

“In *Send*, Jim issues a compelling summons for churches to recapture a sending culture, championing the cause of Christ. With clarity and biblical fidelity, Jim charts a course for churches to multiply locally through strategic church planting and local missions, while simultaneously reaching out globally through dynamic engagement in frontier missions. This is a book that will stir your soul, enlarge your perspective, and spur you to joyful obedience as we labor together for the day when God’s glory covers the earth as the waters cover the seas.”

MATT CARTER, VP of Mobilization, Send Network,
North American Mission Board

“Jim Essian has served the church beautifully well in writing this short book that packs a huge punch. Founded upon the character of our sending God and his vision for his world, Jim calls us, simply, to join with our God in his sovereign plans. This would be a great book to read for “normal” Christians (like me) who find it all too easy to either lose sight of God’s global rescue plan, or else lose confidence in the part that I can usefully play.”

DAN STEEL, Elder, Magdalen Road Church; Ministry Program
Director, Yarnton Manor, Oxford

“In a world that finds hope in anything and everything but Jesus, Jim offers a kingdom vision, a tangible invitation, and a helpful example for any disciple and every church to follow. This book will do more than just help you plant more churches or send more missionaries. In Jim’s poignant reminders, I trust that you’ll also find your role in planting the gospel and sending God’s true hope—whether to neighbors or nations—in Christ alone.”

BEN CONNELLY, Servant Leadership Team, Salt & Light
Community; Director, Plant Fort Worth and The Equipping Group

“This is a great book for all of us who are tempted to settle for a comfortable church life. We will catch a fresh excitement for our majestic mission and will be stirred up to see the part we can play.”

JONTY ALLCOCK, Pastor, The Globe Church, London;
Author, *Impossible Commands*

“Mobility is an essential element in the mission of the church. Without it, we are swimming in sentimentality and dancing with disobedience. This book not only gives a biblical vision of gospel mission but wisdom and guidance from a pastor and church who are praying, giving, and going. Trust me, you want to learn from Jim. These pages are a testimony of what God has done—and can do for you. If you want to see members sent and churches planted for the name of Jesus, you are holding the right book.”

J.A. MEDDERS, Co-author, *The Soul-Winning Church*; Director of Theology and Content, Send Network

“Page after page, I was encouraged, uplifted, and joyful about how God allows us to be a part of his cosmic purposes. With written excellence, Jim shows us how God sends his people to accomplish his task of kingdom-building. I found this book to be a thrilling explanation of why and how God sends his people. I commend it not only to church planters and vocational missionaries but to every Christian looking to understand how God works in accomplishing his purposes through his people.”

BRIAN HOWARD, President, Acts 29

“*Send* is a grace-saturated treatment of the radical mission of the church to magnify Christ in the Great Commission. In a thorough but concise way, Jim Essian has given us an immensely encouraging work that both informs and inspires.”

JARED C. WILSON, Assistant Professor of Pastoral Ministry, Midwestern Seminary; Author, *The Gospel-Driven Church*

“Practical, prophetic, and deeply pastoral—this book is a true gift to Christ’s church. *Send* beautifully captures God’s heart for the lost and underscores the urgency for the church to reflect his redemptive mission. Not merely a book to read once but a resource to be studied, absorbed, and woven into the fabric of our discipleship. As we engage with its wisdom, we are compelled to reset our posture toward the Great Commission, aligning ourselves afresh with the Spirit’s leading in reaching the lost.”

DR DOUG LOGAN JR., President, Grimké Seminary; Director of Urban Church Planter Development, Send Network



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Loving Your Church by Praying, Giving or Going

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*To my wife, Heather,
my partner in life and ministry.*

FOREWORD

BY JOBY MARTIN

As I write, the church that I have the joy of getting to pastor, The Church of Eleven22, is about to turn twelve years old. Looking back, I see so many faces and so many stories, some miraculous and some heartbreaking. I remember when we felt that God was calling us to launch our second campus back in 2015. I remember feeling challenged in January of 2020 that maybe we were missing a major opportunity to disciple people online, and launching that ministry only a week before the world shut down through Covid. It's wild to reflect on these twelve years of seeking God and finding him to be better than I could have ever imagined.

Before we planted Eleven22, I sat praying at the kitchen table with my wife, Gretchen, asking God if this was the next thing he had for us. Should we plant or should I take a job at an established church where I could plug into what God was already doing? How would we pay for things? What if it didn't work out? Gretchen, with her confidence in God and in me, is the real reason why we took that step out of the boat back in 2012. There's no

way we could have known then what we know now, that more people worship in the churches that we've planted around the world than worship with us on a weekend. For sure, we've walked through some painful and difficult moments, but we've also experienced the power and presence of God in ways that are beyond comprehension.

I get asked often, what's the secret sauce of Eleven22? I've got one answer to share that I think Jim so powerfully walks out through this book: *we respond to the gospel*. I heard the gospel message as a 16-year-old at a pretty painful point in my life, and I've never recovered. I cannot get over the good news that Jesus lived the life I couldn't live, died that death that I deserve, and rose from the dead so that I could live eternally with him. News like that demands a response!

At Eleven22, I end every sermon the same way, calling people to respond to the gospel in one of three ways—we sing, we bring, and we pray. I think that's what Jim is also doing in this book. He's calling you, the reader, to respond to the gospel with your life.

We sing: The appropriate response to the message of Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and ascension is to worship God! When we understand that we were dead spiritually—that we were wretched, hard-hearted sinners—and that Jesus exchanged his perfect, holy, righteousness for us, how can we not sing? How can we not respond with overwhelming thankfulness? The gospel is good news because it's impossible for us to be

restored to him in any other way. We find ourselves in the domain of darkness apart from Jesus. But God... But God did what we couldn't. God made a way where there wasn't. God paid the debt that we owed. It causes us to sing with our whole hearts:

*And when I think that God, his Son not sparing,
Sent him to die, I scarce can take it in.
That on the cross, my burden gladly bearing,
He bled and died to take away my sin...*
THEN SINGS MY SOUL...

What about you? When was the last time you responded to the glorious message of the cross and empty tomb with shouts of praise and declared him alone as worthy?

We bring: The appropriate response to the generous heart of God who sent his only Son for us is to give back to him what he has given to us. This is rooted in two truths. First, everything we have is from him. There is nothing that we own that didn't come from the hand of God. Second, we give our first and best because he gave his first and best. We aren't tipping God; we bring him the firstfruits of all that he's entrusted to us as an act of worship, because we've learned it from him.

Out of the overflow of perfect love that existed eternally within the Trinity, everything was created. Out of the overflow of perfect love that exists in the heart of God, the Son was sent. 1 John 4:19 simply says, "We love because he first loved us." The theologian John Stott

puts it this way, “God does not love us because Christ died for us; Christ died for us because God loves us.” God loved and God gave. What about you? You will give to what you love. Is it his mission and his kingdom that captures your heart, shapes your dreams, and how you steward what you own?

We pray: The appropriate response to the gospel is to run to God. We pray because we have a good heavenly Father who wants us to come to him. We have access to the throne! When Jesus was crucified, Matthew 27:51 tells us that the veil in the temple that protected the holy of holies was torn from top to bottom. This implies that it was God who tore the veil—it’s God who has given us access to his throne through Christ. I love the quote from Tim Keller, “The only person who dares wake up a king at 3 a.m. for a glass of water is a child. We have that kind of access.” You are his beloved child. You have access to the throne of God. What do you do with that access?

If we respond to the gospel, the gospel will advance. God’s kingdom will flourish when we act on the challenges Jim presents in this book. The apostle Paul says, “You were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies” (1 Corinthians 6:20). Our response should be to go wherever he calls us and to give our lives for him so that others might know the good news.

Joby Martin
Pastor, The Church of Eleven22
Author, If the Tomb is Empty and Anything is Possible

1. GOD'S VISION FOR THE WORLD

*For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory
of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.*

Habakkuk 2:14

You are in the midst of a global movement.

A movement that is advancing in every culture and place, across the millennia—a Spirit-filled, gospel-armed people who will not stop or even slow down until we break through the gates of hell and welcome our King and his kingdom. We will not lose, because he has already won. It's a movement of grace and truth, of word and deed, and in the fear of the Lord, his church multiplies.

And you've been invited in.

We fear nothing and no man; we seek the glory of God and the good of all people. The gospel propels us forward with boldness and audacity. We can be the most entrepreneurial, courageous, and fearless people. Why?

Because Jesus was victorious. Because the kingdom is coming in its fullness.

All this is true. But it doesn't always *feel* or even *look* true. So let me show you how all this will end, because it ends in glory. And if we can see the finish line, maybe it can help us to see how the Spirit will get us there, and how we can join him on his mission.

IN THE DESERT

The world is broken. Ravaged by sin, torn apart in conflict, fractured. Technology broadcasts each fissure and sends it straight to our phones. More than any generation before us, we're inundated with knowledge, and so much of it demoralizes the heart and devastates the soul. We know more than we should know.

Anxiety (at least in the US) is at an all-time high,¹ and hope at an all-time low. Like an economic bear market, the situation seems dire and investors' confidence is low. We're pulling out all our cash and stuffing it under the mattress—this surely isn't the right time for planting churches, starting new initiatives, and thinking about multiplication. We can barely keep our friends in church (or in the faith), it seems.

The prophet Habakkuk felt the same way in his time, well over two millennia ago:

1 <https://news.gallup.com/poll/505745/depression-rates-reach-new-highs.aspx> (accessed February 12, 2024).

*O LORD, how long shall I cry for help,
and you will not hear?
Or cry to you "Violence!"
and you will not save? (Habakkuk 1:2)*

For Habakkuk, the world is a desert. The knowledge of God's glory has dried up. Habakkuk lives in a time when God's people are in a bad place. Assyria has taken over, deporting most of God's people and dominating those who remain in Jerusalem. God's people haven't been following him faithfully. There's violence and destruction, contention and injustice, conflict, scandal, and greed. Everyone is striving for the "Assyrian Dream" and following their heart wherever it leads. Things are getting really bad.

The Old Testament prophets usually speak in tumultuous times full of evil and injustice, when God's people are trying to figure out how to navigate the world. Maybe that's why they often read like a Radiohead song. Sometimes, I just want to give Jeremiah or Habakkuk a hug. And yet, they are filled with the promises of God.

Habakkuk is no false optimist. He looks around, dejected and depressed, and calls out to God, "How long shall I cry for help?" (v 2). *God, how long will this take?* Habakkuk wants answers and he pleads with God to do something. God does answer him, but not in a way that Habakkuk likes. God says he will do something about it, but first it's going to get worse before it gets better (v 5-11).