



# Perspectives

## An Integrative Approach to Discipleship

By **R. GREGORY DUHART SR.**

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*“Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” (Phil 1:6)*

At age 10, I accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior and was baptized at Grace Baptist Church in Brooklyn, New York. I gave my attention in ministry primarily to my church and in the 10–20 block radius around our church. Our pastor worked hard on teaching the Bible, discipleship, and modeling how the congregation should walk humbly before the Lord. My Christian experience did not include reading missionary biographies, going on short-term mission trips, or hosting missionaries for home assignments and mission conferences. I did not hear stories of mass conversions of unreached, unengaged peoples in far-off lands. My Christian experience was being the hands and feet of Jesus to those in need in my community, and there were always many needs that required attention.

So, when I began to understand what missionaries did, how they operated, the people they served, and the money that was spent to serve them, I was outraged and became an anti-global Christian. My thought process was that there were so many needs here in the United States that it was sacrilegious to care for

others before we took care of our own. Even with this attitude, God’s Spirit worked mightily through my church experience, developing in me gifts for teaching, leadership, discipleship, and shepherding.

*“For it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.” (Phil 2:13)*

In 2013, the Spirit used a series of events to reveal to Kim and me that we were to leave our church (having ministered there for 10 years) to go wherever he would lead us. As we prayed, one of my criteria among others for our new church home was that it must have a high regard for the Bible. I also wanted my Sunday to look like the rest of my life—multicultural.

We visited Cherrydale Baptist Church (CBC) and found the teaching met our criteria. The church embraced the Bible’s “all people” concept. When we joined CBC, we had no idea of the significance of missions and the Great Commission within CBC’s DNA; nor did we understand their commitment to reaching unreached and unengaged people groups. In 2014, the missions pastor at CBC, Ed Grudier, asked Kim and me to join his leadership small group. I explained to him that I believed that the American church was in error to spend so much money on

reaching people who did not speak our language, had no desire to seek God, and/or were hostile to Christian presence. Ed replied, “Great! Fantastic. I look forward to working through these thoughts with you.” This was the first major transformation in my Christian journey.

For weeks, Ed allowed me to express my misgivings about missions while he lovingly, biblically, philosophically, and practically refuted all my arguments. One day, he said, “Greg, before we get started, it’s obvious that you’re gifted in teaching, coaching, and discipling. How are you with Acts 1:8 and Matthew 28:16–20?” He then read both passages to me. My reply was “Not very good.” At that moment, I felt the ice melt from my heart.

A second major transforming event occurred directly after our small group ended. CBC hosted the Perspectives on the World Christian Movement course, so I asked Kim to join me in taking the class. During the first five lessons, I experienced changes in my spiritual life. The integrated nature of this body of knowledge we call Perspectives changed how I read the Bible, how often I read it, and, most importantly, my understanding of God’s mission (*missio Dei*). Now, taking the Word of God to every tongue, tribe, and nation so that they would worship the Lord Jesus Christ, became a focus in my life. My new understanding moved me to seek my place in his story. By the time we finished lesson 15, we felt compelled to take this material to the African-American community that we live in and the African churches with whom we fellowshiped.

In retrospect, I see God’s hand moving Kim and me to find our place as mobilizers. Upon completing Perspectives at the certificate level, God quickly provided a Perspectives Coordinator Workshop (PCW) for us to attend in the Mid-Atlantic region. After finishing the PCW, God provided a two-day conference sponsored by the National African American Missions Council

(NAAMC), where I met an African-American missionary for the first time. We also met Bishop David Perrin, who has a track record of leading the charge for missions in the African-American community around D.C., Maryland, and Virginia. Bishop Perrin was very familiar with Perspectives and wanted his church to host the course, but the congregation did not have a trained coordinator. Kim and I quickly agreed to coordinate the course. In the fall of 2015, Kim and I hosted our first Perspectives course at Christ Kingdom Church for 51 African Americans.

Kim and I later became loop coordinators for the state of Maryland and have hosted many Perspectives classes around the Mid-Atlantic region. I would go on to become a Perspectives Instructor and currently serve as the Regional Director for the Mid-Atlantic region for Perspectives USA. I’ve been on many short-term trips to assist workers in their mission endeavors and on pastoral visits to workers from Nigeria to Prague in the Czech Republic. I’ve been on the advisory board for NAAMC and currently serve on the Board of Directors for Pioneers USA. God has done amazing things with this imperfect vessel. He’s used us to build bridges of love to the African-American community and other communities that are necessary to complete his mission. 

