

We Value Missions



Core Value

We value missions.

In obedience to Christ we seek to share his message of salvation, build relationships, and join hands with others to help meet physical needs. We seek to accomplish this through prayer, sharing of God's word, hands on missions, and financial support. Using Acts 1:8 as a guide we practice this locally, nationally, and globally.

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. (Acts 1:8)

Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." (John 20:21)

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 (Matthew 28:19-20)

Introduction

Tyler Wash had heard about Olle Belle's home in Nada. He had heard about the terrible living conditions for this grandmother and her grandchildren, but no one could really image what Olle Belle's house was like until they say it. Tyler went with a group to deliver a meal to our good friend Olle Belle. He saw holes in the walls that could not stop the wind, the bare cracked floors that could not hold back the dirt, a roof that could not shed water, and the few pieces of tattered furniture in this indescribable tiny house. When Tyler came back to the cabin he was broken. He couldn't believe anyone could have so little, while he had so much. He sat on the porch and wept. As result of his experience Tyler has become a great missionary and advocate for Nada. Tyler is not the only one who has a heart for serving and witnessing to neighbors near and far. Lexington Avenue Baptist Church has a heart for missions.

Bible Study

The scriptures chosen for this core value are three of the most well-known mission passages recorded by three of the gospel writers—Matthew, John, and Luke.

Matthew 28:19-20

These verses are often called the Great Commission. They are spoken by Jesus when he appears to his followers after his resurrection. Jesus' Great Commission is demanding. It is not enough simply to get people inside the front door of the church. The responsibilities of the Christian community go far beyond the front door.

Jesus said, “Go” or “As you go.” We are not to sit around waiting for people to come to us. Jesus calls us to go to the people with the message of salvation.

Jesus said, “make disciples.” A disciple is one who follows a teacher listening and learning a way of life. Discipleship is a life long journey of following and learning from Jesus.

Jesus said, “all nations.” All people everywhere are to be invited to become Jesus' disciples.

Jesus said, “baptize them.” Baptism is a new believer's testimony that the believer has buried their old sinful, selfish life and has been raised to a new life as Jesus' disciple.

Finally, Jesus said, “teach them everything I have commanded you.” Everything includes, the Sermon on the Mount, parables, everyday conversations, and Jesus' example of concern for the poor and love for everyone. Everything is the story of Jesus handed down to us in the four gospels.

So, we see that the Great Commission is no small task. It would be an impossible task were it not for the fact that Jesus promised, “I will be with you always.”

John 20:21 (20:19-23)

Jesus has been crucified; no doubt a traumatic experience for his disciples. Their leader is now dead and the disciples hide themselves in fear and hopelessness. They shut the door and lock it. When the disciples are at their lowest point, suddenly Jesus appears to them. “Peace be with you,” Jesus says and then commissions them with these words, “As the Father has sent me so send I you.” What a contrast. In a moment the disciples go from fear to peace, and from being shut up inside to being sent outside.

“As the Father has sent me,” indicates the way the church is to go into the world. Jesus was sent by God to be God with us; to love us and teach us. We call it the incarnation. The mission of the church therefore is incarnational. We are called to go and be among the people as Jesus was among us. The church is a sent community.

Acts 1:8

In Luke's account, these are Jesus' last words before he ascends to heaven. Jesus promises his presence in the form of the Holy Spirit and sends his followers out as witnesses to the Good News.

A little geography can help us understand this passage. Jerusalem was their hometown. For the disciples everything began in Jerusalem. Judea was the larger surrounding region, so Jerusalem was a city within Judea. Something like Danville in the state of Kentucky. Samaria was an adjoining region, so Samaria and Judea were side by side. The meaning of Samaria here goes beyond geography. Samaritans were despised by most Jews at that time. They were thought

of as an impure race and unclean. Their religious beliefs, though similar, were considered blasphemous. Thus, most Jews would walk all the way around Samaria rather than pass through. The ends of the earth refers to the whole world as they knew it. So the witness of Christ moves out in concentric circles from home to the ends of the earth and includes people unlike us.

Acts 1:8 Ministry at LABC

The world is a big place, so how can Lexington Avenue Baptist Church witness to the ends of the earth? One way we are able to witness to the ends of the earth is through our financial support. When our members tithe, a portion goes to mission organizations like Kentucky Baptist Fellowship and Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. These funds are multiplied many fold as they join with that of other churches. Thus, we are able to support missionaries and mission efforts in Kentucky, the United States, and all over the world.

We have also sought to be directly involved in a hands-on, face-to-face ministry. Periodically, on the front of *The Key* we print these words:

Lexington Avenue Baptist Church
Friends of Danville/Boyle County
Friends of Nada, Kentucky
Friends of Rabat, Morocco and Hands of Hope, Kyrgyzstan

These three phrases are meant to remind us of our Acts 1:8 ministry focus—our Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and the ends of the earth. Lexington Avenue cares about people across the street and around the world and so we seek to build relationships, share the Good News of Jesus, and partner to help others in need.

Jerusalem

Danville/Boyle County is our Jerusalem. Lexington Avenue Baptist Church is to be a mission center to those around us. Some of the ways we reach out to our community is through our outreach plan, through local ministries such as Salvation Army and Habitat for Humanity, and through neighborhood ministry actions such as delivering loaves of bread and Holy Week Devotionals and leading Backyard Bible Clubs in an apartment complex.

As we learned from John 20:21, the church itself is sent. Lexington Avenue Baptist Church is sent to be a missional church. The Mennonite Mission Network describes the missional church this way,

A missional church focuses all of its activities around its participation in God's mission in the world. That means, it trains people for discipleship and witness; it worships and practices mutual support before a watching world. A missional church understands that the congregation itself is sent by God to proclaim and to be a sign of the reign of God. Just as God sent Jesus, now Jesus sends the church” (Mennonite Mission Network).

So we are not just a church that does mission projects, we are a mission—God’s missional church sent to Danville.

Judea

We have called Nada, a small community in the mountains of Eastern Kentucky, our Judea. We have sought to build relationships of giving and receiving. We have taken several mission trips to Nada to lead activities, repair homes, paint, and generally hang out with Nada friends. But we also recognize the many gifts Nada has to offer in friendship and service. Mission teams always come away blessed. Nada youth mission teams have even partnered with our youth to work in Danville, Owsley County, and Arkansas.

Samaria

Samaria represents those who are not like us or those we may not like. It may make us uncomfortable, but Jesus wants us to relate to people who are different from us and also commands us to love our enemies. Being faithful to Acts 1:8 missions means that we must step out of our comfort zones to be with all kinds of people, especially the neglected and hurting.

Ends of the Earth

The ends of the earth for LABC includes Kyrgyzstan and Morocco. Alex and Tina Savelyev, are members of our church, who spent part of the year in Kyrgyzstan, Russia, ministering with deaf children. Our church also partners with the Evangelical Church in Rabat, Morocco. October 7 is World Communion Sunday, and our congregations will conduct a worship service in which we both sing some of the same hymns and share other common elements of worship.

In all of these partnerships, Lexington Avenue Baptist seeks to “share [Christ's] message of salvation, build relationships, and join hands with others to help meet physical needs.”

Conclusion

Missions has a face. The giggling face of a child at the apartments near our church. The unknown faces of a family that lives across the street. The happy face of a new Habitat homeowner. The carefree face of a teenager in Nada. The desperate face of a Moroccan refugee. The joyful face of a singing choir member at our partner church in Rabat. The expressive face of a deaf child in Kyrgyzstan signing a Bible story. All of these faces belong to people God has placed in our circle of relationships.



Daily Devotionals: Missions



Monday: *Our Partnership Church in Rabat*, by Doris Cessna

Scripture Reading: Acts 1:8, Hebrews 6:18-19, I Corinthians 15:19

This past March, I had the extraordinary privilege of traveling to Morocco with a KBF team to visit our partnership church in Rabat. Since my return I have often reflected on my trip, and I must say it was not at all what I had expected nor what I had imagined our partnership church to be. I was amazed to find a church so far ahead of us with an obvious global vision.

While working along side our partnership church, their daily actions taught us how they live in a Muslim country peacefully, without ever speaking a word. There is so much to be learned from them. As I worked with the church in Rabat, and witnessed their daily activities, I got a glimpse into what I felt like a missional church should be. I saw a church with very limited resources. This has not stopped them from helping the thousands of refugees pouring into Morocco. They help people fleeing from civil war, genocide, political persecution and all manner of hardships, looking for a better future.

After being in Morocco, I think God has given us a window of opportunity to work with our brothers and sisters in Christ. It should be our mission to be involved with the refugee ministry in our partnership church. A partnership simply means a joint interest. As refugees are risking their lives looking for a better future, for a ray of hope, we definitely need to reach out and enlarge our circle to be the “Presence of Christ”. Hope is a powerful force, especially when faith is connected to it. I strongly feel faith jump starts a person’s ability to see the Divine Promise that stretches into eternity. This is what real hope is all about. (Heb. 6:18-19)

My prayer is that we will not let the opportunity to share the “Love of God” pass over us. We must extend our hand to the people asking for our help.

Tuesday: *Sign Me Up - I’m Going*, by Brenda Farmer

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 6:8-9, John 20:21

I lost my Daddy, (my hero) to Alzheimer’s Disease on May 10, 2003. Heart broken, and my body numb, I cried one morning in my kitchen, “God, please, please help me! Show me how to get through this agony.” As I turned, there on the kitchen table lay a flyer from LABC. It read: “HELP WANTED! VOLUNTEERS NEEDED! Nada Mission Trip.” I picked up the phone, called the church office, and told Gail, “Sign me up, I’m going.”

My life changed on that morning in May. This small community at the foothills of the Red River Gorge has blessed me and many others at LABC. I have witnessed lives being changed (theirs and ours) by the strong relationships built with love and respect from the LABC members. One of those special relationships is with the youth. The Nada youth touch my heart. Growing up in Nada is a struggle. Poverty is a way of life. Many kids never finish school and have little hope for a future.

But! They can play basketball. Two years ago LABC took thirteen Nada and three LABC youth (boys and girls) to Helena, Arkansas for a Basketball/Missions/Bible Camp led by the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. Nearly all the Nada kids had never been outside Powell County, much less the state of Kentucky. For them, this was a life changing experience. Playing

against, and with, predominantly African American youth and Native Americans from South Dakota was an extraordinary challenge for these kids in that Mississippi Delta town. They rose to that challenge! By the end of the week, friendships and respect had been built among all three groups regardless of the differences in their cultural backgrounds.

Last November, standing on the sidelines in the pouring down rain, I watched as five of the Nada young men played their final game of the season. The look and smile on their faces, when they saw me there, will forever be etched in my heart and mind.

These youth continue to bless my life. In May, five Nada youth graduated from Powell County High School. How proud I was as they walked across that stage to receive their diplomas! Three graduated with college scholarships, others plan to enter job training or the work force. These are true success stories. Please pray for all of them.

How we think about people and how people think about themselves, limits or enhances what they will attempt. God answered my prayer that May morning in 2003. HE said: "Brenda, love your neighbors in Nada, encourage and respect them, build relationships that will last a lifetime, show and tell them of MY love for them, for they are MY children. I send you."

AND I SAID: "YES, LORD, SIGN ME UP, I'M GOING!"

Wednesday: *Build Up Hope*, by John Lepper, KBF Coordinator

Scripture Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Thanks to the support and partnership of Lexington Avenue Baptist Church and other churches around the state, Kentucky Baptist Fellowship (KBF) is able to serve others in the name of Christ, through church planting in Kentucky, church partnerships in Morocco, and community development in Nada, Owsley County and McCreary County. The following story from our "Build Up Hope" missions emphasis is an example of the work of KBF Churches like yours:

*Courtney was only eleven-years-old when her mother died in her arms, leaving her father to care for her and her five brothers and sisters. Her father's small, two bedroom apartment became very crowded for the seven of them, so when Courtney and her family heard that applications were being received for a second **Extreme Build** in McCreary County, they jumped on the chance.*

We need bigger, but this is all my dad can afford. He's doing a good job, but we need a bigger house," wrote 14-year-old Courtney as a part of the application. If you could just take the time to read this my family and I would really appreciate it. Thank you very much for [understanding] my family's needs."

*On July 21, 2007, Courtney and her family moved into their brand-new, four bedroom house built by her new friends in the **Kentucky Baptist Fellowship**. ... they received a tangible expression of the amazing love of Christ.*

Helen Keller once said, "Alone we can do so little. Together we can do so much." Together we're building hope in Kentucky.

Thursday: *What is Missions?*, by Dave Garrett

Scripture Reading: 3 John 4-6

Missions is... Nikki rehearsing her "I am with Lexington Avenue Baptist Church and we would like to give you this homemade baked bread" line as she approached each apartment we visited. Each time she would misstate her verbal introduction a different way but she kept trying and folks felt cared about.

Missions is... Seeing Landon surrounded by children who are trying very hard to be patient as he ties balloon animals as fast as he can until each have their very own.

Missions is... Kelsey, April, and Brittany laughing, jumping, and playing a jump rope game with boys and girls from the neighborhood. Brittany “got out” first almost every time.

Missions is... Justin, John-David, and Cayle raking leaves after dark on a Wednesday night for one of LABC’s senior adults.

Missions is... Mary Cait and two friends rushing away from a two hour cheerleading practice to work with the children at VBS for two more hours.

Missions is... LABC’s youth working at the Salvation Army each Thanksgiving preparing food baskets for families in our community. Dana the coordinator at the Salvation Army is always pleased and amazed with how much work these kids accomplish each year.

Missions is... LABC’s youth ringing the Salvation Army bell on Christmas Eve every year, even in the bitter cold.

Missions is LABC’s youth laughing, sweating, working, reading, freezing, smiling, and praying.

Friday: *Hands of Hope with Alex and Tina Savelyev, from the web site*

www.handsofhopekg.info/deaf.html

Scripture Reading: Matthew 28:19-20

The deaf have long been legally classified as “invalids” by the government of Kyrgyzstan and it is generally accepted that the deaf cannot learn and are not capable of living full and productive lives....

Drawing extensively from his own life experience since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Alex felt strongly that the most effective way to begin a long-term outreach among the deaf in Central Asia was to begin with a core group of deaf young people who were less likely to be embittered by fast-paced political changes. Toward that goal, Hands of Hope began summer Deaf Kids Camps and enlisted the help of school administrators and parents in the process. Since the beginning in 2001, Alex and Tina have developed relationships with some 100 deaf young people and their families and endeavor to maintain those relationships as the young people grow into contributing members of society and leaders of their deaf community. They’ve also brought volunteers from America to provide real-life examples of leadership as well as encouragement for the journey.

- Pray for the Savelyevs and the volunteers who come alongside to assist the work of Hands of Hope.
- Pray especially for the deaf and hard-of-hearing in Bishkek as they continue to search for their own place in a changing society and as they continue to experiment with new ideas for developing gainful employment.