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Foundations Course

Spring term 2026

Mission and Evangelism

Journal

Five Marks of Mission

Tell: proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom (εὐαγγελίζω)

Teach: educate, baptise and nurture new believers

Tend: respond to human need with loving service

Transform: change unjust structures of society, challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation

Treasure: strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth

Journal 2

"All of the Anglican 'Marks of Mission' are about treasuring God's creation. Without the fifth mark, none of the others work." In your journal, reflect on this quote - do you agree? Why/not? Also, say in your journal how you are already involved in looking after creation. Write down some ideas about how you could join in with other people to make sure creation is looked after better?

An indivisible whole

The five marks, today, make up one indivisible whole. They are not items on a menu that we can pick and choose at will. In my first journal I established (for myself) that by dint of being a Christian I am a missionary, and as a missionary I must adopt the five marks of mission, not some sub-set.

Yet, reflecting on 1 Corinthians 12, it is clear that each of us, in the body of Christ, has a specific gift or calling. This means, for example, that while some would excel at teaching, others may excel at confronting injustice, but still we do not discard those marks that are not our primary focus. Each Christian, each missionary will live and practice all five marks to one degree or another. There are none that can be dispensed with.

A controversial statement

The statement, *"Without the fifth mark, none of the others work"* is interesting, and somewhat controversial. Given that it was the last of the five added, around six years after the first four were established, it rather implies that all mission work for those six years was worthless—which is clearly not true. More accurate perhaps would be to say that without the *first mark*, none of the others would make sense—certainly none of the others would be specifically Christian.

Anyone of any faith, or no faith, can (and many do) tend to their fellow human, transform unjust structures, and nurture creation (even if they don't call it "creation"), but without proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom, these would fail to be acts of Christian mission.

Teaching lies on the cusp of this division. If teaching follows from Telling and is purely focused on educating people about the work of Jesus and Christian faith, then

it is equal to Telling. But again secular people teach—they teach all kinds of things, even religion.²

Creation

From another perspective, it is becoming clearer and clearer each year that if we don't *strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth*, then nothing else much matters. We cannot tend to human needs or confront injustice if the ecosystem itself has collapsed. The earth, the entire cosmos is God's creation, so to neglect any part of it is to fail to live up to God's mission, and there is a danger that our telling, teaching, tending, and transforming are carried out from self-interest, ego or self-aggrandisement.

My own involvement

And yet I am aware I am not doing all I can to live out this fifth mark. I do the usual household activities of reducing, repurposing, reusing and recycling as much as is practically possible, and I teach my children to do the same. We actively seek out and buy household products that are “green and clean” But beyond that I am in no way an ecological activist. My own calling is more towards tending and transforming, which sometimes involves teaching.

My wife does better, actively studying zoology and ecology, with a view to finding employment in the field of species preservation, conservation and the protection of biodiversity. I'm a freeloader on her calling, but I am not called myself into this work. Although, I could argue that by being the sole family breadwinner I enable this work to be carried out, as without my income she would not have the time or freedom to be so invested.

There are of course many opportunities to engage in active work to safeguard and sustain our living planet, but it would be disingenuous of me to claim I'm going to do anything more at this time in my life, beyond just paying better attention, and focussing on the small decisions—Fairy Liquid or the slightly more expensive Ecover? Loose bananas or the more convenient plastic-bagged version? If we each paid attention to the small decisions, perhaps the big initiatives would start taking care of themselves.

² I was given a Bible, and taught how to read it by a non-Christian. I am forever grateful.