

IN FOCUS: Acts 1:8 world is messy and dynamic

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I recently was in a meeting with denominational leaders who were discussing our Matthew 28:19-20 commission and Acts 1:8 imperative. As I reflected back on what we shared, I realized we could have had the same conversation in 1985.

In our limited time, we focused on the distribution of funds. If we had more time together, we probably would have discussed strategies instead of structures. But we didn't. Obviously, the world of 2009 is quite different from 1985. Shouldn't we be thinking of new and innovative ways to fulfill the Great Commission?

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One of the problems is that most of us are linear thinkers in a mosaic world. I like Acts 1:8. It provides us with a clear structure that is comprehensive and measureable. It is perfect for us "linears." All we have to do is define our Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria and develop a strategy for taking the gospel into each of these areas. We can then map our progress and evaluate our effectiveness.

Unfortunately, we face challenges with implementation. Some countries are closed to proselytes and will not welcome missionaries. We also face a shortage of those willing to go and live in another culture; communication challenges they face once they arrive; and the shortfall of funds to support such a bold mission. Then there is the realization that even if we put 8,000 missionaries on the field, it will be a drop in the bucket.

What do we do? We certainly should dedicate more of our personal income and church budgets to missions. We should also pray for God to call out

missionaries to the field and be willing to serve ourselves.

But are there other opportunities? I actually believe there are!

Some of us are immigrants to this strange new world of technology, communication, mobilization and multi-tasking. We should embrace the changes and recognize this as an exciting day of mission opportunity.

This may be the most exciting time for participation in the Great Commission since the first century. We need to begin to see Acts 1:8 not just as a geographical strategy but also relationally and virally.

The world has come to Texas—and probably to your neighborhood. Many who come from countries closed to the gospel have come here to work and study.

Our Iranian neighbor (or coworker or fellow student) whom we befriend probably will still have contacts in Iran. As we share the hope of Christ with her, she may be able to share with her family.

Today's Jerusalem may be a two-mile radius from your church; it may also be your Facebook list. God may send you to another place in the world as a missionary, or he may send you as an engineer in your company or through the military or as a student.

The Acts 1:8 world is messy and dynamic. It may be hard to plan or even evaluate. But isn't this descriptive of movements of the Holy Spirit throughout the ages?

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