



OUR PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY

SALT Next Gen Ministries exists to train and send the next generation to reach the nations with the Gospel for the glory of God. As a Christian evangelical missions organization, we believe and champion the following five values:

1. **THE GREAT COMMISSION** which directs us to make disciples of all nations
2. **THE NEXT GENERATION** of Jesus' disciples and the future of the church
3. **THE LOCAL CHURCH** which is Jesus' body and the focal point of God's activity on earth
4. **THE GLORY OF GOD** which is our ultimate motivation for everything we do
5. **THE PARTNERSHIP OF THE GOSPEL** in which we seek to operate and collaborate

Our embrace of these values flows from our Philosophy of Ministry. This document is an effort to explain our philosophy as it supports and runs through our values and everything we do.

THE GREAT COMMISSION

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)

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

THE MISSION: JOINING IN THE MISSIO DEI

An English rendering of this Latin phrase speaks to the "mission of God." It is God who has a mission to set things right in a broken, sinful world, to redeem and restore it to what He has always intended.

Therefore, mission is not the invention, responsibility, or program of the church. Instead, it flows directly from the character and purposes of a missionary God. In the words of South African missiologist David Bosch, "It is not the church which undertakes mission; it is the missio Dei which constitutes the church." Or stated in a slightly different way, "It is not so much that God has a mission for His church in the world, but that God has a church for His mission in the world."

God's purpose in the mission is explained clearly by John Piper in his book, *Let the Nations Be Glad*:

Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn't. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man. When this age is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. But worship abides forever.

Worship, therefore, is the fuel and goal of missions. It's the goal of missions because in missions we simply aim to bring the nations into the white-hot enjoyment of God's glory. The goal of missions is the gladness of the peoples in the greatness of God. "The LORD reigns, let the earth rejoice; let the many coastlands be glad!" (Ps. 97:1). "Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you! Let the nations be glad and sing for joy!" (Ps. 67:3-4).

But worship is also the fuel of missions. Passion for God in worship precedes the offer of God in preaching. You can't commend what you don't cherish. Missionaries will never call out, "Let the nations be glad!" if they cannot say from the heart, "I rejoice in the LORD. . . . I will be glad and exult in you, I will sing praise to your name, O Most High" (Pss. 104:34; 9:2). Missions begins and ends in worship.

And so, we too deeply desire to see peoples "from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages" (Rev. 7:9) who are reached with the Gospel, who are then regenerated and converted to be disciples, joining in the worship, exaltation, and glorification of God their Creator and Redeemer.

THE AUDIENCE: PEOPLE GROUPS

And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us... (Acts 17:26-27)

And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. (Matt. 24:14)

A "people group" is an ethnolinguistic group with a common self-identity that is shared by the various members. The most dominant identifier of a people group is their language, but each unique people group also shares a commonsense history and customs. For strategic purposes, a people group is the largest group through which the gospel can flow without encountering significant barriers of understanding and acceptance. In other words, a people group calls "us, us" and "them, them" by distinguishing insiders and outsiders. In the Bible, the Greek word "ethne" often times gets translated as "nations" but really means ethnic groups or people groups.

It is estimated that of the 7.83 billion people alive in the world today, 3.37 billion of them live in unreached people groups with little or no access to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. According to Joshua Project, there are approximately 17,428 unique people groups in the world with 7,400+ of them considered unreached (over 42% of the world's population!). The vast majority (85%) of these least reached groups exist in the 10/40 window and less than 10% of missionary work is done among these people. Watch this brief video to learn more!

THE MESSAGE: PROCLAIMING THE MESSAGE OF THE GOSPEL

"We have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations..." (Rom. 1:5)

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith." (Rom. 1:16-17)

We believe the message of the Gospel is to be proclaimed throughout the earth, in every nation and among every people group (Revelation 5:9; 7:9; 14:6). This is not an optional action but a direct command from the Master that must be obeyed (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48; John 20:21; Acts 1:8). But what is the content of this message? What is the gospel? Theologian D.A. Carson offers an explanation of the Gospel as the Bible presents it:

“The gospel is integrally tied to the Bible’s story-line. Indeed, it is incomprehensible without understanding that story-line. God is the sovereign, transcendent and personal God who has made the universe, including us, his image-bearers. Our misery lies in our rebellion, our alienation from God, which, despite his forbearance, attracts his implacable wrath. But God, precisely because love is of the very essence of his character, takes the initiative and prepared or the coming of his own Son by raising up a people who, by covenantal stipulations, temple worship, systems of sacrifice and of priesthood, by kings and by prophets, are taught something of what God is planning and what he expects.

“In the fullness of time his Son comes and takes on human nature. He comes not, in the first instance, to judge but to save: he dies the death of his people, rises from the grave and, in returning to his heavenly Father, bequeaths the Holy Spirit as the down payment and guarantee of the ultimate gift he has secured for them—an eternity of bliss in the presence of God himself, in a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. The only alternative is to be shut out from the presence of this God forever, in the torments of hell. What men and women must do, before it is too late, is repent and trust Christ; the alternative is to disobey the gospel.”

THE NEXT GENERATION

A STRATEGIC SEGMENT OF THE POPULATION

Who are “the next generation”? When we refer to the next generation, we are speaking of high school and college students between the ages of 16-26 years old.

Why focus on these students? Currently, there are about 1.2 billion youth on the planet. Young people, aged 15 to 24 years, constitute 16% of global population. In the U.S., 13% of the total population is between 15-24 years old. Yet this small sample humanity is a rapidly growing, disproportionately influential group with incredible potential for the kingdom. It is during these years, as identities are settled and trajectories are shaped, that the most important life decisions are made. We believe that it is these, the last before settling into the rigors and demands of adult life, years which are most strategic and can be wasted or invested for the gospel.

OUR APPROACH TO WORKING WITH THE NEXT GENERATION

Objections to working with the next generation (16-26-year-olds) have been raised. And indeed, there are many challenges in working with young adults, such as emotional, mental, and behavioral immaturity, spiritual immaturity, doctrinal ignorance, general lack of knowledge and wisdom, limited perspective and experience, minimal skills, and resources, etc.

So why invest in young men and women? Even more specifically, why spend time, energy, and resources on young adults?

There are two primary reasons why we passionately believe it is vital to focus ministry on young adults. First, Jesus commanded us to make disciples of them and mobilize them for the mission.

Just because they are young does not mean they cannot be disciples, mentors, trained, and released to meaningfully serve. Second, because they are the future of the church. They will be the next representatives of Christ to the generations that follow them. They are now and one day will be the Church! They will be the future church members, missionaries, teachers, trainers, pastors, theologians, deacons and deaconesses, elders, senders, goers, youth workers, college leaders, parents, etc. In short, they are the future of Christianity.

How then will we develop the next generation as ministers of the gospel?

Philosophically and strategically, we believe that we must provide the following:

1. Ministry opportunities
2. Biblical training
3. Intentional mentoring

Students cannot learn if they are not afforded the opportunities to serve. They need to be placed in a ministry posture where they can put what they have learned to practice. They can handle and can be trained to handle a certain level of responsibility. In the right setting, they can be afforded opportunities to success and to fail. With the proper oversight and involvement of mature, godly adults who love and care for them, they can learn from successes and failures, and they can grow.

Students must be trained to serve. They must be given information, insight, know-how, skills, wisdom, etc. in order to do ministry with some level of effectiveness. We believe that we must target every domain of learning in order to accomplish this. We must give develop them cognitively (the “head”) and impart to them the principles of the faith. We must also develop their psychomotor skills (the “hands”) and train them in the practices of the faith. And we must also impact their affections (the “heart”), influencing them in the priorities of the faith.

Students require intentional mentoring on the part of adults in their life. At every stage of preparation, deployment, ministry, and follow-up after ministry we want to have a godly, loving adult leader pouring into them. This requires a coordinated effort that will involve the student’s home church, staff from our ministry, and on-field missionaries with whom they will serve.

THE CHURCH

“On this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” (Matt. 16:18-19)

“This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God’s grace, which was given me by the working of his power. To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things, so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord...” (Eph. 3:6-11)

THE LOCAL CHURCH IS GOD'S "PLAN A" – THERE IS NO "PLAN B"

We believe in the place and priority of the local church as God's "Plan A" in accomplishing the mission. There is no "Plan B"! What we mean by this is that God has ordained that the primary vehicle through which kingdom work is accomplished and the Great Commission is fulfilled is through the activity of the local church. The Gospel spreads as missionaries are sent from local churches into places where the Gospel needs to be proclaimed. As people come to faith in Christ, they become or enter into a community of disciples which the Bible calls the Church. This local community of disciples is to be led by elders and deacons/deaconesses. Ultimate spiritual authority is delegated by Christ, the Head of the Church, to the elders of the local church. These elders are called to "shepherd the flock of God" that is among them. This requires "teaching them all things" that Christ commanded – including the work of evangelism and discipleship and church-planting. Missions is the work of bringing the gospel to a place where there are no Christians or disciples and evangelizing and discipling until local churches can be planted. These churches then join in the effort to advance the gospel where Christ has not yet been named.

IF THE CHURCH IS GOD'S "PLAN A", THEN WHY A MISSION ORG THAT IS NOT A CHURCH?

Our ministry is not a church. We are a missions organization which is designed to come alongside the church and assist her in her task of accomplishing the Great Commission. We are not a replacement for the local church. We see ourselves as a catalyst for the local church – connecting the next generation of every church to the mission of the church: the Great Commission.

We place a high value on the local church and insist that every staff member who serves with SALT Next Gen Ministries is an active and growing member of a local church. We also require the recommendation, endorsement, and involvement of local churches with the students that come to be trained and serve with us.

On the mission field, we direct our efforts and partner with organizations that are focused on evangelism, discipleship, and church-planting. This includes serving in a variety of ways that enable missionaries and students to assist in the establishment of local churches and in the building of relationships with people who need to hear the gospel.

STAYING FOCUSED ON THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

Although the Scripture is clear regarding the mission of the church in this present age, this does not prevent some churches and organizations from prioritizing things that are NOT the gospel. Pastors and authors Kevin DeYoung and Greg Gilbert present the issues in their book "What Is the Mission of the Church? Making Sense of Social Justice, Shalom, and the Great Commission". DeYoung and Gilbert present two mistakes that are made:

Mistake #1 – SOCIAL JUSTICE: Since the advent of liberal theology in the late nineteenth century and the rise of the ecumenical movement in the middle of the twentieth century, many within larger "Christendom" have called for the church to focus on "the liberation of the oppressed." This movement has influenced many within the ranks of evangelicalism as well to move churches into work for social justice. The term is a broad category and is variously defined. However, the basic thrust of this mission is that the church work as an agent in helping alleviate poverty and racial discrimination. Advocates cite the many references that

Jesus made to loving one's neighbor and to conducting oneself in a fair and just way. Old Testament passages relating to how the nation of Israel was to function as a just nation among nations are also marshalled in support of this mission.

Mistake # 2 – CULTURAL RENEWAL: Advocates of this view claim that the church, as redeemed humanity, is to take up the task of renewing culture and building a better world. Many use the biblical concept of shalom as shorthand for this mission. Seizing upon the meaning of the word as something parallel to our word "harmony", those persuaded of this mission call for Christians to "bring shalom" to their workplaces, neighborhoods, and environments. This view is defended from Genesis 1 among other passages which provide God's original creation mandate to Adam and Eve to "subdue" or bring creation under dominion for the glory of God.

Why are these views mistakes when considering the mission of the church? As important as both of the above missions are in their own right, they truly lack the biblical support of Jesus' full instruction (Matt. 28:18-20), of that of the apostles in the New Testament (1 Cor. 1:18-31; Phil. 1:27-30; Col. 1:19-23), and indeed of the entire sweep of God's redemptive work in human history (Ps. 67). After all, Jesus' last words in Matthew 28:18-20 were unambiguous: 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."*

THE GLORY OF GOD

"Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?" "Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?" For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen." (Rom. 11:33-36)

"I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Do not withhold; bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth, everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made." (Isa. 43:6-7)

COMPELLED BY THE GLORY OF GOD

What is the "glory of God"? In the Scripture, God's glory can refer to 1) His renown on earth (Exod. 14:4; 17, 18; Rev. 11:13), 2) His manifested presence (Exod. 24:16-17; 40:34-35; Deut. 5:24; 2 Chron. 7:1-3; John 1:14; 2 Cor. 3:7-18), 3) His character and attributes (Psa. 19:1; Rom. 1:23; 2 Pet. 1:3), and even 4) His radical God-centeredness (Isa. 42:8; 43:7; 48:9-11).

We "glorify" God when we recognize His significance, bear witness to His reputation, give honor to Him, or yield to His agenda. The Scriptures bear witness the necessity and appropriateness of people glorifying him:

- We are to ascribe glory to Him (Deut. 32:3; Psa. 29; 96:7-8).
- We are to glory in His Name (Psa. 105:3; 115:1).
- We are to declare His glory to all peoples (1 Chron. 16:24; Psa. 96:3; Isa. 42:12).
- We are to live in such a way that brings glory to God (Matt. 5:16; John 15:8; Phil. 2:12; 1 Pet. 2:15).

When it comes to our participation in the Missio Dei, we are compelled by a passion for the glory of God in all things. Specifically, we are motivated by the desire to see Him made much of in “every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues” (Revelation 5:9; 7:9)! We join with the Moravian missionaries who often exclaimed, “Shall not the Lamb receive the full reward for His sufferings?”

THE PARTNERSHIP OF THE GOSPEL

“I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.” (Phil. 1:3-6)

“And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit.” (Phil. 4:15-17)

We believe wholeheartedly in partnership. We believe that we can do more through healthy partnership than we can do on our own. This belief forms one of the three pillars of our overall strategy:

SALT Next Gen Ministries **prepares** students for cross-cultural ministry, **partners** in Gospel work with local churches and like-minded mission organizations and **places** the next generation on the global field to meaningfully serve in the advancement of God’s kingdom.

This partnership extends to local churches and to like-minded missions organizations. While we value working with a diverse number of churches and organizations, our partnerships are carefully chosen. We are willing to work with any evangelical denomination so long as that denomination is ardently gospel-centered and aligns to our Statement of Faith. Likewise, we are willing to join in the Great Commission effort with any evangelical missions organization provided that that organization is also ardently gospel-centered and aligns with our Statement of Faith.

PURSUING EXCELLENCE IN CROSS-CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT FOR THE GOSPEL

As a evangelical mission organization, we wholeheartedly endorse, subscribe to, and incorporate the "Seven Standards of Excellence in Short-Term Mission" which can be found online at <https://soe.org/7-standards/>:

1. GOD-CENTEREDNESS

An excellent short-term mission seeks first God’s glory and his kingdom, and is expressed through our:

- Purpose — Centering on God’s glory and his ends throughout our entire STM process
- Lives — Sound biblical doctrine, persistent prayer, and godliness in all our thoughts, words, and deeds

- Methods – Wise, biblical, and culturally-appropriate methods which bear spiritual fruit

2. EMPOWERING PARTNERSHIPS

An excellent short-term mission establishes healthy, interdependent, on-going relationships between sending and receiving partners, and is expressed by:

- Focus – Our primary focus on intended receptors
- Plans which benefit all participants
- Mutual trust and accountability

3. MUTUAL DESIGN

An excellent short-term mission collaboratively plans each specific outreach for the benefit of all participants, and is expressed by:

- On-field methods and activities aligned to long-term strategies of the partnership
- Goer-guests' ability to implement their part of the plan
- Host receivers' ability to implement their part of the plan

4. COMPREHENSIVE ADMINISTRATION

An excellent short-term mission seeks first God's glory and his kingdom, and is expressed through:

- Truthfulness in promotion, finances, and reporting results
- Appropriate risk management
- Quality program delivery and support logistics

5. QUALIFIED LEADERSHIP

An excellent short-term mission screens, trains, and develops capable leadership for all participants, and is expressed by:

- Character – Spiritually mature servant leadership
- Skills – Prepared, competent, organized, and accountable leadership
- Values – Empowering and equipping leadership

6. APPROPRIATE TRAINING

An excellent short-term mission prepares and equips all participants for the mutually designed outreach, and is expressed by:

- Biblical, appropriate, and timely training
- On-going training and equipping (pre-field, on-field, post-field)
- Qualified trainers

7. THOROUGH FOLLOW-THROUGH

An excellent short-term mission assures debriefing and appropriate follow-through for all participants, and is expressed by:

- Comprehensive debriefing of all participants (pre-field, on-field, post-field)
- Thoughtful and appropriate follow-through for goer-guests
- On-field and post-field evaluation among sending and receiving partners