

The 5 Marks of Mission

*Background paper on the rationale for the projects supported by St Andrew's
Corbridge with Halton Churches*

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The Mission and Giving Group has met several times over the last couple of months in order to make recommendations to the PCC about how to allocate our 10% tithe of our planned giving to outside concerns and also to consider how we can encourage interest and involvement in God's mission to the world. The following paper gives some of the rationale that has guided us in our decision-making process and gives a sketch on some foundational ideas about mission.

Firstly, we asked ourselves a few questions.

What is meant by the word mission?

Mission can be defined simply as finding out what God is doing in the world and getting involved. This is a powerful statement reminding us that God is the initiating agent to all acts of building his kingdom here on earth. Thus, we need to take time to discern what he may be calling us to do as a church community, rather than coming up with our own ideas and then asking God to bless them.

God's mission to his world is **holistic and wide ranging** and is well captured by the **five 'marks of mission'** of the worldwide Anglican church.

1. The first mark states that we are to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom.

The "Good News of the Kingdom" is the unconditional love and forgiveness of God in Jesus Christ. "The Kingdom" describes what the world is like wherever people are faithful and seek to live in ways that demonstrate the love and grace of God and acceptance and value for all people, since all are

loved by him. This will require us to support those who have the gift of proclamation.

This first Mark of Mission of announcing the coming Kingdom is the foundation of the remaining four. Jesus introduced the coming of the Kingdom by saying he had come to “preach good news to the poor, set prisoners free, give sight to the blind, and proclaim the year of God’s grace and favour”.

2. The second mark of mission calls us to teach, baptize and nurture new believers.

If we believe the news of God’s love and forgiveness is truly Good News for all, we will want others to accept and grow into it for themselves. This will require a building up those who have spiritual gifts in encouraging new disciples.

3. The third mark of mission calls us to respond to human need by loving service.

This mark of mission can capture the many issues of our day that require compassion and immediate practical support for those in need throughout our world. It helps us to remember that we are all called to be generous in the giving of our time and money to those who do not have what we have.

4. The fourth mark of mission calls us to seek to transform unjust structures of society.

This mark requires us to become more aware of global issues that affect many of the dispossessed in our world. It includes advocacy, political

activism and community approaches that are able to speak truth to the unhelpful use of power.

5. The fifth mark of mission calls us to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the earth.

This mark recognises that we have all been called to be good stewards of God's creation. How we live on this planet matters and how we consume the earth's resources is a spiritual as well as practical issue. God does care about the visible destruction of the good things he has made. He also cares about the people and livelihoods of all those impacted by the ravages of climate change.

Another question we asked ourselves was when our own church finances are under so much pressure at this time;

Why do we give to people and situations outside of our own church life?

It is generally expected that each church will set aside a tithe or 10% of its planned giving to people and projects outside of normal church life. This pattern of giving is not new and is a biblical precedent throughout the Old and New testaments. Jesus taught about money continually at a time when people did not have a lot to spare. He knew that nothing demonstrated the truth about our faith better than how we use our resources. However, if we are not careful it can become something we do, without giving it much further thought or involvement from us. Giving is much more than a duty, it is fundamental to our relationship with God. Giving to others is an opportunity to respond with gratitude for what God has given to us, most notably in the person and work of Jesus Christ. We are called to give willingly and cheerfully, according to our means (2 Cor, Chap 8 and 9) and also to get involved with what we give to, in prayer and action. We see that this approach to giving and mission could act as an encouragement to the church family during these times when many of our

activities have had to change in light of the pandemic. In engaging with global mission, we could be encouraged by what God is doing in the world even while we feel the constraints of the current restrictions.

Another question we asked was;

What is the role of Mission and Giving Group? 'Take 5'

We saw that this is a committee of people who have a variety of interests and life experience which gives them some insights into wider issues outside of the church. Each person has agreed to give their time to help us to plan and coordinate our church giving and volunteer interests. We will meet at least 3 times a year to monitor existing church commitments, to plan Giving Days and to arrange speakers/materials etc. Each of the projects that we are suggesting that St Andrews supports this year and into 2021, has a person assigned to act as a champion. They will make it their job to bring it to the attention of the church community through articles in the bulletin, church news, presentations in church services, a notice board, and inclusion of prayer requests in our church intercessions. We would hope that others would join these activities and join the group in due course.

We have named ourselves 'Take 5' in order to draw attention to the five marks of mission.

The next question we asked was;

How will we choose which organisations to support?

We decided that for this year at least we would spread the net wide in order to find out what people are interested in supporting longer term. We suggest that the church plans to support a number of organisations with a regular commitment, as well as making one-off donations to others. The suggested recipients of donations have been chosen with the **5 marks of mission** in mind,

with at least one being a local or UK organisation and at least one reflecting our concern for the needs of those in other countries. We also looked for; some longer term projects to support in order to be part of deeper transformational changes; some immediate short term projects or immediate responses to crises; some projects that will help us to grow in our understanding of what it means to belong to the global church; some local projects that will give opportunity for acts of service alongside the giving of funds; some projects that reflect the current levels of interest and expertise within the congregation and finally we decided to support someone who is working in full time Christian work who is from the global south to reflect the changing focus of mission in today's world.

What next?

After satisfying ourselves that we had a rationale for making decisions we then took time to go away and research various organisations that we saw fitted into these 5 categories. We had several suggestions made for each category and we went through a process of discussion from a shortlist as to how much the church could learn, grow and get involved with each project. We brought this list to the PCC and gained their approval to proceed.

It is clear to us that many of the organisations and projects fit into more than one category of mission. Many of them overlap and we see the projects not as siloed from each other. Recognising this overlap we will aim to produce something for the church notice board not as a table but more like a flower of distinctives but with many similarities in their aims and motivations. The logo shown below is the one we will use for the notice board, bulletin, prayer diary and newsletters.



On the website we have created a place for the Take 5 material under a new section called Mission and Giving. Here we have added summary pages of organisations and projects we support to provide background information for those interested in knowing more. These pages also act as a resource for those leading intercessions as we would like a project to be prayed for each Sunday. There is also an updated prayer diary to help with this.

What about the future?

We have tried in each case to be realistic about where Corbridge church is currently at with its understanding of Global Mission. We also are aware that funds may be tighter next year and so we did not want to over promise to any one organisation or person.

We will have a review process to see how the church is responding to the organisations we will be championing this year and adjust our giving accordingly next year to match the interest shown.