

Alex Kocman: On today's show:

Chad Vegas: That's confrontational because you're telling people that you're gonna die in your sins and be judged if you don't look to Christ and believe and repent. That's the nature of the confrontation. By and I guess what I'm trying to say is that you have not proclaimed the gospel if that confrontational element is missing. You might have had a productive spiritual conversation, you might have said helpful things, but you haven't proclaimed the gospel by its very nature if you don't get to that confrontation. And even if that's just one-on-one.

Alex Kocman: Welcome to The Missions Podcast, the show that explores your hard questions on missions, theology, and practice to help goers think and thinkers go. I'm Alex Kocman, Director of Advancement and Communications for ABWE. Joined by Scott Dunford with ABWE as well and Pastor of Redeemer Church in Fremont, California. For those of you who are watching today, we're doing a video episode today and we're doing that because we're diving into another topic that's important and we just like to see each other's faces whenever we're doing something that's, you know, important and kind of mission critical. We think facial expressions matter, we think that embodiment is better than being just disembodied voices, right, Scott? That's kind of the spirit.

Scott Dunford: That's yet to be determined, but it kind of depends on the faces and the bodies, but hey, we have what we have so we'll go with it.

Alex Kocman: This is true. Scott, I don't know about you, one of my favorite conversations that we had most recently was with Ted Esler, president of Missio Nexus, because there is a lot of public conversation about some of the topics we bring up on this show all the time about pragmatism, about movements, about certain methodologies that get used on the mission field a lot lately. And we want to engage those debates and conversations, we also want to press in and really press definitions and see okay, where, is there common ground and where are there really irreconcilable differences. What were some of your thoughts coming out of that conversation?

Scott Dunford: Well, one, obviously, I mean, Ted is a statesman, I appreciate his engagement with us; he was kind and gracious and let us push and he pushed back too. And it was a really, I think, helpful conversation in that one of the things that was helpful was talking about definitions and really getting clarity. And he brought up some things that I think we can work hard to work to get better clarity and definition on as well. And one of those issues I think we're gonna talk about in depth today on in proclamation.

Alex Kocman: Yeah, we did have a good conversation there as well, but the conversation isn't over. And in fact I got a letter, I forwarded it to you, from a listener. He's in a restricted field, we'll just call him B, the letter B, B, you know

who you are, and we thank you for that. But a pretty long letter, probably a couple thousand words, I didn't measure, but responding to some of the things that we said. We kind of through some concepts out there, I threw some concepts out there talking about this thing called the regulative principle. And that's a controversial topic sometimes but then applying that not just to worship, which is usually where that gets applied, right, is in the context of worship and musical style and instrumentation and some of those things and applying that to evangelism and missions. And so we threw a few concepts out there. We didn't dive deep, we want to get deeper into some of those definitions and Scott, this guest that we have here today is someone that I know well and you're getting to know as well. But we've done some work on this topic.

Scott Dunford: Yeah, it's exciting to have Chad Vegas with us. He's the pastor of Sovereign Grace Church in, Sovereign Grace Baptist Church, right, Chad? I want to make sure I get the name right, in Bakersfield. So he's coming to us straight from the streets of Bakersfield.

Chad Vegas: Just Sovereign Grace.

Scott Dunford: Just Sovereign Grace Church?

Chad Vegas: Yeah.

Scott Dunford: And he's done a lot of work. He also was a part of the founding or actually the founding church pastor of Radius International, which we've had a great relationship with and have had a number of their instructors and leaders on our podcast and have had a long partnership with them and are really thankful for that. And Alex, you and Chad have also written a book together, *Missions by the Book*, which has just come out and is getting some good press and we're excited about that. So we figured hey, this is a great opportunity to sit down and just like we did with Ted and try to clarify some of the definitions and the uses of those terms, and even maybe, Alex, you might even wanna respond, I don't know if you wanna respond to or not to something we weren't really, I wasn't planning on talking about, but the use of the term regulative principle in missions. Which, maybe you wanna clarify that, or not. But I wanna dive into this issue specifically to this issue of what is proclamation. Not in a definition, we all know what proclamation means, but especially as it's being used, and I think it's being proposed as a missiological term. What do we mean by that? So let's just dive right in, and I'll start by just kind of asking you, Chad, when you use the term proclamation in a missiological setting as a term like that, what do you mean by that? And what do you not mean by that? I think it's important to say what we mean and what we don't mean.

Chad Vegas: Yeah, well, let me say what we mean. The word that we're picking up, we've picked up the word proclamation is the way we often translate the Greek into English. We can translate the Greek terms *karuso* to preach or to proclaim, *karoocks* which is the preacher or the herald or the

proclaimer, *kerugma* which is the preaching or the proclamation, or *kataangalo* which is to announce or proclaim. I mean if you just do a search of those terms for example, I did a ten-minute search on them and it was used 146 times in the New Testament. And if you do any, just the search I did, I didn't expand the search beyond those, if you do a study of what those words mean and then you look at how they're being used in the text of scripture, so you wanna first say what do the Greek terms mean and then you wanna look at how are they used in scripture contextually.

To proclaim, it's just to announce, to preach, to proclaim, to herald. And it's a kind of public proclamation. In Acts, sometimes that word is used with boldness, so bold proclamation is often used together in the book of Acts. Alan J. Thompson and his book on the book of Acts, his new studies on biblical theology texts on the book of Acts says that bold proclamation, or that kind of boldness, means clarity in the face of fear. So that when I'm afraid of how people might hear me or respond to me, I can tend to get mealy mouthed, muddled, unclear, and so bold proclamation is clarity in the face of fear. I choose to be clear no matter what the outcome is.

So if we think about examples of that, when I say public proclamation, think about Matthew 10. One, where we call the missions discourse in Matthew, where he sends out the twelve and he tells them to go out. At the end, near the end of that narrative, he talks about what you hear silently said in rooms or secretly whispered in rooms, proclaim it on housetops, right? He says he sends them out to proclaim the kingdom of God, and then he says, "Hey, what you hear silently, or secretly in rooms, proclaim that on housetops."

We see this in the mission of Christ, and we see it with John the Baptist, but we also see it in the mission of Christ. For example in Luke 4:18 and 19 when he says, quoting from Isaiah 61, that "I've come to proclaim good news," and Luke 4:18 through 19. We see it again in Luke 4:43 when he says, and we see it in Mark, as well, but when Jesus says, "Hey, I need to go from town to town proclaiming the gospel because this is what I've come for, to proclaim or to preach the gospel." We see it in the mission of the Spirit through the apostles, so in Luke 24:46 through 49 when Jesus comes to them in the upper room after the resurrection. He talks about himself from, you guys remember the law and the psalms, et cetera, the prophets and the psalms? And then he says, "You're gonna go out preaching," right? Repentance for the forgiveness of sins, you're gonna preach that beginning in Jerusalem and to all the nations. And I'm gonna send the gift of the, you'll be my witnesses and I'll send the gift of the Father upon you. So wait in Jerusalem until the gift of the Father comes upon you.

Then in Acts 1:8, the Holy Spirit's gonna come upon you, you're gonna be my witnesses, which is technical term for eyewitnesses, you're gonna go out proclaiming. And then we see it played out in the book of Acts. Acts

and the mission of the apostles by the Spirit. In Acts 4:2 they're accused of proclaiming or preaching the gospel to the Jews, which they agree that they actually are doing. In Acts 5:42 they go about preaching the gospel or proclaiming. In Acts 8:35 with the Ethiopian eunuch, when Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch sit down it actually says that, you know he begins to ask him if he understands Isaiah, et cetera. "How can I if no one explains it to me?" is the response. And then the text goes on to say that Philip preached the gospel or announced the gospel to him, is the language. You see it again in Acts 8:40, same term, when Philip leaves from there and preaches the gospel in other towns. Same word as in Acts 8:35.

Acts 15:36 sums up Paul's ministry and Barnabas' ministry as being out proclaiming or preaching the gospel. You push that into Romans 10. How will, you know everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved, but how can they hear? You know it would, as you go down, how they can call on him if they not believe him, and how can they believe in him if they've not heard, and how can they hear if no one preaches to them, right? So how can they preach unless they're sent? First Corinthians 2, Paul knows nothing among them except Jesus Christ crucified so he then proclaims that. First Corinthian 15, we proclaim the message we receive. Colossians 1:28, him we proclaim, teaching, admonishing everyone. Right, so this is just a constant theme from the beginning of the Gospels with John the Baptist through the mission of Christ, the mission of the Spirit through the apostles and then passed onto the church. For example in 2 Timothy 4, preach the word, right? So we hear this again and again.

What it doesn't mean, just to really quickly summarize what it doesn't mean is it doesn't mean it's never dialogical. In other words, one of the charges is if you're proclaiming the gospel, if you guys are saying it's announced, it's being shouted from rooftops, which very much has this notion of heralds going out and proclaiming news, right? They're making news known. Is it ever a dialogue? Well, for example in Acts 17, we're told when Paul goes to the church at Thessalonica, it says that for that plant, it says that he was, that he reasoned and on the Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the scriptures. That's the Greek word from which we get the word dialogue. He had a dialogical interaction with them. But what's interesting is that grammatically we're then told what that dialogue looked like in verse three with these participles. And the participle explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and arise from the dead and saying thus, or this Jesus whom I proclaim to you is the Christ. So it's dialogical but it's not dialogical in the sense that they're discovering on their own what the truth is. It's dialogical in the sense that he's propounding truth, we see that happen at Mars Hill as well. He's propounding truth, they're asking questions about it, he's propounding more truth in answer to those questions and proclaiming the gospel. So I would say that's what proclamation is, and is not, in other words it's not merely monological but it can be dialogical as well.

Alex Kocman:

If I could hop in, I completely agree with that and I would also, you know, point out when you go to the Old Testament and you think about the prophetic office, typically people have a tendency to think of prophets as strictly foretelling the future. But when you dive into the text of scripture you realize that's not their function, they're really lawyers, they're really lawyers in God's covenant with his people and when they announce, "Okay, you broke God's law, here are the consequences," what they're really doing is they're not foretelling the future, they're forthtelling. And that function, whatever you do with prophecy and spiritual gifts today, that function of forthtelling or another word for that is proclaiming, speaking forth someone's word and content that isn't your own, announcing what God has to say about the situation from his word, being a mouthpiece for him, that's the simplest concept there. We have to start there in our understanding of evangelism. We know that implicitly but it's not us, it's not our content. But that idea of forthtelling, there is a turn in a dialogical encounter, a conversation with an unbeliever where okay, this is no longer me talking, you know, this is what God would say to you. And I would submit to you thus and such and from there the gospel's shared.

Chad Vegas:

I just wanna piggyback on that and say many of the texts I just referenced from the New Testament are actually citations of prophets, like Isaiah. So when you say you see this in the prophets, I mean, you know, how will they preach unless they're sent is a quotation from Isaiah 52, right? How beautiful are the feet of those who preach good news, that's from Isaiah 52. Actually Paul changes the pronoun there, how beautiful the feet of him who preaches the good news now is applied to, to those of us who preach the good news. We see the same thing, Isaiah 49 when Paul references that with regard to himself. Simeon references it with regard to the Christ. Acts, I mean excuse me, in Luke 4, that's Isaiah 61 being quoted when Jesus says, "I've come to proclaim good news to the --" so I mean again and again and again we've taken this concept of proclamation from the Old Testament office of the prophet.

Scott Dunford:

So I appreciate all of that, I think that's excellent and it's a, you know it's a great survey through scripture about proclamation. And I, you know, I know a lot of missionaries, some of whom want to use and do use other methods of disciple making movements, methods and things like that, that would agree with ever verse of scripture on the topic. So if we can distill that a little bit and maybe Alex, you can go, maybe you can go first, Chad, you can jump in on that. So if we were trying to distill that into like what does that mean practically? Does that mean that every aspect -- like this is one thing Ted brought up, does that mean like every time we share the gospel it needs to be public? Does proclamation necessarily have to be public, in front of a group of people?

Alex Kocman:

I would start of and Chad, you can correct me or add your own flavor to this. I would say in principle it's public, but I would wanna define public

as there's three parties involved, there's the herald, there's the audience, the hearer, and there's God. I'd say that's public in a sense, it's before God that it's taking place.

Scott Dunford: Okay.

Alex Kocman: Doesn't have to happen in a public square or a public setting.

Scott Dunford: Right.

Alex Kocman: There's certainly cases of that and that's the majority of cases in the New Testament. But I think it's that mental mindset shift there of understanding that this is happening, this is taking place before God.

Chad Vegas: Can I, also I sort of want to fundamentally challenge an assertion that you made, Scott, that all these missionaries who propound DMM agree with this, they don't. Just like the Mormons agree with every verse of scripture that I point out, or the Jehovah's Witnesses agree with every verse of scripture I point out, they all agree with it. But they redefine what it means. And so the question is not whether or not you're willing to say, "I agree with that text in scripture," but do you define it the way that scripture defines it? And I actually think DMM is fundamentally opposed to the biblical definition of proclamation, particularly Ted Esler's own article. It's fundamentally – I think actually he's wildly ignorant of what the Bible teaches on this topic and of what's happened in the history of the church. I know that seems harsh –

Scott Dunford: Well –

Chad Vegas: I know that seems harsh.

Scott Dunford: It does.

Chad Vegas: But let's just face it, it's never the case, well, I mean just listen to his own assertions, his own arguments. If you read his dissertation, which I have, or if you listen to the debate that I was in, which I was in, or if you read the articles he put out against proclamational model of ministry, or if you hear him say statements like, "I've never seen a positive presentation of the proclamational model before," I think you have to be wildly ignorant of church history and of scripture to make those kinds of assertions. So I –

Scott Dunford: I do wanna go there, I do wanna go there but before we go there I think I'd like to press in, if you would let me, a little bit to defining what you're meaning. 'Cause I mean it's great to, I think, go through the scriptures and what they say, and I think you've done a good job of even laying out what the words mean, but I wanted to like practically, like if we were gonna create like a nine marks of healthy proclamation, what would be those very simple determ – so Alex, you kind of defined it as public but it can be two people and God. So it doesn't necessarily have to be like a pulpit and preaching. 'Cause I do think that sometimes when people hear that,

they're thinking Chad wants to move to Morocco and set up a pulpit and preach in the town square until he's killed. And you're not saying that, right?

Chad Vegas: No, and I don't know anybody who's ever defended a proclamational model who is saying that; that's my point. That's just nonsense. And I'm sorry to say it, but it's, I know it sounds harsh, but it's just like, I feel like when I read these guys it's like they're arsonists running through a field of straw men. They don't bother to listen to what the other, what the side is saying from this position. It's really simple. Proclamation is announcing God's word to other people. It's just like baptism. Does baptism have to be in front of 500 people to be public? No. Ordinarily it's in front of the church, ordinarily. But there are extraordinary times in which it's not in front of the whole church. And does that invalidate it? No, but it's public in as much as it's not a private matter of the heart, it's something that is done in front of other people, that's out loud. And so that's what's meant by public as opposed to private –

Scott Dunford: Okay, yeah.

Chad Vegas: and as far as announcement, it isn't you discovering the truth for yourself and it isn't me coaching you toward the truth, it is me telling you the truth, "Here's what God's word says and I'm speaking on his behalf." But if you go through the biblical examples, sometimes there are one-on-one conversations, Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch.

Scott Dunford: Right.

Chad Vegas: Sometimes they're dialogues in a town square like Mars Hill. Now I don't mean by that Paul stood in a front of a grocery store and yelled at people. I mean he actually went to a place where people were having these exchange of ideas and talked with them.

Scott Dunford: Right, right.

Chad Vegas: Sometimes it's in a synagogue, sometimes it's, you know, in front of huge crowds like if you think about Pentecost. Here's huge crowds. Nobody has ever argued that proclamation means you get a wood pulpit, you stick it in front of a crowd on a corner and you yell at people, no one. I don't know anybody who's ever argued that in the history of the church.

Scott Dunford: Yeah.

Chad Vegas: That's what I mean by it's like a false foil, who are you arguing against?

Scott Dunford: Well, I'm the one asking the question, so if you're gonna be mad at someone, that's me, 'cause I think it's, I think it's helpful to hear it articulated because if, it does come up. And even in the email that we received there was like, "What do you mean by this?" And I think it's helpful to clarify. So I'm not saying that anyone else said that but me

asking the question just to simply get clarity. So you would also say, I'll let you answer this, Alex, Jesus and the, Jesus and Nicodemus, quiet, probably just the two of them, would that be considered proclamation?

Alex Kocman: Yeah, you know an important example, and sorry, I'm already turned to another passage, but I think it bears importance for that question 'cause you're taking an example of a dialogue and you're saying, "Okay, is this proclamation?"

Scott Dunford: Right.

Alex Kocman: Another text that's often used in defense of disciple making movements is Philip's encounter with the Ethiopian eunuch. And we look at that and like, okay, there's some kind of discovery Bible study thing going on here. Not 100 percent sure whether or not the eunuch is regenerate or not, at what point does that happen, he's clearly interested in scripture, he's learning, the missionary word comes alongside, and that's usually how the text is treated. But here's what's interesting is that in verse 35, Acts chapter 8 verse 35, I'm reading from the Christian Standard Bible, it says, "From there," after this initial conversation about the text in Isaiah, that he's reading about the suffering servant, Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch are talking and it says, "Philip proceeded to tell him the good news about Jesus, beginning that scripture." So Philip uses that as a diving off point to proclaim. And I think that that's valid.

I do think that there are several people in this conversation who think that there's, there's two things that I kind of differ with. I don't think there's a proclamational model and a non-proclamational model, that's number one. And then number two, they think proclamation necessarily means standing on a street corner, including in restricted contexts where you're necessarily going to be killed, arrested, told to quiet down. I think both of those are wrong.

First of all, to the first point, I don't think there's necessarily two models, I think all evangelism is proclamational. And I don't think there's a way around that because *evangelion*, right, *evangelion*, the Greek word from which we get evangelism, for gospel, is what? It's good news, and it's that same idea of news or a proclamation that you have. In other words, like *kataangelo* in Greek that are saying, it's the telling of news. And so the gospel is simply –

Scott Dunford: Right.

Alex Kocman: news to be shared. Practically how this fleshes out is if I'm taking an unbelieving friend out for coffee, and maybe we're in a very difficult country and environment where we're having these conversations in hushed tones. In fact I know of missionaries who are in very security-conscious environments who do not believe in some of these movement methodologies, who believe in proclamation, and who are doing it at cafes

in hushed tones, knowing that they could be overheard. So they're able to hold some of those tensions but it's the difference between these two things, it's the difference between me sitting down with an individual, opening up scripture shoulder to shoulder with them and getting them to arrive at those conclusions. And maybe at some point in time in the conversation I say to them, "You know, so-and-so, you should really consider Jesus, you should really give Jesus a try, he's changed my life. Anyway, see you next week." That's not bad, but it's the difference between that and, "Hey, friend, if you don't mind, let me tell you, this is uncomfortable for me, but I need to say this to you, God would call you to repent and believe this good news. This good news that Jesus died, he rose, Jesus is Lord, he offers forgiveness of sins to all who trust in him. God would have you to believe that and I submit that to you." That's a different posture in the conversation. So I think I, we really do end up in some red herrings, or the fields of straw men when we take the conversation really anywhere else.

Scott Dunford: Well, I wanna ask these questions not particularly for those who you know you disagree with. But particularly for those who are listening, they're new to this conversation, they're trying to understand what's, what is everyone meaning.

Alex Kocman: Yeah.

Scott Dunford: It's like discipleship sounds good, proclaiming sounds good, what are we talking about here, right? So if I ask a question that is, seems overly simplistic to you, that's the reason that I'm asking 'cause I think that getting some of that out of the way and out there is helpful. So we've clarified it's not, it doesn't mean you're behind a pulpit preaching with a suit and tie. It can be one-on-one even, but it is going for the gospel, right? The second question I have around that, about what it is and what it isn't, is, does it mean that every single time you have a gospel conversation with somebody that it has to lead to a confrontation to accept and believe the gospel? Or can this be a build-up? 'Cause I know, for instance I would consider and probably you would to, I'm assuming but I want you to speak for yourselves, what is done oftentimes like with the New Tribes model, I call it, where they come in, they're learning the scripture, they're translating, they're learning the language. And then there's a process of time, of declaring, I would say the systematic, chronological story of the Bible that leads to at the end a response. So I don't think you're saying this, but I want you to say it yourselves, does every time you have a spiritual conversation have to lead to a call for a response? What do you, how would you answer that? I'll let you go, Chad.

Chad Vegas: Let me differentiate two things. One, when I was pressing you, not you but the notion of DMM practitioners, in almost all their major works, they astute teaching; they call it a western imposition for someone to come and teach. It's like in their minds it's some kind of imperialistic impulse or

something. I'm responding to that, that's why I'm responding so strongly to that notion.

Scott Dunford:

Sure.

Chad Vegas:

Further, Alex is right, we're, I don't know anybody who's taught that, and as a pastor nor do I practice the notion that every time I sit down with an unbeliever over a cup of coffee that I need to stand up on a soap box and yell out the gospel at them or something, you know, pull out a pulpit.

Scott Dunford:

Yeah.

Chad Vegas:

We just have a conversation. Would I call every conversation I have with an unbeliever evangelism? No, right, even if I talk about God, I'm not gonna call it evangelism, I'm not even gonna call it proclamation. That word that Philip picks up, or that Luke picks up in Acts 35 with regard to Philip is *euangelisido*, right, which is the proclamation or the announcing of good news when it said he told him or tells him the good news. Same word in Acts 8:40, same Greek word when he preaches the gospel to all towns, Philip does. So there's a transition from we're discussing Isaiah to now I'm proclaiming the gospel to you, and there's a confrontation, if you will, that happens there. So yes, I would argue that every time you have a gospel conversation there is a confrontation because you're a minister, aroma of life to life for some and of death to death for others. But would I say every time I have a spiritual conversation with an unbeliever, it's a confrontation? No. But once we move into the language of gospel conversation, i.e. I'm now telling them the good news, there's a confrontation for sure, by its very nature.

Alex Kocman:

There's something else that I would add there too, which is the goal in evangelism when those confrontations do happen and in those settings where, okay this is one of those conversations where I'm gonna be able to communicate more of the gospel than I would in maybe some of those seed planting, you know, tilling the soil pre-evangelism types of interactions, is can I communicate this message in such a way that the person receives it as news? One illustration that I've used a few times in messages that I've preached that I stay away a little bit from now only because it brings to mind so many other political controversies, but I started using it during a year when there was a presidential inauguration. And I've used that as, to point to make simply when you turn on the news and you see a news anchor, you don't hear a news anchor suggesting, "Oh and by the way, you should consider there might be a new president." It's announced, right, it's simply told as fact. And in the same way, news is reported as fact.

I was having a conversation with our mutual friend, E.D. Burns, a friend of the show as well, several weeks ago. And he was sharing one of the things that he's done as he goes into different contexts is he does look for whether, even if you're in a pagan religious environment, who's the

individual in that culture who is regarded as someone of authority to make those sorts of pronouncements? And is there even wisdom in the missionary modeling his or her style of presentation of themselves, of the message after that person because again there's a difference between sharing the gospel in the sense of suggesting, talking about the gospel, and simply presenting it as news and as fact to be received. And I think that's maybe the key distinction is there's a difference between putting it in front of somebody. And here's another thing that happens as well, is a lot of the conversation gets sidetracked because well God can use the content of scripture, for instance, to save an individual apart from someone proclaiming. Someone can pick up a Bible on their own, figure out the message, no one has necessarily verbally, audibly preached it to them.

Scott Dunford: Right.

Alex Kocman: And God can save that person through that. The problem is we tend to argue through exception. And rather than asking ourselves the question what has God commanded and holds us responsible to do, not what can God do in an extreme situation where maybe there is no human teacher or maybe the people that God would use in that situation are not being faithful and so God resorts to other means in his sovereignty. But instead of arguing from the exception, we should look at what we're commanded explicitly to do.

Chad Vegas: I think it's helpful, Alex, that you picked that up. We don't want to argue from the exception to the rule, but from the rule to the exception. So God can speak through donkeys. God can send an angel if he wants. But, and people can be converted just reading the Bible. I don't deny any of that. God can do what he wills. But what he's commanded the church to do is he says, "Send forth preachers." He doesn't say send forth Bibles, he says send forth preachers, right? How can they preach unless they're sent?

Scott Dunford: Right.

Chad Vegas: And we're not sending forth Bibles, we're sending forth preachers. And when you preach, or proclaim, or evangelize, that moment at which I say is a confrontation, the reason I say it's inherently confrontational is because Jesus says you're preaching repentance for the forgiveness of sins in his name to all nations. You never see the apostles think they've done their job without them calling for faith and repentance. They call for faith and repentance in every evangelistic sermon in Acts, and in every evangelistic sermon in Acts, they say that the forgiveness of sins and eternal life hinges upon faith and repentance in Christ. That's confrontational because you're telling people that you're gonna die in your sins and be judged if you don't look to Christ and believe and repent. That's the nature of the confrontation.

Scott Dunford: Right.

- Chad Vegas:* By, and I guess what I'm trying to say is you have not proclaimed the gospel if that confrontational element is missing. You might have had a productive spiritual conversation, you might have said helpful things, but you haven't proclaimed the gospel by its very nature if you don't get to that confrontation. And even if that's just one-on-one.
- Scott Dunford:* But just to clarify, you're not saying that the entirety of the whole story of the gospel has to be presented every single time you preach.
- Chad Vegas:* No.
- Scott Dunford:* Right.
- Chad Vegas:* I mean again, we train what you call the New Tribes model, right? What you call the New Tribes model –
- Scott Dunford:* Yeah.
- Chad Vegas:* Radius essentially trains with that, which is –
- Alex Kocman:* It's funny that you call it that, Scott, 'cause ABWE and Radius both practice that chronological Bible method.
- Scott Dunford:* Well, but I, they developed it and they were –
- Alex Kocman:* Let's give New Tribes credit, sure.
- Scott Dunford:* they did it widely.
- Alex Kocman:* No, yeah –
- Chad Vegas:* Yeah, Trevor McIlwain is the one who really pressed that hard on a lot of folks, right? From New Tribes. So I think that's right. But it's the model that you see in Acts. What I'm gonna argue in chapter six of our books, of our book is just that it's the apostle's model or method. They also start with God. And depending on the audience they have, they start at a different place with God. So when they're in Acts 3 in Solomon's colonnade, they start with the God of our fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, they're talking to a group of Jews in the temple.
- In Acts 17 when Paul's talking to the epicurean and stoic philosophers at Mars Hill, he starts with the God who created all things. And then made a man by whom we all come, so he has to, he has to rebuild their whole understanding of who God is. He's not one of these idols, he doesn't live in temples made by human hands. So, which by the way, borrowing from Stephen there, which is fascinating all by itself. But you know, preaching part of Stephen's sermon, you know Paul. But yeah, I think you have to start there; that may take a long time.
- Scott Dunford:* You made a comment earlier, Chad, I don't think you were obviously disagreeing with Chad, but you said it differently, Alex. You made a comment all evangelism is proclamational. But, and, but I also know that

when we're talking about proclamation as maybe an antithesis to another view, you know, maybe it's DMM, that you wouldn't say that everyone who is doing evangelism or calling it, calling what they're doing evangelism is proclaiming the gospel. So to clarify that, what do you mean, Chad, if you were to say all methods of evangelism are, not all methods of evangelism are proclamational, or Alex, maybe from the positive side that you would say all methods of true evangelism are proclamational. What do you mean by that? What is it not proclamational about other methods of evangelism, or so-called evangelism?

Chad Vegas: Well, I think if I wanna, first of all, I don't know all the methods of evangelism that are used. So I don't, I don't wanna speak about all methods of evangelism but of the ones of which I'm aware –

Scott Dunford: Yeah.

Chad Vegas: when it's not proclamational it fails to make the gospel known to the person to whom you're talking. Which means the facts of the gospel, Christ came and lived and died and rose from the dead, ascended to the right hand of the Father, you see those facts presented, what J. Gresham Machen calls the history, right?

Scott Dunford: Yeah.

Chad Vegas: The facts and the doctrine for you and for your salvation, right? The application that needs to come. So if you're not proclaiming, making known the facts of the gospel story and the doctrine that it needs to be applied to you for the forgiveness of your sins and that's received through faith and repentance. If you're not doing those things then you're not proclaiming the gospel. I, you know when it comes to DMM I'm not saying everybody who says they practice DMM avoids proclaiming the gospel. I'm not arguing that. What I'm saying is the main authors of the books defending DMM, the argument that Ted Esler made in the debate with me with regard to DMM is a model that is not proclaiming the gospel. It's a model that says you, in fact, don't send teachers. The thing that the Watson's have said even on the Radius campus have said is that we do not send western missionaries to make known the gospel to other people, you find a person of peace and that person gets together a group of people and they have a discovery Bible study and they discover the truth of the Bible on their own. You don't teach it to them. That model of DMM, that is proclaimed in the books and articles is what I'm objecting to. Not every practitioner on the field and what they might be doing. I don't know what everybody's doing on the field.

Scott Dunford: Right.

Chad Vegas: It's like saying I'm, I disagree with all Presbyterians or all Baptists. On What? Like all the Baptists aren't the same, all the Presbyterians aren't the same. If you wanna talk about their confessional statements, now we can

actually have a discussion. Do I agree with the Westminster Confession or the London Baptist Confession? But do I agree with everybody who calls themselves a reformed Baptist, or everybody who calls themselves a Presbyterian, I don't know; but I can talk about the confessions. So what I'm saying is I'm talking about the major books, *Miraculous Movements* by Trousdale or the disciple making movements by the Watson's, or Esler's, the debate I was in with Ted Esler. That's what I'm referencing when I say that's not biblical evangelism. Not every practitioner on the field.

Alex Kocman:

Yeah. And for those of our listeners that haven't caught up with our two-part conversation with Ted Esler yet, we'd strongly encourage you – actually hit pause on that, on this, and then go back and listen to those as well because we were able to dive into some nuances that Ted I think helpfully did a good job in holding some members of his side accountable for overreporting of statistics and some things like that that I think is helpful as a counterbalance. But you know on that particular point I would say that evangelism at its core is proclamation. The issue is how faithful are various methods in either playing up or downplaying that essential part of the character of evangelism. Some methods are gonna do that well, other methods aren't going to necessarily preserve that. In the same way that that's, you know all dogs have four legs. Well, I can show you dogs that only have three legs or so and they're still dogs. But part of dogness is four-leggedness, right? And that doesn't change that. 'Cause again we want to argue from what's essential and then reason out from there to some of these exceptions as well.

And so what I think has kind of set us up for failure in a lot of these conversations in the missiological community is that you have movement methodologies over here juxtaposed against proclamational methodologies. And what I would submit to you all, and you can agree or disagree, is that what I'd like to do is make proclamation of the gospel, announcement of the gospel in a way contextually that makes sense. But announcement of that gospel news, the content of that message, I wanna make that the banner, I wanna make that the lines that we draw in, I want to make that the category. And within that, you're gonna have some methodologies that are more monological, some that are more dialogical, some that are more relational, some that are less relational, you know? And some that might lead to a little bit more of this organic, I don't wanna say movement because that's so charged, but an organic peer to peer type of presentation versus something that's very soap box kind of an orientation.

Scott Dunford:

Right.

Alex Kocman:

But I essentially am arguing that proclamation is the lines because the goal is to communicate the gospel. And if we're understanding proclamation to be narrowly just well, when we say proclamation if people think that that

necessitates monologue and soap box, okay, then there's a miscommunication happening there. But if a method of evangelism is not proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ and calling for the response of repentance and faith, then it's not a method of evangelism. It might be communicating spiritual truths, but it's not evangelism.

Scott Dunford:

But it, you know, remembering this, and this is kind of where I kept wanting to bring it back to, is that most of the missionaries on the field are not doing deep dives, they're not reading dissertations, they don't have time for it, and they're not going to do that. They're hearing resources recommended to them and maybe they're using a tool or they're reading an article or someone's saying, "Hey, here's what I'm using," and a lot of it's just missionary to missionary on the field. And they're adapting it and they're using it differently. And so I think that's helpful for us as we're trying to define things and help encourage missionaries to think okay, just because we're using a term doesn't mean we're necessarily criticizing the individual missionary. Sometimes we're simply pointing out, "Hey, this is what's happening on the theological, philosophical level; this is what you need to be careful of and this is what we mean by what we're doing with the gospel." 'Cause I know missionaries that would say they're practicing DMM that do proclaim the gospel. They do sit down and call people to repentance, they do try to teach the whole gospel. Maybe not perfectly, but you know I mean that's true of all of us. But I think that's a helpful clarification, I think that what you two do, described in saying "This is what we don't mean by proclamation, we don't mean it has to have a pulpit, it has to, it's not necessarily C1 on the contextualization scale." But it does mean fully declaring the gospel or at least moving in that direction with the intent of calling people to repentance and faith and believe and following after Christ fully is what we're shooting for. Sounded like, looked like you wanted to jump in.

Chad Vegas:

Yeah, I think that the reason that I use the oppositional language of my concern about DMM is because I wanna take these brothers at their word with what they write. So if you don't mean what you wrote in your book, then don't put it in your book. You know and so if you read the books, they say that they're opposed to teachers. They flat argue against it. If you read Ted Esler's article on the proclamational model when he has two ways to do things, I'm, he fundamentally misunderstands what proclamation is. Literally the word to gospel, or gospel, the gospel, or *euangelion*, and *euangelidso* in the verbal form is literally to proclaim. That's what it is, to proclaim good news. So to say our model is not proclamational is to say it's not evangelistic. To be evangelistic is to proclaim or announce the good news by definition.

Alex Kocman:

Right.

Chad Vegas:

So if it's not proclamational, it's not evangelism. That's just what the word means. So what I'm pressing against is when guys say, "We don't

Chad Vegas: Defining the 'Proclamational Model' (Part One)

Alex Kocman, Scott Dunford, Chad Vegas

proclaim the gospel," I'm just gonna take them at their word. We don't use the proclamational model, okay, well then you're not doing what the text of scripture says. If you don't mean that, then write what you mean. That's all I'm arguing for.

Alex Kocman:

Hey listeners, we're gonna take a quick break from this important conversation. It's too long to bring you in one piece so next week tune in for part two of our important conversation with Chad Vegas. The Missions Podcast is a resource ministry of ABWE. To get more info, go to ABWE.org. To get more content, go to missionspodcast.com. And before you leave, remember to share this show with a friend, leave a positive review, and a five-star rating; that'll help get this content in front of others who can be blessed by it. And until next week's second part of this interview, thank you for watching or listening.

[End of Audio]