

GLOBAL SOUTH CONFERENCE
THE 6TH TRUMPET, CAIRO 2016

THE CHALLENGE OF 'MISSION TO THE WORLD'

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 We count it an immense privilege to collaborate on this Bible reflection for the assembly of church leaders at the Global South Conference. Hopefully, combining the field experiences of Africa and South East Asia adds depth and width to the application of biblical perspective and principles on this vast topic.

1.2 What is the Church's "mission to the world"? Clearly, the Church's mission must derive from God's mission to the world. For the Church is not to design her own mission but rather to participate in God's mission. That is how the Bible presents it. The book of Acts is strictly-speaking not the acts of the apostles but the continuing acts of Jesus Christ, now as the risen Lord and appointed King of the universe, wonderfully present and working through His Spirit-empowered Church (Acts 1:1-9).

1.3 The Mission of God is the redemption and re-creation of the entire, fallen created order. The saving work of God which is fundamental to accomplish this mission is the finished work of Jesus Christ on the Cross. By His death and bodily resurrection, Jesus has launched the new creation. He has brought about the age of God's reign in saving love over man and the whole universe. This new age is what the Bible refers to as 'the Kingdom of God'.

1.4 The Kingdom of God was what the people of God in the Old Testament longed for. It referred to a coming age in which God will establish His righteous rule fully and the world would be no longer marred by sin and injustice, nor death and decay. The good news and the surprising news announced by the apostles is that the Kingdom of God has begun in human history with the arrival of Jesus and the accomplishment of His work on the Cross. Two things mark the arrival of God's Kingdom or the turning of the ages; namely the bodily resurrection of Jesus and the gift of the Spirit to all who come to saving faith in Him. (Acts 2:58; Rom 8:9-11; 2 Cor 2:22; Eph 1:14). The Kingdom is inaugurated by Jesus but it is not yet complete. It will be completed by Jesus at His second coming when all evil will be expunged and the whole cosmos (ie the new heavens and the earth) becomes the home of righteousness (2 Pet 3:13).

1.5 In the time between our Lord's first and second coming, the Church as the redeemed people of God is entrusted with the mission of ushering people into the Kingdom of God and with extending the Kingdom of God and His righteousness in the here and now of human history. In this sense, the Church's mission to the world is broader than 'world evangelisation'.

1.6 It is significant that in the 40 days between our Lord's resurrection and ascension, the one subject matter that He speaks to His disciples about is 'the Kingdom of God'.

1.7 The mission of the Church is to extend the Kingdom of God, embodied and established by Jesus in the hearts and lives of people, in the social order of the nations and indeed in the whole complex of life in God's created universe. It is a Kingdom marked by the practice of righteousness, justice and compassion and by the experience of love, joy and peace in the Holy Spirit (Is 42:1-4; Rom 14:17).

1.8 What does this mission involve? Three dimensions to this mission can be traced from and reflected on from selected passages in the book of Acts:

A. Proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ Faithfully (Acts 2)

- B. Overcome the Hostility of the Enemy Boldly (Acts 4)
- C. Shine the Light of God's Rule Winsomely (Acts 13)

2. PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST FAITHFULLY

(a) Proclaim with Love and Joy

2.1 The Gospel of Jesus Christ is a message of the Gift of Peace: Peace between God and man, peace between man and his neighbour, peace within himself and peace with the ordering of God's creation (Gen 1-2). It is a peace experienced by those who come to saving faith in Jesus Christ. Believing the Gospel brings peace and the capacity for a transformed life. That is the power of the Gospel. That is the good news. There is forgiveness and newness of life in Jesus. That is the greatest news the world will ever hear!

2.2 We are to proclaim this good news with the burning love and exceeding joy of the Holy Spirit. Significantly, the Spirit comes upon the disciples in the upper room in tongues of fire (Acts 2:1-11). Their hearts melt in the fire of God's love and they experience a hitherto unknown depth of love for God, for one another and for other persons. (cf Zinzendorf & the Moravians at Herrnhut 1727). And the Spirit gives them the supernatural ability to speak in languages native to the multi-national groups that had gathered around them. It was a fire of divine love that brought about communication and connection with others. It was a very different fire from the fire of judgement that James and John had threatened to call down on Samaritan village folk who had antagonistically refused Jesus hospitality during his earlier itinerant ministry (Lk 9:51-56).

(b) Proclaim by Presenting Truth to the Mind

2.3 The proclamation of the Gospel is presented in the New Testament as persuading others to believe (cf Acts 19:28; 1 Cor 2:13). Gospel proclamation involves the presentation of truth to the mind, with the goal that a person's will and heart will lovingly embrace and submit to Jesus as Lord and Saviour.

2.4 We observe in Acts 2 that the phenomenon of the disciples ecstatically proclaiming the wonders of God in languages they were supernaturally enabled to speak led to the question: 'What does this mean?' (Acts 2:7) And it takes Peter to present the truth to them by assembling the Hebrew scriptures to point out that Jesus is indeed the promised Messiah: *"Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified"* (Acts 2:36). Hence, Peter invites them to turn to Jesus for the forgiveness of sins (ie man's exile from God is ended) and newness of life which is enabled by the Holy Spirit and which lasts endlessly (Acts 2:38).

2.5 We see this presentation of truth to the mind also operating in Paul's testimony to the Gospel when addressing Gentiles. In the case of the pagan Athenians, he begins with their altar 'to an unknown God' and proceeds to proclaim the one Creator-God over all mankind who has now acted decisively for 'people everywhere' by appointing Jesus as Saviour and Judge of the whole world (Acts 17:22-34).

2.6 Both Peter and Paul are seeking to persuade their respective audiences to trust in Jesus, by speaking 'true and rational words' (Acts 26:25). They are not relying on rhetorical skills or worldly standards of wisdom but drawing attention to the Person of Jesus, to His death and resurrection as public events in space-time history (cf Acts 26:26) and to the power of transformation when one believes the Gospel (Rom 1:16-17).

(c) Proclaim the Message in its Entirety

2.7 The faithful proclamation of the Gospel requires that we convey the Gospel message in its entirety. In particular, we need to convey (i) the ethical component of the Gospel; and (ii) the final triumph of Christ over the powers of evil.

2.8 It is abundantly clear that the Gospel the apostles proclaimed required repentance and a turning to the right ways under the loving rule of God. Peter calls on his audience 'to save yourselves from this crooked generation' (Acts 2:40) and Paul unsettles Festus the Governor by speaking not only of the hope that comes with the bodily resurrection of Jesus but by reasoning with him about "righteousness and self-control and the coming judgement" (Acts 24:25). We are not to compromise the ethical concomitants of the Gospel.

2.9 Believing in Jesus brings with it a commitment to the divine patterns God has established for humankind. The present controversy about sexuality and the drift towards making pastoral provisions for same-sex relationships cannot obscure that what is involved is a fundamental clash of doctrine. We must vigorously contend for the truth out of true love for our fellow human being and for future generations. This must be balanced by a compassionate reaching out to those who are sexually broken and astray. We do this by holding forth to them the invitation to a new lifestyle pleasing to God and made possible by the power of the Cross ministered through the Holy Spirit.

2.10 If the Kingdom of God has come in the Person of Jesus, and God's reign in righteousness has begun in salvation-historical terms, why is Satan and the powers of darkness seemingly in the ascendancy in the world today? How can we proclaim the victory of the Cross in the face of the resilience of evil and its parasitic spread, with the evidence of darkness and destruction before us each day? We can because the message of the Cross carries with it the tremendous truth that God harnesses evil, even in its most heinous form (cf unjust trial and horrendous crucifixion of Jesus), to serve His salvation purposes. The dawning of the new age in human history came with the drawing out and absorption of evil at its worst.

2.11 Secondly, we can continue to proclaim the victory of the Cross as a certainty which will be made evident when Christ returns in glory to vanquish all evil for all time and establish the new heaven and the new earth. In the midst of all the chaos, uprooting and destruction in the world today (which can be seen as the judgement of God on an arrogantly rebellious world), we can hold out the hope of Jeremiah (Jer 30:33) when faced with a similar 'state of the world' condition.

2.12 We must learn to weep with Jeremiah at what rebellious man has done to God's world: the immense pain and suffering of the human race together with the defacing and marring of the created order. And then we must learn to authentically hold out the hope that God will 'plant after uprooting and build after destroying' (cf Jer 1:10). The Lord will install a new and beautiful order where death, darkness and decay are extinguished, where God will wipe away every tear from the eyes of the redeemed (Rev 7: 15-17) and where every knee will bow and every tongue confess that 'Jesus is Lord' (Phil 2: 9-11).

2.13 The Church today works for the renewal of the earth, inspite of the rampant injustices and forces of destruction, because we know with certainty that one day the whole cosmos will be co-extensive with the Kingdom of God. Hence, we go on working to extend God's Kingdom in the present fallen world because we have learnt to look at the present disorder from the vantage point of a glorious, consummated End (Rev 4-5).

(d) Proclaim the Truth with Attendant Signs and Wonders

2.14 God in His mercy provides signs that the Kingdom (which is to come in its fullness) is already breaking into human history. That is why the book of Acts is full of healing and deliverance as well as supernatural events that are the signs and wonders which accompany the preaching of the Gospel in the in-between time till Christ comes again. These signs and wonders display the supremacy of the power of the Name of Jesus (Acts 2: 45) and they challenge the false consciousness of secularism that we live in a closed universe of natural cause and effect. Rather, creation is porous and God is free to act supernaturally in His world according to His purpose and glory.

2.15 Signs and wonders are not intended by God to create a wrong triumphalism or to foster an over-realised eschatology. But they are intended by God to demonstrate the breaking-in of God's Kingdom in Jesus, to challenge people's world views, to minister to human need and to exalt the Name of the unique Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord. May the Holy Spirit enable more and more of His Church to proclaim the Gospel with signs attending.

(e) Proclaim the Truth as a Community of Disciples

2.16 The Gospel is proclaimed not only in words but in the quality of our personal lives as Christians and in the corporate witness of our communal life as the people of God. Indeed, one may conclude from the record of the New Testament, that the Gospel is best proclaimed by spiritually vibrant, witnessing and discipling local churches (Acts 2:42-47).

⁴² And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ⁴³ And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. ⁴⁴ And all who believed were together and had all things in common. ⁴⁵ And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶ And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

2.17 We can deduce from the above passage that when these four elements are in place for a local church: orderly teaching (discipling), genuine fellowship, reverential and adoring worship, together with fervent, communal prayer, then the Christian community will naturally open up to all others, bearing winsome witness to those around them, caring for those in need and telling the story of Jesus and His love. The result of such a Spirit-filled community is the advance of Christ's Kingdom and the growth of the Church by the regular addition of people coming to faith. What a reality to aim for in the power of the Spirit!

3. OVERCOME THE HOSTILITY OF THE ENEMY BOLDLY

(a) Kingdom Advance will be Opposed

3.1 The mission of the Church to extend the Kingdom of God will not go unopposed. Satan, the enemy of God, is allowed to wreck destruction and oppose the Church although he has been defeated and put on a leash since the victory of God on the Cross (Rev 12:7-17).

Satan infiltrates institutions and takes hold of power-hungry leaders to deny and oppose God's rule of righteousness, justice and compassion. The devil looks for gaps and footholds in the church that he can exploit to exacerbate evil. He even assaults the minds of Christians.

3.2 Satan attacks in various ways God's true people because they are the chief means by which God's Kingdom extends and renews the whole of creation. Whenever and wherever the Gospel is truly proclaimed there will be opposition: some will believe, some will turn away, some will react with hostility. This is clear from the reaction of the Jewish authorities to Jesus in the Gospel accounts as well as to the apostles in the book of Acts. The apostles were imprisoned and the authorities sought to intimidate them by threatening them with physical punishment (Acts 4:1-22). Not much has changed over the centuries. The world that is organised in opposition to the Kingdom of God seeks to put down the Church today with bullets or derision.

(b) Christians Overcome Fear through Prayer

3.3 We learn from the early church how to respond to the intimidation of the enemy:

When they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. ²⁴ And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, "Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, ²⁵ who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit,

*"Why did the Gentiles rage,
and the peoples plot in vain?*

*²⁶ The kings of the earth set themselves,
and the rulers were gathered together,
against the Lord and against his Anointed'*

²⁷ for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, ²⁸ to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. ²⁹ And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, ³⁰ while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus." ³¹ And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.

(Acts 4:23-31. ESV)

3.4 To gain boldness in the face of intimidation and hostility we need to behold how mighty our God is. And the prayer of the early Church in Acts 4 demonstrates this. The God we serve is the awesome God of creation by whose word the whole cosmos was created (v24). He is also the Sovereign Lord of history whose purposes will never fail. This is because He is in control of all events and His power is limitless. No human power or scheme of the enemy can thwart the plan of God. He even harnesses evil to serve His salvation purposes (vv27-28). With such a vision of God, the early disciples poured their hearts out to Him in prayer and became emboldened to go preaching and extending God's Kingdom whatever the consequences (29-31).

3.5 The apostle Paul knew intimidation, persecution, humiliation and suffering, but he refused to give up. He searched out people of all faiths: Jews, worshippers of pagan idols, and those who served an "unknown god". Always, under all circumstances, his concern, his aim, his reason for living was to "press on" with this Gospel:

"Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own" (Phil.3:12).

The Gospel had so caught and transformed him, that he knew that no person, no situation and no circumstances were beyond its power.

(c) The Example of Jesus

3.6 The suffering of Jesus Christ was because he confronted the powers of hell, of death and of Satan himself. He suffered, but he had to do so in order to rescue a people from death to life, from darkness to light, from hell to heaven. He suffered in order to set on course an irreversible trend of transformation of history, people, lives and communities. God loves the world and humanity so much that he could not leave us in sin for ever. The direct practical implication is that whoever is going to become involved in redeeming the world must face bitter confrontation and even death. Jesus literally went through all this so that today we are the direct beneficiaries of this huge price that God had to pay as his only Son suffered and died our death. The fact in all this is that Jesus rose from the dead triumphantly on the third day and ascended to heaven, to his throne as the Saviour, Redeemer and Judge.

3.7 The Church follows her Lord in the way of the Cross. As Christians, we too go to resurrection by way of trials, oppression and suffering. "The testimony of Jesus ... (points to) a mysterious truth: evil destroys itself when it attacks God's true people. A suffering Church is crucial to the renewal of creation" (Dennis Lennon in Scripture Union, Daily Notes on Rev 4-12).

(d) No Room for Christians to Engage in Violence or Retaliation

3.8 There is no Gospel if all that is seen is destruction. There is no Gospel if man is not reconciled to God and man is not reconciled to man. There is no Gospel if peace from God the Father is not brought to man and if peace is not given from man to man. There is absolutely no room for revenge or retaliation or vengeance in the Gospel.

3.9 Rather, the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the power of God, so that whoever believes in the Gospel, no matter what the nationality or locality or background of that person is, the fruit of the Gospel will be seen in his or her life. And the fruit will be seen in righteousness, holiness, service, development, health, physical and spiritual blessings that mark the person's life in the community. The Christian Gospel does not destroy: it builds and brings life in all its fullness to everybody without discrimination of race or sex, age or background. That is the belief and practice as the Church overcomes the hostility faced in North-East Nigeria.

(e) The Need of the Hour in a Conflict-Escalating World

3.10 The test of who Christians are is now! We must be bold to stand up now when it matters most. We are to be builders, not destroyers, and the mandate of Almighty God on us as leaders is to build lives intellectually, spiritually and physically. We must build all people and particularly the young people and give them a hope for the future. Let us rise to resist destruction and all that destroys life, environment and community.

3.11 Surely by sitting down at table, over time, through careful and skilful negotiations we can arrive at meaningful agreements and equitable arrangements. Throughout history, violence has never been a popular means of reaching any reasonable agreement. Dialogue and negotiations build trust, reduce tension and are far cheaper than violence. The cost of one modern weapon can provide employment and one year's salary for any unemployed youth. Good governance, a good legal system, and good law enforcement must be in place to guarantee the achievement of our collective will.

4. SHINE THE LIGHT OF GOD'S RULE WINSOMELY

(a) Called to be 'a Light to the Nations'

4.1 In the early church, as the missionary movement moves out into the nations of the Mediterranean world and beyond, the missionary bands became conscious that they were fulfilling God's call for His people to be "a-light to the nations". (Acts 13:44-52)

44 The next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. 45 But when the Jews^[a] saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began to contradict what was spoken by Paul, reviling him. 46 And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, "It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. 47 For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, "I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth." 48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed. 49 And the word of the Lord was spreading throughout the whole region. 50 But the Jews incited the devout women of high standing and the leading men of the city, stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district. 51 But they shook off the dust from their feet against them and went to Iconium. 52 And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.
(Acts 13:44-52, ESV)

4.2 It has been pointed out that the Isianic prophecy of 'the servant of the Lord' (Is 42:1-7; 49:1-7, cf Luke 2:27-32) is fulfilled in Jesus Christ but not exhausted by Him. (Hugh Williamson in VARIATIONS ON A THEME: KING, MESSIAH AND SERVANT IN THE BOOK OF ISAIAH). The Church then is to continue the ministry of 'the servant of the Lord' in her life and witness. Hence, Paul and Barnabas in their missionary visit to Pisidian Antioch see themselves as "being a light to the nations" by bringing the Gospel message to a Gentile city.

4.3 In keeping with God's purpose that the Church should continue the mission and ministry of 'the servant of the Lord', Jesus says to His disciples in the context of the Sermon on the Mount:

*"You are the salt of the earth ...
You are the light of the world
Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."* (Mt 5:13-16)

4.4 Christians individually and as the people of God together, are to shine the light of God's saving rule in the nations they are a part of. How are they to shine this light? The words of our Lord in Mt 5 and re-inforced by the New Testament Epistles point to two primary ways: (i) authentic holiness and (ii) good works.

(b) The Beauty of Holiness

4.5 It is holiness which adorns the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. This holiness is both personal and communal. The beauty of holiness in a sin-marred world is to be seen in the personal, everyday lives of Christians – in their character and conduct in their families, in their workplace, the market-place and public square. We are redeemed to be re-made in the image of God and therefore to grow in godliness, integrity and the beauty of holiness. The social ethics practised by Christians and their "manner of life" are to be of the highest order as a witness to the truthfulness of the Gospel and its tremendous transforming power (1 Peter 3:15, Eph 5:7-11)

4.6 Very importantly, holiness and ethics must characterize the communal life of the Church. This is to be at all levels of church life: from the local parish church to the national church and to the global fellowship as well. The New Testament has so much to say about how Christians ought to relate to one another in the fellowship of the Church (Gal 5:19-6:5; Col 3:5-17; 1 Jn 3:16-20) and to how the Church itself is to be a foretaste and expression of the community with God as King. May we repent of so much back-biting, rivalry, under-handed ways and quest for vain glory in the Church today.

(c) The Witness of Good Works

4.7 The other aspect of shining the light of the Kingdom in our darkened world is through a life of 'good works' or 'doing good'. By 'doing good', we are to extend the righteous, just and compassionate rule of God.

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. ¹⁰ Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers. (Gal 6:9-10, NIV)

Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us. (1 Pet 2:12, NIV)

4.8 Clearly then, the Church is to engage the society and to 'seek the welfare of the city' (Jer 29:11). We are to do this by our responsible participation and active service in the life of the community and nation that God has set us in. This 'doing good' in a society will include:

- (i) Ministry to the poor and needy (Gal 2:10), including care for the displaced people of the world (cf Deut 10:19, 24:14, 17-22).
- (ii) Provision of educational, medical and community services to promote the common good.
- (iii) Faithful witness to and advocacy in the public square for moral values and social ethics in line with God's Kingdom values and divine patterns which preserve the sanctity of life, the worth of personhood, justice and compassion in God's world.
- (iv) The envisioning and energising of our respective nations to move towards a picture of the future when their society practises Kingdom values (cf Walter Brueggemann in THE PROPHETIC IMAGINATION).
- (v) Creation care: The care for the natural and physical environment as stewards of God's world (Gen 1:28 - 2:15; cf Jer 4:22-27).

d) Room for Co-operation with Other Religions and Civic Organisations in Promoting the Common Good

4.9 In the history of all nations of the world, religion has played some wonderful parts and has sometimes played some terrible and ugly parts. However, in spite of the dark parts in its history, the common purpose of every religion remains unchanged and unchangeable:

- to seek justice, to establish righteousness, to care for the poor, the strangers, the widows and orphans;
- to see to it that human activities are governed justly;
- to see to the healthy building of communities, and in so doing to make the beauty of religion attractive to the careless, the unbeliever and even the atheist.

Religion throughout history, in doing this, has furthered the cause of good and qualitative education, health care development for communities, healthy political development, and has provided arbitrators in difficult crisis periods in different communities.

4.10 It is common knowledge, however, that religion in many countries now, whether Muslim or Christian, has fallen short of the original gift and intention of religion. We must be honest and restore and bring back to the path of truth what has gone wrong. Any religion that is not promoting peaceful co-existence, dialogue, human development, contributing to the 'social capital' development of its community, seeking to establish righteousness and justice and providing care for the poor, for strangers, for orphans and widows - such a religion is suspect. We are inheritors of great and wonderful practices of religion - the type of religion that established schools, health care, a strong and vibrant work-force, in both public and private sectors to the extent that there was no hard line dichotomy between religions when it came to community building and societal involvement. However, over time, this is being lost.

As Christians, we must rise to restore and promote honest religious practices which contribute meaningfully to the development of people in all spheres of life (Mic 6:8). In so doing those whose interest is different from the original intention of religions across the world will be exposed and their evil intentions will have no place - sooner or later.

(e) Room for a Stepped-Up Role in Social Care

4.11 It is true that in an increasingly polarized world prone to violence and the persecution of targeted groups, the number of sufferers – the poor, the displaced, the widows and the orphans – has increased dramatically. The Church is the one institution which should know how and what to do in all such circumstances.

4.12 At present the Church in parts of Northern Nigeria is facing an increased problem of refugees and internally displaced persons. The aim is to resettle displaced persons back in their homelands as soon as conditions become favourable for their return. Therefore, rather than leaving everyone in camps, Christians are encouraged to provide hospitality; church schools offer free places for children, or provide scholarships to other institutions; one Christian school even provides over 400 vulnerable children with free education, free meals, and free health care. It should be noted that people in such circumstances are very open to the Gospel, and they take God seriously, thus giving opportunities for evangelism and discipleship.

4 CONCLUSION

(a) The Response Needed

5.1 In the course of addressing the challenge of the Church's mission to the world, we find that we need a renewed vision of:

- (i) the Kingdom of God and how to extend it in the world
- (ii) the Glory of God and how He is in supreme control of world history
- (iii) the Church of God and how she is to be a beautiful light to the nations.

5.2 In terms of practical, concrete action, we need to:

- (i) Build strong and vibrant parish churches
- (ii) Strengthen the collective witness of God's faithful people (across denominations) in our respective cities and nations.
- (iii) Establish structures and processes in the Communion to be a global fellowship for faith, order and mission that is in accordance with God's Word.

(b) The Power Provided

5.3 The task of 'mission to the world' can be seen biblically as the "edenisation of a fallen world" (Ezek 36:33-36). Through Jesus Christ, God has redeemed and is re-creating man and the cosmos. He is restoring His divine intentions and His divine patterns when He first created the world (Gen 1:1 – 2:25). Pictorially, He is transforming the dry, brutalized and devastated landscape to the Edenic garden of man and woman joyfully and harmoniously at work among the fruit trees watered by the freely flowing river.

5.4 The task of transformation is enormous, long-term and beyond human capacity. Hence, the indispensable need of the Church and the Christian to fulfill this mandate is for the power of the Holy Spirit:

Then he said to me, "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD of hosts. (Zech 4:6, ESV)

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." (Acts 1:8, ESV)

(c) The Legacy Received

5.5 It is not by coincidence that we are gathered in God's presence here in Egypt. 'Egypt' can stand for a number of spiritual realities in the whole biblical discourse. Two aspects seem to stand out in the context of our gathering at the present time of world history and also the life of our Communion:

- (i) Egypt was the place of refuge and formation for the patriarchs (Gen 12:10) and even the holy family (Mt 2:13-15)
- (ii) The movement towards the promised land of God's rule over His people began in Egypt (Ex 12:31-42).

5.6 The prophet Hosea captures the poignancy of God's faithful people being called out of Egypt, and Matthew sees its perfect fulfilment in Jesus Christ, God's perfect Servant and Son.
"When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son." (Hos 11:1, NIV)

5.7 Our Lord Jesus Christ is leading His Church "out of Egypt" today to fulfil the legacy of blessing the world with the riches of living under the rule of our mighty God and Saviour.