

Called, Sent, Empowered –

A Theology of Mission



As a people claimed by the Spirit of the gospel, we believe that God desires to gather all creation under the reign of Jesus Christ, to bring all creation into unbridled communion with and in God and with itself.¹ To this end, God – the very One who, in the movement of missionary love, continually broods over creation and initiates a friendship with Abraham pregnant with promise – elects a people called Israel, makes them into a priestly nation to offer worship on behalf of all the world's nations and peoples with a view to their reconciliation to God; and, in the fulness of time, God, in Jesus of Nazareth, moves anew into the world in order to reconcile all things to God; and God also calls forth a new community who, with Israel and with Jesus, participates in and bears witness (*martyria*) to God's own loving and reconciling activities in the world. Born of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, this new community is called 'the Christian community' (or 'the church').

We believe that the Christian community, a creation of God's Word in election, is a people *called* by God to participate and share in God's mission in this world – to be a humble, prophetic and celebratory sign, embodiment and hope-filled foretaste of life in the coming reign of God. It is a people *sent* by God in the name of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit to witness to, and to represent, the liberating, empowering, healing, and reconciling love of God wherever such is identified. It is a people *empowered* by God to embody in its own life the mystery of salvation and the transfiguration of creation.

Mission, therefore, is not an 'optional extra' for the Christian community but is of its essence, finding both its *genesis* and its *telos* in the trinitarian relations and in God's own movement into the world, the object of God's love. The Christian community cannot be true to itself apart from this action of bearing servant witness (*martyria*)

- (i) to God's will for the salvation and transformation of the world;
- (ii) to God's command to maturing discipleship;
- (iii) to God's compassion, mercy and advocacy for the poor, the needy and the marginalised;
- (iv) to God's vision for the flourishing of societies that reflect the justice of love and seek the end to unjust structures; and
- (v) to God's desire for the integrity of a creation liberated from abusive, irresponsible and destructive actions.

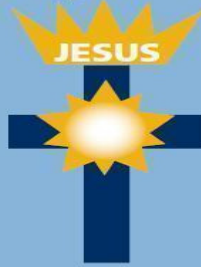
– Rev. Dr. Jason Goroncy

¹ See World Council of Churches, *The Nature and Mission of the Church: A Stage on the Way to a Common Statement* (Faith and Order Paper 198; Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2005); World Council of Churches, *Participating in God's Mission of Reconciliation: A Resource for Churches in Situations of Conflict*. (Faith and Order Paper 201; Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2006).

New Humanity

Jesus

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New Humanity

Us



Jesus' Story (The Top Sequence)

- Left (incarnation, life): The Son of God became human as Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus took to himself a broken human nature, symbolized by the crack running down the human figure. He did this to fight the corruption and brokenness in his own human nature. But he never sinned. Within himself, Jesus poured out the wrath of God upon that brokenness that was in him. He bent his human nature back into the love of the Father.
- Center (death, resurrection): Jesus died and rose again. Ultimately through his death on the cross, he judged the corruption and brokenness in himself, overcoming its final resistance. In his resurrection, Jesus now has a God-drenched, God-soaked, God-cleansed, God-healed, God-purified, and God-perfected new humanity. That's why there is no crack left in him. He has become what God always wanted for human beings: to bear God's glory from within himself.
- Right (resurrection, Spirit): He shares his new humanity with us by his Spirit and our participation. He works in us without us knowing exactly how he does so, but it helps if we conform to him and confess that we need him to heal our human nature.

Questions:

- 1.) **Is this universalism?** ____! We are distinct in our union with Christ and can insanely reject God FS&S.
- 2.) **Does this mean we can do whatever we want and God will still love us?** ____ and ____! Yes, God will always love you unconditionally, HOWEVER, you can't just do whatever you want because Jesus is what God has made of you! In love God will unconditionally show up as wrath to oppose your opposition to who you really are! God would not be loving to do anything less than help you be who you really are in His Son! God does not forgive sin but the sinner. He completely destroys all sin! 1 Cor 3:10-15. Ouch!
- 3.) **What does it mean for God to be "in" us?** God is in us ____ the God/Man. Through the Holy Spirit Jesus gets in us kind of like heat gets in a pan over a fire. The pan is not the fire and the fire is not the pan but they are in union and share in the same heat. The Man in Jesus is not God. We will never be God, but will be glorified humanity which is god-like and God-conformed.
- 4.) **What is sin?** Sin is to think less of you than what God has made of you in ____!
- 5.) **So what is salvation?** ____! Who is Salvation? Jesus is our Salvation (deliverance!) from sin and our Salvation into Participation in God's Love and Life.
- 6.) **What is Hell?** Experiencing our union with Jesus (Who will never let us go!) in a ____ way! Ouch!