

## **“THE CHURCH ON PURPOSE”**

### ***“One in Heart and Mind”***

#### **Scripture Reading – I Corinthians, 2:10b-16**

*The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no-one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.*

*The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment: “For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ.*

*‘All the believers were one in heart and mind. No-one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all.’*







**Acts, 4:32-33, NIV**

THE CHURCH ON PURPOSE is based on the example of the Early Christian Church.

*‘They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.’*

**Acts, 2:42-47, NIV**

In Acts, 2:40-47, we read of the purposes God desires for his Church.

 <b><u>EVANGELISM</u></b>	(Acts, 2:40-41)
 <b><u>DISCIPLESHIP</u></b>	(Acts, 2:42)
 <b><u>FELLOWSHIP</u></b>	(Acts, 2:42, 44, 46)
 <b><u>MINISTRY</u></b>	(Acts, 2:45)
 <b><u>WORSHIP</u></b>	(Acts, 2:42, 46-47)
 <b><u>PRAYER</u></b>	(Acts, 2:42)

In this series, we considered this amazing summary of the Early Christian Church. When they actively engaged in EVANGELISM, DISCIPLESHIP, FELLOWSHIP, MINISTRY, and WORSHIP, what was the result? ‘THE LORD ADDED TO THEIR NUMBER DAILY THOSE WHO WERE BEING SAVED’.

*If we do as they did, can our same Lord add to our number ‘THOSE WHO ARE BEING SAVED’?*

#### **“THE N.E.W.S. CONCEPT”**

*The Church exists to reach people for Jesus and to teach those who respond how to become like Jesus and to live like Jesus. The Church exists to care for people's needs in the name of Jesus through the acts of its members in faithful ministry and service. Whilst this is happening, the Church must worship God in the splendour of his holiness, and in spirit and in truth. All this activity must be underpinned by the foundation of faithful prayer by members of the Church...*

**In THE SALVATION ARMY, THEN.E.W.S. CONCEPT is a tool to help shape our Corps...**

#### **NURTURE**

*‘Jesus came to the disciples and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age”.’*

**Matthew, 28:18-20, NIV**

In simple terms, a disciple is one who learns the teachings of his master.

*‘Discipleship is the process of helping people become more like Jesus in their thoughts, feelings, and actions.’*

**Rick Warren**

The Church of Discipleship is on purpose in knowing and doing God's Word.

The Church of Discipleship is on purpose in prayer.

The Church of Discipleship is on purpose in love.

#### **EVANGELISM**

*‘We are a salvation people – this is our speciality – getting saved and keeping saved, and then getting somebody else saved, and then getting saved ourselves more and more. We believe in salvation. We believe in old-fashioned salvation. Ours is the same salvation taught in the Bible, proclaimed by the prophets and apostles. We believe the world needs it, and that this alone will set it right. We need no other nostrum – nothing new.*

*‘There are think-so Christians, and there are hope-so Christians; thank God we belong to the know-so people – we know we are saved. Our work is salvation. We believe in salvation, and we have salvation. We are not mere sentimentalists or theory people; we tell what we have heard and seen and handled and experienced of the word of life and the power of God. We aim at salvation. We want this and nothing short of this, and we want*

*this right off. My brothers, my comrades, soul saving is our vocation, the great purpose of our lives. Let us seek first the Kingdom of God, let us be Salvationists indeed.'*

**William Booth**

The word EVANGELISE comes from the Greek word EUGGELIZO which means:  
"TO ANNOUNCE GOOD NEWS; TO DECLARE GLAD TIDINGS OF THE GOSPEL".

Evangelism happens when we see, speak and serve on purpose.



## **WORSHIP**

*'Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth. Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.'*

**Psalms, 100:1-4, NIV**

**'You were planned for God's pleasure through worship.'**

*'When you fully understand this truth, you will never again have a problem with feeling insignificant. It proves your worth. If you are that important to God, and he considers you valuable enough to keep with him in eternity, what greater significance could you have? You are a child of God, and you bring pleasure to God like nothing else he has ever created.'*

**Rick Warren**

**'Worship is all that I am responding to all that God is.'**

*'If worship does not change us, it has not been worship. To stand before the Holy One of eternity is to change. Worship begins in holy expectancy; it ends in holy obedience.'*

**Richard J Foster**

Dynamic Worship requires Preparation, participation and practice.



## **SERVICE**

### **SERVICE TO THE BODY OF CHRIST HAS TO DO WITH FELLOWSHIP**

*"How did the Early Church fellowship without coffee and cakes or tea and biscuits?"*

**Howard Hendricks**

The New Testament uses the Greek word 'KOINONIA' to describe Christian fellowship.

**'KOINONIA' means 'COMMUNION' or 'SHARING'**

True Christian fellowship necessarily requires that we experience VERTICAL FELLOWSHIP with God and 'HORIZONTAL FELLOWSHIP' with one another.

### **SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY HAS TO DO WITH MINISTRY**

***'We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.'***

**Ephesians, 2:10, NIV**

*'Before God created you, he decided what role he wanted you to play on earth. He planned exactly how he wanted you to serve him, and then shaped you for those tasks. You are the way you are because you were made for a specific ministry.'*

**Rick Warren**

**'Ministry involves getting into S.H.A.P.E.', what is your S.H.A.P.E.?**



#### **SPIRITUAL GIFTS**

*Unwrapping your Spiritual Gifts*



#### **HEART**

*Listening to your Heart*



#### **ABILITIES**

*Applying your Abilities*



#### **PERSONALITY**

*Using your Personality*



#### **EXPERIENCE**

*Employing your Experiences*

*'Christ doesn't expect us to produce more than we can, but he does expect us to produce all we can by his power within us.'*

**Rick Warren**

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### **"ONE IN HEART AND MIND"**

***'All the believers were one in heart and mind. No-one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all.'***

**Acts, 4:32-33, NIV**

**What if the Biography Channel decided to film the story of your life?**

Tonight we could watch the documentaries: "FABULOUS LIFE OF HOLLYWOOD SUPER SPENDERS", "GREATEST MOVIE GADGETS", and "THE ALIEN SAGA". It must be 'JAMES BOND NIGHT', because we could learn about film stars Sean Connery, Roger Moore and Pierce Brosnan.

*But just imagine if we could have a "BIOGRAPHY SPECIAL" about your life...*

**Where would the producer send his camera crew?**

Maybe they would start at the hospital or house where you were born. Then move on to your childhood home – or, if you had a string of those – to one in which you lived during some pivotal time in your life. We would have film of the schools that you attended, and your college; perhaps the site of your first job. Maybe there would be a feature on the place where you met and married your spouse. Perhaps they would come here, to this church – or to another church that has been central to your spiritual development

**There are so many places the writers could focus their attention.**

There are so many people and places that are important in the telling of your story. As for content, some of the elements to include would be obvious – the clear turning points in your life. Moments... decisions... that shaped all the days that followed.

But to give the audience – and let's face it, it would be a massive audience if you were the subject – a genuine picture of your life, the producer would do well to identify the "every-day" pieces of your existence. You know – what you are like at the breakfast table, not just when you are making some important life-changing decision that will affect you and others.

It is important, if we really want to know what someone is like, that we know about the every-day-ness of his or her life, because the ins-and-outs of your routine tell us so much about how and why you are the way you are...

*Your morning routine...* rising early, or late; shuffling into the kitchen to make a cup of tea, or striding confidently in with your morning newspaper folded under an arm; greeting others with a cheerful, "good morning", or a series of grunts only when you are addressed first; lingering in prayer, or slurping coffee on your way out the door?

*Your lunchtime habits...* do you eat a quick lunch because you have to maximize the hours of your day, or do you take a break from the hectic pace of life to take a walk, or listen to a piece of music; do you prefer to meet friends for lunch, or eat alone?

*Your evenings...* are they spent working; building relationships with family or friends; relaxing with a book or a favourite television show; spending hours on the internet; praying or listening to music; early to bed or very late to bed?

*These things are not apparent to the casual observer, but they tell us volumes about you – about your priorities, your character, your interests...*

#### **Luke takes us behind the scenes of the Early Christian Church.**

Anyone producing the story of the Early Church for the Biography Channel could figure out, "OK, we need to talk about Pentecost and the fact that the Holy Spirit gave the followers of Christ the ability to communicate the gospel in languages they never learned... and we certainly need to include the story of the lame man at the Beautiful Gate who was healed in the name of Jesus by Peter and John... and we really ought to talk about how the religious court reprimanded Peter and John and told them never to preach again the name of Jesus and how they said they couldn't help talking about what they had seen and heard".

#### **Luke takes us backstage of the Early Christian Church.**

Behind the headline events at Pentecost and mind-blowing miracles to the ordinary people of the Early Church, and, believe it or not, this snapshot may be as stunning as the more public displays of the Holy Spirit's power. The followers of Christ have become unified, a unity that is characterized by a single-minded devotion to Christ and to each other.

***'All the believers were one in heart and mind. No-one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all.'***

***Acts, 4:32-33, NIV***

***These verses give us an invaluable insight as to what makes a church truly great...***



#### **THE GRACE OF UNITY**

***'All the believers were one in heart and mind.'***

***Acts, 4:32a, NIV***

#### **Can you imagine what would happen if every Christian was united together?**

I have no idea how many Christians there are in the UK, but what great things could be achieved if we all pooled our resources, exercised our faith, decide to get busy, and unselfishly serve God? What a difference it must make if there was true unity and **'ALL THE BELIEVERS WERE ONE IN HEART AND MIND'**.

In **"THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS"**, C S Lewis imagined Screwtape (the devil) teaching his young nephew, Wormwood, a little demon who has been assigned the task of recruiting members into the Kingdom of Hell. In the first chapter, Screwtape says to Wormwood: *"You will find that the Church is fertile soil. The Church is one of the best places to find recruits for Hell"*.

The old devil gives the young demon wise words of advice: *"Keep them bickering over programs, procedures, money, organization, personal hurts, and misgivings. Keep them bickering. Whatever you do, do not let them see the banners wave, because if they ever see the banners wave, we have lost them forever"*.

It is almost as though C S Lewis is telling the Church: *'The secret to carrying out the Great Commission is to have our vision fixed firmly on Jesus. When we are so caught up in Christ, we will not have time to bicker, we will not have time to worry about life's little hurts. When we are caught up in the task of carrying his banner to a lost and dying world, then the Church will march forward in triumph once again'*.

***'May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.'***

***Romans, 15:5-6, NIV***



#### **THE GRACE OF GENEROSITY**

***'No-one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had.'***

***Acts, 4:32b, NIV***

Their devotion to Christ and each other was so serious that it took control of their wallets and chequebooks. Six times in only five verses, Luke mentioned the importance of sacrificial giving in that Early Christian Community.

#### **Why would they want to give to God and others at such personal cost?**

One of the unmistakable characteristics of love is giving. Show me your cheque book and your bank statements, and I can tell you what you love. Show me an hourly log of your day – where you give your time and energy – and I can tell you what you love. And you

could do the same with me. You are investing your money and your moments for love... and so did the early church.

**These men and women were consumed by what God had done for them.**

*By God's power to overcome the most devastating human action possible by raising from the dead his Son, whom we had crucified.*

*By God's ability to redeem human sin and bring good, even from what was intended for evil.*

*By Jesus' willingness to forgive those who bitterly failed him, and to restore them to be his representatives in the world.*

*By God's empowering Holy Spirit which caused prayerful and ordinary people to be used in ways they could never have imagined.*

*By the miraculous gift of changed lives in the name of and for the sake of Jesus.*

Basking in the glow of what they had received from the Holy One, they did not keep score about what they were giving for his sake. In comparison to the gifts of God, their giving paled... but they gave all they could: their lives... fortunes... time... and their testimony.



## **A GREAT WITNESS**

***‘With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all.’***

**Acts, 4:33, NIV**

**Your testimony is a mighty power to overcome the devil.**

When you testify whom Jesus is in your life, you are throwing water on Satan's fire that is trying to devour you. Testify who you are. Tell Satan that when Jesus died, you died. You were crucified with Christ. Tell Satan that when Jesus was buried, you were buried. You were buried with Christ. Tell Satan that when Jesus was raised, you were raised. Tell Satan that when Jesus ascended, you ascended. You are redeemed, accepted, and empowered by the Lord Jesus Christ. You are now a King and a Priest.

***‘They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.’***

**Revelation, 12:11, NIV**

**Believers overcome Satan when they testify whom Jesus is.**

He is Lord. He is the Lamb who died. He is the Lion who rules. When Satan comes against you, testify about what Jesus did at Calvary and the empty tomb.

**Believers overcome Satan when they testify Satan's future.**

*“The next time Satan reminds you of your past, you remind him of his future.”*

*To this let us live so we might be able to say, “We are one in heart, mind and purpose”.*