

Fulfilling God's Will For His Church

[Part 3]

Defining The Mission Statement For Your Church

There are two statements made by Jesus Christ which I feel summarise what a church should be and should be doing.

Matthew 22:37-40 [NIV] *“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.”*

This **great commandment** was given by Jesus in response to a question from one who was an expert in the Old Testament Law. *“What is the greatest commandment in the law?”* Jesus replied, all of the Old Testament can be condensed into one simple statement; Love God totally and your neighbour as yourself.

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.”*

At the end of His Ministry here on earth Jesus gave this **great commission** to His Disciples, assigning them three more tasks; make disciples, baptise them and teach them to obey.

I believe every church should be defined by what Jesus Christ has committed it to do, summarised in these two passages.

If an activity or programme fulfils one or more of these commands, we should be doing it individually and as a group.

If it doesn't, the activity or programme should **not** be part of our plans.

These passages give us the primary tasks that the church of Jesus Christ should focus on until His Return.

Let us now study these five missions of the church.

1 Love the Lord with all your heart, soul and mind.

One word can describe this, “worship”; the church exists to worship God.

We love God with all our heart, soul and mind by worshipping Him.

Worship of God is to surrender all these three aspects of our existence to Him freely: out of the gratitude and love we have for Him because of what He has done for us; out of His Love for us through Jesus the Christ.

1 John 4:19 [NIV] *“We love because he first loved us.”*

(a) **Heart** – Greek “*kardia*” – our thoughts and our feelings.

(b) **Soul** – Greek “*psuche*” – our breath, the life force in us, what motivates our actions, will and purpose.

(c) **Mind** – Greek “*dianoia*” – composition of the basic words “*dia*” – channel of an act and “*nous*” intellect, perception or understanding.

These three, heart, soul and mind, sum up the totality of our existence.

All are means of worshipping God, expressing our love for Him.

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.*”

We do this by a total surrender to God’s Will for us as an individual and a group.

Matthew 4:10 [NIV] “*Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’”*”

Such worship [love] should be **only** for God.

Psalms 34:3 [NIV] “*Glorify the LORD with me: let us exalt his name together.*”

This worship is done individually and as a group.

We shouldn’t worship out of duty but because we want to, as an expression of joy and thankfulness.

2 Love your neighbour as yourself.

One word can describe this purpose – “ministry”.

The church exists to minister to people.

1 John 4:11-12, 20-21 [NIV] “*Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No-one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.*” ... “*If anyone says, “I love God,” yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.*”

Ministry is demonstrating God’s Love to others by meeting their needs and healing their hurts in the name of Jesus.

Each time you reach out to others in love you are ministering to them.

The church is to minister to all kinds of needs and hurts; spiritual, emotional, relational and physical.

Ephesians 4:11-13 [NIV] “*It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fulness of Christ.*”

It is the job of the ordained ministry to prepare all whom God has called to serve people and minister to their needs.

Faithfulness should be defined in terms of service to others rather than attendance of church services.

Christians should serve, not sit, soak and turn sour.

3 Go and make disciples

One word can describe this purpose – “*evangelism*”.

The church exists to communicate God’s Word.

2 Corinthians 5:20 [NIV] *“We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God.”*

The job of an ambassador is to speak for his country’s government and to reconcile other people to his country and government.

Our mission is to evangelise the world until all know of Jesus our King and Saviour.

The Greek word translated “go” is a present participle and is better translated “*as you are going*”.

It is every Christian’s responsibility to share the Good News wherever we go.

Tell the whole world of Christ’s Birth, Life, Teaching, Death, Resurrection and Promised Return.

Someday each of us will have to give account to Jesus Christ regarding how seriously we took this responsibility.

Scripture shows how important evangelism is by repeating this commission in each of the gospels as well as in Acts.

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.”*

Mark 16:15 [NIV] *“He said to them, “Go into all the world and **preach the good news to all creation.**”*

Luke 24:47-49 [NIV] *“**and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.** You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”*

John 20:21 [NIV] *“Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, **I am sending you.**”*

Acts 1:8 [NIV] *“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”*

Evangelism is more than our responsibility, it is our great privilege.

4 Baptising them.

Why is such prominence given to the simple physical act of baptism?

Romans 6:3-10 [NIV] *“**Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.** If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin, because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know*

*that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but **the life he lives, he lives to God.***

In baptism we all identify with the death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ.

With this identification we all are united as one, with the same purpose in life as Jesus Christ has, “*but the life He Lives, He Lives to God*”.

Our lives must centre around the work that God wants us to do as a group and as individuals.

The unity of this common act of baptism also shows us that we are not only to **believe** in what the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ does for us, but also to realise we all **belong** to the same Body of Christ here on earth.

As Christians we are called to believe and belong.

Baptism is the symbol of salvation and fellowship.

Baptism also visualises a person’s incorporation into the Body of Christ.

When a person is baptised, we welcome them into the fellowship of the created Family of God.

Ephesians 2:19 [NIV] “*Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow-citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household,*”

The church exists to provide fellowship for baptised believers.

This brings with it great privileges but also responsibilities.

Galatians 6:1-2 [NIV] “*Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ.*”

We have to each give support to others.

Romans 15:1 [NIV] “*We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves.*”

The mature supporting those with less strength.

2 Corinthians 1:24 [NIV] “*Not that we lord it over your faith, but we work with you for your joy, because it is by faith you stand firm.*”

Ministers serving members.

2 Timothy 2:24-26 [NIV] “*And the Lord’s servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.*”

We all can serve others in this humble way.

5 Teaching them to obey

The word we commonly use to refer to this purpose is “*discipleship*”.

The church exists to edify [or educate] God’s People.

Discipleship is the process of helping people become more like Christ in their thoughts, feelings and actions.

This process never stops: it starts when a person is “born again” and continues throughout the rest of their lives.

Colossians 1:28-29 [NIV] “We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I labour, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me.”

Note “His Energy”. It is Christ doing the teaching through us by the Holy Spirit in us.

John 16:12-15 [NIV] “I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you.”

The church is called to **reach and teach**.

It is the church’s responsibility to develop people to spiritual maturity.

Ephesians 4:11-13 [NIV] “It was he who gave some to be *apostles*, some to be *prophets*, some to be *evangelists*, and some to be *pastors and teachers*, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fulness of Christ.”

Paul presents this as the Will of God.

If we examine the earthly ministry of Jesus, it is apparent that He included all of these five in His Work.

The work Christ did on earth is summarised in the prayer He made to the Father just before His Crucifixion.

John 17:1-26 [NIV] “After Jesus said this, he looked towards heaven and prayed: “Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. **Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began. “I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. 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. 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. 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. While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled. “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. **I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one.** They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. **Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.** As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified. “**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. **I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”***

The apostle Paul also fulfilled these five missions in his ministry and explains them in **Ephesians 4:1-16**.

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.**”*

The early church at Jerusalem is a very clear example of these five missions being practised.

They taught each other, fellowshiped, worshipped, ministered and evangelised.

These five missions for the existence of the church have **not** changed and should be the driving force for us to fulfil the reasons for our existence under Christ as the Head of the Church.

The church is to **edify, encourage, exalt, equip and evangelise**.

Five key works can summarise Christ’s mission for His Church:

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| Magnify: | We celebrate God’s Presence in the Church through worship |
| Mission: | We communicate God’s Word through evangelism |
| Membership: | We incorporate those whom God calls into our fellowship with Him |
| Maturity: | We educate God’s People through example and discipleship |
| Ministry: | We demonstrate God’s Love through service |

Example of a Church’s Mission Statement:-

“To bring people to Jesus the Christ and welcome them into the *membership* of His Family, develop them to Christ-like *maturity*, and equip them for the *ministry* in the church and a *mission* in the world, in order that we may *magnify* God’s Name.

Note:-

- This is a statement of **measurable results** and **not** just activities.
- This statement enables and **encourages participation by every member**.
- This statement arranges the five missions of the church into sequential **progressive process**.

- d) This statement **focuses on growing people with a process** that God can use to give numerical growth to the church.

If we try to do anything outside of these five missions, given by the Head of this Church, Jesus the Christ, we will be on our own.

Unlimited power will be available to us to do the Work of God here on earth today, while it is still today!!

2 Peter 1:1-3 [NIV] *“Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who through the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours: Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. **His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.**”*

We have available to us all the power we need to fulfil God’s Work. Let us all tap that unlimited power and fulfil Christ’s Work as His Body on earth.

John 14:13-14 [NIV] *“And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.”*

God is not dead, He is just under employed in Christ’s church today.

What is the next step we take now?

Pray for God to give us a clear vision of the process by which His Will may be fulfilled in each of these reasons for our existence as His Church.