



July 19th 2020
Reflection Two on
Acts c13 v 1 to 48
God's Mission: His
leadership, our
worship

Mission is what God does to put the world to rights. As we see in C14 v27 Paul and Barnabas reported to the church all that God had done through them and how He had opened the door to the Gentiles. And as we read in C13 it was the Holy Spirit's decision to send out Barnabas and Saul [as he was still then known] for the work for which He had called them. And this work as Jesus told Ananias, is to be "my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel." Mission is what God does and He invites and indeed instructs His church to join Him in His work. [see the great co-mission]

In thinking of mission we tend to think of it as something separate from worship. Yet it was while the church was worshipping and fasting that the Holy Spirit acted to call out Barnabas and Paul for His mission. Worship, fasting and prayer express our love commitment to God, a visible sign of the living reality of 1st commandment in our lives, the living self-sacrifice of our lives making ourselves available to God for His purposes. If God's mission agents are not committed to worshipping the Head of the Church in the fellowship of the Body of the Church what message are they sending out as missionaries?

The fact that worship is mission means that we exhibit an open door policy. We are here. And whatever other outreach we do all our outreach begins with how we greet new people coming to seek God in our worship, in our church building. Think for example of Barbara and Priscilla who in their different ways were drawn to visit us and found a Godly welcome amongst us. Research shows that it is by the church's welcome that people are encouraged to return to church, or discouraged never to return. Mission begins at the door of our worship welcome.

But in this coronavirus crisis we are not yet in the building. We're on-line folks! People we may never meet at our door may be worshipping with us on-line. This raises new questions about our future worship. Some of these are technical and Nick and Laura have shared some really helpful thoughts on that with me for sharing with the deacons, as also have Jo and Graham, who run our website for us. But the big issue is not our technology but the style and the content of what we offer on-line.

Our building-centred face to face worship which has worked for us in the past needs to be developed into a model that will effectively bring on-line people to the Lord today. The methods of yesterday may not be effective for tomorrow's mission, and so for the sake of God's mission purpose we may have to embrace the pain of giving up our old mission methods. But our comfort is that it's not the method we use that matters but the mission God calls us to do. Paul says of David that he served the purposes of God in his own generation. That's what we are called to do and we can trust that when we seek God's kingdom, He will open the door to the Gentiles

Recognising that worship is something we all make together I'm inviting you to offer ideas, explore possibilities, and connect with me and each other through zoom to start working out what might work for us.

Let's pause and praise God in song, singing All for Jesus, which may not be the one you expect it to be. An illustration of the our reflection – the song may be different but our worship still lives.

Nick