

Disease

For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God! 2 Corinthians 5:19-20 (NLT)

What does the Bible say about reconciling the world back to God?

- In John 17:18 (The Message), Jesus prays to his Father, "In the same way that you gave me a mission in the world, I give them a mission in the world," or "as you sent me, I send them."
- In Isaiah 49:6 (NCV), the Lord said to Isaiah: "You are an important servant to me to bring back the tribes of Jacob, to bring back the people of Israel who are left alive. But, more importantly, I will make you a light for all nations to show people all over the world the way to be saved."

Our mission is literally the global glory of God!

What did Jesus do in his day?

- Jesus equipped common people to accomplish God's reconciling mission in the world.
- Jesus assisted the poor.
- Jesus cared for the sick.

The facts:

- Most of the world lives on less than \$2 a day. One billion people, sometimes known as the "bottom billion" live in slums and grinding poverty.
- Disease always accompanies poverty. Diseases of poverty represent the most prevalent and the most preventable in the developing world.
- 30,000 children die every day of preventable diseases...diseases we knew how to cure 100 years ago!
- Tuberculosis, malaria and HIV/AIDS, for example, together account for nearly 18% of the disease burden in the world's poorest countries.
- 500 million people will get malaria this year alone.
- Globally, ALRI represent the single most important cause of death in children under 5 years and account for at least 2 million deaths annually in this age group.
- Malnutrition particularly affects people in poor countries. As a result of vitamin A deficiency, for example, 500,000 children become blind each year.

What about HIV/AIDS?

- Nearly 5,000 people in Middle Tennessee are HIV+.
- South Africa has a poverty rate of 50% as well as the highest rate of HIV infection in the world, hovering somewhere around 20% of the total population being HIV+

What does the Bible say is our duty as followers of Christ to those who are sick?

There are five specific duties God's word lays out for us:

- To pray for them
Philippians 1:19 (NLT): For I know that as you pray for me and the Spirit of Jesus Christ helps me, this will lead to my deliverance.
- To sympathize with them
Romans 12:15 (NLT): Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep.
- To comfort them
2 Corinthians 1:3-4 (NLT): All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. He comforts us in all our troubles so that we

can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us.

- To relieve them
Job 16:5 (NLT): But if it were me, I would encourage you. I would try to take away your grief.
- To protect them
Psalm 82:3 (ESV): Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute.

How do we reflect the Holy Spirit and Christ?

Paracletos (Greek), literally "called to the side of; advocate."