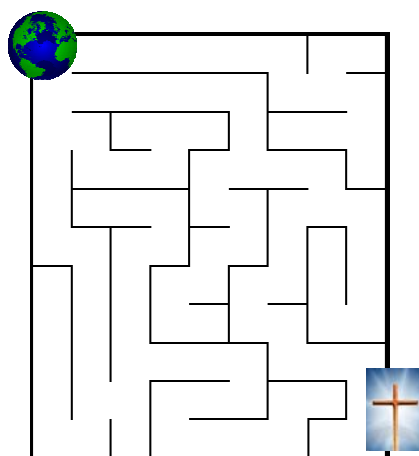


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What is the Mission of the Church?



*.... I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith
that was once for all entrusted to the saints. Jude 1:3 NIV*

What is the Mission of the Church?

On January 1, 2009, while on my way back to the car from Dunkin Donuts with my brother-in-law (or brother-in-love), a relatively well dressed woman approached my brother-in-law's car. She had in her hand some Watchtower literature that she was eager to share with him. My brother-in love, politely told her that he was a Christian and not really interested in accepting her literature. However, this woman's persistence prevailed and my brother-in-love took the literature. Needless to say, the Watchtower literature, like rat poison, contained some wholesome teaching along with some spiritual poison to harm the uninformed reader.

On January 2, 2009, while in my office (Dunkin Donuts) doing my usual reading, I came across an article entitled "What is the Mission of the Church?" It was then that I thought back to the woman (Jehovah's Witness) from the day before and realized that we have lost sight of the Church's mission.

To me what was very disturbing about this persistent Jehovah's Witness is the fact that she was out "New Years" day doing for a Watchtower lie what the Church should be doing for the truth, proclaiming it. With all that said, I want to take a minute to answer the question, "What is the Mission of the Church?"

For the "born again" believer, the answer to this question should be "**to reach the world for Christ**", and I'm speaking of the whole world beginning right here in our neighborhood and community. We find this basic command in two (2) familiar passages of scripture:

1. Matthew 28:18-20 (HCSB) "Then Jesus came near and said to them, all authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

2. Acts 1:8 (HCSB) “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

In Acts 14:21-23, we see the mission of the Church in the form of a ministry to follow. The date of this passage is about 18 years after Pentecost. Paul is coming to the end of his first missionary journey and is in Southern Galatia, the cities of Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe. On this particular journey, he and Barnabas had both success and tough opposition. Paul was actually stoned and dragged out of the city and left for dead.

Paul and Barnabas’ ministry can be summed up in three (3) basic areas:

1. Acts 14:21 – Evangelizing the unsaved
 2. Acts 14:22 – Edifying the believers
 3. Acts 14:23 – Establishing new churches
1. Verse 21 (KJV) states that Paul and Barnabas “preached the gospel”. When I preach the gospel, I am proclaiming three (3) things:
 1. The death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:3-4)
 2. Jesus as Savior and Lord (2 Peter 3:18)
 3. The call for people to repent and receive forgiveness of sins (Acts 3:19)

Even though we are not all called to be pulpit preachers, we must ask ourselves, **does our witness, our attitude, action and words reflect a relationship with Jesus Christ in such a way that others would want to know him?** We preach the gospel everyday by the way we live around the unsaved. We, as the Saints of God, are the “Salt and Light” of the earth (Matthew 5:13-14).

In truth, **every member** of the body of Christ has a god-given responsibility to go out and win the lost for Christ, there are no exceptions.

2. Verse 22 (Amplified) speaks of “establishing and strengthening the souls and the hearts of the disciples, urging and warning and encouraging them to stand firm in the faith...”

Paul wanted the believers to grow in the faith. Once saved, like a newborn baby, we must be nurtured in the faith, in order for us to grow in knowledge and understanding of our faith and commitment to Jesus Christ. It is of the utmost importance that we grow in our Christian faith just as a baby grows and matures physically. I’ve often said that if a mother brought a newborn home from the hospital in January and sees no growth/change in November, she’d know something is wrong. The same holds true for the believer, no growth, something is wrong.

3. Finally, we see in verse 23 that Paul saw the importance of establishing churches as he went to new cities. Paul didn’t just want to see the good news/the gospel preached, received and then move on. Paul recognized God’s purpose for believers within the local church. So he went to great strides to see that the church was organized and that believers would have a place to worship, grow, learn, serve and be held accountable. Hebrews 10:24-25 reminds us: (KJV) “And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

Our mission Church, should we decide to accept it,
is to reach the world for Christ, let’s do it!!!

Pastor D. M. Duncan

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