



## A Call to the Nations

Samir and Jackie | Dwaar, New Delhi  
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**Summary:** Samir Deokuliar was radically saved out of a Hindu background as a college student 30 years ago. Soon after trusting Christ, Samir committed his life to serving Christ in however he was called—and that was soon revealed to be church-planting. Samir started and led three churches directly, and has been instrumental in planting dozens of others, from the slums of Mumbai to the business district of the capital of India, in New Delhi. Their church, Dwaar, means “gate” and is named for Jesus’ words in John 10:9: “I am the gate for the sheep.”

Samir’s calling—and ours—goes back not to a personal encounter with God but to the call of God upon his people from the very beginning. From the moment God told Adam and Eve to “fill the earth,” we’ve seen the Lord’s desire to be known everywhere. But in his rebellion against God, humans have often tried to settle and secure their lives rather than living by faith as a sent people. Take the story of the Tower of Babel: “Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth,” (Gen. 11:4). Being “scattered” was, in effect, God’s purpose for them; but since they wouldn’t carry out God’s will he scattered them by the confusion of their languages.

But God’s goal of having a global community who would know and love him would not be thwarted. God called Abraham and said, “All peoples on earth will be blessed through you” (Gen. 12:3). Later, as Abraham’s descendants grew into the nation of Israel, God said, “It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. ***I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth***” (Isaiah 49:6). Israel never embraced this calling, but God would not be stopped.

When Jesus finally arrived on the scene, he eventually explained that “Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms....The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and ***repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem***” (Luke 24:44-47).

But even after the church began in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost, and “Babel” was overturned and God’s praise was declared in many languages, and Peter preached the gospel to a large crowd and 3,000 decided to follow Christ—even then, the church inclined toward staying put. Only after suffering persecution which drove them out of the city did the people of God finally begin to fulfill their purpose, taking the gospel from “Jerusalem, to Judea and Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

Today this work continues through Dwaar and Willowdale—and untold thousands of other gospel-centered, globally-minded churches. And may it continue with prayerful, obedient intentionality, until every person has a chance to hear of the God who loves them and died to save them.

## Discussion:

1. In Matthew 28:18-20 Jesus said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." To what degree have these words, known as *The Great Commission*, been formative to your faith and your understanding of the mission of the church?
2. Have you ever seriously sought God about whether you should go and be part of planting the gospel in a place where Christ is not known, or few if any churches exist? When was the last time you sought God about this?
3. The call to be a blessing to the nations transcends proclaiming the gospel only. It also involves building the relationships, infrastructures, and institutions that cause whole communities to thrive. (See God's call to the exiles in Jeremiah 29.) Pastor Samir related how a Tim Keller quote impacted him as he was moving to New Delhi: "Don't go to build a great church; go to build a great city." What does that thought say to you about our presence as a church in our "city"? How does it challenge and inform your work, life, and mission in the world?
4. Samir also made this insightful statement: "The strength of a church is not its seating capacity but its sending capacity." What are some things we can do as a church to increase our sending capacity? If got really serious about sending out people to plant new churches where most needed, how would it change us? What might we need to start doing...and stop doing?
5. What else did you find interesting or impactful from Samir and Jackie's talk? What was one good take-away for your life?