



Summing Up Views on the Five Marks of Mission

BY CAROL CLARKE

The varied missional experiences shared by our contributors emphasises the 'Five Marks of Mission', although not always referred to as such. The diversity of their ecclesial settings, and lived experiences, explores different approaches to how we do and interpret mission - from a Pentecostal, Baptist, Evangelical, Anabaptist and Iona Community perspective.

National Presiding Bishop of Church of God of Prophecy, and CTE Pentecostal and Charismatic President, Bishop Tedroy Powell, shares his missional praxis, and the power of personal experience to empower social and spiritual transformation in his community. One example of the Five Marks of Mission cited by Powell is from his pastorate at the House of Bread in London. In response to human needs in the vicinity of this ministry, breakfast was served to locals, and a shower provided for them to use as an act of loving service.

Loving service is also a key theme in Chris Duffett's article. He shares the disciplines that have enabled him to live out his missional call in serving the poor. Chris presents us with a rhetorical question, whether missional practice is the role of the local church and ordinary believers. He

challenges every reader to consider what they might do to exercise something of the 'Five Marks of Mission' as part of their lifestyles.

Farhad Chermahini's book review of *When Everything is Missions* provides us with an important clue to evaluate all mission, whether it be the Five Marks of Mission or otherwise. Leaders must see mission in the light of Jesus' life and ministry, in the context of the Great Commission. And to do mission well, leaders must think thoroughly about how mission can be incarnated in their ecclesial contexts. Both Bishop Tedroy Powell and Chris Duffett appear to model Spitters and Ellison's view of taking on God's posture of concern for the suffering and misfortune of others, as an example of living a life like that of Jesus.

Ruth Harvey states that the early Iona Community Members' beliefs regarding mission, which involved taking the Gospel outside of the sacred private space of holiness and, instead, focusing on out-reach fuelled by prayer, provides a vision that can challenge every believer to reach out to others. Part of this wider out-reach necessarily includes challenging unjust societal structures in the pursuit of

justice and peace. One way of doing this is raised by Stuart Murray, who rightly criticises the injustice of the criminal justice system, that fails to prevent reoffending, and believes a victim-led approach is key to bringing about justice, peace and personal transformation.

Personal transformation, and challenging unjust structures, therefore, comes through 'the principles of discipleship of one serving the king, and living the values of the kingdom', according to Andy Hardy. Ruth Harvey reminds us that mission should be about the transformation of people, seeking 'the glory of Christ amid ordinariness'. This approach is seen in the public art of Fyffe Christie, of Christ feeding the people, where the gospel is taken beyond Christian attempts to be holy, to instead seek to bring holy living and witness into wider society. This piece of art represents how Christ feeds those caught up in the 'stuff of life'.

Perhaps the personal experience shared by Chris Duffett of the taxi driver, who declared his lack of understanding about the incarnation, and Chris seizing the opportunity to proclaim the Good News of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus to him, can be viewed as 'the

glory of Christ in the midst of ordinariness.' Chris's responses to this taxi driver were a kind of spiritual feeding, where Chris drew attention to God's Word to feed a deeper spiritual hunger for meaning. As such, this echoes the beliefs of the Religious Society of Friends, highlighted by Ruth Harvey, in that 'there is that of God in everyone - we are the starting point for God's mission'.

From a Pentecostal perspective, Powell passionately discusses the importance of challenging unjust structures, giving a glimpse of how the Church of God of Prophecy works in collaborative partnerships with other church denominations, such as the New Testament Church of God, to challenge injustice from colonisation and slavery - covering a period of over 500 years. Part of the way he seeks to do this, is by challenging unjust trading structures, and aiming for reconciliation. Powell suggests that 'it is important to dialogue in the spirit of grace, not wrathfully or vengefully' when we challenge injustices. Yet, as

Andy Hardy implies, we should take every opportunity to seek to transform unjust worldly structures, even though it will not be fully possible to realise this goal in a fallen world. Hardy challenges us to consider whether we should try to negotiate for lasting peace, because human power structures continually succumb to evil? Perhaps as Hardy suggests, we need both 'gospel conversionism and social action working in tandem in our missional enterprises' if we are to witness real transformation in a fallen cosmos.

Murray vitally points towards the need to bring together Black and White Christians to discover more about African and Caribbean Christianity, racism and structural injustice in church and society, in his work on the Black Light Course. Equally, other Christian traditions, for example, Church of God of Prophecy - RAFFA International and the Iona Community - War on Want, Common Concern Networks, Quakers - as representatives of the 'historic peace

church', have implemented campaigns and activities as part of their commitment to seek justice, peace, social and political engagement.

Could some of the injustices we face be due to our consumerist behaviour patterns? Hardy says that we are called to be stewards of the earth, to safeguard creation, to sustain and renew the earth's life. He also suggests that 'being servants called to care for creation challenges the self-absorbed mindset of a me-first attitude that stems from consumerism, compared to a servant-centred mindset'.

How might we seek to live out the Five Marks of Mission effectively? Perhaps we should do so as part of our missional lifestyles. Perhaps it will be important that we do not seek for God to serve our needs, but rather to live out a lifestyle of faithfully loving God and one's neighbour as oneself. As Duffett comments, Jesus has made his mission the model of our mission to the world. Jesus was the servant leader par excellence.



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