

5 Directed by God's Mission



Part of our calling as Anglicans is to participate in God's mission in the world. We do this through respectful evangelism, loving service and prophetic witness, lived out in all our various contexts. This commitment to mission is something that we share with all Christians: to bear witness to and follow Jesus Christ, the crucified and risen Saviour.

What is Mission?

Central to mission is the idea of *being sent*. When we say in the Nicene Creed "we believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church" we are saying that the church is (amongst other things) about the faith of the apostles, those early messengers of the gospel whom Paul lists first among the members of the body of Christ. That is the faith that was handed down to us. The word "apostle" comes from the Greek word for "sent" – an apostle is someone sent off to perform a service, in this context sent to carry Christ's mission into the world. Today each of us is that "someone" who is sent.

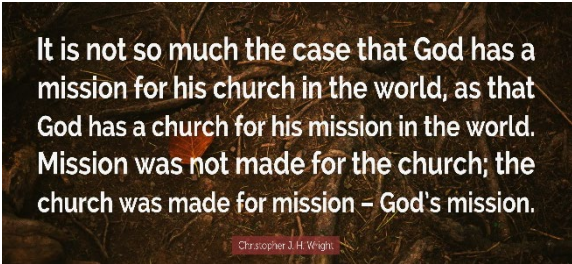
The word "mission" also means "sent" (from a Latin word this time). "Mission" and "dismissal" are linked, as in what we hear as we leave at the end of worship: "Go now to love and serve the Lord. / We go in the name of Christ." What this means is that anyone who has responded to the dismissal at the end of a worship service is on mission.

- ❖ ***Is that a new idea? That the "dismissal" is about mission (and not just "it's time for coffee")?***
- ❖ ***What do you think about the idea that you are on mission? That you are a missionary?***
- ❖ ***What is mission to you? How would you define it?***

God's Mission

It's important to remember that it is *God's* mission. Mission begins from God. "Mission has its origin in the heart of God. God is a fountain of sending love. This is the deepest source of Mission." (David Bosch, *Transforming Mission*) This is a way of looking at mission that sees it as the activity of God, something that is born out of the missional heart of the Trinity. And this means that mission is something that belongs to God. It's not something the church owns – it is Christ's mission, not the Church's.

So where does the Church come in then? Mission is the calling of the Church, in every place and at every level, to be part of God's mission in the world. Looking at it like this means the Church is not the "sender" of missionaries (which often gets connected in particular with sending missionaries overseas), but the one being sent. The Church is all of us, and all of us are the ones who are "sent."



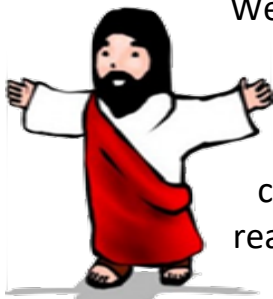
It is not so much the case that God has a mission for his church in the world, as that God has a church for his mission in the world. Mission was not made for the church; the church was made for mission – God's mission.

Christopher J. H. Wright

It's the mission that makes the Church: the Church's very identity is tied up in mission. And that means that if it ceases to be missionary, it has ceased being Church.

❖ ***"If the Church stops being missionary it has stopped being Church." How do you react to that idea?***

Seeing mission as central to the Church's identity means mission is no longer about church expansion – or about sharing the cultural blessings of western civilization (and in the past there was sometimes an element of that, especially with overseas mission). Mission is about seeing what God is doing and then joining in.



We can get some clues as to what Christ might be doing in the places where we live and work when we recall what we see him doing in the Gospels. We see him eating and drinking with people and telling stories. We see him establishing communities of followers who did life together. We see him reaching out to those whom society tried to exclude and we see him living in service to others and encouraging his followers to do the same. And above all we see Jesus healing and teaching and proclaiming the imminent coming of the kingdom of God.

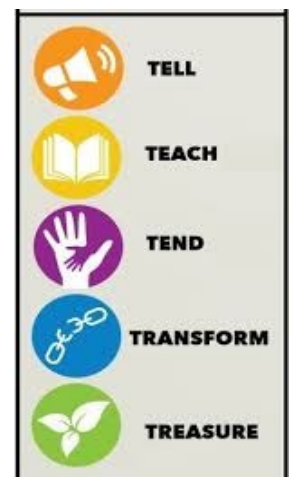
- ❖ ***So what is God doing where you are? How is Christ at work in your neighbourhood?***
- ❖ ***How can we join in that? What might that look like in practice?***

The Five Marks of Mission

The Five Marks of Mission are an important statement on mission. They express the Anglican Communion’s common commitment to, and understanding of, God’s holistic and integral mission. They are also based around the idea that the mission of the Church is the mission of Christ.

The Five Marks of Mission were developed at meetings of the Anglican Consultative Council (remember, that’s the one that includes lay people, clergy and bishops), meeting in 1984 (1st to 4th marks), 1990 (5th mark), and in 2012 (that meeting, in Auckland, revised the 4th mark). Here they are:

1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
2. To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
3. To respond to human need by loving service
4. To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation
5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth



These are sometimes abbreviated to Tell, Teach, Tend, Transform, Treasure.

Telling is about knowing God’s story and sharing this with others.

Teaching is when we help people grow in their faith and deepen their connection with a church community.

Tending is about putting love into action and caring for people in need, in lots of ways.

Transforming is the task of working for justice, standing up for the oppressed. It’s ultimately about changing society.

Treasuring is about caring for our planet and living sustainably (“we’re Anglican – we recycle”).

- ❖ ***Which one do you relate to most easily?***
- ❖ ***Do we individually need to do all 5 marks, or is it the work of the Church as a whole, or the parish as a whole?***

- ❖ *What are some examples of things which fall under the different marks of mission?*
- ❖ *Which have you already done – as an individual, or in your ministry unit? What might you do in the future?*

Anglican mission agencies

There are, around the world and here in Aotearoa New Zealand, a number of mission agencies that address one or more of the marks of mission. Here are some of them:

Anglican Missions

Anglican Missions is an International Development and Aid agency. It works with and on behalf of the Anglican Church in New Zealand and Polynesia, and supports a range of partners to carry out Christian mission, development and humanitarian aid. Its motivation is to put God's love into action and bring hope to people who are vulnerable and living in poverty.



NZ Church Missionary Society

New Zealand has a special debt to the Church Missionary Society which sent some of the early missionaries to this land. NZCMS was founded in 1892, in response to the challenge from the CMS UK to “take your own share in the evangelisation of the world: send out your own missionaries and support them.” NZCMS sends people globally, to take the gospel to places where Christ isn't known, and to partner with local churches, so that local believers can be empowered and trained. It also supports mission within Aotearoa New Zealand.

Mission to Seafarers

The Mission to Seafarers (an international organisation with branches in New Zealand) supports men and women working at sea. It does this in practical ways, operating Seafarers' Centres in major ports to provide places to rest and relax, and transport to shops and local amenities. Emotional and spiritual support are also provided by port chaplains and ship visitors.



The Church Army

The Church Army is a Society of Evangelists, called to share the transformative gospel of Christ, to disciple disciple-makers, and to train up leaders to do the same. Again, it's an international organisation with a branch here.

A Text for Mission: Luke 4:14-21

Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone. When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.’

And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, ‘Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.’

This functions as a programme statement in Luke’s Gospel; it’s what the evangelist believes Jesus’ mission was all about.

❖ *How do Jesus’ (and Isaiah’s) words relate to mission, as you understand it?*

THOUGHTS / QUESTIONS

Meet the family

William Wilberforce (1759 - 1833) Politician, Abolitionist
Wilberforce was a British Member of Parliament who headed the parliamentary campaign against the British slave trade for twenty years until the passage of the Slave Trade Act of 1807. He also championed the Society for the Suppression of Vice, British missionary work in India, the creation of a free colony



in Sierra Leone, the foundation of the Church Mission Society, and the SPCA. Later, he campaigned for the complete abolition of slavery, which led to the Slavery Abolition Act 1833, which abolished slavery in most of the British Empire. Wilberforce died just three days after hearing that the passage of the Act through Parliament was assured. He said, "You may choose to look the other way, but you can never say again that you did not know."

Josephine Butler (1828-1906) Worker among women



Josephine Butler was an early feminist and social worker who believed that social action is a necessary demonstration of religious belief. She once said, "God and one woman make a majority." She campaigned against the sexual exploitation of women and girls and was involved in the campaign against child prostitution. As part of this, the age of consent was raised (from 12 to 16). She was an outstanding orator, and attracted large audiences, though many people were shocked by the idea of a woman speaking in public about sexual matters. She also campaigned for women's education.

Florence Nightingale (1820-1910) Nurse

Dissatisfied with her comfortable life, Florence Nightingale felt called by God to devote her life to nursing at a time when this wasn't a respectable profession. She nursed for the British army during the Crimean War, at the military hospital at Scutari in Turkey which, when she arrived, was beset by appalling conditions. She won the deep gratitude of the soldiers she nursed and it was for her evening visits to the wards that she became known as the "Lady with the Lamp." Florence founded the Nightingale School and Home for Nurses at St Thomas's Hospital, and by the time she died, nursing had become a valued and honoured profession.



How is your life (and your parish's life) directed for God's mission?