

# Fulfilling God's Will For His Church

[Part 4]

## Applying the Mission Statement of the Church to our Fellowship

**2 Thessalonians 3:4 [Living Bible]** *“We trust the Lord that you are putting into practice the things we taught you.”*

**Developing a mission statement is the first and easiest step, but if this is as far as we go, nothing will be accomplished.**

**James 2:14-20 [NIV]** *“What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, “Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. But someone will say, “You have faith; I have deeds.” Show me your faith without deeds, **and I will show you my faith by what I do.** You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that, and shudder. You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless?”*

**We may fully understand from scripture the mission for Christ's Church but unless we not only re-structure the church around these proven tasks, and then act on them, nothing will be accomplished.**

**This application will take time** – months of prayer, planning, preparing and experimenting – this cannot be rushed.

We need to focus on progress, not perfection, if we are **not** to be discouraged.

### Ways to become a mission-driven church

- 1 Assimilate new members to be part of our mission
- 2 Programme around the mission of the church
- 3 Educate the new people on the mission of the church
- 4 Start small groups to fulfil the mission of the church
- 5 Preach on mission of the church
- 6 Calendar events to fulfil the mission of the church
- 7 Evaluate our progress in fulfilling the mission of the church

Now let us consider each of the above in depth.

#### **1 Assimilate new members to be part of our mission**

**How are we to apply this principle?**

**Matthew 15:24 [NIV]** *“He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.”*

**Jesus is here showing that His Ministry was “targeted”.**

He publicly identified His Ministry target was the Jews.

Was Jesus being unfair or prejudiced?

**Certainly not! Jesus targeted His Ministry in order to be effective, not to be exclusive.**

**Matthew 10:5-6** [NIV] *“These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: **“Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel.”**”*

**Here we see that Jesus instructs His Disciples to target their ministry also.**

**Galatians 2:7** [NIV] *“On the contrary, they saw that I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, just as Peter had been to the Jews.”*

**Paul targeted his ministry to the Gentiles and Peter targeted his ministry to the Jews.**

Both ministries were needed, both were important, and both were effective.

**Why do we have four accounts of the gospel message?**

**Each was written with specific target audiences in mind.**

**Matthew’s gospel was targeted for the Hebrew reader.**

**Mark’s gospel was targeted for the Gentile reader.**

**Luke’s message stresses the relationship Jesus had with people.** Emphasises prayer, miracles and angels and gives prominent place to women. Gives accurate account of Jesus’ life as the perfect human and Saviour.

**John’s message is to prove conclusively that Jesus is the Son of God and all who believe in Him will have eternal life. Written to new Christians and searching non-Christians.**

All have the same message but written in different styles to suit the audience targeted.

**Targeting our audience for evangelism is a method God invented! He expects us to witness to people in their own terms and culture.**

This concept is built into the “*great commission*” given by Jesus.

**Matthew 28:19** [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,”*

*“All nations” is a Greek term from which we get the word “ethnic”; it literally means “all people groups”.*

**Each of these unique “people groups” need an evangelistic strategy that communicates the gospel in terms that their specific culture can understand.**

**This practice of evangelistic targeting is especially important to small churches.**

In a small church with limited resources it is important to make the most of what we have.

We need to focus our resources on reaching the people our church can best communicate with.

Only large churches can have the benefit of multiple targets.

Small churches become more effective when they specialise in what they do best.

**How do we define our target?**

## **1 Define our target geographically**

**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.”*

This is exactly how it happened. We can read about it in Acts.

**To have a specific target we should not try to reach people over 15-20 minute drive of our meeting hall.**

This is the maximum extent of our *“evangelistic fishing pond”*.

**Even this distance is not considered as *“local”* to many people so it is best to start in the area directly around the meeting hall that is in easy walking distance.**

**Remember also, people choose churches today primarily on the basis of relationship and what they can receive from its programmes rather than location.**

Just because we may be the closest church doesn't mean we can automatically reach them effectively: what we offer may **not** attract or fit them.

## **2 Define our target demographically**

We need to know the community we are targeting in our *“evangelistic fishing pond”*:

- a) How many in each **age** group?
- b) How many **single** adults and **married** couples?
- c) **Education** level?
- d) Average **income** level?
- e) Predominant **occupations**?

**Each of these factors will influence how we are to minister to the people and how we are to communicate the gospel message.**

For example:

- a) **young adults will have different hopes and fears to senior citizens, and our approach must be different to be effective;**
- b) **married couples with families have different interests to single adults;**
- c) **poor people face different problems and needs to the middle class.**

**If we are serious about our church having an impact in the community we need to become experts on our community.**

**Pastors should know more about their community than anyone else.**

**This can only be accomplished by an extensive census as a result of a door-to-door survey.**

This is best done through a questionnaire, distributed then followed up personally.

## **3 Define our target culturally**

The word culture is used in this case to refer to the *“mind-set”* of those who live around our church meeting place.

This includes the people's: a) values; b) interests; c) hurts; d) fears.

The best way to find out the culture, mind-set and lifestyle of the people is to talk to them personally.

Just go out and meet with the people face-to-face.

Ask them what they feel are their greatest needs. Listen to their hurts, interests and fears.

**There is no substitute for this one-to-one contact.**

#### **4 Define our target spiritually**

Discover the spiritual background of the people in our community.

- a) Do they believe in God or a universal spirit?
- b) Do they understand a Biblical definition of God?
- c) Do they believe in life after death?
- d) Do they believe we are here on earth for a spiritual purpose?

When we witness to someone who doesn't have a relationship with Christ we need to try to discover any common ground we may have due to their religious background, however little this may be.

**Once we have done such a survey we will be able to tailor our evangelistic approach to fit the needs of the people we seek to reach for Jesus the Christ.**

Once we have defined our target we now need to use that knowledge to reach that target most effectively.

**John 1:41** [NIV] *"The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ)."*

What was the first thing Andrew did?

**John 1:45** [NIV] *"Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."*

What did Philip do almost at once?

**Matthew 9:10** [NIV] *"While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and "sinners" came and ate with him and his disciples."*

What did Matthew do the same day?

**Even a casual reading of the New Testament will show that the gospel spread primarily through relationships.**

I believe that the most effective evangelistic strategy is to first try to reach those with whom we already have something in common.

When guests come into our church meeting hall, the first question they ask [without words] is *not* a religious question but a cultural one.

Their eyes will scan the room full of strange faces and they are unconsciously asking, *"is there anybody here like me?"*

**If guests find other people in our church meeting that are similar to them, they are much more likely to come back again.**

## **1 We need to ask what kind of people already attend our church meetings**

Of course, as believers we must want to welcome all people into our church family.

For all are the same in God's eyes.

But remember, the fact that a church may be unsuccessful in reaching certain types of people is **not** a matter of right or wrong but a matter of the wonderful variety of people God has placed in the world.

## **2 What kind of leaders do we have in our church?**

Is the next question we need to ask.

The personal characteristics of the leadership has an enormous impact on the church's ministry.

**Many studies have shown that the number one reason people choose and remain faithful to a church is because they identify with the pastor.**

The pastor does **not** attract first-time guests but he is a major reason guests come back or do not come back.

**The pastor needs to honestly ask himself “what kind of person am I?”**

- a) What is my cultural background?
- b) What kind of people do I naturally relate to and what kind do I have a harder time understanding?

God has uniquely called and shaped each of us in different ways to reach different types of people.

**Every pastor will minister through the personality that God has over the years, painfully at times, shaped him to become.**

If a person is called to be a pastor this means that there must be a group of people somewhere in the world whom he can reach better than anyone else.

**The pastor has the greatest contribution to the church when he is matched to the target people he is seeking to evangelise to.**

**The pastor as a leader will attract who he is, not who he wants to.**

**Don't as a church try to be something we are not; build on our present strengths.**

Keep doing what we are best at, just do it better.

**Matthew 13:1-8, 16-23** [NIV] *“That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. Such large crowds gathered round him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. Then he told them many things in parables, saying: “A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop, a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.” ... “But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. For I tell you the truth, many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it. “Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path. The one who received the seed that fell on rocky places is*

*the man who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away. The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful. But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”*

Jesus teaches us in the parable of the sower and the soils that spiritual receptivity varies greatly.

**For evangelism to have maximum effectiveness, we need to plant our seed in the good soil.**

**Spiritual receptivity is something that comes and goes in people’s lives like an ocean tide.**

**God uses a variety of events to soften hearts and make people receptive to his gospel message.**

**God uses both change and pain to make people receptive to the gospel.**

**a) People in transition.** Any time a person experiences a major change in their lives, whether positive or negative, it seems to create a hunger for spiritual stability.

People look for “*islands of stability*” when change becomes over-whelming.

For example, new marriage, a new baby, a new home, a new job, a new school.

**b) People under tension or stress.** God uses all kinds of emotional pain to get people’s attention; financial problems, divorce, death of a loved one, unemployment, resentment, guilt and other stresses.

Such fearful and anxious people often begin to look for something greater than themselves to ease the pain and fill the void in their lives.

### **Ten possible most receptive groups of people**

- 1 Second-time visitors or guests of the church
- 2 Close friends and relatives of new converts
- 3 People going through a divorce
- 4 Those who feel need of recovery programme (alcohol, drugs, etc)
- 5 First time parents
- 6 The terminally ill and their families
- 7 Couples with major marriage problems
- 8 Parents of handicapped or problem children
- 9 Recently unemployed or with major financial difficulties
- 10 New residents in the community

### **The least receptive people**

- 1 Old members who have stopped attending

**Re-activating such disgruntled ex-member takes at least five times more energy than winning the mind of a receptive unbeliever.**

God called pastors to “*catch fish*” and “*feed sheep*” **not** to “*corral goats*”.

This is a skill Christ wants us to learn.