

# Mission And God's People

Mission reflects what is foremost on the mind of the Father and Jesus Christ.

**Matthew 28:16-20** [NIV] *“Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising 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.”*

The final recorded command given before He returned to the throne of God to be our High Priest.

This reflects all that He had taught His disciples in the previous three years.

**John 17:1-25** All mission we are involved in will fail unless we understand what Jesus is saying in this passage of scripture.

**John 17:3** [NIV] *“Now this is eternal life: that they may **know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.**”*

Definition of eternal life – “know” Greek “ginōskō” the same word used in **Luke 1:34** [King James] *“Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?”*

Mary's response to the message given to her by God's messenger concerning the birth of Jesus.

A very intimate relationship, through the active entrance of the Holy Spirit into our lives.

**John 17:6** [NIV] *“I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world.”*

Christ had revealed the Father to them.

**John 14:8-9** [NIV] *“Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.” Jesus answered: “Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”*

Revealed by the life he led.

**John 17:6** [NIV] *“They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word.”*

We belong to Jesus Christ.

**Acts 20:28** [NIV] *“Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.”*

Purchased by the sacrificial blood of Jesus Christ.

**John 17:8** [NIV] *“For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me.”*

Knowing that Jesus came from God the Father is a key to successful mission.

**John 17:9-10** [NIV] *“I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them.”*

Jesus the Son of Man is praying to the Father for each of us!!

**John 17:11** [NIV] *“I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one.”*

To be protected by the Father’s name is to be protected by His life.

Only those who are “*born again*” by the Holy Spirit [who is God] and one with the Father and Christ can participate in the Father’s name.

**John 17:2** [NIV] *“For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him.”*

The Son has given the Father’s life [eternal life] to those whom the Father has given Him. Hence such humans share the father’s name by being protected in it and are one in it.

**Our oneness can only come through the active indwelling of the Holy Spirit in each of us.**

**Galatians 5:22-23** [NIV] *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”*

Remember the first listed fruit of that intimate relationship is love “*agapé*” [a love that is constant irrespective of the response to that love].

**John 17:13** [NIV] *“I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them.”*

Christ in us [through indwelling of Holy Spirit] is the joy of our relationship with God.

**John 17:20-25** [NIV] *“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. “Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world. “Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me.”*

Twice in this prayer Christ states the desired outcome of this intimate relationship, our being in Christ and Christ in us.

*“So that the world may believe that you [the Father – God] have sent me”* [Jesus – the Son of God and Son of Man].

This is the “*heart of mission*” our love for each other and our love for the “*lost*” those who still live in the dark **not** knowing Jesus Christ the light that has come into the world.

**1 John 1:1-7** [NIV] *“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched, this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We write this to make our joy complete. **This is the message we have heard***

*from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.”*

This is part of the gospel message to this society that lives in spiritual darkness.

### **How is this message delivered?**

**1 John 2:1-11** [NIV] *“My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defence, **Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world. We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. The man who says, “I know him,” but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But if anyone obeys his word, God’s love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did. Dear friends, I am not writing you a new command but an old one, which you have had since the beginning. This old command is the message you have heard. Yet I am writing you a new command; its truth is seen in him and you, because the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining. Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness. Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there is nothing in him to make him stumble. But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness; he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him.”***

The gospel message is delivered through our exhibiting our love for each other and for others outside our fellowship with the Creator God.

### **This life of love must involve our total life.**

**Romans 12:1** [NIV] *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship.”*

The total sacrifice of our life [like the burnt offering of the Old Covenant, all offer to God nothing left for priest or the one making the offering].

The offering made under the Old Covenant had to be without blemish.

How can we offer ourselves in such a form?

**1 John 1:8-9** [NIV] *“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. **If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”***

Confess our sins and ask for purification by the blood of Jesus Christ.

**Romans 4:18-25** [NIV] *“Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead, since he was about a hundred years old, and that Sarah’s womb was also dead. **Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. This is why “it was credited to him as righteousness.”** The words “it was credited to him” were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness, for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.”*

Claim the promise of Christ’s righteousness being credited to us as children of Abraham, that is faith and trust in God akin to that of Abraham.

Our “*oneness*” or “*communion*” [all of us sharing a common thing] is our sharing the grace and love of our Creator God.

It is at the sharing of the bread and wine at the “*communion table*” where we are regularly reminded of this “*oneness*”, brought about by sacrificial love on our part as well as that of God.

**2 Corinthians 13:14** [NIV] “*May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*”

Same Greek word translated “*fellowship*” here is translated “*communion*”.

The “*communion table*” is a group of people gathered around the same table in *fellowship* with God and one another.

The mission statement of the church is “*living and sharing the gospel*”.

This needs to be expanded to fit each church fellowship, for no two churches are identical.

### **Questions we need to ask are:-**

#### **What are we as a church?**

Many things can govern our approach to mission.

- a. Numerical size of our fellowship.
- b. The location where we meet [this may mean we have to move].
- c. When we meet for worship services.
- d. Format of our worship services – are they “*seeker friendly*”?
- e. Jargon [in-speak] used in our worship services.
- f. The type of community [if any] directly around where we meet.
- g. Are we a “*gathered*” church?
- h. We are a “*word*” based church.
- i. Are we exclusive or inclusive by nature?
- j. Are we a “*one class*” fellowship, in age or material wealth?
- k. Are we united or divided on issues of doctrine?

#### **Who are we as a church?**

The gifts or skills of all the members

- a. Hospitality
- b. Communication
- c. Organisational skills
- d. Musical skills
- e. Commitment and dedication [loyalty to church and one another]
- f. Family orientated atmosphere
- g. Teaching / preaching abilities
- h. Prayer culture
- i. Busy or non busy membership [“*busy*” – **Bound Under Satan’s Yoke**]

- j. Releasing of all members culture – delegation and trust
- k. Prevailing sense of initiative
- l. Use of women in work and worship
- m. Members have strong personal opinions or allow the Holy Spirit to lead
- n. Negative dedication that leaves no space for enlightened change
- o. Non-acceptance of other Christian fellowships not of our denomination [still a “ghost” in some of our denomination’s fellowships]
- p. We are a modified Episcopal [top-down] church, **not** a congregational church
- q. Focus of solution to world’s problems –
  - 1) **Future** only awaiting Christ’s return
  - 2) **Present** needs and distresses
 Remember Christ healed [physically] and now spiritually **all** who came to Him.
- r. Judgemental or compassionate in attitude, legalistic or loving.

**What is the foundation on which mission is laid?**

God is a god of mission.

God began His work of mission before the physical creation.

We are blessed by God to be invited to be involved in that work of mission for the brief period of our lives.

**Matthew 16:13-15** [NIV] *“When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”*

Caesarea Philippi, a peaceful area and the source of the Jordan river.

Jesus Christ felt that the time to ask His disciples a certain question had come.

Who do you believe I am?

Jesus was really asking what has the Father revealed to this small group of faith.

**Matthew 16:16** [NIV] *“Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”*

**This was a statement of faith.**

What was Christ’s response?

**Matthew 16:17-18** [NIV] *“Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.”*

Christ proclaimed **on this confession of faith I will build my church.**

A church that would never die.

The living example of our confession of faith must be passed on to the next generation for this to happen.

The fellowship that Christ was building would be founded on this confession made by His disciples throughout each generation.

**Matthew 16:19** [NIV] *“I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”*

This was the “key” that would unlock the Kingdom of God to each generation.

The fellowship [church] founded on this confession of faith would constantly face changes as it passed from one generation to another and entered different cultures.

First major change in the church was revolutionary to the culture of the first members.

**It was no longer going to be a Jewish fellowship, following the Jewish culture.**

Christ had died to bring salvation to gentiles as well as Jews.

Christians in each generation must be living, walking witnesses as to who Jesus Christ is to their own generation.

Missionary walkers who relate to their own generation and culture.

**Matthew 28:19-20** [NIV] *“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising 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.”*

**As we go about our daily lives we are to love all we meet with unconditional [agapé] love.**

**Acts 2:17-18** [NIV] *“In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.”*

The job description of the church.

Calling on the abundant power that comes to a fellowship that allows the Holy Spirit to work in and through them.

**Acts 2:21** [NIV] *“And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”*

**This was totally alien to Jewish thought and culture as it is to our culture in this generation.**

**Acts 2:38** [NIV] *“Peter replied, “Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”*

Peter was telling these people if you believe what I have just said then stand up and be counted publicly.

**Matthew 18:19-20** [NIV] *“Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.”*

A promise from Jesus Christ to all His disciples.

**1 Corinthians 11:23-26** [NIV] *“For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, **whenever** you drink it, in*

remembrance of me.” For **whenever** you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.”

Christ through Paul tells us **whenever** we have a meal together, breaking bread and drinking wine, as part of worship or as a fellowship meal of church members, remember what I have done for all humanity.

**Acts 2:42-47** [NIV] “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, **to the breaking of bread and to prayer**. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. **They broke bread in their homes and ate together** with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”

This was part of the priorities of the early church and Christ promised to be present with them at all such times.

**Such loving fellowship made them a very impressive group of people, who drew others to join them.**

**Acts 3:1** [NIV] “One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer, at three in the afternoon.”

This shows that this was a seamless transmission of culture, an example we have to follow.

Disciples still visited temple to preach the gospel message.

**Acts 3:2-10** [NIV] “Now a man crippled from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, “Look at us!” So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them. Then Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. **In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.**” Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man’s feet and ankles became strong. He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. When all the people saw him walking and praising God, they recognised him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.”

Miracle done in the name of Jesus.

**Acts 4:12** [NIV] “**Salvation is found in no-one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.**”

Jesus Christ is the **only name** in which we can find salvation, **faith in any other person and their teaching is in vain.**

This is the message we are to preach.

This message **will** bring persecution on us as a church in this “*politically correct society*” as the same message did to other generations of Christians.

**1 Peter 2:21** [NIV] “To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.”

Suffer with Christ, He was murdered for preaching this same message.

**Romans 8:18-19** [NIV] *“I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed.”*

**The darkened world awaits for us to do the work we have been commissioned to do as God’s children.**