

**MAPPING FBC DNA:
Global Partners
2 Corinthians 5:14 - 6:2
Dr. Doyle Sager, First Baptist Church, Jefferson City, Missouri
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WATCH/LISTEN: <https://www.fbcjc.org/sermon/mapping-fbc-dna-global-partners/>

Today we conclude a five-part sermon series: Mapping FBC DNA, as we look at God's unique imprint on us and calling for us to be and do. We have explored God-centered worship, life-changing faith, authentic relationships, community transformation and now, global partners. In the very first verse of our text today Paul declares, "the love of Christ compels us..." (v. 14). That syncs with our newly adopted vision statement: Compelled to be Christ's love and hope.

Christ's love constrains us, compels us, lays claim on us, urges us on. Because Christ died for all (v. 15). That's the good news. But it's also urgent news. You get the sense that Paul is hinting at a burden that weighs on him, that people are not a theological category or vague concepts. They are real people who are without Christ, people with faces and names and families. Elijah Brown, the General Secretary of the Baptist World Alliance, shared on Facebook recently about the Bangladesh Baptists celebrating their 100th anniversary (yes, there have been Baptists there for 100 years!). One gentleman had planted 60 churches in 41 years. Wow. Why did he do that? Because the love of Christ compelled him. He was motivated. What motivates FBC JC?

But read on. We learn even more about Paul's motivation. In Christ, we are new creations (v. 17). God is the one doing the reconciling. He doesn't stand around, politely waiting for us to see the light and fix ourselves (v. 19). And in Christ, the great trade was made (v. 21). He became sin for us that we might become God's righteousness. What a wonder, when time and eternity meet in a human heart.

The love of Christ compels us, Paul says, and we are ambassadors for Christ (v. 20). We share Christ. In Washington, DC, at the residence of the British ambassador to the U.S., there is a statue of Sir Winston Churchill. The likeness has one foot within on U.S. soil and the other on British soil. An ambassador must be a part of two worlds and be bilingual. An ambassador delivers messages, but also embodies the essence of her homeland. So it is for us as Christ followers. Our homeland is the Kingdom of God and we are to embody Kingdom values as we share Christ.

Too many believers are mail carrier Christians, not ambassador Christians. My mail carrier doesn't know me from Gomer Pyle. He just drops the mail in my box, dispassionately and impersonally. He has no investment, so he doesn't care if he is dropping off a \$10,000 check from Publishers Clearinghouse Sweepstakes or delivering a letter from IRS saying I owe \$10,000 (by the way, neither of those has happened!). We are not Christ's mail carriers. We care. We embody the message. We are ambassadors for Christ.

David Bosch wrote, "Mission is not primarily an activity of the church but an attribute of God.

God is a missionary. The church is...an instrument of that mission" [quoted in *Pastor*, by William Willimon, p. 239]. Paul was writing to a church that had trouble getting over itself. He is still writing to churches with the same problem.

Paul was calling Corinthians and us to move beyond prejudice and boundary, our fear of the other and our fear of change. To be compelled by the love of Christ.

Nada DeWeese was a church member here who died last November. She had spent most of her active Christian years in a church in Colorado. So when she passed, I invited her pastor from Colorado to bring the message at her service. He told about Nada's long years of work and their labors together to bring their church into health and growth. And then the day came when it was time to make some changes—to the music, the worship service, the way they connected to their community. He held his breath on the first Sunday after they rolled out all this "new." What would Nada think? What would she say? She was very traditional. She looked at him and said, "Pastor, we are here to reach people." And then the pastor told us at the funeral the key to Nada's great heart: "Seeing people come to Christ and connect with his church were more important to her than getting her own way." The love of Christ compels us. We share Christ.