve, your thoughts? We are heading towards persecution here in the United States and in the Western world, as Martin said, but I've been in places that are very dangerous and persecuted. I remember in Indonesia, the turning where the radical Islamists began to do programs in the very city that we worked out of, and they know where the Christians live, they know where the churches are. And they mark those out. And those are the first that they hit. And we need to be praying for our friends and fellow believers that are still in Afghanistan as Westerners that didn't get on the planes out because they're in for a terrible, terrible experience, and we need to pray for their strength. It would be good to read Foxes Book of Martyrs and remind ourselves that this is not the end, this life is not the end. And we have a glorious future that we look forward to. But it's not time to worry about our 401 Ks. It's time to really, really stretch ourselves out on God and serve him.

H

Host: David Wheaton 40:24

Well, we appreciate both of your taking the time to come on The Christian Worldview Radio Program today to talk about a biblical approach to missions and church planting, and this upcoming Lifegate Worldwide Conference here in the Twin Cities in St. Paul. Thank you for both of your perspectives, and for standing strong for the gospel and for biblical truth in the various areas where God has put both of you. And we just wish all of God's best and grace to both you Steven and Martin and your families.

S

Steve Lonetti 40:51

Thank you, David. And as you say, think biblically, live accordingly. I'd like to add to that

minister accordingly, and not with your own methodologies.

H

Host: David Wheaton 41:00

Well, I hope that interview with Steven and Martin really inspired you to answer the call, to pray for opportunities to share the gospel with others, to disciple others who are younger in their faith than you, because there's really nothing more important than that, aside from your own personal growth, and sanctification. So I'd just like to mention one more time the upcoming 2021 Lifegate Worldwide Conference on September 23rd to the 25th. It's being held here in the Twin Cities at Beacon of Hope church in St. Paul, but they're going to have pastors and church planters from around the world, the Middle East, Europe and North America, who are going to speak on the topic we discussed today, missions and church planting. You can find out more and register at LifeGate Worldwide.org. I also hope the interview today informed you about this church planting movement or this disciple making movement. It's something ironically enough that I had spoken with an earlier guest from a couple months ago, you may remember pastor Matt Fletcher from Webster Bible Church outside Rochester, New York. Well, there was a short portion of the interview with him that we didn't have time to air. And interestingly enough, it was about missions. And he talked about this church planting movement, this disciple making movement. So I just want to play that short segment with him as we come near the end of the program today. So here's an unaired portion of the interview with Pastor Matt Fletcher. Let's move over into another role and responsibility of the local church. It's not just about those from the community, the local church, but also missions, the Great Commission, after all, is, you know, make disciples across the world. You know, you have a significant commitment to missions at your church, Webster Bible Church. And we won't get too much into this today. I think this bears a full topic on missions. But we've talked about this during your time in Minnesota, just in conversation, just about the way missions has changed the methodology of missions. And you talked about the church planting movement or the disciple making movement. They're really, I think, two phrases for the same thing. So church planting movement, CPM or disciple making movement DMM, which is this, I think you described it as an obedience based discipleship. So just tell us, give us an overview of that methodology for those missions movements, and how that compares, do you think to what the Bible prescribes for missions?

M

Matthew Fletcher 43:36

Good question. And I think this is an area that has gone in many ways undetected, and therefore unaddressed by pastors and churches. And, David, I'll confess that that even I was up until several months ago, was somewhat ignorant of some of the methodological changes that have been occurring over the last decade or two. I'm very thankful for the

missionaries that partner with us, but in the larger missions movement organizations, there is a methodology that seems to be increasingly unscriptural. And you're right. Another whole program or more can be fully devoted to this. But I'll just say, you know, the church planting movement, disciple making movement, I mean, those sound like very positive things, right. I mean if it wasn't that New Testament fulfilling the Great Commission, my uncle began missions organization several decades ago to the unreached peoples of the world, and he would use the expression church planting movement, but what it meant in that day, and what it is come to me in the last couple of decades, you know, capital CPM, church planting movement is very different without getting too much into it. There was a book written about 20 years ago called, Church Planting Movement Diet by David Garrison, and the idea had to do with planting churches with rapidity. You know, it was all about speed. Making disciples rapidly and then moving on to another people group. And what I can appreciate about his desire as revealed in his book, I've not read, I've read only excerpts of it, but the idea is that there's an emphasis on prayer, and trusting the Word of God and the Spirit of God to work in people's hearts. So all that is a good thing. But the idea is they have minimized the role of the preacher, the teacher coming to proclaim the gospel. This obedience based discipleship is basically where they find a person, they would call it a person of peace, which is a misunderstanding of Luke 10. A person at peace is someone who believes the gospel and God's peace rests upon them, peace has pronounced upon them. But they would say, as an unbeliever, who was open to the gospel, and then you give them let's say God's Word, but at that point, you are very much in the background. So this unbeliever, gathers his family and friends, and you don't teach them the Word of God, they just kind of they had these discovery Bible studies where they just open the Word of God, and you tell them basically just to obey whatever they read. And the idea is, is that they become disciples over time. And at some point, it leads to conversion. And once it leads to conversion, you have a few of them, you now have a, I'll put it in quotes, "A church" and now a church has been planted, and you can move on to another people group. So there's this passion to complete the Great Commission to reach the unreached. But it's all about speed. And so there's not a dedication to language learning, living incarnationally, over a period of years among the people, investing in them, developing leaders, and because you don't know the language, how do you know whether they're really grasping the gospel? How can an unbeliever understand the Word of God? And so there's this background role that is played and the way they again, we don't have time today, but the way they tried to explain it from the New Testament. I mean, it's incredible proof texting that is taking place. And it really contradicts what the Bible actually teaches about the manner in which we'll fulfill the Great Commission. When Jesus said, make disciples, He says, to go, right, baptize them, and teach them. So the teaching and the maturity comes after they come to faith in Christ. They get it backwards, there's like, it's almost like they're disciplined, to conversion. And we do not see that in the ministry of Christ. We do not see that in the

Apostolic ministry throughout Acts and the epistles. And so yeah, it's definitely something worth checking into,

H

Host: David Wheaton 47:37

Just as you were discussing, that reminded me of just of years ago, I heard about things going on in the Middle East with missions that there was the approach that, you know, don't try to tell a Muslim that they have to become a Christian, they can still be a Muslim and be a Christian. However that works. That's impossible, of course. But I think they were trying to do that, because there's such a cost to convert, so to speak, from being a Muslim to Christian even with your life. You can certainly understand that pain, and that difficulty for a Muslim to contemplate that but alas, that's what we're called to do when we come to saving faith is we must be willing to leave all and then we must be willing even to die for our faith. And that's, of course, easy for me to say here in America, where there's not that kind of threat of death and so forth. But anyway, good initial explanation of what this movement is, this missions movement is and we'll at some point, do a program on it and find out more and look into what the biblical New Testament call for missions is.

M

Matthew Fletcher 48:39

As much as possible, I want to collaborate with these big umbrella missions organizations, because they are filled with people that really have a passion for reaching the unreached with the gospel of Christ. And they feel that sense of urgency that the Lord could return at any time and these people need to hear. But let's take 15%, 20%, 25% of their methodological approach that really doesn't have scriptural support. It can poison the whole thing. We do need a point out where there is a dangerous methodology where the immediate result may be very impressive, and the statistics look great. But 10 years down the road, these churches are filled with heresy with syncretism right and have departed from the faith. I mean, Paul went back to strengthen all the churches that he had planted because he understood, we are prone to error. And they really seem to miss that in my estimation.

H

Host: David Wheaton 49:32

That's really well said. I mean, you could see in the early church from Paul himself and his traveling companions would go and wouldn't be long before false doctrines and teachings are coming and Paul didn't just overlook that and say we're just glad there's a church there. Let's go on somewhere else. And he was pained over false doctrines and false teaching, because he knew where it went. It destroyed people's lives and misrepresented God.

M

Matthew Fletcher 49:54

And Paul stayed when he could to make sure that a strong New Testament Church was planted and well established with godly leaders. The only reason Paul ever moved on in virtually every case was because of persecution. And that's why he went back to strengthen the churches. No, he stayed when he could. And even when he moved on and had apostolic appointments with pastors like Timothy and Titus, what did Paul tell them? Here are the qualifications for an elder, teach faithful men who will be able to teach others also, you know, establish elders where you have planted churches in every city. Paul was very clear how critical godly leadership is to the church. And he went back and revisited that himself. So it needs to be a priority. And it's a priority that is often lost because of the desire for speed. Well, just as we were talking about earlier, how there can be mission drift in a church, it can be mission drift in a pastor, but there can be mission drift as well, in missions. That's all it is. It's missions pragmatism. So the pragmatism we see in the American evangelical church so often has simply carried over into world missions. We're seeing the poisonous fruit of seeds that were planted decades ago with the whole attractional seeker driven model. Its just carried over into the missions world.

H

Host: David Wheaton 51:13

Again, that was Matt Fletcher, senior pastor of Webster Bible Church outside Rochester, New York, basically saying the same things that Steven Lonetti and Martin Manten were saying earlier in the program, about this church planting movement, how unbiblical it is, and how based on the human reasoning methodologies that are so pervasive in the church today. And frankly, that's part of the mission of this program to sharpen the biblical worldview of Christians. So I hope your worldview was sharpened today with regards to missions in church planting. It always goes back to Scripture. So I want to thank you for joining us today on The Christian Worldview Radio Program. You can hear past programs and connect with our ministry at the website, TheChristianWorldview.org. There's lots of things for you to do there. One of the most visited pages on the website has to do with, What Must I Do To Be Safe? That's the most important question in all of life. And so if you're listening today, and have never put your faith, your trust, your belief in who Christ is and what he did for you on the cross, paying the penalty you deserved for your sin so that you could be forgiven and right with God, we would encourage you to go to that page and find out how you can be reconciled to God, how you can be saved. Go to TheChristianWorldview.org. As we close, let's remember, Jesus Christ and His Word are the same yesterday, and today, and forever. Until next time, think biblically, live accordingly. Pursue missions in church planting biblically and stand firm.



Program Director 52:59

The mission of The Christian Worldview is to sharpen the biblical worldview of Christians and proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. We hope today's broadcast encouraged you toward that end. To hear a replay of today's program or to sign up for our free weekly email or to find out what must I do to be saved? Go to our website, The Christianworldview.org or call us toll free at 1-888-646-2233. The Christian Worldview is a listener supported ministry and furnished by the Overcomer Foundation, a nonprofit organization. You can find out more, order resources, make a donation, become a monthly partner and contact us by visiting The Christianworldview.org, calling Toll Free 1-888-646-2233 or writing to Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331. That's Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota by 5331. Thanks for listening to The Christian Worldview. Until next time, think biblically and live accordingly.