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Title: Adopt Five Marks of Mission

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The following document was downloaded from the Internet on September 2, 2011, and is provided as a PDF document for educational reference and personal use only. It is a copy of "The Five Marks of Mission," authored and published by the Anglican Consultative Council and endorsed by the 76th General Convention of The Episcopal Church. For more information, see <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/ministry/mission/fivemarks.cfm>.

Mission - The Five Marks of Mission

The Mission of the Church is the mission of Christ

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
To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth
(*Bonds of Affection*-1984 ACC-6 p49, *Mission in a Broken World*-1990 ACC-8 p101)

Reviewing the 'Five Marks of Mission'

At its second meeting (Ely 1996), MISSIO began reviewing the '*Five Marks of Mission*' as developed by the Anglican Consultative Council between 1984 and 1990. We recognise with gratitude that the Five Marks have won wide acceptance among Anglicans, and have given parishes and dioceses around the world a practical and memorable "checklist" for mission activities.

However, we have come to believe that, as our Communion travels further along the road towards being mission-centred, the Five Marks need to be revisited.

Mission: Announcing good news

The first mark of mission, identified at ACC-6 with personal evangelism, is really a summary of what *all* mission is about, because it is based on Jesus' own summary of his mission (Matthew 4:17, Mark 1:14-15, Luke 4:18, Luke 7:22; cf. John 3:14-17). Instead of being just one (albeit the first) of five distinct activities, this should be the key statement about *everything* we do in mission.

Mission in context

All mission is done in a particular setting - the context. So, although there is a fundamental unity to the good news, it is shaped by the great diversity of places, times and cultures in which we live, proclaim and embody it. The Five Marks should not lead us to think that there are only five ways of doing mission!

Mission as celebration and thanksgiving

An important feature of Anglicanism is our belief that worship is central to our common life. But worship is not just something we do alongside our witness to the good news: worship is itself a witness to the world. It is a sign that all of life is holy, that hope and meaning can be found in offering ourselves to God (cf. Romans 12:1). And each time we celebrate the eucharist, we proclaim Christ's death until he comes (1 Cor. 11:26). Our liturgical life is a vital dimension of our mission calling; and although it is not included in the Five Marks, it undergirds the forms of public witness listed there.

Mission as church

The Five Marks stress the *doing* of mission. Faithful action is the measure of our response to Christ (cf. Matt. 25:31-46; James 2:14-26). However, the challenge facing us is not just to *do* mission but *to be a people of mission*. That is, we are learning to allow every dimension of church life to be shaped and directed by our identity as a sign, foretaste and instrument of God's reign in Christ. Our understanding of mission needs to make that clear.

Mission as God-in-action

"Mission goes out from God. Mission is God's way of loving and saving the world... So mission is never our invention or choice." (Lambeth Conference 1998, Section II p121). The initiative in mission is God's, not ours. We are called simply to serve God's mission by living and proclaiming the good news. The Five Marks of Mission could make that clearer.

The Five Marks of Mission and beyond

We commend to each Province (and its dioceses) the challenge of developing or revising its own understanding of mission which is faithful to Scripture. We suggest two possible ways forward.

- The Five Marks could be revised to take account of comments like those above. This has the advantage of retaining the familiar shape of the Five Marks.
- Alternatively a holistic statement of mission *actions* could be strengthened by setting out an understanding of the *character* of mission. This would affirm the solemn responsibility of each local church to discern how it will most faithfully serve God's mission in its context. An example of such an understanding is given below.

Mission is the creating, reconciling and transforming action of God, flowing from the community of love found in the Trinity, made known to all humanity in the person of Jesus, and entrusted to the faithful action and witness of the people of God who, in the power of the Spirit, are a sign, foretaste and instrument of the reign of God. (Adapted from a statement of the Commission on Mission of the National Council of Churches in Australia.)

Whatever words or ideas each local expression of our Church uses, MISSIO hopes that they will be informed by three convictions:

- We are united by our commitment to serving the transforming mission of God.
- Mission is the bedrock of all we are, do and say as the people of God.
- Our faithfulness in mission will be expressed in a great diversity of mission models, strategies and practices.

Discussion Question

If you were to ask people in leadership positions in your Province (diocese, parish) whether they see mission as "the bedrock of all we are, do and say as the people of God", how do you think they would answer?

Anglicans In Mission (MISSIO report 1999)

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