

Mission is Simply Multiplying God's Love.

A. Multiply the Love

In some way or another – and as a multitude of pop songs have said – everyone is looking for love. In Biblical language, God has “*set eternity in the hearts of mankind*” (Eccl. 3:11).

The gospel tells us that the reason so many have an aching void in their hearts, is because they are cut off from the love of God which we as humans were designed to enjoy. The gospel tells us what Jesus has done to make it possible again for us to experience the love of God overflowing our hearts.

When we trust in Jesus and receive the indwelling power and love of the Holy Spirit, we begin to find that “*the love of Christ compels us*” (2 Cor. 5:14) – and suddenly we have a desire like we've never had before to love the people around us.

Jesus said that the command to “*Do to others as you would have them do to you*” summed up “*the whole law and prophets*” Matthew 7:12. And if we've been transformed by the simple message of the love of Jesus, then we'll want to share it so that others can experience God's transforming love! In the words of God's promise to Abraham, we have been “*blessed to be a blessing*” (Gen 12).

After Jesus' resurrection, he commanded his disciples: “*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you*” (Matt. 28:19-20). We call this ‘The Great Commission’.

B. Four Common Questions

1. What do I say? / 2. Who do I say it to? / 3. How do I stay faithful? / 4. What do I do if they say ‘yes’?

#1 What do I say?

1. Share your story (testimony) of being transformed by the gospel, and 2. share the gospel.

How to share your testimony: **Your testimony is just your personal story of encountering Jesus.**

It has three parts: 1. Situation Before, 2. Encounter with Jesus, 3. Situation Afterward.

How to share the gospel: ♥ X † ?.

#2 Who do I say it to?

Friends: *Love your neighbour as yourself...* (Lev. 19:18)

Strangers: *Love the stranger as yourself...* (Lev. 19:34)

Enemies: *Love your enemies...* (Matt. 5:44)

I encourage people to aim to tell 1 person/day = 7/week. Ask God who to start with each day/week.

#3 What will help me be faithful?

Specific accountability, basic discipleship training, goal-setting and prayer when our group meets.

[Hebrews 3:13] “*Exhort one another...that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.*”

#4 What do I do if they say ‘yes’?

“*Teach them to obey all that I've commanded you*” (Matt. 28:20).

Start with a simple discipleship course, and then study the Bible. I'll be training you to use the 4-part Simple Christianity course (Mission/Prayer/Trinity/Bible). So as soon as someone believes, you can share ‘Mission’ with them, arrange for them to meet you the following week for ‘Prayer’, etc.

C. Going and Coming

Some Christians with a focus on mission like to make the point that in the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19), Jesus said 'Go!' -- not come. And so they say church should be 'Missional' not 'Attractional'.

But in John 1:39 Jesus says, "*Come and see*" – so although 'going' is vital, 'coming' is also necessary.

In fact, whether we are the newest believer or the oldest pastor, we should all be 'coming' somewhere to receive, and 'going' somewhere to give. As Jesus said, "*Freely you have received, freely give*" (Matthew 10:38). Are you doing both? Where are you receiving? Where are you giving?

D. 'Addition' cannot complete The Task

The Task that the Great Commission involves is huge – "every nation". Revelation 5:9 talks about people "from every tribe and tongue, people and nation". Joel 2:28 talks about the Spirit being poured out on "all flesh".

How will this be accomplished?

There are (at least?) 3 billion people on the earth who have never heard the gospel. If we had an anointed evangelist who went around the world preaching in stadiums, who consistently saw 10 000 truly believe the gospel each night – and if he did this six nights a week, for fifty weeks a year, it would take 1 000 years for 3 billion people to be saved.

The addition of church members through evangelism programmes will not complete the task.

How then will we complete the Great Commission task?

E. Biblical Multiplication

2 Timothy 2:2 *What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.*

Here we see four generations of discipleship: first Paul, then Timothy (and 'many witnesses'), then 'faithful men', and then 'others also'. Paul is encouraging Timothy to think beyond merely adding to his own church ('faithful men'), and shift his mindset from Addition to Multiplication ('...others also').

F. Ying Kai : The Proof

(see T4Tonline.org or Steve Smith's book 'T4T: A Discipleship Re-Revolution')

Ying Kai is a Chinese church-planter who for 10 years had started a new church each year. He moved to a new province in Asia and realised that merely to continue planting churches at this rate would never reach the whole area.

Then the Holy Spirit said to him.

'What's better than planting a church? – Training others to plant churches!

What's better than training others to plant churches? Training others to train others...'

In 8 months, there had been 300 churches started, with 4 000 baptised.

After one full year, there were 908 house churches with 12 000+ newly baptised members.

The next year, 3 535 new churches formed with more than 50, 000 baptisms.

The next year, 9 000 new churches and 104 000 baptisms.

G. “We plant acorns, not oak trees”

Some people will hear this and say ‘isn’t this church-planting?’ And for some people this will be a good thing, and for others it will be a bad thing.

In response to the question, we should say “We plant acorns, not oak trees”. Which is to say “We plant the word of God, not churches”. Cf. Mark 2 -- Parable of the sower.

I believe that there is one church (“one body” Eph. 4:4) “built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone”.

But the principle that “you cannot sew an unshrunk patch onto shrunk cloth” (Mk. 2:21) remains true – and means that you should not expect a new believer to get much out of a meeting where everyone else has been a Christian for twenty years.

The gospel makes completely clear that ‘going to church’ is not necessary for salvation. All that is necessary is to trust in Jesus. So ‘We point people to Jesus, not to church (even our church/group)’.

But – someone will say – ‘if Jesus is Lord of someone’s life, surely they shouldn’t go on “*forsaking the assembly*” (Heb. 10:25)—surely they need continued community and teaching and accountability.’ Agreed! But they should assemble *to give*, as well as *to receive*. And – particularly for a new believer – this requires two different meetings.

It is therefore vital to contend for the fact is that even a small circle of just two or three is a valid ‘church’ for someone to commit to receive from. “Where two or three are gathered, I am with them” said Jesus. Therefore, if someone is going to a small ‘circle’ to receive and starting another ‘circle’ to give, then there is no need for that person to go a bigger ‘local church’. They already ‘are church’, and are fully ‘doing church.’ But if people want to go to multiple places to ‘receive’, well and good – so long as they are also ‘giving’ by leading their own new circle. Otherwise the city’s churches become insular and lose the missionary dynamic.

This doesn’t mean we’re against big meetings, or highly-educated elders. But simple mission must take precedence over structural tradition – the trellis should support the vine, not vice versa! (Helps to think ‘4-D Leadership’: Structural {B, E, D}/Spiritual {A, Pr, Ev, Pa, T}/Sexy! {M/F, Eu}/Simple {Servant})

H. TNT – Acts 2’s Explosive Ecclesiology

Luke informs us that Jesus instructed the disciples to “Wait for the power of the Holy Spirit” before beginning their mission. And so they prayed – and then the Holy Spirit came! And revival broke out-- and the most compelling demonstration of loving community in history was suddenly initiated (as described in Acts 2:41-47). Acts 2:42 tells us that they devoted themselves to four things, which I like to alliterate: Prayers/Preaching/Participation/Passover Meal.

The possible novelty here is ‘Participation’ – my translation of the Greek word κοινωνία, (koinonia) which is often translated ‘fellowship’ (a word which, in the 21st century only Christians really use, and which is generally diluted down to ‘hanging out’. Now there is nothing wrong with ‘hanging out’, but it needs to be distinguished from the maximum participation of the Spirit-filled Acts 2 church.

I call a meeting structure (a ‘liturgy’) that spends equal amounts of time on these four parts the ‘TNT’ model. See sheet for more detail. The key to TNT (‘Training New Trainers’) is 3 elements absent from most church meetings: specific accountability, basic gospel/discipleship training, & goal-setting. Credit where it’s due, this is an adapted form of Ying Kai’s T4T (‘Training 4 Trainers’) method.

I. The Four Calls

From above: Isaiah 6:8; From across: Acts 16:9; From below: Luke 16:27-28; From within: 2 Cor. 5:14.

J. We Must Go!

Ezekiel 33:1-9	Ezekiel's watchman mandate
1 John 4:20	1 John's love command
Luke 9:26	Jesus' unashamed call

K. Don't Fear Opposition

Opposition is an inevitability (John 15:20).

Opposition is a blessing (Matthew 5:10-11)

Whenever we share the gospel there is always a blessing:

if the person believes, they get the blessing—if they reject the message, we get blessing!

Opposition is a catalyst: (John 12:24)

To be specific, opposition itself isn't the catalyst, but rather our perseverance in spite of opposition.

Revelation 12:11 gives 3 ingredients by which the saints (ie. Christians) can & will defeat the devil:

i. The blood of the lamb, ii. the word of their testimony, and iii. not loving their lives to the death

L. Commitment: Share your testimony + gospel with 1 person/day

Pair up if you can. And pick one time during the next week when you're both free for at least fifty minutes. It's even better if you can find a time that you'll consistently be free every week.

Now commit to each ask at least seven friends this week (average of one person each day) to join you at that time. Pray and ask God for wisdom, and then make a list:

1. _____; 2. _____; 3. _____; 4. _____; 5. _____; 6. _____; 7. _____

Perhaps you're afraid of what they'll think. Then just tell them that you want to share something that's really important to you. And perhaps it will take you a couple of meetings to work up the courage to tell them that you're now one of God's people. It did for Esther! (Cf. Esther 5:1-8. Though to be fair to her, she was in danger of losing her life, whereas we're probably just in danger of people not understanding why we would trust in God, and thinking us a bit odd.)

Remember that even before you say anything to them, the Holy Spirit will already be convicting them "of sin and righteousness and judgement" (John 16:9).

M. Great Commission Blessing

We have been blessed to be a blessing!

(Genesis 12:2)

Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations

Baptising them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

And teaching them to obey all that He has commanded.

For behold! He is with us even to the uttermost end of the earth.

(Matthew 28:19-20)