

# Introduction to Mobilizing the Gospel

## Transcript

### with Daniel Bethel

Sue

Welcome to Mobilizing the Gospel. My name is Sue Eenigenburg. And today, my guest for the great commission conversation is Daniel Bethel. Daniel has recently become the international director of Christar. And we're going to introduce the purpose of our podcast.

You know, there are a lot of podcasts being offered in our world today. So why are we doing another one?

Daniel, before we jump into the why, let's talk about the who. And can you just share a little bit about your story and your ministry background?

Daniel

Sure. Thank you for letting me be a part of this. Glad to contribute and to be a part of kind of the launch and seeing this podcast take off. So, I guess maybe I'll go back and catch my history with the organization. So, my wife and I, in 2006, went to Southeast Asia, and we were on a church planting team. And I was just a team member, for many years, for after eight years, I became the team leader of a church planting team there in Southeast Asia.

And for five years I was in that position. And we loved our time, in Southeast Asia, we loved our team, the environment. God allowed us to come alongside some nationals and local people came to faith and we had the privilege of seeing some churches planted. And we recognize it was a team effort.

It was it was a God thing and of course, all those things. But for us it is still exciting to have been a part of that. And then after 13 years, we had a call and we were asked to consider taking on the position as the director of Church Planning division. And initially we thought, no, that's not for us.

We speak the local language, you know, all these different things. But as we interacted with our leaders, from our sending church and other people in the organization, it did seem that God was opening up an opportunity. And so, we accepted the position. We moved to Malaga, Spain, where we live now. And, in Malaga, Spain, I became the director of Church Planning division.

And my wife, Karrie, was the women's ministry director. And we've been doing that for almost five years now. And it's hard to believe how fast it goes. And we had a little bit of overlap with you. Sue. So, you know that, and then just this year, our international director stepped down from his role, moving on to another organization, a good leaving that, not a negative thing.

Sue

Right, right.

Daniel

But the board, the International Board, asked me to consider being the international director. And I was appointed. So, it's totally new to me. If you say, what are you doing as international director? I would have to say, I don't really know yet. I have some ideas.

But as the church planning director, we worked with all the regional leaders. We call the synergy groups. And we had a vision which was healthy people on healthy teams planting healthy churches. And really, we kind of that was our filter. You know, any decision we were making around training or helping a team locally or working with the focus group or affinity leadership, we were always asking, is this helping someone to walk with Jesus better?

That's, you know, healthy people? Is this helping a team to become a better version of itself, a healthy team? And is it ultimately contributing to the planting of healthy churches among these rich peoples? So, that's a little about my history in the organization. And I'm married. Like I said to Carrie, we have two kids.

Chase, who's 16, Shae who is 13. And we feel really settled and integrated into life here in Malaga at this time.

Sue

Well, that's great. You know, sometimes, you know, we transitioned back to the US almost two years ago, and sometimes it's easy to get. You have the people who go, the people who are sent and they're the ones that are really involved in the Great Commission. You have the churches who send, and it almost feel like you're kind of involved in the Great Commission.

Then you have people who like, give financially or pray for missions. But it's almost like compartmentalized.

Daniel

Yeah.

Sue

And how would you say a conversation like this, a podcast on mobilizing the gospel, and kind of focusing on the great Commission? How would you say that useful for the ones who are like here, but not the ones who are sent?

Daniel

That's a great question. You know, I think, when I just reflect on that question, it makes me realize that there seems to be a gap where we ask people to support those who are sent, and they do. They pray faithfully. Financially, they contribute. And they get prayer letters back and things like that. But I think sometimes the process, some of the how and, well, what's it really look like for someone to go overseas and to do this work?

I think sometimes there's a that for people, particularly from our sending churches, this podcast potentially gives them an opportunity to hear some of those stories, to put some of those pieces together in a new way so that they get a better idea of ... well, what's that whole process look like when I contribute through prayer? You know, when those prayer letters come in or we get the weekly update or the text messages that come in and say, please pray for us and such, you know?

What does it look like on the ground? You know, and what is my prayer actually contributing? Or when I send financially well, what does it actually do? And so, for example, the church planning

division we talked about, well, what does that even mean? Well, we are working with the regional leaders to help them develop the teams.

Daniel

And so, some of that contribution goes directly to the worker. But some of that contribution actually helps provide the services that make that church planting strategy better.

So, I think just some of those things that we can talk about to help, people understand. Well, when I give financially or when I pray, where does what does it actually affect?

Sue

And I think sometimes when missionaries are sent and you pray for them like once a week or every day, and then you go on about your day and life here, I, you know, life is busy here and you kind of get caught up in, you know, providing for family or meetings or sporting events and things like that.

And so, it's almost like the Great Commission gets, you're committed to it, Right, but it's easy to get set aside in a box until it's time to give and pray or go on a short-term trip and stuff like that. So, I think conversations like this kind of keep it in the forefront, you know? It becomes part of more everyday conversations and thinking deeply about what some of the issues are that cross cultural workers face.

Daniel

Right. And I think sometimes we also feel like my current role in the Great Commission is my final role. And I think maybe part of this conversation too will open up as people experience it and listen to it, that they may be able to question that a little bit. You know, maybe someone has gone, but they've had to return for a family member with cancer or for different reasons.

And now maybe they're becoming a contributor. Maybe they're giving, maybe they're praying, or maybe the other way around. Someone who's always thought, well, my only role is to give, but maybe through this podcast they'll hear some stories, or they'll get some ideas. Or maybe that God is saying, "Actually, I want you on the field." And so, that's another way this may, you know, have an impact on those who need to be mobilized to missions.

Sue

Right. And so even having this, resources for churches. I know years ago you used to have like whole weeks dedicated to missions conferences and things like that. And it almost seems like it's become, I mean, it's still a focus, but you don't have that whole week committed to this very topic. And so, really, challenging churches and members of those churches to keep this in the forefront of their minds.

What else do you see? Conversations like this doing for the church in general?

Daniel

I just think that for the church, like you said, there's so much opportunity to do so many things, especially the church in the West. You know, you have programs that the church does. But then the church is also challenging you to as a member ... well, you're reaching your neighbors, are you ..., you know? And then you're just trying to manage your family.

And so, I think hopefully like you said, a resource like this on your way to work, you can turn this on. And you're able to sort of go a little deeper and say, well, you know, what is happening in the world of missions? How is the gospel going out? What's my part? You know, how can I contribute in a new way?

Daniel

And I know that some of the guests you have lined up are really thinking about how can the average church member significantly contribute to the Great Commission without having to leave the place where God has put them. And then you're going to have other guests who are going to actually challenge those members, say, "no, maybe you should go."

So, I think for whoever it is, whatever seat they're in, right now, I think that as they go through these different, the season of the podcast, there's going to be a challenge out there for different ones. But I think one of the big wins is you can be jogging. You could be in the car on the way to work.

You're going to be able to kind of take in this content, and it can really start to move people to be thinking, what's my place in the Great Commission?

Sue

And one of the things I really like about our plan for these great commission conversations is having resources available. So, for every podcast, there's going to be like things that we've talked about and what are resources that would be relevant are helpful. Or if somebody hears something and they're like, wait, I want to find out more about that.

There will be actually action steps or things that they could follow up on. But I do really see this as something that would be helpful for just the whole body of Christ. And one of the things I know that Christar does is we really seek to be international, like we have centers in the West.

We have them in the southeast and the global South. How do you see something like this just really mobilizing the whole body of Christ towards that great commission?

Daniel

I think one of the things that we we've talk about now as we mobilize people is, are you doing now what you want to be doing then? So, in other words, are you doing the things now in your local context, in your local church? You know whether that's in the US or whether that's in Latin America or Southeast Asia or wherever we're mobilizing from?

Are you carrying out the activities, living out your faith in such a way that it matches what you anticipate our desire to do when you get to the mission field?

You know, so, if when you get to the mission field, you're thinking, I would like to start Bible studies and take people through creation to Christ. Well, are you doing that now? And so, I think another, you know, how is the great Commission conversation important to churches. Well, I think hopefully it's a shot in the arm for all of us in the global church to ask that question.

And I didn't hear what I expect the missionaries to do there.

Right? Or am I doing here what I want to do there? So whether you're on the path to the field, or if you feel like you're called to send, that's you feel like my I really feel called to send people that's financially and through prayer, but still, I. Would you be willing to hold yourself to that similar expectation that I will practice here?

What I want the missionary I'm supporting to practice there. And I think this just having this conversation potentially mobilizes on both sides, right? The church gets fired up and says, "Yeah,

we want to be carrying the gospel into our communities even more.” And the missionaries are sent out and they have that same inspiration.

Sue

And I think the other side of that is we're going to be hearing from cross-cultural workers about some of their challenges. And when you're a sender, it's just going to provide a wealth of information that you can be praying for because there are some things that you just don't know about some of the challenges are the stressors and things that people face every day.

And then you're hearing about that not only in prayer letters, but also in conversations with people. And you're like, oh, I should write to this person that we sent and see how they're doing, you know? So just that overall love and care for one another. Sending well, going well, praying well ... However, God designed us that we would be taking up the role that we have to see the Great Commission fulfilled.

Daniel

I think that's really good.

Sue

I think what I'd like to do is just end our time in prayer. But Matthew wrote about Jesus giving the Great Commission in chapter 28, verses 18 through 20. So, what I would like to do is use these well-known verses as a basis for the closing prayer of our conversation. Jesus, you said that all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to you, and on that basis you send us out as you told your disciples, you tell us to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the father and of the son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that you have commanded us.

Sue

You promise that you are with us always to the very end of the age. Lord may each one of us accept and fulfill the roles you have given us in this worldwide enterprise of sharing the gospel and discipling nations for your glory and honor. Amen.

Daniel  
Amen.