

WE PRAY, WE MOVE

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I recently had the opportunity to visit different temples in Metro Manila as part of my requirement in seminary. My task was to observe the people coming in and also to observe their worship practices. As I reflect on that experience, I recognize how many are hoping for a good life but it seems that searching for it is an endless cycle. There is no certainty in their fate and in their gods.

I realized how truly blessed I am to know the One True Living God. I could no longer imagine a life where I have to throw stones to make a wish, hoping it will turn out to my favor, nor, making offerings to the gods hoping they will be pleased with it and grant my wishes. As disciples of Jesus, we have the assurance that even in the midst of joy and suffering, there is one absolute God to whom we can entrust our lives with.

This experience is a common scenario to many people around the world but this one is special to me because it is close to home. We often think of missions as going to remote places like mountains and far-flung islands. But the mission is not about the place but the people that God wants to redeem and to worship Him. Missions is the heart of Jesus for the people of all nations.

And Jesus went throughout all

the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction - Matthew 9:35.

The ministry of Jesus shows us His heart for the people. In Matthew 9:35, Jesus went to the cities and villages to teach and proclaim the gospel and to heal the sick. We do not see Jesus waiting for people to come to Him, though people have always been seeking Him. Jesus models the intentionality of going to the cities and villages where the people were.

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd (v. 36).

Part of His intentionality is to understand the people. When He saw the crowds, He had compassion for them as they were harassed like a sheep without a shepherd. To 'see' (Gk: eidō) is not to only look with the eye, but to perceive or understand not just their physical needs but also their spiritual needs. But the reality is that when we see the people, hungry to also experience a full life, not many are willing to be part of the change in these people's lives.

Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few (v. 37).

According to Joshua Project, out of the total world population, only 31% identify themselves as Christians. There are still 5.4 billion people out there who do not believe and accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Jesus recognized that the harvest is already there, plenty and waiting to be discipled. But there are not enough laborers to reach out to them. What more for the many people who might have never even heard of the name of Jesus in their entire lives?

therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest (v. 38).

As we are about to conclude Missions Month this October, we invite the church to pray together to the Lord of the harvest for laborers to be sent out. Though we recognize the importance of reaching the unreached people groups, the mission field is no longer just in far places, but could be just within our reach: our neighborhood, workplace, schools, social groups, or simply wherever the people are. Each one of us can be a missionary. It is time for all of us to pray and discern how God wants to use us. And it is time for us to move and respond where God is leading us.

Together, let us pray. Let us move. For His renown and His greater glory! ✠