

# Integral Mission and the Great Commission “The Five Marks of Mission”

**Chris Wright**  
International Ministries Director  
Langham Partnership

## Introduction: Where should we start?

- “Holistic mission” = whole of human need  
but what do people *need most*?
- “Missional church”  
but what is legitimately included in *the church’s* mission?

## 1. The Mission of God

What is the great plan and purpose of God?

### ***Eph. 1:9-10***

**To redeem the whole of creation**, broken by sin and evil, into the **new creation**, populated by the **redeemed from every culture**, through the **cross and resurrection of Christ**.

‘Whole counsel of God’ = the plan of God from *Genesis – Revelation*  
The whole biblical grand-narrative: *Creation – Fall – Redemption – New Creation*

*We are committed to world mission, because it is central to our understanding of God, the Bible, the Church, human history and the ultimate future. The whole Bible reveals the mission of God to bring all things in heaven and earth into unity under Christ, reconciling them through the blood of his cross. In fulfilling his mission, God will transform the creation broken by sin and evil into the new creation in which there is no more sin or curse. God will fulfil his promise to Abraham to bless all nations on the earth, through the gospel of Jesus, the Messiah, the seed of Abraham. God will transform the fractured world of nations that are scattered under the judgment of God into the new humanity that will be redeemed by the blood of Christ from every tribe, nation, tongue and language, and will be gathered to worship our God and Saviour. God will destroy the reign of death, corruption and violence when Christ returns to establish his eternal reign of life, justice and peace. Then God, Immanuel, will dwell with us, and the kingdom of the world will become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ and he shall reign for ever and ever.*

***Cape Town Commitment 1.10***

## 2. The Mission of God’s People, the church.

2.1 “The five marks of mission” (Anglican Communion, 1984)

- i) Evangelism
- ii) Teaching
- iii) Compassion
- iv) Justice
- v) Care of Creation

2.2 Three missional foci, Church, Society, Creation

- i) Building the Church (through evangelism and teaching)
- ii) Serving society (through compassion and justice)
- iii) Caring for creation (through ecological concern and action)

### 2.3 The mission of God, in which we are called to participate, addresses

- Individual persons
- Society and culture
- Creation

*“All three are broken and suffering because of sin; all three are included in the redeeming love and mission of God; all three must be part of the comprehensive mission of God’s people.”*

*Cape Town Commitment 1.7a*

All of the above is based on, and mandated by, the **cosmic Lordship of Jesus Christ**:  
 “All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me” - the opening affirmation of the Great Commission.

## 3. Building the Church

‘Make disciples, baptizing them...  
 and teaching them...’

### 3.1 Evangelism

‘gospel’ the good news of what God has promised and accomplished through Christ. Telling the whole story of what God has done (using Old and New Testaments)

- False ‘holism’ – two wrong ideas  
 Holistic mission = everything else *except* evangelism  
 Holistic mission = everything including evangelism but with *no integration* (bag of marbles)
- The **centrality** of the gospel/evangelism  
 As a hub is central to a wheel, but a wheel needs the rim as well as the hub. (CTC I.10). It is an integrated object. *Every point of the rim must be connected to the hub. CTC IID.1.e*
- **‘Integral mission’** means integrating all dimensions of our mission around the central hub of evangelism – which is driven by the ‘engine’ of the gospel - what God has done in Christ to save the world. *CTC 1.10*

### 3.2 Teaching / discipling

- The Old Testament is: “oldest and longest program of Theological Education” (Andrew Walls)
- Jesus: 3 years, teaching, teaching, teaching
- Paul: Teaching was integral to his whole life as a missionary church planter  
 His personal example - Ephesus  
 His mission team – Timothy, Titus, Apollos  
 1 Cor 3:5-9 “one purpose”  
 His goal – maturity in Christ Col. 1:9-11, 28
- Teaching (including theological education) is an intrinsic part of the mission of the church, in obedience to the Great Commission.

## 4. Serving Society

Compassion and Justice

“Teaching them to observe *all that I have commanded you*”

### 4.1 Jesus builds on Deuteronomy

Deut. 10:12-19 - to be like God in compassion and justice for the needy (as God had done for Israel)

Matt. 5:6; 6:33;

Matt. 23:23, “justice, mercy, and faithfulness”

Mic. 6:8, “do justice, love mercy, walk humbly with your God”

### 4.2 The Mission of God’s People - asks the question: Who are we and what are we here for?

Gen. 18:19 Walking in the way of the LORD, doing righteousness and justice

Ex. 19:6 Priestly and holy, in midst of the nations

Lev. 18:1-5; 19 Distinctive from the nations

Deut. 4:6-8 Visible to the nations

1 Kgs. 8:41-43, 60-61 Attractive to the nations

### 4.3 “You are the light of the world”

Light shines from people committed to compassion and justice. Isa. 58:7-8, 10.

Apostles and early church were committed to obeying the teaching of Jesus, as well as preaching the gospel about Jesus.

Acts 4:32-38 (cf. Deut. 15:4)

Gal. 2:10 (“remember the poor”)

Titus (“doing good”, 8 times)

James 2:14-17 (faith and works)

*Cape Town Commitment* I.10.a

## 5. Caring for creation

### 5.1 The Great Commission begins with Christ’s Lordship over *all* creation

Matt. 28:18 - Jesus is Lord of “heaven *and* earth” = all creation. Cf. Deut. 4:39.

Col. 1:15-20 - whole universe is created by and for Christ, sustained by Christ, and redeemed by Christ (cf. also Jn. 1, Heb. 1)

### 5.2 Caring for the earth = caring for God’s property.

*“We cannot claim to love God while abusing what belongs to Christ by right of creation, redemption and inheritance. **We** [i.e. as Christians] care for the earth and responsibly use its abundant resources, not according to the rationale of the secular world, but for the Lord’s sake. If Jesus is Lord of all the earth, we cannot separate our relationship to Christ from how we act in relation to the earth. For to proclaim the gospel that says ‘Jesus is Lord’ is to proclaim the gospel that includes the earth, since Christ’s Lordship is over all creation.”*

Cape Town Commitment 1.7.a

### 5.3 The goodness of creation

- Creation is good in relation to God

It belongs to God (Deut.10:14; Ps. 24:1)  
 It reveals God (Ps. 19; 50:6; Acts 14:17; Rom.1:20)  
 It is valued by God for itself (Gen. 1:31)

- Creation is good in relation to us  
 Made in God's image (Gen.1) - to rule (in God's way)  
 Placed in the garden (Gen.2:15) – to serve and to keep

#### 5.4 The glory of creation

- God's glory through the praise of creation  
 Pss. 145, 148, 150; Rev. 5:13
- God's glory in the fullness of creation  
 Ps. 104:31; Isa. 6:3
- Whatever destroys creation diminishes God's praise and glory

#### 5.5 The goal of creation

- All creation is included in God's plan of redemption through the cross and resurrection of Christ.  
 Isa. 65:17-25 - new heavens and new earth  
 Ps. 96:10-13 – rejoicing of all creation  
 Rom. 8:18-21 – birthing of new creation  
 Col. 1:20 - creation reconciled through the cross  
 2 Pet. 3:10-13 – purging, not obliteration  
 Rev. 21:1-4. Our final destination! Not just 'heaven', but new creation  
 Rev. 7:9, 21:24-26. The glory of all human cultures, languages and civilizations – purged and purified – brought into the City of God.
- Ecological concern and action are legitimate dimensions of Christian mission, for Christ's sake, Lord of heaven and earth.

### **Conclusion: So what?**

1. God's whole mission is for God's whole church  
 But every**body** can't do *everything*
2. The whole church's mission includes every church member  
 But we have different callings and sendings
3. Every member's mission includes the whole of life.  
 Jesus is Lord – of all.