



SAMS-CMS Mission Affirmation

Together we affirm that mission begins with the one and only God. God is by nature missionary. As Father, Son and Holy Spirit, God created all things and works constantly to sustain the universe, renew creation, judge evil, liberate the oppressed and bring home the lost. God's mission (the *missio Dei*) is to reconcile all things in Christ (Eph 1:10; Col 1:20), ending all hostilities caused by human self-will (Col 1:21–22; Rom 5:10), bringing people to a knowledge of the truth (1 Tim 2:4) and into obedience to God's perfect law of liberty (Jam 2:12) and bringing to nothing every hostile power (1 Cor 15:24–25; Col 2:15).

To achieve this end, Jesus Christ came into the world to offer his life as a costly sacrifice, demonstrating both the seriousness of sin and God's compassionate identification with a perverse humanity. In his death, Jesus Christ bore in his own person the sin of the whole world, making a full atonement. In his resurrection, the power of evil was broken and new life released. To this the Scriptures bear faithful witness.

The missionary activity of God reveals him as holy, loving, merciful, steadfast in keeping his promises, patient and not willing that any should be lost. This gives rise to a community of people (the Church), summoned to participate in God's initiatives through which the messianic order of justice and peace is accomplished. The Church is sent by Jesus, its head, in the power of the Spirit into every part of the world (Jn 20:21–22) to be a holy people, an agent, sign and embodiment of God's new order. Christian disciples are to go wherever Jesus, by his Spirit, sends them; without the Spirit's presence with them, they dare not go. Mission knows no frontiers. God's people are to fulfil the promise to Abraham to be a blessing to all nations.

Jesus, the Messiah, in his life, death and resurrection fulfils God's mission, made known in the election of Israel, the ethical codes of the law and the message of the prophets. Thus, the whole of Scripture, inspired by the Spirit, is the record of the unfolding mission of God, written by and for people with a God inspired mission vision. It is to be read and interpreted in this light.

Mission, then, springs from God's mighty acts in history, culminating in redemption in Jesus Christ. It follows a deep sense of gratitude to God who, in tender love and through grace, liberates all who turn to him from all that destroys life. It flows from a desire to follow in the way of Jesus Christ as his disciples, going and doing what he did (Lk 10:37; Acts 10:38).

Christians are impelled into mission as their response to what a loving God has done in Christ and by the joy of sharing with others what they have received. It emerges out of a personal experience of the transforming power of the Gospel. It is manifest in holy and sacrificial living which confirms God's promises, gives courage to declare the truth as made known to us in Jesus (Eph 4:20) and produces compassion for all who suffer. Christians also respond with pain and anger to the tragic consequences of not hearing God's word and living God's way.

The ends of mission should justify the means. The way of mission is essential to the integrity of the message and is its confirmation. Hence, no activity is admissible which degrades the full dignity of every human being. The Christian community can only fulfil its calling in a spirit of servanthood, weakness and vulnerability, refusing for itself power, privileges and favours.



Christian mission requires healthy and constant critical self-examination in order to discern what is true to the Spirit of Christ and what needs to be challenged. The Gospel is always presented and received within a cultural context. It is relevant to all cultures and translatable into all languages and contexts. Therefore, it affirms whatever is good in every culture, however apparently insignificant. Cultures, however, display both the goodness and beauty of God and the evil and ugliness of human sin. Therefore, God's people have to be attentive to how different cultures may embrace the gospel or may distort it.

The Christian community is called to a number of inescapable tasks: to proclaim the good news of the kingdom; to teach, baptise and nurture new believers; to respond to human need by loving service; to seek to transform unjust structures of society, and to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain the life of the earth (Anglicanism's 'Five Marks of Mission', ACC-7, Singapore 1987). Thus, its engagement in mission will involve each of these areas. In particular, it will bear witness to the fact that God's salvation is only available through Jesus Christ – there is no other way to God – and challenge all false beliefs and practices. It will challenge the damaging effects of globalisation, the corrosive effects of affluence (especially conspicuous consumption and political corruption) and the destructive fruits of poverty. In places of conflict and violence it will act as a peace-maker (Matt 5:9), persuading the parties in conflict to recognise genuine wrongs, and changing attitudes and structures.

As mission entails Christians being co-workers with God and with one another in the world, it takes place in every locality. There is no region of the world that is particularly privileged either in the sending or receiving of those engaged in mission. Every church has a responsibility to fulfil its mission calling in its own vicinity and to the ends of the earth. Mission really is from everywhere and to everyone. We acknowledge that each church is seeking to fulfil its mission calling as it understands obedience to Christ. We give thanks that the church is truly universal and that each part makes a valuable contribution to the whole: in its understanding of mission; its interpretation of Scripture, and its conformity to the way of Christ. In particular, we appreciate greatly all that we have learnt of God's purposes through our partnership with churches in Africa, Asia, Europe, Middle East and Latin America.

The fully global interdependence of local churches is a new fact of our times. This means that there is no one centre that directs the church's mission. We need each other's vision to correct, challenge and enlarge our own. We cannot follow Christ alone. The multiplicity of cultures represented in the church will be refined and brought to completion in Christ. He will break down all barriers that may exist between us (Eph 2:14–22), so that the one body may manifest the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph 4:3–5). The final end of God's mission is the renewal of the whole creation, when people of every nation bow in worship and acknowledge the majesty and sovereign will of God for ever and ever (Rev 7:9–12).