

The Mission of God's People

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In speaking of "mission" we refer to more than activities in which we might legitimately engage. We refer to the purpose and aim of one's activities. Upon what principal point is all of our work to be focused? What is the **main function** of God's people? By "God's people" we refer to those whom He has chosen and called through the Gospel (2 The. 2:13-14) and who have been delivered "out of the power of darkness and translated... into the kingdom of the Son of his love," (Col. 1:13). God's people are His family, His house, which is identified in the New Testament as His church (1Tim. 3:15). People become a part of His kingdom or family, the church, by being "born of water and the Spirit" (John. 3:5). Men are saved from sin and added to the church when they repent and are immersed for remission of sins (Acts 2:38-41). Hence, the subject might as appropriately be called "The Mission of the Church. "

The Views of Men

Because of the various ideas of men, the religious bodies founded by men emphasize many different things. Presently it is popular for churches to place all or most of their emphasis on social causes, such as civil rights, welfare, public housing, etc. Others, besides emphasizing social causes, have been led into the political arena. Aside from such Social gospel and Activist emphases, there are others who conceive of their churches as little more than entertainment or social clubs which are fulfilling their end if they provide "a good time" for their members. Obviously, the aforementioned areas of emphasis, not to mention many others that cannot here be discussed, testify that God's revealed will concerning the mission of His church has been largely forgotten.

God's Mission for His Son

All of the Bible relates to one grand theme: the redemption of sinful man. This is why John 3:16 may be called "the Bible in miniature." Jesus made it very plain that his mission to earth was to save man from sin (Luke 19:10; John. 3:17, etc.) thus fulfilling His Father's will (1 Tim. 2:3-4; Luke. 22:42; John. 6:38). While Jesus did many wondrous works, including relieving much human suffering, His basic aim was to provide the

necessary evidence for intelligent faith in His divine Sonship, which was necessary for man's eternal life (John. 20:30-31). It may be correctly said that Jesus could have done everything He did for man (teaching, healing, etc.) without ever leaving Heaven, with one exception: providing the remedy for our sins through His death upon the cross. In this one event we see all the activity of His life, all of events of sacred history and all the lessons of inspired instruction coming to a precise focus. He came not merely to feed hungry stomachs, but to nourish starved and dwarfed souls with the bread of life (John. 6:26-27). He came not merely to lift up diseased and crippled bodies, but to heal sin-sick souls (Matt. 9:2-8). To assign to Jesus any other mission is to miss the point of His earthly life.

The Mission of God's Church

The mission of God's church is tied up with its nature. It is spiritual in nature, resting on a spiritual foundation (John. 18:36; Matt. 16:18-19; Ep. 2:19-22), hence it has a spiritual mission. Note further that the church is frequently referred to as the spiritual body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4, 15-16; 5:23-30; Col. 1:18). It follows that whatever the mission of Christ was in His physical body would implicitly be the mission of His spiritual body, the church. The direct teaching of scripture demonstrates the truth of this inference. Jesus assigned the task of teaching all nations, preaching the Gospel to every creature, as the great mission of His people (Matt. 28:18-19; Mk. 16:15).

The reason for this assignment is its relationship to the eternal redemption of man, which has already been established as Jesus' mission on earth. It is noteworthy to observe that after telling the early disciples to "preach the Gospel to the whole creation," He then states the purpose: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). The work of preaching and teaching the Gospel is directly related to the redemption of man. Paul says that the Gospel "is the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16). Please observe further that it was God's "eternal purpose" to make known "...through the church the manifold wisdom of God" (Eph. 3:10-11). The church is described as "the pillar and ground of the truth," meaning it is to uphold, support and proclaim the truth to a world condemned in sin (1 Tim. 3:15). The church in the first

century was compassionate to the needs of those about it, both within and without (Gal. 6:10), however, Jesus taught that even our good works were to have as their basic aim, glorifying our Heavenly Father (Mat. 5:16). The mission of the Church is the same as the mission of Christ – the redemption of lost men through teaching the Gospel. To assign to the church any other primary mission is to miss the point of the church's earthly life and lead it astray.

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