

God's Mission or Ours? Foundations and Practice of Integral Mission

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Global Connections
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1. What story are we living in?
– A missional hermeneutic of Scripture
2. What mission are we living for?
– Dimensions of the Great Commission
3. What difference should it make to our churches?
– Mobilizing the whole church for integral mission

1. What story are we living in?

A missional hermeneutic of Scripture

The Bible is not just....

- A book full of doctrines
- A book full of promises
- A book full of rules

The Bible is fundamentally a story - or rather

- **THE STORY** – The grand narrative of the universe
- It is a **DRAMA** in **SIX ACTS**.

The missional drama of Scripture in six acts



What does this do?

1. It tells us the story we are in. We participate in Act 5, in the light of all we know from Acts 1-4, and in anticipation of Act 6.

So, we don't just "apply Bible verses to our life", we live as participants in the story.

What does this do?

2. It shapes our worldview. Answers all the fundamental questions:
 - **Where are we?** (what is the world we live in?)
 - **Who are we?** (What does it mean to be human?)
 - **What's gone wrong?** (why is the world in a mess?)
 - **What's the solution?** (what can be done about it?)

What does this do?

3. It aligns our mission with God's mission

Some concepts of mission generate disputes.

- "Holistic mission" = whole of human need
 - but what do people *need most*?
- "Missional church"
 - but what is legitimately included in *the church's* mission?

2. What mission are we living for?

Dimensions of the Great Commission

- What is the great plan and purpose of God?
 - Eph. 1:9-10
 - **To redeem the whole of creation**, broken by sin and evil, into the **new creation**, populated by the **redeemed from every culture**, through the **cross and resurrection of Christ**.
- 'Whole counsel of God', Genesis – Revelation

2. What mission are we living for?

Dimensions of the Great Commission

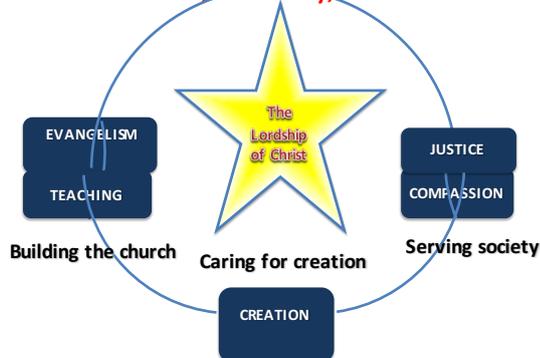
- The Great Commission flows from and affirms the mission of God
 - The cosmic Lordship of Christ (Matthew)
 - The fulfilment of the Scriptures (Luke)
 - The sending of the Father (John)
- The "imperative" (our mission) flows from the "indicative" (who Christ is and what God has planned and accomplished).

2. What mission are we living for?

"The five marks of mission"



Church, Society, Creation



Triple focus

The mission of God addresses

- Individual persons
- Society and culture
- Creation

"All three are broken and suffering because of sin; all three are included in the redeeming love and mission of God; all three must be part of the comprehensive mission of God's people."

Cape Town Commitment 1.7a

A. Building the Church

‘Make disciples, baptizing them...
and teaching them...’

1. Evangelism

- ‘gospel’ the good news of *what God has promised and accomplished* through Christ
- The gospel (what God has done) is central to integral mission - in the way a hub is central to a wheel. It holds everything together.
- But the hub must be ‘connected to the road’, i.e. engaged in the social context through life and action = integrated mission

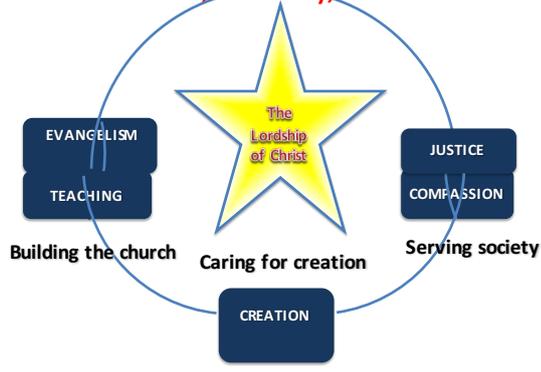
A. Building the Church

‘Make disciples, baptizing them...
and teaching them...’

2. Teaching / discipling

- **O.T.** “oldest and longest program of Theological Education” (Andrew Walls)
- **Jesus**: 3 years, teaching, teaching, teaching
- **Paul**: church planter + church teacher
 - His personal example - Ephesus
 - His mission team – Timothy, Titus, **Apollos** (1 Cor 3:5-9)
- **Teaching (including Theological Education) is an integral part of mission work.**

Church, Society, Creation



B. Serving Society

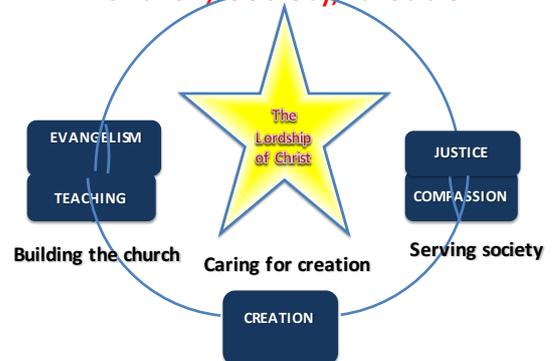
Compassion and Justice

- “Teaching them to observe *all that I have commanded you*”
- Deut. 10:12-19 - to be like God in compassion and justice for the needy (as God had done for Israel)
- Matt. 5:6; 6:33;
- Matt. 23:23, “justice, mercy, and faithfulness”
- Mic. 6:8, “do justice, love mercy, walk humbly with your God”

“You are the light of the world”

- Light shines from people committed to compassion and justice. Isa. 58:7-8, 10
- Apostles and early church were committed to obeying the teaching of Jesus, as well as preaching the gospel about Jesus. e.g.
 - Acts 4:32-38 (cf. Deut. 15:4)
 - Gal. 2:10 (“remember the poor”)
- Obeying the commands of Jesus must be included in obeying the “great commission” of Jesus

Church, Society, Creation



C. Caring for creation

- Matt. 28:18 - Jesus is Lord of “heaven *and earth*” = **all creation**. Cf. Deut. 4:39.
- Col. 1:15-20 - whole universe is created by and for Christ, sustained by Christ, and redeemed by Christ (cf. also Jn. 1, Heb. 1)
- We cannot separate our personal submission to Christ as Lord from our use of creation.
- Ecological concern and action are legitimate dimensions of Christian mission, for Christ’s sake.

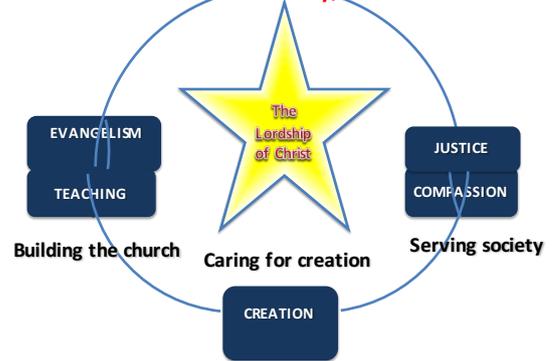
The goal of creation

- All creation is included in God’s plan of redemption through the cross and resurrection of Christ.
 - Isa. 65:17-25 - new heavens and new earth
 - Ps. 96:10-13 – rejoicing of all creation
 - Rom. 8:18-21 – birthing of new creation
 - Col. 1:20 - creation reconciled through the cross
 - 2 Pet. 3:10-13 – purging, not obliteration
 - Rev. 21-22 – new creation
- Creation-care is rooted in biblical doctrines of creation, redemption, and eschatology.

*“We cannot claim to love God while abusing what belongs to Christ by right of creation, redemption and inheritance. **We** [as Christians] care for the earth and responsibly use its abundant resources, not according to the rationale of the secular world, but for the Lord’s sake. If Jesus is Lord of all the earth, we cannot separate our relationship to Christ from how we act in relation to the earth. For to proclaim the gospel that says ‘Jesus is Lord’ is to proclaim the gospel that includes the earth, since Christ’s Lordship is over all creation.”*

Cape Town Commitment 1.7.a

Church, Society, Creation



3. What difference should it make to our churches?

Mobilizing the whole church for integral mission

- God’s whole mission is for God’s whole church
 - But everybody can’t do everything
- The whole church’s mission includes every church member
 - But we have different callings and sendings
- Every church member’s mission includes the whole of life.
 - No ‘sacred-secular divide’. Jesus is Lord – of all!