**All Saints, Crowborough**

**WORLD missioN POLICY**

**A Biblical** **Vision for Mission**

As a conservative evangelical, Anglican church[[1]](#footnote-1) with a commitment to grounding the practice of the church in the Bible it is important that our vision for mission is based upon the Bible’s teaching about mission.

**1. Trinitarian Mission**

There is a strong Trinitarian shape to mission in the Bible.

**1.1 Mission is for God’s glory**

One of the clearest and most all-encompassing truths in the Bible is that all things exist for God’s glory (Romans 11:36). That means God created us for His glory (Isaiah 43:7) and that He is concerned for His glory (Isaiah 48:9-11). Therefore all of life should be lived in order to glorify God (1 Corinthians 10:31) and that must include mission. The cry of the Psalmist is for the nations to know God’s salvation so that they would praise Him (Psalm 67) because He is worthy of praise (Psalm 96:1-4). Furthermore, God is the only one who deserves praise for the fruit of mission because He is the only one who can bring people from death to life (Ephesians 2:4-5) and reconcile people to Himself through Christ (Colossians 1:19-20).

John Piper, in an eminently quotable turn of phrase, summarises that:

*Mission is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Mission exists because worship doesn’t. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man. When this age is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, mission will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. But worship abides forever.[[2]](#footnote-2)*

**1.2 Mission involves proclaiming the gospel of Christ**

In the great commission Jesus tells His disciples to “Go, therefore, and make disciples ofall nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **20**teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:18-20). Therefore mission involves going to the nations and teaching them everything Jesus taught His disciples. The rest of the New Testament is consistent with this priority placed on teaching or proclamation. Paul draws out the implication of failure to proclaim the gospel when He says, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent?” (Romans 10:13-15). Peter says that we were chosen, “that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light” (1 Peter 2:9). John’s vision of the throne room of God in Revelation features a multitude from every nation, tribe, people and language praising God and Jesus for “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb” (Revelation 7:9-10). This is just a representative selection of passages which demonstrate the New Testament’s prioritising of teaching and proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ which one day the nations will be praising Him for.

**1.3 Mission is done in the power of the Spirit**

In the book of Acts the apostles are given the power of the Holy Spirt to witness to Jesus to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). The Spirit is working at Pentecost (2:4); empowers Peter before the Sanhedrin (4:8); helps Stephen during his martyrdom (7:55); directs Philip (8:29); helps the church choose Saul and Barnabas (13:2); and blocks the way to Bithynia (16:7) amongst many other things. It is clear from the book of Acts that mission is done in the power of the Holy Spirit. Tim Chester is surely correct when he says, “the Holy Spirit is the great Mission Director.”[[3]](#footnote-3)

**2 Mission and the Local Church**

In addition to this Trinitarian shape to mission the Bible also informs us about other aspects of mission.

**2.1 Local Churches Send and Support**

It is the job of the local church to identify and send out Mission Partners. The clearest example of this in Scripture is in Acts 13 where we read,

*Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul.****2****While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’****3****So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.*

It is the local church’s job to assess the appropriateness of potential Mission Partners by examining the godliness of their character, their competency at ministry, and their theological convictions. Implicit in this is the local churches responsibility to dissuade inappropriate candidates for mission.

The local church also has a responsibility to care for Mission Partners. The church in Philippi is recorded as having cared for the apostle Paul by sending aid to him (Philippians 4:15-16) and John encourages Gaius to support itinerant Mission Partners (3 John). It is therefore important that the church not only sends Mission Partners, but that it supports them once sent.

**2.2 Local Churches get Established**

As Paul journeyed around visiting new cities, he established churches in those cities. For example, in Acts 17 we see Paul visiting Thessalonica and then later on in the New Testament we have two letters written to the church now established in Thessalonica. Similarly, we know from the book of Acts that Paul visited Philippi (16), Corinth (18), and Ephesus (19). In each town a church was established and, what are now, New Testament letters written to them.

The establishing of local churches is a vitally important part of mission because of the importance of the local church. The local church is where believers are able to encourage one another (Hebrews 10:24-25); it is the context in which Christians are built up and mature (Ephesians 4:11-13); and individual Christians are given spiritual gifts for the sake of the church (1 Corinthians 12:1-11). Therefore mission must be concerned with the establishment of local churches if it is to see converts grow in their knowledge and love for Jesus.

**3 Other considerations**

There are three other considerations worth exploring.

**3.1 Mission involves discipleship, not just conversion**

As seen above, when Jesus gives his disciples the great commission He tells them to “go and make disciples” who are obedient to everything Jesus says. We are not told to simply convert people but to make disciples. Earlier in Matthew’s gospel Jesus describes His followers as those who “deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me” (Matthew 16:24). That is a lifelong process and commitment to follow Jesus as King. Therefore mission is not simply concerned with seeing people converted to the Christian faith, but with seeing people follow Jesus sacrificially and obediently all the days of their lives.

**3.2 Mission is to all nations**

The great commission says we are to go to all nations and at the end of time people from all nations will be praising Jesus for His salvation. It is the mission of the Church to be reaching all nations, all people, all ethnicities. While that doesn’t mean each local church needs to send out a mission partner to every country in the world, it does mean our WMG will have a global focus and a concern beyond our corner of East Sussex.

**3.3 Mission and Prayer**

In Matthew 9 Jesus tells his disciples to, “ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.” If we are to have the same compassion on lost people as our Lord had, we must be committed to praying for workers for the harvest field. That will include praying for God to raise up new Mission Partners and praying for different people groups who are in desperate need of Mission Partners.

We are also to pray for existing Mission Partners and for God to be glorified through their work. Paul says to the Thessalonian church: “As for other matters, brothers and sisters, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honoured, just as it was with you” (2 Thessalonians 3:1). Just like Paul, our Mission Partners around the world will be depending upon us to pray for their ministry.

**4. A Biblical Definition of Mission**

Having briefly examined an overview of the New Testament’s teaching on mission we are in a position to give our biblical definition of mission:

*The ultimate purpose of mission is to glorify God by proclaiming the gospel of Christ in the power of the Spirit so that people from all nations will be saved, gathered into local churches where they will be discipled, and, as mature believers, will worship and obey God and transform their communities.*

**The World Mission Group Policy**

The World Mission Group (WMG) aims to do three things, inspire and inform All Saints about world mission; encourage and advise people to consider full-time mission work; and support our Mission Partners in their work.

1. **Inspiring and Informing**

The WMG aims to inspire the church family at All Saints to show concern for the cause of world mission and to provide them with information about world mission. To that end the WMG aims to do the following:

* Organise the annual World Mission Sunday after Easter each year. This should include additional teaching and opportunities for prayer, as well as the Sunday services.
* Deliver a Lent Course, in conjunction with the head of the Maturity Room, every five years on the topic of world mission.
* Ask home groups to “adopt” a Mission Partner who they will commit to communicate with, receive correspondence from and pray for regularly.
* When Mission Partners visit, the WMG will aim to organise opportunities for members of the church family to meet them and ask them questions about their work.
* Raise the level of prayer for world mission in general, and Mission Partners specifically, at All Saints. This will include regular slots at the church prayer meetings, prayer points in the weekly newsletter, prayer for Mission Partners in the Sunday services, as well as at the monthly World Mission Prayer Meeting, plus encouraging people to download the Joshua Project’s *Unreached of the Day* app.

**2. Encouraging and Advising**

The WMG wants to see people at All Saints seriously consider the possibility of being actively involved in world mission. Therefore, the WMG aims to do the following:

* Encourage the ministry staff to issue challenges from the pulpit for people to be concerned for the nations and to consider mission work where appropriate. This would be followed up by direct encouragement to individuals.
* Organise regular short-term mission trips – both for the youth and the church in general.
* Promote gap year programmes with mission agencies to both 18-year-olds and post-grads.
* Encourage the church to be praying for God to raise up Mission Partners from the congregation at All Saints.
* Provide potential Mission Partners with opportunities to visit the mission field and to help them with potential spiritual, cultural and practical barriers.

**3. Sending and Supporting our Mission Partners**

**3.1 Who is a Mission Partner?**

We have three categories of Mission Partners: (1) World Mission Partners who currently serve overseas, (2) UK Mission Partners whose work is based predominantly in the UK and (3) Prayer Partners who we commit to pray for as a church for a set period of time for a specified reason (for example a member of the congregation who is leaving us to go to theological college to train for ordained ministry or a member of the church family who is going overseas short-term in an exploratory fashion as part of a gap-year programme).

We recognise that some people go for a long-term period of two years or more, whilst others go short-term period of three months to two years. We require that a long-term Mission Partner has received some recognised theological or biblical training and must be affiliated to an appropriate Mission Agency.

We are expecting these Mission Partners to be committed Christians who are in agreement with our *Biblical Vision for Missions* document, and who go to a place of need because they want to see the advance of the Good News of Jesus. Some may go as evangelists, Bible translators, trainers of pastors, church leaders or church planters. Others may go in supporting roles for that kind of ministry: as aircraft pilots, administrators, doctors, nurses or teachers with Mission Agencies that are working to spread the gospel. In some situations, it is not possible to go overtly for the purpose of mission; in those cases, a Mission Partner’s official job might be incidental to their work of mission and deeper reason for going. If for these reasons their job itself does not involve proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus, then we would expect them – as we would expect any committed Christian – alongside their job to be seeking to proclaim the gospel at work, with friends and neighbours and to be actively involved in a local church.

We also support mission visitors who wish to go for any period between two weeks and three months to gain an experience of mission. The following criteria for Mission Partners will be relaxed and applied less rigorously for mission visitors. We anticipate this mission experience having more of a personal impact on the mission visitor and less impact on the people and place they are visiting.

**3.2 The Criteria of a Mission Partner:**

Mission Partners at All Saints are those who have been adopted by the PCC (following a recommendation by the WMG) and then by the church family so that the church can commission them and agree to support their involvement in God’s mission of saving people of all nations through prayer, regular communication and financial assistance if required.

The WMG will prayerfully assess each application against the following criteria:

* Living faith in Jesus Christ with a love for the Bible and deep commitment to serve Christ.
* A biblical vision and motivation for mission, as described in this policy.
* Commitment to a relationship with All Saints
* A firm understanding of, and agreement with, the All Saints Core Convictions document.
* Readiness to be accountable towards, and trained by, a mission agency.
* A responsible consideration of obstacles and issues such as training, finance, health and family.

All long-term Mission Partners will have a contract with All Saints. Every three years Mission Partner status will be reviewed by the WMG on behalf of the PCC. The level of financial support given to a Mission Partner will be assessed annually with the drafting of the mission budget. Where it is necessary to make financial cuts, a full year’s notice will be given.

**3.3 The Criteria of a Mission Agency**

The criteria for choosing the mission agency are:

* Clear Christian values which are in accordance with both the All Saints *Core Convictions* document and the All Saints *A Biblical Vision for Mission* document.
* A commitment to furthering God’s mission of saving people from all nations.

**3.4 The Practice of the WMG in Relation to Mission Partners**

It is expected, and encouraged, that those wishing to become mission visitors or Mission Partners will seek the advice of the WMG (either as a group, or to any individual) at the earliest stages of planning. If deemed appropriate a recommendation for supporting mission visitors or Mission Partners will be made to the PCC by the WMG chairperson. Details of the application, considered against each criterion, and with regard to the suitability of the mission agency, will be given.

The WMG will provide a link person chosen to maintain a close relationship between the church and the Mission Partner:

* Through regular contact with the Mission Partner to encourage him/her in her work and to share with them news of All Saints.
* To encourage the writing of regular prayer letters to be sent out to people who have committed themselves to praying.
* To supply the monthly World Mission Prayer Meeting with prayer requests for their mission project as well as personal needs.
* To inform WMG if there are any problems/concerns or particular financial needs.
* With WMG to arrange for opportunities for the Mission Partner to speak whilst on leave.
* With WMG to encourage and arrange some spiritual refreshment whilst on leave and to have time for de-briefing with a member of the WMG.

Our financial approach to supporting Mission Partners is that the WMG:

* Expects to work in financial partnership with Mission Partners / visitors. We anticipate not meeting anyone’s financial needs in full, but being able to give greater support to longer term projects.
* Reviews annually the church’s world mission budget (this may include gifts to different agencies alongside support to Mission Partners, mission visitors and mission agencies) which is then formally accepted by the PCC. In addition to an annual budget the PCC may be asked to approve other spending at any point during the year.
* Advises thePCCon possible mission projects for the church’s annual World Mission Gift Day to help make the decision on what projects to support.
* Safeguards transparency and accountability of funds allocated to Mission Partners, projects and organisations.

1. This is how we define ourselves in our identity document. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad: The Supremacy of God in Missions* (3d ed. Nottingham, IVP; 2010), 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Tim Chester, *Mission Matters: Love Says Go* (Nottingham, IVP: 2015), 41. See also Arturo G. Azurdia III, *Spirit Empowered Mission: Aligning the Church’s Mission with the Mission of Jesus* (Ross-Shire, Christian Focus; 2016). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)