

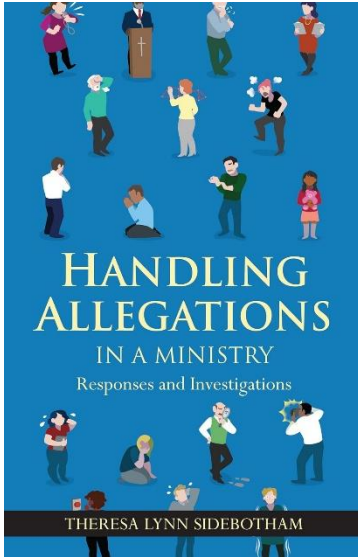
Leader's Edge Summary

March 2026 Summaries

Missio Nexus

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*** Leadership ***



[Handling Allegations in a Ministry – Responses and Investigations](#)

By: Theresa Lynn Sidebotham

Illumify Media, 2022

182 pages

[Find it on Amazon*](#)

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Summary

Theresa Sidebotham is a graduate of Wheaton College and is a long-time practicing attorney, having served on the Colorado Court of Appeals and at a large law firm in general litigation and serving religious institutions before opening Telios Law. In leading Telios Law, she has represented a variety of businesses, ministries, churches, and individual clients in matters ranging from child protection to civil rights. She has long-term experience in conducting internal investigations into misconduct allegations.

A church office worker complains about romantic advances made by a married pastor. What do you do? Parents in your congregation accuse a teenage boy of touching their daughter inappropriately. How should you handle it? A woman in your ministry files a sexual harassment complaint about a male coworker, which turns into a confusing he said/she said clash. How can you determine the truth?

Allegations of harm must be taken seriously. The health and reputation of the organization, the potential victim and the accused are all at stake. How does one go about investigating in an effective, godly way? This work is a handbook that provides guidance for pastors, ministry leaders, board members, and HR professionals in

- initiating the process of investigation, documentation and response;
- maintaining fairness and communicating appropriately;
- listening to and protecting those who may have been victims;
- taking responsibility when necessary and restoring those involved;
- whether outside expertise is necessary.

Best Idea

“Chapter 1 discusses receiving complaints and how to establish reporting systems that encourage reporting. Chapter 2 focuses on the decision-making that goes into pursuing an investigation or not. Chapter 3

discusses different ways to structure investigations and which structures are appropriate in different situations. Chapter 4 details special considerations of child abuse allegations. Chapter 5 explains the processes of building an investigative team. Chapter 6 outlines how an investigation progresses. Chapter 7 addresses concerns of memory and credibility issues. Chapter 8 focuses on responsibly handling investigative documents. Chapter 9 explains when and how to bring an ongoing investigation to a close. Chapter 10 focuses on leadership responsibilities, restoration, and reconciliation within a congregation.” Kindle location 153

Best Illustration

“Sarah works at Everyone’s Bible Church (EBC) as an executive assistant to Pastor Flirt, an associate pastor on staff. She is single and he is married. Sarah is fairly shy and quiet. A few months ago, Pastor Flirt started making comments about how pretty she is. That made her uncomfortable, but she didn’t say anything at first. Then he escalated to sending her texts of a sexual nature. She did respond by text and ask him not to. He stopped for a month or two, then started again. Slowly, the texts became more graphic. Sarah shared her problem with the Director of Children’s Ministry, Kate, who offered sympathy and suggested that Sarah approach the senior pastor, Pastor Responsible, but did not otherwise provide any practical support. Finally, Sarah did tell Pastor Responsible she was uncomfortable with some of the comments Pastor Flirt had made, but she was too shy to give details. She asked if she could switch jobs to work for someone else. Pastor Responsible did not ask for details or to see the text messages. He told Sarah that she should confront Pastor Flirt directly per Matthew 18 and that he would not get involved until Sarah had carried out this process. Was this the right approach?” Kindle Location 164

Best Take Away

“While Matthew 18:15 is a great scriptural guide on how to handle disputes and personal differences between Christians, it has limitations. First, it describes a process between persons of equal status. Both in biblical times and today, other approaches are described for persons of little power, such as Paul’s advocating for Onesimus to Philemon. Second, this approach doesn’t address criminal activity, breaking the law, or danger to the public. Most churches would not use the Matthew 18 directive in the case of robbery, rape, or murder. Misapplying Matthew 18 may force people, even children, inappropriately into a context where they have to confront an offender. Those reporting abuse or misconduct should not have to put themselves in undue danger, physically or emotionally, to bring allegations to leadership. If a victim of wrongdoing is afraid the offender will retaliate, and the policy is too strict on enforcing the Matthew 18 model, then the victim may just not report it and choose instead to simply leave or do nothing. This could result in continued abuse going unnoticed.” Kindle location 328

Our Recommendation

Theresa Sidebotham demonstrates a deep familiarity with and sensitivity to the many various moral and legal issues involved when allegations of abuse arise. She displays a broad knowledge of the Biblical text as well as the law in these matters. Since it is written as a comprehensive handbook and not as a narrative, it is not necessarily an easy read, yet it may be critical for responding effectively and legally when these types of circumstances confront the ministry or other organizational leader. Definitely recommended for insight into this issue.

Best Quotes

“An allegation of misconduct—or worse yet, child abuse—is a nightmare for any pastor or ministry leader. For the leader who gathers the moral courage to face the allegations, there is still the question of how to respond. There are a few ways to respond rightly. There are even more ways to respond wrongly. How organizations respond makes a huge difference in whether people are further harmed... in the culture of the organization and in the maintenance of its Christian testimony...” Kindle location 119, 123

“So many interests exist when there has been an allegation, and they seem to be in tension. The organization must attend to the following: Hearing well those who may have been harmed. Identifying and providing care and support to those who have been harmed. Pastors and ministry leaders are typically not trained to deal with these issues.” Kindle location 125, 134

“Common mistakes include failing to hear victims adequately, failing on privacy and confidentiality issues, and failing to treat people accused with fairness.” Kindle location 136

“This handbook is intended to help pastors, ministry leaders, and board members walk through the process. The information presented here will help guide you in determining what kind of help you need and when. This handbook is also for lawyers, members of law enforcement, and forensic practitioners who find themselves investigating allegations of misconduct at houses of worship.” Kindle location 138, 140,141

“Nobody likes complaints, including organizational leadership. Despite this instinctive reaction, an organization should encourage internal complaints and whistleblowing anyway. There are multiple reasons. First, we want to root out misconduct, whether that involves child safety, sexual harassment, or ethical issues involving finances. Second, organizations that address and resolve conflicts internally are less likely to have to deal with their scandals in the public square. Third, when organizations routinely encourage and address internal complaints and no negative action is taken toward the complaining employees, they are likely to have a better workplace. Fourth, it is a legal defense to some discrimination claims if an organization has a known complaint procedure that employees have not used. Fifth, victims of crimes and other inappropriate conduct struggle to disclose the misconduct. Finally, if leaders want a safe and ethical organization, people must feel free to discuss dilemmas and shortcomings.” Kindle location 190-209

“Four principles should be considered in responding to a report or setting up an investigation. The first is to protect the person who may be a victim. The second principle is to seek justice for the alleged victim. The third principle is to seek justice for the accused. This may involve bringing the accused to justice, but it should also involve giving justice to the accused in the process. An allegation is just that—it may not be true. Allegations should be treated as if they may be true, but without a presumption that they are true. A fourth principle is to protect the organization, which is also a fiduciary duty of the organization.” Kindle location 222-233

“Allegations of misconduct, especially leadership misconduct, are one of the hardest things for ministries to handle, bringing shock and grief. A common response is to fail to act on allegations, fail to take them seriously, or push the person harmed into dealing with the offender directly.” Kindle location 241

“You may want legal advice about several areas, such as how to: – Conduct the investigation so that it is well executed and protected. – Comply with statutory requirements. – Avoid serious legal consequences.” Kindle location 276

“If someone has been accused, should the person be put on leave? This question brings up a related question: Are there any safety issues involved? This is one of the first things that an employer should figure out when there has been a complaint or questionable behavior is observed. The issues involved will likely define the need for administrative leave.” Kindle location 308

“If the allegation is of child abuse, then mandatory reporting must be carried out immediately and a Matthew 18 context should not even be considered. Failure to report to law enforcement or child protective services is often a criminal offense, and reporting must be done quickly to comply with the law.” Kindle location 336

“Caring for someone who may have been harmed is the highest priority. This can be the child or individual who may have been abused but could also include his or her immediate family as collateral victims.” Kindle location 349

“Being accused, whether the person is guilty or innocent, is a painful experience. Leadership will want to respond to a person accused with kindness and without assuming guilt. However, directly providing care will lead to a conflict of interest, as leadership is responsible to be impartial in steps forward, like the investigation or assisting law enforcement. Therefore, a care plan should be set up for someone accused. This should be provided by someone who will not be a decision-maker, will not be involved in the investigation, and who is free to unconditionally accept the position of the accused.” Kindle location 360

“The procedure should contain a guarantee of protection for good faith complaints. This protects people when they complain. (But employees who complain in bad faith—lying, malice, and so on—can be disciplined. The problem here is we don’t know if Tom and Sally were acting in good faith in their accusations of the mission leader, because it wasn’t investigated.) Avoiding the Retaliation Lawsuit: How do you avoid a retaliation lawsuit? First, have an organizational culture that encourages complaints. If you can show that you often receive, and respond well, to complaints, it makes it much less likely that you are retaliating against a given employee. Second, if you have dealt with the complaint promptly, conducted an investigation and dealt with any wrongdoing, that helps. Third, do follow-ups with people who have filed a complaint to make sure there is no retaliation. Ask them on your own initiative if they are being treated okay. Here are the basic elements for a retaliation lawsuit: The employee complained. The employer knew that she complained. The employee was disciplined or terminated because she complained.” Kindle location 408

“Good investigations are part of good member care. They can serve the following useful purposes for your culture and spiritual goals, including these: Give employees confidence that you are caring for them. Root out misconduct. Cultivate a good workplace culture: by taking investigations seriously, the organization creates a culture where voices are heard, and un-Christlike behavior can be confronted. Encourage support for your moral standards and the standards of conduct for the organization because it sends the message that you take those seriously.” Kindle location 471

“Timing is important. Investigations should generally be begun within days, not weeks or months. Geography may make this a bit more difficult, and how long ago the event occurred can also make investigations more complex, so there will be a case-by-case analysis.” Kindle location 529

“Planning the investigation is important to avoid wasting resources but also to make sure nothing is overlooked. A common but devastating mistake is to talk only to the accused and not to others who could confirm the story. If you have confirmed, for instance, that a youth pastor was kissing a teenage girl, your employment decisions are already simple. However, you may need to investigate to make sure there are no other victims or a widespread problem. Part of planning will be to determine the purpose of the investigation and how you will use the results.” Kindle location 615

“You may choose to have an attorney run the investigation, both for a skill set and for privilege issues (discussed below). Some will argue that if the attorney is giving legal services to the organization, the attorney is not impartial and is biased in favor of the organization. This depends on what the legal services are. If the attorney has been retained to conduct a neutral investigation, find out the truth and position the organization for an appropriate response that cares for those harmed, that is the attorney’s task.” Kindle location 635

“We Are Taking the Right Actions, So Shouldn’t We be Transparent? There would be several problems created by revealing all information as it is gathered. First, sharing information before the investigation is complete and the information is substantiated creates a high risk of unjustly tarnishing someone’s character. Second, if someone has had negative material revealed about them, they also have a potential legal claim for defamation. Third, even if the investigators are able to substantiate information, this is only to the standard of ‘more likely than not.’ Fourth it is almost impossible to keep an investigation on track if the investigators are being actively critiqued as they work. Fifth, even if you think you have done everything right, a plaintiff’s attorney will not agree with you.” Kindle location 672-690

“Depending on the severity of the allegations, running an investigation may be quick or lengthy, simple or complex. Here are the overall steps for planning purposes: Receive the complaint. Appoint an investigator. Gather and review documents. Conduct investigative interviews. Reach findings and conclusions.” Kindle location 717

“Once a mandatory child abuse report is made, the ministry may be able to rely on law enforcement or CPS investigations, at least for determining whether child abuse happened. If there is a law enforcement investigation, the ministry should not interfere with it. Sometimes the government investigation does not produce a useful result for the ministry. Some possibilities are: – Law enforcement or CPS drops the investigation, determining that they do not want to file charges, either because they do not think abuse happened or because they think they will not be able to prove it beyond a reasonable doubt. - Agencies won’t share any information, even as time goes by. It can be hard to access the information law enforcement is gathering. – Agencies will not take jurisdiction in the first place, because of when it happened (perhaps too long ago), because it did not happen in their jurisdiction, or because allegations are too minor. This leaves the organization on its own. The child abuse piece was dealt with, but the organization needs more information to make ministry employment or discipline decisions. In these cases, you may need a partial or entire investigation sponsored by the organization.” Kindle location 866-871

“An outside firm not only avoids the appearance of impropriety and bias, but also may limit the possibility that decision-makers will be manipulated by people they work with and not make the right decisions. This may be more important if there are high-level liability concerns. For instance, if top-level leadership has been accused, it is quite difficult to run an internal investigation adequately. Having an outside team helps avoid allegations of bias and ensure the investigation is run well. Outside investigations are more costly but may be needed for both PR and liability purposes.” Kindle location 930

“Pros and cons should be evaluated when considering whether to use an attorney, a private investigator, or a mix of both. Ultimately, what is important is skill set, experience, and talent. Some private investigators are much better than some attorneys, and vice versa.” Kindle location 950

“Typically, investigators will interview the reporting party, people who may be victims, the accused, and any other witnesses to the events or people who may have information about the allegations. This may include former employees. The following order is suggested for interviewing: – Reporting party and people who may be victims. – Other witnesses who may have insight. – Accused. – Other witnesses suggested by the accused. – Circle back to initial witnesses as needed.” Kindle location 1,093

“Both the person bringing allegations and the person being accused deserve a completely fair process—which means they are not only entitled to an in-person interview with a full hearing, but they are entitled that the person disagreeing with their position also be tested with an in-person interview. What if Someone Refuses to

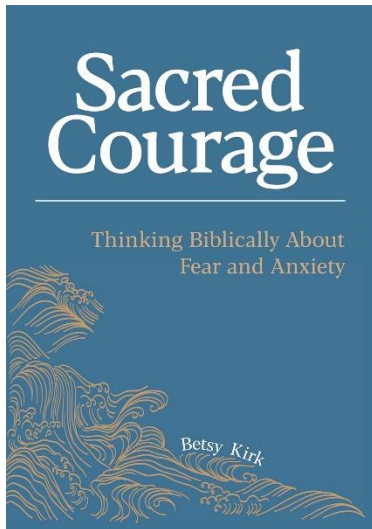
Cooperate with the Investigation? An employer has an obligation under certain circumstances to conduct the investigation, even if the reporting employee, for example, does not want an investigation. The employer should generally have a policy that failure to participate in an investigation may be grounds for discipline, up to and including termination. Without such a policy, it may be hard to get people to cooperate.” Kindle location 1,202

“Be aware that it is extremely difficult to enforce confidentiality on witnesses. If they are employees, it is possible but risky. If they are not employees, it is impossible. Some witnesses may even go on social media after an interview to express indignation that they were asked to keep confidentiality, alleging that the request amounts to a cover-up. In requesting confidentiality, watch for evasive non-responses, such as, ‘Well, I can’t lie if someone asks me a question.’” Kindle location 1,238

“Assessing credibility is an important part of interviewing. Investigators will evaluate credibility by considering whether: The witness was telling the truth or had reason not to tell the truth. The witness has a personal interest in the outcome. The witness remembers well or has memory issues or had memory issues. The witness had the opportunity and ability to observe things firsthand.” Kindle location 1,355

“In considering plausibility, investigators can consider which witnesses’ stories make the most sense. If one person’s version of events defies logic or common sense, it may not be true. Could the witness have heard or seen what he or she claims? Should she have heard or seen things that she did not admit to?” Kindle location 1,363

***** Spiritual Formation *****



[Sacred Courage: Thinking Biblically About Fear and Anxiety](#)

By: Betsy Kirk

William Carey Publishing, 2025

184 pages

[Find it on Amazon*](#)

*As an Amazon Associate Missio Nexus earns from qualifying purchases.

Summary

Here is a helpful spiritual formation book directly related to the missionary experience from William Carey Publishing. The author, a missionary in Indonesia, helps workers fight against fear with faith in God. The author's own battle against fear—from childhood to motherhood, from Minnesota to Indonesia—is woven throughout the book. Each chapter also draws upon Christian wisdom from the ages and offers fresh meditations on biblical passages to develop a response to fear that is theologically informed and practical, especially for those in ministry.

Best Illustration

“One of my most precious mentors was (and is) Elisabeth Elliot. It doesn't matter that we never met; she mentored me for years through her writing. My favorite nugget in all the gold of her writing is this one, though every time I read it, it knocks me over: ‘God is God. If he is God, he is worthy of my worship and my service. I will find rest nowhere but in his will, and that will is infinitely, immeasurably, unspeakably beyond my largest notions of what he is up to.’” Kindle location 1767

Best Idea

“Fighting fear begins, not by taking a closer look at our fears, but by taking a closer look at the One who is on our side. As Corrie ten Boom put it, ‘If you look at the world, you'll be distressed. If you look within, you'll be depressed. But if you look at Christ, you'll be at rest.’” Kindle location 517

Best Take Away

“In the garden, there was no fear until communion with God was broken. When God finally and fully dwells intimately with his people in the new heavens and new earth, there will be nothing to fear ever again. These are two swift glimpses, two visionary descriptions bookending the Bible, of life utterly without fear.” Kindle location 1038

Our Recommendation

As a well-read author with many life experiences as a missionary, Kirk's book is a solid guide to help all who

struggle with fear. That's probably most of us to some extent. Scriptural insights will help the reader think biblically as one faces fear and anxiety.

Best Quotes

"A key premise of this book is that everyone, at some level, is afraid. Though the specific fears we feel most, the way we express them, and even our awareness of them differ as widely as our personalities, every human inhabitant of earth experiences fear." Kindle location 93

"Fear twists relationships and creates overprotectiveness, possessiveness, jealousy, and an obsession with control. A substantial portion of stress is actually fear." Kindle location 212

"From Mark 3 and 4, we may glean two useful things to know about fear: a powerful figure (or force) can only be defeated by a more powerful one and the most powerful figure is the one to fear." Kindle location 300

"If we are going to gain victory over our fears, if we want to be able to step forward in obedience in spite of them, then we must also ask, 'Who is Jesus?' And we need to listen for his gentle reply: 'Take heart, it is I.' If we really grasp who he is and understand his love for us, fear loses its power, even before the storms cease." Kindle location 306

"Undeniably, life on earth means a fearsome array of threats of all kinds. There is enough scare power in the word cancer alone to make my point. You and I, living in the world we live in, must be either scared, senseless, or lying. Because fear is not irrational. It is not silly." Kindle location 392

"I would argue fear is the most rational, natural, and legitimate posture possible for a human being existing in this particular universe." Kindle location 398

"If we want to live honestly— and if we want help with our fear problem—perhaps we must start by taking a candid look at our undisguised selves, but from there we must look to God. If our gaze is focused on God, fear loses its power." Kindle location 447

"We can see, as far back as the garden, that fear has its roots in sin. In short, fear exists because sin does. It comes with our current human state and is a deeply entwined part of our spiritual DNA after the fall." Kindle location 575

"For the believer in the God of the Bible, fear tempts us to refuse to trust in the sovereign will and providence of our good God." Kindle location 586

"But fear also presents us with an opportunity for a different response: trusting God. It really is a call to battle. It is a rallying cry for faith to rise as we repeatedly affirm our trust in God and his sovereign plans. When fear rises, we, far from being somehow disqualified or condemned because we are afraid, can journey forward in courage with God." Kindle location 666

"Fear may present us with powerful temptations to sin, but it simultaneously gives us opportunities to walk by faith, to tread our earthly measure clothed in Spirit-filled courage as we await the deliverance of God." Kindle location 737

"Have we come to grips with the reality of our own death? Or are we, like the wider culture around us, too busy denying it? It seems to me that American culture in particular sanitizes death and ignores it. Many have never even seen the dead body of a person; if we do, it has been painted to look lifelike." Kindle location 857

“How can meditating on our own death help us? It forces us to make real in our souls the belief that this life is not all there is. It forces us to bank on our motto that the best is yet to be. In short, it keeps us honest, and it grounds us in reality.” Kindle location 874

“What ‘to live is Christ’ means is that life, knowing Christ, aware of and attached to him, is good. He is what makes life good. He must be the reason we cling to life—because life with him, even in a scary world, is life indeed. We invest our lives, our moments and days, our values and joys, our hopes and dreams, our work and effort, in him. He is what makes life worth living.” Kindle location 967

“Could our fear of death and our increasing sense of mortality bring us to the point of finally, wholeheartedly trusting God with that hardest of all things to relinquish—our own lives?” Kindle location 975

“Have you ever wondered what it would be like to live entirely without fear? To patiently await future developments with quiet confidence in a positive outcome? What would it be like to live unburdened by fear and free from dread? I can only faintly imagine.” Kindle location 1020

“We need a vision that allows for the perpetual arising of fear but not for living under its burden. This side of heaven, a dread-free life involves a faith characterized by endurance and patience—‘all endurance and patience with joy,’ as Paul put it in Colossians 1:11.” Kindle location 1049

“What we call fear of the future is really fear of what the future may bring. What if this happens, and what if that happens? In other words, we’re asking the ‘what if’ questions. Have you noticed how many of our fears begin with a real or implied ‘What if ...?’ These kinds of questions will arise, and worrying over each one takes emotional energy, increases our anxiety, and steals our hope.” Kindle location 1056

“Every what-if, however terrible, that can occur in the life of one of God’s own cannot uproot it from the bedrock of God’s certain and faithful promises. The soul that grasps this is free indeed.” Kindle location 1110

“Fearing God means, for starters, that we have focused our fear on him because ultimately he will determine all outcomes. This view puts all other threats to our security in proper perspective.” Kindle location 1237

“If the fear of the Lord is the key to living a dread-free life, we must not draw an unbiblically narrow picture of what this fear of him is. As we grow in our understanding of the relationship God wants to have with us, we will know what it is to fear him.” Kindle location 1245

“So the way that the fear of the Lord helps us to fear nothing is that we who fear him not only tremble before his power but also trust his goodness. In so doing we have his friendship—meaning we have been taken into the confidence of the God of the universe.” Kindle location 1358

“We make a big mistake when we think we could fully explain his actions or his nature with our supposedly consistent logical systems. Though he has revealed himself to us in the Bible and in his Son Jesus Christ, much remains unknown.” Kindle location 1613

“This has to be a false idea of God because he does bring the things that we fear to some believers, and we know it. Telling ourselves, from our position of ignorance, that God won’t do a certain thing isn’t what it means to take refuge in God.” Kindle location 1616

“The hardest reality that we encounter is that we cannot determine what will happen to us and our loved ones. So it turns out that our battle with fear isn’t just a battle with fear. It’s a battle with our own need to be in control.” Kindle location 1634

“Tozer helped me recognize that the central question underneath the battle with fear is really ‘What is our actual mental image of God?’ Additionally, and just as important, ‘How do we picture God’s posture toward us?’” Kindle location 1830

“He is smiling, he will work it all out for good, and he does—he really does—dearly love us. At long last, finally, that is fear’s true antidote: the knowledge of the deep, deep love of Jesus. Jesus’s love is wide and high and long and deep. It is, in fact, perfect.” Kindle location 1982

“There is a spiritual survival kit that we need to pack before fear surges up in our souls. The battle with fear is often won or lost before it starts, depending on how we have readied our hearts. If we are scrambling for spiritual resources in the moment that fears gather like clouds before a storm, it is often too late.” Kindle location 2018

“The spiritual survival kit we need is the truth of the word of God. It is prepared through the spiritual disciplines of Bible reading and prayer, those time-worn pillars of Christian practice upon which we build so much. It turns out they are of gravest importance in the fear battle.” Kindle location 2022

“Truthfully, the times when fear seems to be winning are the times when I have been neglecting my Bible and prayer. Coincidence? I think not. God gave these vital practices for our spiritual survival; they are how we find help.” Kindle location 2032

“When it comes to a particular fear or anxiety, can you really have ‘trusted the Lord’ if you have not given it to him thoroughly in prayer? What does trusting him even mean if not that? And if we have not done so, why do we expect to be able to respond in faith and courage?” Kindle location 2050

“By reading the Bible desperately, we are purposefully searching its pages for help. As we read, God gradually transforms us from shaking and scared people into warriors.” Kindle location 2141

“The struggle with fear is a lifelong battle, reaching an intense pitch in different seasons. We cannot be ready to fight in an instant, but we are prepared by a lifetime of training through the daily disciplines of prayer and Bible reading. The battle is largely won or lost in our ordinary moments of daily devotion.” Kindle location 2218

“First, it’s countercultural to confess fear at all in our brazen, self- confident age. After all, being afraid is a weakness, and to the world, weaknesses must be camouflaged and compensated for. But Christians don’t need to mask their weaknesses.” Kindle location 2270

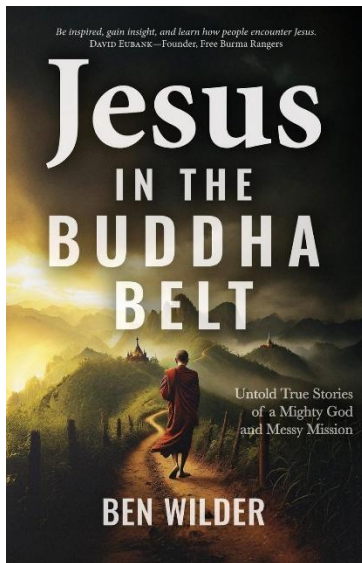
“The second principle, related to the first, is that we are only as strong as the strength we have together. Your courage matters to me, as does the tested genuineness of your faith—and mine matters to you.” Kindle location 2300

“A third principle: every one of us in the body has a specific call to strengthen and support one another in fearful times. This is not only the responsibility of the pastor or the trained counselor. We are not underqualified to walk alongside each other, and it is not someone else’s job.” Kindle location 2328

“Christian courage may be thus described. It is the undaunted audacity of a sanctified heart in adventuring upon difficulties and undergoing hardships for a good cause upon the call of God.” Kindle location 2482

“The call of God is not a single lightning bolt experience followed by divine silence as we struggle to obey. It is a constant whisper as he gently leads us onward, empowering us by the presence of his Holy Spirit. There are none more courageous than those who have God’s voice constantly in their ears.” Kindle location 2592

***** Missions/Ministry *****



[Jesus in the Buddha Belt: Untold True Stories of a Mighty God and Messy Mission](#)

By: Ben Wilder

William Carey Publishing; 2025

188 pages

[Find it on Amazon*](#)

*As an Amazon Associate Missio Nexus earns from qualifying purchases.

Summary

Ben Wilder in *Jesus in the Buddha Belt* introduces the reader to the stories of four people who come into contact with Jesus in Myanmar. Told in their own words, the mini-biographies include a former Buddhist monk, a cultural Christian, and two urban migrants. Each story is used to illustrate aspects of mission and evangelism today, both the good and the bad. The book provides insight into the Buddhist beliefs and world view which is contrasted with the grace and freedom offered by Christ. The principles and stories expounded in the book are applicable to people throughout the Buddha Belt (Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, and Tibet). Wilder points out that since most Buddhists will never hear the gospel, the need for a clear presentation of the message of Jesus followed by discipleship is enormous! Lastly, each segment of the book concludes by drawing out the deeper theological truths illustrated in the stories. The appendices include questions for discussion and reflection and would be appropriate for a small group discussion.

Best Illustration

“Hell is hot for a monk who doesn’t practice the teaching.” I read it again. My mind was racing: 227 rules of monastic behavior, all the junior monks I had taught, the donors who worshiped me. I had vowed to practice the Buddha’s teaching – but I couldn’t do it. All the while, my worshippers believed I did! The whole thing was a lie! I was headed for hot hell! Page 7

Best Idea

“Most of us have never seen a Bible. We don’t have churches in our villages. The Buddhist monks constantly inoculate us against the truth. And our whole society thinks changing religion means betraying our people. No, my people are not going to stumble across the Jesus trail on our own. Everything in our lives is keeping us from it. How would we ever find Jesus without a guide? And how few guides there are! Lord, send us more guides!” Page 31

Best Take Away

“Might you be willing to consider how your prayers, passions, skills, and resources could influence the people of the Buddha Belt’s outcome in a positive direction?” Page 161

Our Recommendation

This book is recommended for anyone interested in learning about the practical and theological issues of sharing the gospel in another culture, particular in Buddhist nations. The book provides an excellent introduction to many of the foundational issues of missions today in an easily accessible manner. Overall, it is very engaging and thought provoking – a page turner!

Best Quotes

Part 1. Aung's Story: a Buddhist monk's life takes a supernatural turn

"Then, I suddenly heard the strangest sound. It was a voice I had heard before – but never let into my ears. It was so loud now that I couldn't hear anything else; I had to pay attention. The voice said three solitary words: 'Jesus is savior.'" Page 8

"But the Buddha teaches there is no escape from karma: 'only cause and effect- you get what you deserve-no one else can be your substitute!' Jesus said something different: 'But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us' (Romans 5:8). Wow! What a difference!" Page 14

"The Buddha taught Kisa Gotami a wise lesson on the universality of death-but he could not raise her son from the dead. Jesus, on the other hand, raised several people from the dead. He even rose from the dead himself and promised to resurrect his followers one day too! The power of Jesus over death was something I did not find in Buddhism. It blew my mind and filled my heart." Page 16

"Following Jesus hasn't made my life easy, but it has made it simpler. I'm not drowning in dead rules and rituals anymore, no more living in fear and grasping for luck. I have quit the works-based manipulation tactics and accepted Jesus's invitation: 'Come to me, all who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.' That's good news!" Page 20

"God often does not spare his people from persecution, but instead uses persecution to produce maturity in their lives and validate their gospel witness." Page 29

"Each pioneer Ta'ang Christian's story is different, but most of them share two things in common: 1) a personal experience of Jesus's power through prayer and 2) an intelligible explanation of the gospel." Page 31

"What is the sum of teaching in the Three Baskets of Buddhist Scripture we received? I will sum it up for you in a few short words: works of the law. All the Scriptures boil down to this one thing- you must do the works of the law to attain enlightenment, nirvana, the cessation of suffering. That's the end goal of Buddhism, and works are the way to get there." Page 33

"...anyone who follows Buddhist teaching to its logical conclusion will understand their total inability to keep all the requirements. This shows our need for a savior. A savior is the only way out of suffering-and where will you find a savior?...The only one I have found who claims to be a savior is Jesus. Jesus has answered my prayers and my biggest questions in a way that Buddhism did not. Buddhism showed me a path out of suffering that I couldn't walk; Jesus showed me that he is the Path, he is the Truth, he is the Life-and no one can come to the Almighty Father except through him." Page 35

Part 2. Bawi's story: conversion from Christian tradition to the real Jesus

“Unlike most other Myanmar ethnic groups, many Chin tribes accepted Jesus en masse and have idolized Americans ever since... Many Chin say they are born Christian. I guess I was too. Then I met Jesus, and the trouble started. Ha! Amazing! I’m kind of joking but also kind of serious. My early life was like a fish following the current. After realizing the difference between knowing about God and know him by experience, I often found myself swimming against the stream, even in my own Christian community.” Page 46

“Life was different after experiencing the Holy Spirit. He gave me a deep, new desire for everyone to know Jesus. I couldn’t stop weeping each day as I prayed for Buddhists on the other side of Main Street. With no training or strategy, I started spontaneously crossing the invisible barricade and telling everyone I met about Jesus. How could I not tell people about him? He is so amazing! I couldn’t rest until they knew him! This was all new for me. I had never told people about Jesus before, but now I could not stop.” Page 49

“Ironically, a Christian village was one of Sky’s biggest barriers to following Jesus. The gospel sound great to Sky: God forgives you, makes you new, and takes you to be with him forever outside of suffering! But if all that was true, why did the neighboring Kachin Christian village abuse alcohol, beat their wives, and gossip worse than Buddhists? Sadly, Sky saw more bad habits in the Kachin Christians than in her Palaung neighbors.” Page 66

“Doesn’t this Christian man voluntarily destroying his house to save the others beautifully depict the love of Christ? It’s clear to me, but, sadly, I don’t think anybody else in town saw the connection-even when I explained it-except for the handful of Christians. How incapable we are of seeing until Christ removes the blindfold! The people of Banyan Ridge are held captive in the domain of darkness. They can’t get out by their own will or missionary persuasion. We can tell people about the light-we must!-but we can’t make them see it; only God can.” Page 70

“I think what the people of Banyan Ridge need most is for God to open their blind eyes. God must remove the blindfold if they are going to see. This realization has driven me to rely less on other missionary efforts and give myself more fully to the most important missionary task of all, getting on my knees in prayer.” Page 70

“God has designed the Great Commission as a partnership between him and his people. We pray, plant the gospel seed, and water it-but God makes things grow. He performs the miracle of conversion and enables the spiritual growth that follows, not us.” Page 72

“I started studying Buddhism-not in order to become a Buddhist-but in order to understand them better, so that I could communicate with them better. How could I effectively point people to Jesus without understanding them?” Page 76

“One of the deepest concepts ingrained in the Buddhist mind is that there’s no one to save you-everything hinges on your own ability to follow the teachings. This is directly opposed to the good news of Jesus, which begins with the principle of human inability. Jesus teaches that people can never do enough good deeds; we can only be saved by faith in what he has done for us. Any Buddhist who genuinely considers the way of salvation will have to grapple with these contradictory claims.” Page 79

Part 3. Lin’s story: the bright and dark side of Christian mission in Myanmar

“When I was growing up, nobody in the village knew about Jesus. We knew there was a Christian religion that worshipped Jesus, but that was a foreign religion for foreign people.” Page 88

“As a kid, I also heard that Christians buy converts. Using gifts and money to manipulate religious convictions disgusted us...I grew up hearing other rumors about Christians too. They initiate converts by dunking their heads underwater until they see Jesus, they can sin all they want because Jesus forgives them, and they are promised a good next life.” Page 88

“I have since learned that the local hearsay about Jesus and Christians did contain partial truths, but the small bits of truth were so mixed with lies and distortions that our perception of Jesus was totally disfigured.” Page 89

“My Buddhist background has also made me hyper-aware of how much people need Jesus-because I still remember life without him. I could hardly wait for training to end so we could get out there and start sharing the gospel.” Page 95

“The other more problematic way that orphanages without orphans make money is by bringing children to the orphanage only when the donors visit....Once the orphanage leaders received the money, the donors returned home...and so did the children, leaving new cars and houses in their wake.” Page 99

“If donors do not live here, do not know the language, and do not have good accountability systems, they may never even know their funds have been misused.” Page 99

“Becoming a marginalized minority was harder than I expected, but it gave me more compassion for the ethnic groups I had once looked down on.” Page 108

“This may be hard to believe, but many Anya villages have never had a Christian witness at all. Let me say this another way-many Burmese Buddhists live and die without ever hearing the gospel even once.” Page 117

“Some villages have heard the gospel from Christians who contradict the message with their lives. In this case, the Christians had good talk, but a bad walk...Our Buddhist brothers and sisters will only know the love of Christ if Christians tell them with our lips and show them with our lives.” Page 117

“A third problem that I see keeping many Burmese Buddhists from Jesus is the way the message is preached...the problem may be that the Christian does not know the truth of Buddhism well enough to communicate the truth of Christ in a way that is meaningful to the audience.” Page 118

“God has sovereignly assigned his people two indispensable links in the chain leading others to salvation: 1) Preaching-announcing the good news of salvation through Jesus, 2) Sending-setting apart and helping others go and announce the good news. Without these two links, the chain cannot go further.” Page 122

Part 4. Tha Gyi's story: unprecedented opportunity in the urban youth scene

“God is orchestrating unique opportunities through youth urbanization that he has uniquely gifted his people-including you-to leverage for the gospel at this moment in history.” Page 136

“Ellen and Jill told me all kinds of things about Jesus-how he changed their lives, how he loved them, and how they loved him back. This was all strange to me, but not nearly as strange as the next thing they said: Jesus loved me. That was weird. I didn't know much about Jesus at that point, but I know he was for foreigners-not for Burmese people. Burmese are Buddhist. Period. A Burmese worshipping Jesus is treason! We would have to betray our ethnic identity to do that.” Page 139

“If the god of white foreigners loved Burmese people, why did his British worshippers invade our country with guns? Did they desecrate our temples with boots and pillage our holy treasures because Jesus loved us? In my mind, becoming a Christian meant siding with the British-and I know I did not want that.” Page 140

“Was I a Christian now? I didn’t know. I didn’t like that word, but I didn’t know how else to describe what was happening. I just knew something was different...That day I opened the door to something new, to someone new-to Jesus-the man who surprisingly stood knocking on my Burmese Buddhist door.” Page 143

“It took a lot of relearning and new experiences, but my original mental image of Jesus has changed. Nowadays when I close my eyes, I see him with brown skin, like mine. I see him wearing a longyi, like mine. I hear him speaking Burmese words, like mine. I know Jesus was from Nazareth and looked like the people of his day, but I can’t help but think he would wear a longyi and shave his face if he visited Myanmar.” Page 156

Epilogue and Appendices

“Second, right now, millions in Myanmar and across the Buddha Belt are disillusioned with life and religion. Their normal unquestioning conformism has been cracked, and they are willing to consider different alternatives in unprecedented numbers. This is a historic window of opportunity, but it may not last long.” Page 161

“The nation of Myanmar has a population of 58 million people and 52 people groups that are considered unreached by the gospel.” Page 165

“Over 31 million of Myanmar’s 58 million citizens are ethnically Burmese. According to the joshuaproject.net, only 0.08 percent of Burmese people are Christian. Many Burmese villages have no churches and no Christian witness.” Page 168

“Countless thousands of Burmese and other Unreached People Groups are migrating to cities in Myanmar and abroad each year. These urban youth migrants often have increased receptivity to new ideas, including the gospel. Foreigners and Myanmar nationals can partner with prayerful strategies and deep discipleship to maximize this amazing gospel opportunity.” Page 170

“In the face of problems beyond their ability, some Buddhists are trying prayer to Jesus-and receiving answers. Many times, after receiving answers from prayer to Jesus, Buddhists are eager to learn more about him and his ways.” Page 175

“Buddhist background believers in Jesus may not know many Christians or many Bible verses at conversion, but they desperately need the encouragement of Christian community and the Bible to withstand persecution and grow mature.” Page 175

“Many people across the Buddha Belt do not believe they can choose their religion any more than they can choose their ethnicity-for them, both are something inherited that they cannot change.” Page 175

“Persecution is a normal, often unavoidable, experience for new believers in the Buddha Belt and is intensified by the communal nature of their societies.” Page 175

“When Christians do not have a deep experience of Jesus and a vivid memory of the gospel’s work in their own lives, they are likely be more concerned with interchurch and worldly affairs than with sharing the gospel with unbelievers.” Page 176

“Building bridges from a host culture’s previous knowledge can help increase understanding and minimize barriers to the gospel-but it cannot produce conversion.” Page 177

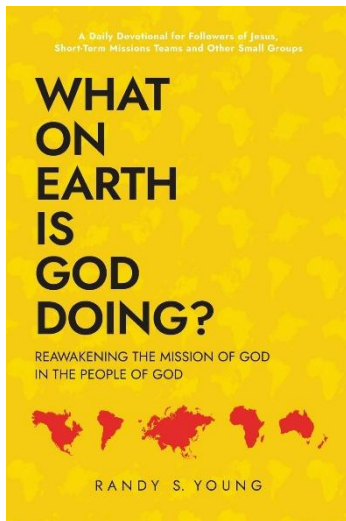
“Entrenched racism among different ethnic groups can be a major hindrance to God’s mission, but also presents an opportunity for the gospel to shine brightly-doing it’s unique work of breaking down racial barriers and creating one new family in God.” Page 179

“Donating money is one of the easiest ways for foreigners to feel like they’re making a difference-and the things money buys can boost the mission-but foreigners donating lots of money to poor local people without sufficient relationship and accountability pose major risks to the donors, the recipients, and Christ’s reputation.” Page 179

“National history and ethnic identity have sadly tainted many people’s views of Jesus in Myanmar and across the Buddha Belt. But deeply rooted relational evangelism and discipleship can help these people see Jesus in more accurate and compelling ways. This is an invitation!” Page 181

[Listen to the interview here.](#)

***** Church Mission Leadership*****



[What on Earth is God doing? Reawakening the mission of God in the people of God](#)

By: Randy S. Young

Redemption Press Express

198 pages

[Find it on Amazon](#)*

*As an Amazon Associate Missio Nexus earns from qualifying purchases.

Summary

“What on Earth is God Doing” by Randy Young was written “to inspire all of God’s people to personally own God’s one mission, to purposefully engage in that mission daily, and then live to passionately spread His glory to the ends of the earth.” (Page 1) Presenting snapshots of missions from biblical, historical, and cultural perspectives, the author invites us to a deeper understanding of the centrality of God’s mission and our role in it, involving both theory and practice. Throughout the book, the author addresses common misunderstandings around missions and provides a course correction back to the worldview of a follower of Jesus first and foremost. For example, he challenges us to break out of cultural biases and love our Samaria surrounding us. He encourages us to become World Christians who incorporate five habits (pray, give, go, welcome, and mobilize) into our daily lives to take part in reaching the world with the gospel, including these habits in a missional lifestyle and community. He challenges us to make a difference by sharing our faith by becoming more actively engaged rather than a passive observer.

Best Illustration

The author was speaking with a reporter, asking him “simple, get-to-know-you type questions.... The reporter began to cry...I sensed he needed to share some thing that he’d been wanting to express to someone who would listen.... He poured out his story. His insecurities and doubts. His broken dreams... Trying to pay attention to what might be stirring below the surface, I took a risk and tried to move to the next level.” (page 136) In this illustration, Briggs shares a real-life example of a significant encounter that began with simple questions and a willingness to listen, leading ultimately to deeper and more meaningful connection.

Best Idea

The author packs this book with illustrations of methods and effects of sharing the gospel. If you find examples compelling, this book is for you.

- A striking illustration was the study a young man who lived out being a fisher of men. From a worn page in his Bible, “down the whole left-hand side was a listing of his school friends. Next to their names were the dates each came to Christ...It was like a spiderweb of transforming grace moving from left to right across the paper.” “He prayed for the lost. He expected divine appointments. And many of his

classmates will one day spend eternity in heaven with him.” Page 147

- Another example explains how a group of Columbian believers reached out to village and tribal leaders in their country using computer training to share the gospel using a community style. “They believed that if they could just get these leaders immersed in their community of faith for a few weeks, they might experience the love of God through his people and see that the power of God was greater than the power of their witchdoctors. ... At the end of the experience, we had the privilege of baptizing nineteen as they professed Jesus as Lord.” Page 127

Another illustration tells the story of the transforming power of the gospel in the words of a tribal man who first heard about Jesus as an adult. “Still tearing up, he would go on to report that his tribe has always had a reputation for ‘killing’ but that ‘we are getting better.’ He reported that in the last two years, there had not been one murder in their tribe, and they attributed this to the arrival and reception of the gospel. And they were no longer going to the witch doctor because of Christ. A few months later, Diego reported that his gospel-resistant witch doctor had come to Christ: “He killed a lot of people, but now he knows Jesus. ... Before we were blind. Our minds were closed. The gospel is not changing our culture, just the bad things in it. Glory to God.” Page 73

Best Take Away

“To be a follower of Jesus, one must reject any cultural worldview that clashes with the worldview of the Bible. It must always be Christ over culture, never culture before Christ. No exceptions.” Page 78

Our Recommendation

This book is recommended all who are looking for inspiration to live out the great commission wherever they are. The book can lend itself to devotional reading or a group discussion. Chapters are designed to be read as single units and are equipped with reflection and discussion questions.

Best Quotes

“Disciple-making today too often focuses only on replicating the character and ways of Jesus without any expectation of joining Jesus in his work on earth.” Page 1

“Despite being commanded to go to every nation, tribe, and tongue, today, over 85 percent of Buddhists and Hindus still have never even met a follower of Jesus! Why, after two thousand years, has no one walked Jesus into their culture and on their soil yet? Could it be that the Mission of God has been seen as an add-on for making disciples rather than the primary reason why Jesus commanded us to do it?” Page 3

“Jesus has already told us to go into all the world. So the question should not be, Does God want me to go? Rather, we should be asking, Lord, where did you want me to stop?” Page 3

“Every nation. Every tribe. Every people. Every language—a multicultural mosaic of worshippers around His throne forever. This is the dream and longing of God and the promise of His word.” Page 11

“Missions is not merely something the Bible speaks about; missions is what the Bible is about.” Page 16

“I missed a second set of characters in those stories that God was focused the entire time: the nations witnessing the greatness of God. Maybe we can say it this way: For God so loved Egypt, He sent Joseph. For God so loved Babylon, He sent Daniel and his friends. For God so loved Persia, He raised up a refugee girl named Esther. For God so loved Nineveh, He sent the reluctant Jonah.” Page 17

“In some ways, the church is still like those first disciples, too often unconcerned or oblivious to their role in the Mission of God.” Page 25

“God’s plan was to bless his people so that they could be a blessing to the nations, so that those peoples, in turn, might give glory to God.” Page 26

“We, the church, are His key to His glory spreading among the nations. We are saved to be His hands, feet, and voice everywhere.” Page 28

“The Moravian movement...was so passionate about the Great Commission that they started a twenty-four-hour, around-the-clock prayer meeting, with at least one person praying at all times. It lasted nonstop for over one hundred years! Perhaps this is why, over the next two hundred years, they would send out over two hundred missionaries, one in every twelve church members as global workers.” Page 38

“The God who so loves the world will stop at nothing to reach every nation, tribe, and tongue!” Page 42

“...the image of God we carry in our hearts impacts every detail of our lives. Our relationship with God can never go beyond our revelation of God. So, what does this mean for all the people in the world trapped in cultures with no knowledge of Jesus?” Page 61

“First, yes, all are equally lost and need the gospel, but not all have equal access to that gospel. Many tribes still do not yet have a church on their soil and in their language. Those in their culture couldn’t find Jesus if they wanted to because the gospel has not traveled to them yet....That’s why the Bible puts a premium on those yet to be reached hearing the Good News for the first time.” Page 62

“If the mission were only about reaching people, then fine, we could just stay home and reach the lost around us. But both people and peoples need to be reached.” Page 64

“First, World Christians recognize that Christianity is fundamentally different from all other religions. Each religion becomes man’s attempt to reach God; Christianity is the story of God reaching to man. Other religions emphasize what one must do to reach God. Our faith is all about what our God has done, and we connect with God not by works but by repentance and faith in Jesus as Savior and Lord.” Page 66

“When man reaches to God, we call it religion. When God reaches to man, we call it Christmas.” Page 66

“Fear of the gods, the demeaning of women, child labor, and ethnic cleansing in the name of their faith are far from the teachings of Jesus and break His heart.” Page 66

“World Christians do not compromise truth to align with culture.” Page 67

“All roads do not lead to heaven. That’s why we must take His gospel to all the peoples of the world—loving, serving, teaching, and living His words.” Page 68

“First, we must recognize that all cultures have beauty and value in God’s eyes, with elements that reflect His creativity and ways, but they also have in them beliefs and practices that are destructive and break the heart of God. Second, we must come as students. We have a lot to learn from others. If we go only to give and not receive, we are finished before we start.” Page 74

“Traveling to another part of the world, we can immediately begin to compare, often coming to a quick conclusion, unspoken, that ‘our way is better.’ This is the essence of ethnocentrism.” Page 76

“You like it? I’ve got a whole book of ‘em! It’s part of a bigger book called the Bible. Have you ever heard of it?’ ‘No.’ ‘This book, the Bible, tells the story of Jesus, the son of God. Ever heard of him?’ ‘No.’ This young man had grown up in a culture with no knowledge of Jesus. EVER.” Page 81

“When Jai was asked what was different now that he was a follower of Jesus, his answer was quick and simple: ‘The fear is gone.’...The gospel is changing his worldview, and the Prince of Peace is doing what only He can do.” Page 85

“As we take the gospel to the nations, the world is not like a pancake, where you just start pouring syrup, and it ultimately covers the whole thing. The world is more like a waffle; syrup poured into one square will not necessarily overflow into the next.” Page 86

“God doesn’t look at our world and see geopolitical boundaries; He sees peoples.” Page 87

“Unreached People Group—a tribe or ethnicity that is less than 2 percent Christian and among which there is no indigenous community of believing Christians with adequate numbers and resources to evangelize their people without outside help.” Page 88

“If every Christian is already considered a missionary, then all can stay put where they are, and nobody needs to get up and go anywhere to preach the gospel. But if our only concern is to witness where we are, how will people in unevangelized areas ever hear the gospel?” Page 90

“That is the work of a missionary: to be a witness for Jesus in a culture other than their own. To put it another way, all disciples are to be His witnesses; those witnesses Jesus calls cross-culturally, especially to reach those with little or no access to the gospel, we call missionaries.” Page 91

“Churches today spend over 98 percent of their missions resources in already-reached regions.” Page 94

“One day while among the Macuna, Lucia found herself sharing John 3:16, ironically, with a young man named Juan. As she was reciting the verse, Juan interrupted her. ‘Lucia, how long ago did this man die?’ ‘Oh, Juan, it’s been over two thousand years ago.’ As she continued with the gospel presentation, he again interrupted. ‘Lucia, did He die for me too?’ ‘Of course he did, Juan. Why do you ask?’ ‘Lucia, do you mean a man died for me, and nobody has ever told me? Why?’” Page 96

“It’s time for the church of Jesus Christ to once again make His last command our first concern!” Page 104

“Perhaps too many still see the Great Commission lifestyle as only for Global Workers.” Page 106

“Don’t just put God first on your list, like a task you check off when your quiet time is over, then move on to the next thing and the rest of your day. Jesus doesn’t want to just be first on your list; He wants to be the center of your daily life: first in relationships, first in work, first in education, first in recreation—His mission becomes the lens by which we see, choose, and do life.” Page 108

“Faith for the follower of Jesus is to be both personal and public, never private (no matter how much the world tries to paint us into a corner).” Page 109

“Are you ready to join the battle over the nations in the Mission of God from your knees? When we talk about daily living the mission, it begins with a choice. Will you be active or passive? Engaged or aloof? On the field or in the bleachers?” Page 117

“It is tragically possible, in today’s Christian culture, for a person to live their whole life engaged in nice, Christian things and not have one bit of their life story make one bit of difference in advancing the Mission of God.” Page 118

“The Green Martyrdom invites followers of Jesus to daily die to personal wants and a self-first lifestyle to forge relationships, ... that form a missional community that loves and serves the lost together.” Page 121

“There’s not a place on the planet where you can’t make a difference every day—from your knees.” Page 122

“One year, God provided for this college guy to go, and it was a life-changer. The next year, he came to me and said, ‘I know I’m not called to go this year, but I want to help others have the kind of missions experience I had. Here’s the money from the sale of my car.’” Page 125

“Too many people today are paralyzed waiting for God’s where, all the while going nowhere and doing nothing of consequence for Jesus. Don’t get stuck waiting on God for a voice from heaven. Just get started, and the Holy Spirit will reveal the where as you go. To state the obvious, Jesus said go into all the world, and it’s pretty hard to miss!” Page 125

“Get contagious with your Great Commission passion, and take others along with you. In your circle of influence, don’t just be a thermometer, be a thermostat—in other words, don’t just take the missional temperature of your group, raise it! As you go, take them along. As you give, invite them to join you. As you pray, involve them in what you’re experiencing as you get on your knees and go to the nations. As you welcome, help them open their arms too.” Page 127

“When people are welcomed, loved, and served, the gospel changes lives, and Jesus receives the glory.” Page 131

“Visible at all times and verbal when a door opens to share His story and ours, this is how YOU and I become the fifth gospel.” Page 135

“Often, I hear people say, ‘I’m not really good at talking about Jesus, so I just like to witness by the way I live.’ What they probably really are saying is, ‘I’m not comfortable. I get nervous. I don’t want to have to try to explain my faith. I don’t want the potential conflict.’” Page 135

“But people need to hear how to receive Jesus and His salvation. They need to hear how Jesus has intervened in our lives. We need to ask the Holy Spirit to help us freely give what we have freely received—the gospel of salvation. We need to ask Him for the courage to share the good news with the lost all around us at home, not just when we have an opportunity to go on a mission abroad.” Page 135

“Which is a bigger challenge for you—living a visible witness or sharing a verbal witness?” Page 136

“...I thought, Would God delay my boat for one day because he knew a broken man, with a terminally ill daughter who would soon pass into eternity, desperately needed the hope only the gospel of Jesus Christ could

bring? Yeah, He would. That sounds just like our God!" Page 140

"If the people of God fail to carry out the Compassion Mandate, people will needlessly suffer in this life, the heart of God will be broken, and His reputation will be diminished in the eyes of the world." Page 149

"If the people of God fail in the Proclamation Mandate, then lost people do not receive the Good News and suffer for all of eternity." Page 150

"Christians need to be at the forefront, globally extending the compassion and provision of Jesus." Page 151

"The greatest need in the world is still Jesus. He is the ultimate answer to not just eternal salvation but every challenge and every injustice our world faces. The greatest question facing our world today is still: Jesus Christ or not Jesus Christ?" Page 156

"Just why are all these people from other countries living among us?' No matter how they got here, are they just here to take our jobs and take advantage of our generosity, or might their coming among us be God's idea for a God-sized purpose? No matter how or why, as disciples, we can't just mirror our culture's opinions and responses to international students, immigrants, and refugees among us. We really do need to ask ourselves, 'What would Jesus do?' He would actively love any and all." Page 160

"The Samaritan man got involved and, therefore, was the real neighbor. He engaged the hurting stranger personally. He opened his eyes, opened his heart, opened his hands, opened his wallet, and opened his schedule. He allowed every aspect of his life to be interrupted and inconvenienced...Here's the big question: how open are we with our Samaria?" Page 162

"I tend to be suspicious of anyone excited about their call to, let's say, China but oblivious or disinterested in serving the peoples all around them today." Page 163

"Whether a Chinese international student or an African immigrant, our international guests are most open to the good news when away from the pressures of their home culture, family religious expectations and government barriers. And the one million-plus international students on our campuses today will go home to one day be leaders in business, education, and government. What if their influence in their home nations ultimately glorified Jesus?" Page 164

"Two things I know to be true: first, it's God's will for all of us to engage our Samaria lovingly. Second, loving our Samaria takes time, and we need to have a willingness to be open with our hands, hearts, schedules, and resources." Page 166

"There's always enough time to do the whole will of God for your life....So if I don't have time to do something I know is God's will, then whatever is taking up that time needs to go." Page 172

"It can really hurt to disappoint those you love, but I had to be OK with that as I followed Jesus." Page 176

"How do you get the fear of the Lord? You choose it, expecting the Spirit of God to mark your life with it and to fill you with it as the need arises." Page 178

"God has One Big Dream for the world and One Big Dream for your life. Where the two intersect will be the sweet spot for your time on this planet. Since before the day you were born, God has been dreaming big dreams



Learn, Meet, Engage In the Great Commission

for you, again, probably bigger than you have for yourself.” Page 194

“When you don’t understand, obey. When people doubt you, obey. When the Spirit’s guidance is counterintuitive, obey. When things turn dark or God is silent for a season, keep obeying. If you’ve lost your way, go back to the last thing God showed you—and obey.” Page 195

“God’s kingdom can’t afford any of us to be like the 50 percent of next generation Christians who think it’s wrong to persuade or convert someone from another faith. Again, that’s our culture, not biblical truth.”
Page 198

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