

**The Epistles of John 12: Support our Missionaries**

**11/05/2023**

**Scripture 1: (3 Jn. 1:1-8 ESV)**

The elder to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth. Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul. For I rejoiced greatly when the brothers came and testified to your truth, as indeed you are walking in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

Beloved, it is a faithful thing you do in all your efforts for these brothers, strangers as they are, who testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their journey in a manner worthy of God. For they have gone out for the sake of the name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles. Therefore we ought to support people like these, that we may be fellow workers for the truth.

## Sermon:

Now we shall begin to look at the third letter attributed to the Apostle John.

Again, across the whole letter, we find the same standard formatting which marks this as an ordinary and normal type of correspondence.

Again, as with Second John, this letter is sent from “*the elder*”; the semi-anonymous *presbyter* whom tradition, reason, and the textual evidence strongly suggests was the “Beloved Disciple”, John the son of Zebedee.

We discussed previously how this lack of specificity, or obvious authorial connection to an Apostle was one of the reasons why, according to the church historian Eusebius, there was some debate and concern about the inclusion of both Second and Third John within the New Testament canon. However, that was not the only major challenge to their inclusion. The other significant argument used against them was their specificity and directness, being clearly written to specific named parties and addressing specific and limited issues (which were known at the time). Those who argued against their inclusion did not consider them to have the kind of “universal applicability” which they believed Scripture ought to have<sup>1</sup>; yet just as with Paul's letter to Philemon, to Titus, and his two letters to Timothy, these were preserved because of their exemplary and explanatory nature. Each letter demonstrates specific examples where (and how) the Apostle's Christian teachings were to be applied. Therefore, they actually are “universally applicable” because of how they teach us to turn our doctrine into practice.

However, I would be remiss if I did not pause to add a final reflection concerning Second John's intended audience since it is related to the original recipient of Third John. Although I stated that the addressee of Second John, being “*the elect lady and her children*”, was effectively a euphemism for some particular, but unidentified congregation and her individual members, there are others who have interpreted it rather woodenly (literally) and narrowly as being written to some particular, yet otherwise unidentified woman and her kids within an unknown congregation. {Yet the grammar of the text within the letter (in verse 8) refers to the addressee by using a masculine plural form (*eautous*; accusative, masculine, plural) which could be indicative of them not being a (principally) feminine audience of a woman and her household, and instead be more indicative of a broader, inclusive group context like a congregation: like the common Christian epistolic form of address, *adelphoi*, (1 Cor 1:10) which is translated in the ESV/KJV as the broad term “brothers” and is translated in the NRSV as “brothers and sisters”.<sup>2</sup>} Now the grammar of the letter alone does not provide enough evidence to be conclusive one way or another however, the addressing of Third John offers enough circumstantial evidence to swing the argument away from Second John being written to a woman and her household to a particular church because here, John clearly writes to a specific man, Gaius, and also references two other individuals, Diotrephes and Demetrius, by name.

If John did not seek to obscure or hide the identity of these Christian men, then there is no good, suggestible reason for why John would not also directly address a woman and identify her by name and include her household (Paul certainly had no qualms against it) when he exhibited no such concern about addressing Gaius.

Neither Scripture nor church history tells us anything more about these three men: Gaius {“Typically, Roman men had three names: a *praenomen* (informal “first name”), *nomen* (*gens* or clan name), and *cognomen* (small family name).<sup>1</sup> Gaius Julius Caesar is a good example. “<sup>3</sup>}, Demetrius, or Diotrephes. “Gaius” was a very

1 Introduction to Biblical Interpretation; Klein, Blomberg, Hubbard (p. 175)

2 Archaeological Study Bible (p. 2031)

3 <https://biblearchaeologyreport.com/2019/11/15/sergius-paulus-an-archaeological-biography/>

common, Roman “first name” (*pronomēn*) during the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries, which marks him out as a Gentile and very probably a Roman citizen. Similarly, Demetrius was also a Roman name, and while Diotrephes was certainly a Gentile name, it was not necessarily Roman. This means that Third John was written to a Gentile Christian believer in a church made up of many Gentile Christians. He probably had social influence and political standing, as would befit a Roman citizen. Therefore, Gaius was almost certainly a man of means and while this letter was obviously and directly pertinent to him, in his time and place, the rest of his personal context and circumstances (beyond what is mentioned here in this letter) are actually irrelevant for us to understand and interpret this letter {despite being very relevant for them}. What is most important and relevant for us here, is Gaius' practical example of Christian activity and faithfulness.

So let us now focus on the exemplary work of Gaius.

The Apostle John writes to Gaius “...whom [he] love[s] in truth.”; whom he *agapes* in *alethea*; whom he truthfully cares for as his brother in Jesus Christ. Then, by way of his blessing in the greeting, he prays that Gaius' life is generally going well, “...that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul.”. He prays for Gaius' sense of peace and wholeness by acknowledging the mystical union and inter-relation between the bi-partite condition of our being both physical and spiritual persons. {Alternatively, there has also been a tri-partite formula suggested as being: mind (*psyche*), body (*sarx*), and spirit (*pneuma*); which are also mentioned in Scripture as relating to our self, but within Biblical use *psyche* and *pneuma*, mind and life and soul and spirit, are ordinarily used as synonyms. However, to affirm this tri-partite form would be to create a division/distinction where none is necessary nor is implied and it is an interpretation which has ordinarily been rejected by the Church.}

Next, John praises Gaius for all the good and faithful works which he has done in the name of Jesus Christ. “For I rejoiced greatly when the brothers came and testified to your truth, as indeed you are walking in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.” He rejoices because he sees spiritual fruit blossoming within the life of Gaius as this has been reported to him as evidence of his faith.

Again, we can see the continuity and clear signs of relationship between the three Johanne letters, because John expresses his joy being made complete, knowing that those whom he has discipled and taught to follow in the Way of Jesus Christ, continue on in the way which they ought to go, “...walking in the truth.”.

After this greeting, blessing, and earnest praise, John now expresses the reason for his correspondence: a commendation and exhortation for Gaius to continue doing what he is doing. “Beloved, it is a faithful thing you do in all your efforts for these brothers, strangers as they are, who testified to your love before the church. **You will do well to send them on their journey in a manner worthy of God. For they have gone out for the sake of the name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles. Therefore we ought to support people like these, that we may be fellow workers for the truth.**”.

Although this sounds vague, concerning what Gaius was actually doing and for whom (John had no need to repeat the details of his activity to Gaius), the general idea is really quite clear. John was commending Gaius for his personal support of certain unnamed, Christian missionaries traveling throughout the region. They are the ones who have given John their good report, which prompted him to write to Gaius and offer his thanks.

Now those commentators who argue that Second John's, “elect lady and her children” referred to one particular woman and her household, this will rightly correlate this affirmation of Gaius' missional support with John's broad admonition and warning against receiving antichrists, “Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any

*greeting, for whoever greets him takes part in his wicked works.*” (2 Jn. 1:9-11 ESV); arguing that they are two sides of the same coin. They suggest that Gaius was exercising good and proper judgment, while this anonymous woman needed to be instructed and reminded because either she had made some “poor decisions” in the past concerning whom she supports or because she needed to be warned because she was at risk of doing so. Now that is a very uncharitable perspective to hold and a very non-*agapic* position. That is an offensive position to take against this presumed “her”, especially when she is not directly named or counseled.

If that interpretation were true, then the anti-patriarchial mob would have a justifiable reason to come to her defense. However, New Testament Scripture is filled with so many named, strong women being recorded as supporting the work of the Apostles and the early church (Phoebe, Romans 16:1; Priscilla, Acts 18; Lydia, Acts 16), that for John to take that kind of negative approach and attitude would be very out-of-character for him, especially when Paul showed such great affection for Lydia: an independent woman with her own household and successful business. It would be very unusual indeed, for the Apostle Paul to look or sound “nicer” than John, the Beloved, in his writings.

Now, while those interpreters are right in connecting the two statements, it is not strong evidence in support of their position because John's admonition against receiving and heeding false teachers would have been more properly communicated to the wide body of believers, without prejudice. Warn everyone, together and at one time, while also praising individuals directly and privately, so as to avoid the appearance of favoritism and preventing those who “do well” from becoming “puffed up”. This is kind of the spiritual opposite of the worldly, “praise in public, punish is private” attitude held as a means to avoid social shame and embarrassment.

So, no. Really, the most loving interpretation and the most reasonable interpretation concerning who the audience of Second and Third John were, is that Second John was sent to a particular congregation while Third John was sent to a particular member of that church. Between these two letters, John warned them to not welcome, receive, or support false teachers and antichrists (people who claimed to teach Jesus, but instead taught false doctrines), commended them corporately for their faithfulness, and then personally, to Gaius, for his support of the good teachers, these missionaries.

We know, from the narrative provided by the book of Acts (Acts 8:1-4; 11:19-21; ch. 13-14; ch. 16-20), that during the 1<sup>st</sup> Century faith in Jesus Christ was spread widely across and throughout the Roman Empire through the intentional efforts of Christian missionaries and evangelists such as: Paul, Barnabas, Silas, Timothy, and Philip; and through the passive efforts of Christian believers who were scattered because of persecution and prejudice, once they were settled into their new homes and locales. Many of these first Christian “exiles” formed the core and initial seed of Christian worshiping communities, *ekklesia*'s, especially once the followers of Jesus were excommunicated (or “put out” of) from the Jewish Synagogues (John 16:2; and as eventually happened to Paul in every city he visited). Many of these *ekklesia*'s became loving places of support; always glad to assist and host other Christians as they traveled (Acts 21:4, 7; 27:3; 28:14-15). We also know from Paul's various letters, that other Christian disciples were being directly sent to or sent out among the increasing number of *ekklesia*'s to carry both corporate and personal messages (1 Cor 4:17; Philippians 2:19; 1 Thess 3:2; 2 Cor 7:6; 2 Tim 4:10). That is the kind of circumstances which John was writing into in these two letters.

*“Beloved, it is a faithful thing you do in all your efforts for these brothers, strangers as they are, who testified to your love before the church.”* Gaius has clearly welcomed, received, and taken care of some Christian missionaries and they have sent his praises to both John and his local *ekklesia* concerning Gaius's charity and generosity. We are not told what he specifically did, and we are not told how much he did; his good works of Christian *agape* were neither qualified nor quantified, as much or as little as they might have been (Mark 9:41)

Because those specific details are ultimately unimportant for us here in posterity since otherwise we would be tempted to limit our own expected efforts and charitable support to his 1<sup>st</sup> Century standard.

Not only was Gaius is being commended for what he has already done, he was also being encouraged in what he was presently doing, and he was being exhorted, stirred up, and spurred on (Heb 10:24) to do more and even greater good works in love because these missionaries were still on site. They had not yet returned from whence they came. This is why John writes to him, “*You will do well to send them on their journey in a manner worthy of God.*”, telling him that despite having already done so much, that he should not yet stop and should continue for as long as needed, providing for their needs, for as long as he is able. He should do this not because John expects it of him, he should continue to treat them in “*a manner worthy of God*” because they are God's image-bearers, His emissaries, and are deserving of such respect and good treatment because of Whom they represent.

We should not assume that John was raising the bar in terms of hospitality and generosity towards missionaries, evangelists, or pastors because of our particular ministries, education, or ordination. He was not, because this is the attitude and manner which we ought to treat each and every guest, and each person with whom we have dealings. What John was doing was encouraging Gaius, by reminding him that what he was doing is an expression of Christian *agape* towards others, and that what he was doing was both exceptional and very ordinary.

- His generosity and hospitality were exceptional because they went above and beyond the social norms and conventions that governed the treatment of strangers.
- His generosity and hospitality were also very ordinary because they typified what every person, and especially what every Christian, ought to do for any other person, whether they are family or friend, or neighbor and stranger, Christian or pagan.

But then John further qualifies and highlights why these men in particular, were worthy of his continued support, because of the positive impact which Gaius' good works were having through them, “*For they have gone out for the sake of the name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles. Therefore we ought to support people like these, that we may be fellow workers for the truth.*”.

John was saying that even though what Gaius was doing is what he ought to be doing for anyone with a need, it was especially needful, and important, and exceptionally good that he do it for men like these because they were men who have “... *gone out for the sake of the name...*”, men working on account of the Name of Jesus Christ. They are men who were traveling, preaching, teaching and discipling, evangelizing and ministering all across the region in the name of Christ, for the expansion of Christ's Kingdom, and for the glory of God alone.

Why did these men accept “...*nothing from the Gentiles.*”? It was not because of religious purity concerns, because that issue was largely settled in Acts 15 by the Jerusalem Council and in 1 Corinthians 8 by Paul discussing food that comes from sacrifices to idols {It was a common Gentile practice to have sacrifices butchered and then sold in the public market, both as a means of raising funds for a temple and to ensure that “good food” was not wasted.}, instead it was really about avoiding two things:

- First, to avoid the appearance of the Christian faith being presented as just another vain philosophy (Acts 17:18, 19:9; 1 Cor 1:17; Col 2:8) {Being a professional philosopher was a valid, paid, means of gainful employment in Greco-Roman society. They often served as personal tutors; teaching their philosophies and the theories of rhetoric. Essentially, they were paid merely to think, talk, and teach.}; and,

- Secondly, to avoid the appearance of “selling” the Gospel and its spiritual benefits (Acts 18:3; 20:32-35).

This was an imperative of their Christian witness to accept “...*nothing from the Gentiles.*” because they did not want to seem to profit from the open, **free** offer of God's redeeming grace. They would not accept anything from those whom they were calling to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, because their ministry was not self-serving {unlike certain modern televangelists, false teachers, and antichrists who claim to teach God's Word but instead, they exploit undiscerning believers and line their pockets with illicit gain}. However, notwithstanding all that, these men were still needing and deserving of support by their fellow Christians because the Scriptures teach us that, “*You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain.*” (Deut. 25:4; 1 Cor 9:9, 18; 1 Tim 5:18 ESV), meaning that their ministerial work was rightly deserving of a fair wage, paid for by Christians, as support for the continuation of their ministry.

Not only did John believe and teach that it is right and good for Christians to support “professional” Christians as they preach the Gospel and work for the coming of Christ's Kingdom, but that there is an even greater reason for us to support them in such a manner, so “... *that we may be fellow workers for the truth.*”. So that through our support, we may be joined together with them in communal service. So that our good works of support would flow out through them, in their good works of ministry, for the sake of the name of Jesus Christ.

Now juxtapose that thought with Second John, where John tells the church that everyone who receives, supports, or even greets a traveling false teacher and antichrist, they “...*[take] part in his wicked works.*” (2 John 1:11 ESV). While John was actively warning against false prophets and antichrists: like that former PCA pastor, or Andy Stanley, Joel Osteen, Joyce Meyers, and many other similar individuals; they and their heretical messages were being transmitted throughout the Roman Empire using the same mode and model as those who carried the True Gospel of Grace in Jesus Christ. That is why John warned the church and reminded them that the only way the two sorts may be told apart is by their message. Did they preach “The man, Jesus Christ, crucified, dead, and resurrected in the flesh.” or did they preach a different message entirely, “Salvation by works. A need for deeper, hidden, or secret knowledge. Trust in Jesus and then receive temporal prosperity. Or, did they elevate the spiritual over and above the physical.”? The first example would be someone that is faithful and true, while every other example offers a counterfeit gospel preached by a false, Satanic antichrist.

Once again, John emphasizes our unity in Christ Jesus, through the shared and supported good works which are done in His Name. So, like Gaius, as the *ekklēsia*, as we support Christian missionaries, evangelists, and pastors in their Kingdom work we become united with them through this union as, “...*fellow workers for the truth.*”.

Opportunities to support other Christians in this manner is a blessing for us, both as individuals and as a congregation. Not every Christian is called to go into foreign missions. Not every Christian is called to go into the inner city. Not every Christian is able or capable to labor and do the physical work that missionary and evangelistic endeavors often require. But every Christian is called to be engaged in Christian mission and Christian ministry. Through our support of others, we are all still able to participate in those works. We are all still able to help, to the best of our ability and resources, by helping those who are called into these ministries and those who are able to “Go and Do”.

Two hundred years ago, Presbyterians were well-known as the Christians who “Went and Did”. That is why there are so many hospitals and schools with the name “Presbyterian” around the world. Presbyterians went and did things from out of our Christian *agape* for people and then, when they asked us “Why?”, we were able to tell them about Jesus after having first shown them Jesus. Our works helped them to hear and listen to the message which were bringing. But early on in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, many Presbyterians decided that the works

themselves were what was most important, and then they began to leave the Gospel out. Then later on in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, many Presbyterians decided that it was too difficult to “Go and Do”; that it was too challenging and too dangerous; so a lot of Presbyterians stopped going, but many still continued to fund those who were willing to go share the Gospel, for the sake of Jesus' Name. Now-a-days, it seems as if most Presbyterians (across all of our many different denominations) are now too old and tired, and no longer able to “Go and Do”, so much so that now it may feel as if all that we can do is “write a check” so that other people may do, on our behalf.

But if you think that, then you are wrong. While we can and should support other Christian missionaries financially, there is still so much more that we can do to support them and the Christian mission out in the field, and again be missionaries in the field closest to our homes. Through all of the various means of support that we are presently engaged in, or have the opportunity to engage with, we are all still able to be involved in the broader Christian ministry that every believer and follower of Jesus is called into. Sometimes we just need to be reminded about some of the many declarations in Scripture which inform us about God's plan and purpose for His *ekklesia*, about what our mission actually is and what we ought to be doing to fulfill it.

- Matthew 28: “*And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*” (Matt. 28:18-20 ESV)
- Mark 13: “*And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations (Greek: ethne, ethnos).*” (Mk. 13:10 ESV)
- Habakkuk 2: “*For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.*” (Hab. 2:14 ESV)
- Acts 13: “*And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, "It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, "I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth." And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed. And the word of the Lord was spreading throughout the whole region.*” (Acts 13:46-49 ESV)
- James 1: “*Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.*” (Jas. 1:27 ESV)

That is the ministry of the Church, the *ekklesia*, to which every professing Christian is called. We are:

- To make disciples of Christ and teach them to do all that He commands.
- To baptize them into the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and bring them into the covenant community.
- To proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ in and to all nations and peoples until the earth is “*filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD*”, to be a “*light to the Gentiles*” and “*bring salvation to the ends of the earth*”, to bring the Gospel to everyone, everywhere, without exception.
- To perform good works of charity and kindness by caring for, and providing for, those who are less fortunate than ourselves; those who are marginalized, maligned, and forgotten, merely to show forth the *agape* love of God.

All of that is part of our calling and is a part of our ministry.

Not one of us is able to do all of that on our own, alone, but we are able to do it together through our support of Christian missionaries, missions, and even secular charities.

Our congregation is exceptionally generous and that is something which I love about us.

- Last Sunday was the first time the Angel Tree ministry was publicly mentioned. We did not publicize anything about it earlier, because it was not until very recently that we knew for certain that we were going to get to participate with it this year, because of all the hoops and requirements which Jenn Bacquet went through. Yet, every “Angel” was picked off of the tree last Sunday. Thank you. However, there is more to the ministry than just buying the gifts. We also have the opportunity to give these children their gifts and show them the love of Jesus through something much more important than mere “stuff”: the gift of presence. Be on the watch for that information to come soon!
- Every year many of us fill and collect “shoe boxes” for Operation Christmas Child, filling those boxes with wonderful “stuff” for these unknown children; but then next, the workers from Samaritan's Purse get the opportunity to give them the gift of presence on our behalf. Then they get the opportunity to tell those children about Jesus and what He has done for them. So do not forget that your boxes need to be back by Sunday the 19<sup>th</sup>!
- We also support other various causes and ministries from Samaritan's Purse, ones for veterans and ones for disaster relief. Their workers and chaplains go to the lost, marginalized, or forgotten people and help them with what they need most, first. They provide for their physical needs, and then they provide for their spiritual and emotional needs. They go to be present with them, right there with them in their pain and suffering, misery or misfortune and then minister to them in the name of Jesus Christ.
- Locally, we gladly support Richland Pregnancy Services as they help women to make better, informed choices for their lives and for the life of their unborn children. A key part of their work is introducing them to Jesus, and offering to connect women with a congregation who will love them in His Name.
- Then sometimes our work of ministry is best done as charity. Not everything must be evangelistic, most should be but not everything must be, because it is still about sharing Jesus's love with others and if it is a Christian doing it, then it is still a little evangelistic. This is why we also support a local shelter for women and children, often taking them sweet cereals as a treat for those who rarely get to enjoy such luxuries, just as we recently finished collecting food for the local food pantry charity, “People Helping People”.
- We are also partnering with other Christian groups. This Christmas season, we will be supporting the Salvation Army's Red Kettle Campaign; helping to fund all of the local work they do in the Name of Jesus; to help them share His Name and His *agape* with everyone who comes to them for help. They help with food and with shelter. They help kids with their education and learning and also by providing a safe place for them in the afternoon. We do not often see it, but the Salvation Army does far more than just ring bells and collect money but, they cannot do any of it, without the generosity of people donating to the Kettles.
- Internationally, we support our own resident missionary, Angie Hunter and through her we support GEM (Greater Europe Mission), and the Eurobrass. They are helping to take the Gospel throughout Europe, returning it to parts of the world which have often become un-churched and secular. Thank you Angie, for all that you have done and all that you will continue to do through your musical ministry.



- We also support a family of missionaries through Pioneers. Most of you know who they are, so for their protection I am not mentioning them by name; but we have been supporting them for many years as they introduce Muslims living in Europe to the true Gospel of Grace through Faith in Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, they had to cut their American visit short this summer and return overseas due to a family death, so we missed out on hearing about their present ministry experiences.
- Lastly, but not leastly, we also support EduNations and their school in Sierra Leone, Africa through our denomination. We just sent them a large quantity of books and Christian curriculum gathered and collected by our congregation. We have helped them replace a truck, in the past, and we join our funds with the rest of the EPC in financial support.

Yes, we already support many missionaries and missions very well, and I did not even mention everyone, or everything. But there are still other forms of missional support that we can be more or better engaged with.

- Every Thursday morning at 10 am, we have a group who gather together in the Parlor for prayer. We would love to have more people join us because a prayerful church is a powerful church.
- Beyond our walls, Deb Roof has helped to get a monthly prayer group started at the YMCA on every first Monday, also meeting at 10 am. Tomorrow will be their fourth meeting.
- We also have the opportunity to serve our Preschool at their events, as a classroom volunteer, or to just come in and read the kids a storybook. The teachers and kids would all love to have you come spend time with them!
- Everyone has access to a copy of the church directory: someone has a birthday every month, so you can send them a card, text, or make a phone call. It does not even have to be for a birthday, but it can just be to say “Hi!”.

We must not forget that each of us can or should also be missionaries in our own family homes and in our neighborhoods. So we need to know how we can help better support one another there too.

- How can we help support you as you evangelize and disciple your children, grandchildren, or great-grandchildren? What do you need?
- How can we help you show forth Christ with your neighbors? What do you talk about when you meet someone you know at the mailbox? Or at the grocery store? Or at the garden club? Do you know whether or not they know Jesus? Are you willing to make an introduction?

We, together as an *ekklesia*, are very busy and we are doing a lot to help support many different missionaries. That is great! I want to commend you for all that you are doing. You have been generous and faithful and I encourage you to continue doing so. Your efforts are surely storing up “*treasures in heaven*” (Matt 6:20) and you are truly showing forth the Kingdom of God in this world, giving everyone a foretaste of the glory which is still to come. You are doing what you should, so keep on doing it, because it is the right thing to do!

Yet, for all the good that you presently do, is there something more that you feel you could be, should be doing? Come talk with me and I will help you find a way to put your gifts and your talents and your time to works of service. Everyone cannot do everything, but everyone can still do something. Help us to help you in your support and in your work for the mission that God has given to the *ekklesia*.

You are, we are the Church and this is what we do because it is part of “**Why we are the church.**”: to be a blessing to all the families, nations, and peoples of the world in Jesus' Name.

Remember, we get to do this joyfully because we have been chosen and called by God. Being involved with Christian mission and ministry, supporting missionaries and doing local missionary work ourselves and other works of Christian activity are our response of faith and faithfulness. They are works of fulfillment of God's purpose. They are why He has brought us together as the Church, as the *ekklesia*, as His beloved people Israel. Those who are loved by Him. are brought together to love others on His behalf, “*for the sake of His Name*”. We love because we are loved.

Therefore, we support our missionaries because at one time, some missionaries reached out and brought the Gospel to us. Since they brought us news of God's freely given gift of grace, why should we hinder and why should we not help to see others converted to faith in Jesus Christ, as we have been? Through their good works and their sharing of the Gospel, others will come to believe through their touch and ministry; so, by our support we are able to also touch others for the sake of Christ and His eternal Kingdom, for God's glory, and the honor of His holy and precious name.

**AMEN**