

The 3 C's

3. Commission

Introduction

Well, I've talked about **Communion**, I've talked about **Community**, this morning we come to the third 'C' in our 3C vision – **Commission**.

Of the 3 dimensions of our calling this is the one *most* of us find *most* challenging *most* of the time – our commission to meet, to engage effectively with the world as an agent of gospel grace.

Yes, we know the great commission,
we know we're supposed to be out there making disciples for Jesus,
but how? How do we do it?

Most of us feel at best inadequate, at worst overwhelmed by the task!
Yes we know, a journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step,
a symphony is written with single notes,
we know all this, we only have to start, to do our bit, but even this seems hard.

Sometimes just keeping our *own* faith, our own life is hard enough,
how do we ever make disciples of others...?

To be sure, there are helpful ways to get involved -
courses like Alpha have been fantastic,
so too children's and youth ministries.

We can support link missionaries, pray for the world.

This is all part of it, and yet surely there's more ... much more...

A few choice programs, a scattering of professional missionaries, that's not the whole answer.

How do we become a *church*,
a body of disciples who daily meet with the world in a transforming way?
How do we live up to this third vital C of the vision?

Can't say everything this morning, there are 3 things I'd like to touch on.

1. It'll help if we regain a true *perspective*,
2. It'll help if we reassume *our place* in the scheme of things, and
3. It'll help if we get into the right *pattern* of living.

3 P's. 3 P's to go with the 3rd of our C's!

1. Perspective

It'll help us to be a church that meets with the world if we regain a true perspective on the mission.

What do I mean?

Well it has to do with *who*? Who's mission is it!

For years I thought it was *ours*!

For years I felt the burden, as if it all depended on us,
that somehow *we* had to make it happen,
for years I felt guilty, 'cause it didn't seem we were doing very well.

You know one of the liberating discoveries for me has been the realisation that it's not my mission at all!

It's not mine and it's not ours, no, it's God's!

It's the *missio Dei*, not the *missio ecclesia*.

If we look at John's gospel, for example.

we see that Jesus is in no doubt about whose mission it is.

*My food, he says, my drink, my work,
'is to do the will of the Father who sent me,
is to finish his work.'* (Jn 4:34)

'I tell you the truth,' he says in John 5,

*'the Son can do nothing by himself (I can relate to that, esp. when it comes to mission!)
he can only do what he sees his Father doing.'* (19)

As he draws to the close of his earthly part (and here's the bit that concerns us)

he doesn't change things, he simply passes on the baton – to us.

*'As the father has sent me,' he says, in the upper room, in Jn 20,
'so I send you.'* (21)

ie You just get out there and keep going with what we are already doing.

You see, it's not something new,

it's not a burden that God suddenly decides to dump on us.

No, it's more like a commissioning of extra troops.

We, his d's, are commissioned to join in with what's already going on.

Commissioned, *and empowered*.

'And with that,' John says, 'Jesus breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit."' (22)

I don't know, but somehow this takes the pressure off, doesn't it?

It's not quite as daunting.

We don't have to *make* it happen, we just get on board with what's *already* happening,
with what God is already doing.

God is already working in the world, we just join him.

That's why we use the word *co mission*.

Friends, that little prefix isn't there just to be cute, to give us three neat C's.

No, that little 'c-o' is vital to how we see things.

Mission is something we do together, something we do *with* God, not just *for* God.

It's just as Jesus says in Matthew: *'Go... and surely I will be with you ...'*

A true perspective makes all the difference.

2. Part

Having said that, we still have an important part to play. We can't just opt out.

When Xnity was in the ascendancy in Western society,
we got into the rather bad habit of thinking of mission as something far off
you know, jungle stuff, deepest darkest Africa.
Something that was done by special 'missionaries,'
people like Julie Waddy, and Judith Calf, and the Clarks.
It's true, they are missionaries.
What's false, is the corollary that we are somehow not.
What's not true is the belief is that the mission field is distant.

These days the as much need for missionaries here as there is in Africa.
Chances are your neighbour hasn't the vaguest idea about Jesus.
The other day in crèche, one of the children asked, 'Who is God?'
It sounds strange, doesn't it? No idea!
That's what it's like.
It's a qn lots of people are asking, the kind of people we meet every day –in our offices, in our
homes and shops and schools and streets.

Friends the mission field is right here, and guess who the missionary's are?

Every Tues lunch I play touch footy up near the Mint.
It's good exercise, and it's good for me to meet with some of the local guys.
They've nick named me 'reverend', and you know every time we stop,
and sometimes even while we're still playing, they're talking about it,
about God, and faith, and stuff like that.
They stir me,
they proudly quote bible verses,
they ask me about you, the church.
They're amazed to hear that so many of you come.
The point is, they're interested,
Behind all that bravado, the tough blokey exterior, they really are interested!

They don't want me getting all religious on them.
They want me to be real, and they really want to know, why am I a Xn?

Part of my role, is just to *be* there, *keeping the rumour alive*.
Then as God works, and they ask their questions and have their crises, so hopefully I can be,
whatever God asks me to be, for them.

And that's the point, God is asking us to be out there,
with Him, for them.

each of us has a place.

We are part of the mission hood of *all* believers.

It's not specialist missionaries and the rest, it's us.

We're the missionaries, and every Sunday is Mission Sunday,
the day we get commissioned to go out again and meet with the world.

If we understand God,

if understand our place in his purposes,

then every Sunday we will hear in our spirit the words Isaiah heard in the temple - '*Whom shall I send?*'

And like Isaiah we will respond - '*Here I am Lord, sent me.*' (Isa 6:8)

3. Pattern

So, the right perspective, the right part,

finally, it'll help in mission if do it in the pattern, in the right way.

Let's go back to that commissioning verse in John again.

I want to pick up on one little word - 'as.'

Jesus says, 'As the Father sent me, so I send you.' (Jn 20:21)

The word *as* has two meanings.

1. It can mean, and I'm sure does - as or 'in the same way.'

ie *Just like the Father sent me, I am send you.*

It can also mean - '*in the same manner.*'

ie I am sending you to do mission in the same *way* as the Father sent me to do it.

With the same approach, the same attitude and understanding.

This is important for us as we think about mission.

So how did Jesus do it?

Well, John says, '*The word became flesh and dwelt among us.*'

The old word was 'tabernacled', it means camped, set up his tent.

'*Moved into our neighbourhood*' (The Message)

Jesus' way was practical and down-to-earth. (We call it incarnation). h

He came and he got involved. He really did *meet* with the world.

He announced the Kingdom with word and deed.

Where there was *injustice* he set things right.

Where there was no mercy he showed mercy.

Where his Father had been forgotten, he remembered.

Where people were dismissed and excluded, he noticed and embraced.

Where they we're blind and dumb and lame, he taught them to see and sing and dance again.

If we're going to do mission as he did mission then these are things we will do too.

Renewed, realigned, reinvigorated in worship we will reenter the world

bearing in our living,

the life and love of Jesus,
the marks of God's realm.

I read a very interesting article the other day.
It was talking about 'Third Wave Companies.'
These are companies that are seeking to adapt to the post-modern world.

The article contrasted Apple (a 3rd wave company) with Pepsi (2nd wave).
Whereas Pepsi was hierarchical and highly structured in its operation,
Apple placed its emphasis on building networks and flexible relationships.
Where Pepsi had a very traditional culture, Apple concentrated on what they called '*genetic coding*.'

Now what's genetic coding?
Basically it's the idea that all actions and products in this company bear the imprint of the company's identity.
ie There's an Apple way of doing things. Everything they do reflects it.

I thought, how helpful for us as we think about mission. Genetic coding.
The Jesus way of doing things.
Everything we do and say bearing the imprint of our Christian identity, and thus bearing witness to God.

Just like a song we sang the other day (at 10am) –
'*Whether it's eat, sleep, work, play,
whether it's morning, noon, night day,
whether it's sing, dance, talk, pray,*'
We do it all to the glory of God.
The Jesus way.

As Schillebeeckx says, '*People are the words with which God tells his story.*'

Your mission is to tell the story of God's love with your life,
wherever you are, whatever you are doing.
As you go into the world and resist the forces of evil,
(most of which appear at first very subtle and harmless),
as you walk in solidarity with forces of hope,
so you take your place and play your part with God in his mission.

As far as world changing is concerned I think St Frances had it exactly right
Make me a instrument of your peace....

Conclusion

Friends, we may not be raging evangelist,
we may not think of ourselves as famous missionaries, but can all do this.
We can, and that's good because that's exactly where God wants us,
out there, proclaiming the kingdom with our lives.