

GOD'S VISION FOR OUR VOCATION

Proverbs 29:18

God desires that every local church have a clear understanding of how it can most effectively fulfill God's intent for its unique situation. This was precisely the conviction of the IBC elders when they crafted the following vision statement: *"We exist to call and make disciples from every nation to reach all nations."*

Notice several things about this vision statement. It speaks of evangelism—*to call*—and of equipping—*to make disciples*. The target group is people from everywhere, and the ultimate aim is, through them, to reach the whole world. IBC's vocation (mission) as a church is to carry out that vision.

This can be accomplished by focusing on two groups of foreigners: those who have come to Germany for a limited time; those who have come to stay. For both groups, IBC's plan of action is *to call*—evangelize—and *disciple*—equip.

This is a simple, but very biblical strategy. It can be found both in the New Testament and in the Old Testament. Let's look at the latter. As background, we need to remember that Israel was called to be God's missionary people. Through their witness, both temporary and permanent "sojourners" were to be drawn to Jehovah, the Creator God.

Let's look closer at these two emphases and see how they can motivate us to make God's vision for our church our vocation (mission). And we can be sure that as we do so we will flourish both as individuals and as a church.

1. Israel was to be a witness to non-Jews who were temporarily in the land

- From 2 Chronicles 6:32-33, what was one of the purposes for Solomon's temple as regards non-Israelites?
- From 2 Kings 5, particularly verses 15-17, how does the story of Naaman reflect this purpose?
- How can we at IBC best witness to foreigners "passing through the land"?

2. Israel was to be a witness to non-Jews who were permanently in the land

- From Deuteronomy 10:17-19 and 31:12, what was Israel's attitude supposed to be toward foreigners in their midst, and why was this so important?
- From 2 Samuel 15:19-21, how does Ittai der Gittite reflect the divine intention for foreigners living in Israel?
- How can we at IBC best witness to foreigners "dwelling in the land"?

Reflection

- What is the significance of the title of this sermon?