Core Value #5—The Centrality of the Local Church

The sixth installment of our Missions Essentials series deals with the centrality of the local church. This entry is written by Daniel Boyd, who serves in the Netherlands with his wife, Heather, and their three boys.

As Jesus stood near Caesarea Phillipi in the foothills of Mt. Hermon, He asked His disciples the most important question: “Who am I?” Peter offered an inspired confession, and our Lord responded with a clear mission statement: “I will build my church.” Then He explained to their surprise that He must suffer and die at the hands of religious men and rise again (Matthew 16:13-21).
What Jesus wants us to be doing

The gospel is the heart of every missionary who walks through the double-glass doors of the BMM Home Office in Cleveland: We want to go, preach the gospel, and reach the lost. It is striking that Christ connects Peter’s confession, His impending suffering (the gospel), and His determination to build His church. If the gospel is the heart of what we do, building His church is what Christ wants us to be doing.

BMM’s fifth core value is the centrality of the local church. This is a recognition that, from commissioning to mission, the local church is what we are doing: we serve local churches and we plant local churches.
**Serving God globally starts locally**

Saul and Barnabas were appointed for missions as they were faithfully serving the church of Antioch (Acts 13:1-3). Baptist Mid-Missions recognizes that disciples of Christ are formed by local congregations and that servants learn to serve by ministering in a local-church context. Serving God globally starts locally.

In the spring of 2006, my senior pastor sat back in his chair to reflect on the long phone conversation he’d just finished. We had recently applied to BMM, and someone was following up with him. He caught me as I was leaving and, with a smile on his face, expressed how grateful he was that BMM interviews the pastors of candidates to measure their involvement, commitment, and servanthood. The local church affirms, appoints, and commissions the missionary—not BMM.

When Christ commissioned His disciples into the nations, He instructed them to make disciples, baptize them, and teach them (Matthew 28:19-20). Acts unfolds how disciplemaking multiplied churches from Jerusalem to Rome. BMM's missiology centers on planting and maturing local churches that make disciples and nurture servants. This is a mission that outgrows and outlasts the missionary, because Christ’s building program is bigger than we are.
This is where Christ will build His church
Caesarea Philippi was a city enveloped by a terrible idolatry, a place known as Panias—the gates of hell. Of all places, this is where Christ declared His mission “and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it!” This is what brought us to the Netherlands and keeps us here: no matter how dark the culture, country, or city, this is where Christ will build His church … in fact, He’s planted six churches in the Netherlands through us and our BMM missionary colleagues.

From recruiter to staff member, missionary to council member, BMM is committed to serving and planting local churches worldwide. The gospel is the heart of what we do, and the local church is what we’re doing. Are you serving locally so that He can use you globally?

Save the date for Advance Weekend 2020, a seminar that will equip you with tools for missions involvement. The theme will be Keeping it Simple: Discipleship as the DNA of Missions with sessions by Daniel and Heather Boyd who work in a thriving church plant in Holland. If you or anyone you know is interested in missions, don't miss this informative weekend. Click the picture above for more details or to register.