

Could 'Love Wins' Threaten Global Missions?

A controversial book could tear at the seam of evangelical missions. So says David Shibley, a former pastor and founder of Global Advance.

"There has been a book that has been released recently by a high-profile pastor that suggests that eventually everyone is going to go to heaven," Shibley says.

The book has caused a stir throughout the Christian world. Many have called it heresy due to its possible implications that all people will get to go to heaven when they die, regardless of their response (or even lack thereof) to Christ on earth.

Shibley says people going to heaven isn't the problem: "I want to say, first of all, that of course that is our desire as well-that's why our Lord gave us the Great Commission."

However, if hell is no longer a relevant destination for anyone postmortem, missions as a whole could be considered irrelevant. Shibley says: "It always blunts the impetus of evangelism and missions-any suggestion in any form of what is usually termed 'universalism.'"

Essentially, the issue begs the question: Why go to the ends of the earth with the Gospel message if everyone will respond to it and end up in heaven anyway?

Shibley says in this case, it is best to err on the side of caution: "It is far healthier, far better, and far safer to simply stay in the historic, biblical tradition that is clear that people need a Savior and that Jesus is that Savior. And there is always an inherent urgency in the proclamation of the Gospel."

Based on what Scripture does tell us, Shibley says missions must continue.

“The historic position of the Church, and what I believe is the unmistakable teaching of Scripture, is that we’re estranged from God, and that repentance and faith in Christ are absolutely essential to restoring us to a relationship with it,” Shibley says. “We need to carry this message with humility, with gratitude, and with confidence.”