

# Fulfilling God's Will For His Church

## [Part 2]

### How do we define the mission of our church?

Really this is *not* the right question to be asking.

**Matthew 16:18** [NIV] “*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.*”

**We need to always remember whose church this is.**

**It isn't our job to create the mission statement of the church but to discover it in God's Word.**

We need to study the many scriptures that point towards the mission and work of Christ's Church and with them as a basis of our thinking and discussion formulate a summarised mission statement.

As we study these scriptures we need to look for the answers to four questions that will help us formulate our purpose statement.

- 1 Why does the church exist?**
- 2 What are we to be as a church?** (Who and what are we?)
- 3 What are we to do as a church?** (What does God want us to do in the world?)
- 4 How are we to do this?**

As we study scripture we need to write down everything we learn and include our thoughts individually and as a group.

This information can then be edited and condensed into our mission statement.

To be effective, the end product of this study must be a mission statement that fulfils the following:

- 1 It must be Biblical.** Totally from within God's Word.
- 2 It must be specific, simple and clear.** For example, the original mission statements of the following effective organisations:
  - a) **The Salvation Army** “*to make citizens of the rejected*”;
  - b) **Disneyland** “*to provide people happiness*”;
  - c) **A Baptist Church in Surrey** “*to take every opportunity to show the gospel in the local community, and structure a teaching programme to enable people to grow spiritually*”.
- 3 It must be transferable.** Short enough to be remembered and passed on by everyone in the fellowship.

**People remember simple statements, slogans or phrases.**

For example:- “*I have a dream*” [Dr. Martin Luther King, Junior]; “*Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country*” [John F. Kennedy].

- 4 It must be measurable.** So that we can evaluate whether we are fulfilling it or not, as we review, revise and improve everything we do as a church.

As we study the scriptures we need to consider several topics.

**1 Look at Christ's Ministry on earth** and ask

- a) What did Jesus do while He was here?
- b) What would He do if He were here today?

**Whatever Jesus did while here in His Physical Body, He wants to continue today in His Spiritual Body on earth, the church.**

**2 Look at the images and names of the church**

The church is called – a body – a bride – a family – an army, etc., etc.

**Each image has profound implications for what we should be doing as a church.**

**3 Look at the examples of the New Testament churches**

There are many different models we can study, including the seven churches listed in Revelation.

**4 Look at the Commands of Christ for His Church**

Remember, it was Jesus who founded the church, died for the church, sent the Holy Spirit to the church and will some day return to His Church in person.

**Jesus Christ has already established the mission for the church.**

**It is not negotiable; our duty is to discover, understand and implement them.**

Let us now study together some of the scriptures that expand and explain the above questions and topics.

**Matthew 5:13-16** [NIV] *“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”*

**This is a very powerful statement and it is essential that we take this into full consideration as we formulate our mission statement.**

This gives us direction, outward to the world **not** inward, limiting ourselves to our own small fellowship.

**Matthew 9:35-38** [NIV] *“Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, **preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness.** When he saw the crowds, **he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.** Then he said to his disciples, *‘The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.’*”*

**Note:** Towns and villages – teaching in established places of worship – preaching good news – compassion towards the crowds [unchurched] – **missionary attitude.**

**Matthew 11:28-30** [NIV] *“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”*

**A ministry that is gentle, humble and hopeful.**

**Matthew 16:15-19** [NIV] *“But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” 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. 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.”*

**The foundational message that will build the church is for people to come to know who Jesus the Christ is and what He can do for all humanity.**

**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.”*

**We don’t have “to go to church”, we are the church!!**

Two or three, a family or small group; worship and witness is **not** limited to large groups.

**Matthew 22:36-40** [NIV] *“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law? Jesus replied: ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”*

**Worship and witness through love towards God and our neighbour are to be the two great directions of our Christian lives.**

**Matthew 24:14** [NIV] *“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”*

“This gospel will be preached”, this was a statement/command from the Head of the Church [Christ] to His Body on earth today.

**A Christian who is not doing this personally and as part of a group is not fulfilling the commission left by Christ.**

**Matthew 28:18-20** [NIV] *“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.’”*

This is an even clearer statement of the commission given to us all.

**Matthew 25:34-40** [NIV] *“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’ The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’”*

**One way in which loving our neighbour and preaching the gospel can be accomplished at the same time.**

**Mark 10:42-45 [NIV]** *“Jesus called them together and said, ‘You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, **whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all.** For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.’”*

**Laying down our lives in the serving of others is an example of Christ that we have to follow.**

**Luke 4:18-19 [NIV]** *“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to **preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.**”*

A five-fold commission that Christ, through the Holy Spirit within us, want to accomplish as we follow His example.

- a) Preach Good News of what God has done for us;
- b) Free those held captive by Satan;
- c) Give sight to the spiritual blinded;
- d) Comfort those oppressed by this selfish society;
- e) **Year of Lord’s favour could refer to:**

a) **Jubilee Year**

**Leviticus 25:8-17 [NIV]** *“Count off seven sabbaths of years, seven times seven years, so that the seven sabbaths of years amount to a period of forty-nine years. Then have the trumpet sounded everywhere on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement sound the trumpet throughout your land. **Consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants.** It shall be a jubilee for you; each one of you is to return to his family property and each to his own clan. The fiftieth year shall be a jubilee for you; do not sow and do not reap what grows of itself or harvest the untended vines. For it is a jubilee and is to be holy for you; eat only what is taken directly from the fields. **“In this Year of Jubilee everyone is to return to his own property.** “If you sell land to one of your countrymen or buy any from him, do not take advantage of each other. You are to buy from your countryman on the basis of the number of years since the Jubilee. And he is to sell to you on the basis of the number of years left for harvesting crops. When the years are many, you are to increase the price, and when the years are few, you are to decrease the price, because what he is really selling you is the number of crops. Do not take advantage of each other, but fear your God. I am the LORD your God.”*

A year of new beginnings

b) **A day of salvation**

**2 Corinthians 6:2 [NIV]** *“For he says, “In the time of my favour I heard you, and in the **day of salvation I helped you.**” I tell you, now is the time of God’s favour, now is the day of salvation.”*

c) **A time when God will end all the ills that plague this society**

**Isaiah 49:8-13 [NIV]** *“This is what the LORD says: **“In the time of my favour I will answer you, and in the day of salvation I will help you;** I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people, to restore the land and to reassign its desolate*

*inheritances, to say to the captives, 'Come out,' and to those in darkness, 'Be free!' "They will feed beside the roads and find pasture on every barren hill. They will neither hunger nor thirst, nor will the desert heat or the sun beat upon them. He who has compassion on them will guide them and lead them beside springs of water. I will turn all my mountains into roads, and my highways will be raised up. See, they will come from afar, some from the north, some from the west, some from the region of Aswan." Shout for joy, O heavens; rejoice, O earth; burst into song, O mountains! For the LORD comforts his people and will have compassion on his afflicted ones.*

**Poverty – broken heartedness – bondage – blindness – bruisedness – God is the Great Healer of all such ills.**

**John 4:23-24** [NIV] *"Yet a time is coming and has now come when the **true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth**, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth."*

**The linking of spirit with truth throws light on the meaning of "true worshippers".**

**These are genuine worshippers as opposed to those who merely appear to be worshippers by participating in outward ceremonies.**

The emphasis is on "*spirit*" as God is spirit, and true worship of God is through our becoming the same nature as God, in the way we think, speak and behave.