

Scriptural Foundations for Missional and Incarnational Church

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God is **relational, missional, and incarnational**. That God is a calling-out and sending-forth God intent, through the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ, on being an incarnational presence in creation is the over-arching force driving the Scriptural narrative and the unfolding of human history.

This can be traced throughout Scripture:

Genesis 1:28 God blessed them, and God said to them, "**Be fruitful and multiply, and fill** the earth and **subdue** it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."

Genesis 12:1-3 Now the LORD said to Abram, "**Go** from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ² I will make of you a great nation, and *I will bless you*, and make your name great, *so that you will be a blessing*. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you *all the families of the earth* shall be blessed."

Exodus 3:16-17 "**Go** and assemble the elders of Israel, and say to them, 'The LORD, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me, saying: I have given heed to you and to what has been done to you in Egypt. ¹⁷ I declare that I will bring you up out of the misery of Egypt, to the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, a land flowing with milk and honey.'

Micah 6:7-8 ⁷ Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" ⁸ He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

Amos 5:21-24 ²¹ I hate, I despise your festivals, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. ²² Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals I will not look upon. ²³ Take away from me the noise of your songs; I will not listen to the melody of your harps. ²⁴ But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

Jeremiah 31:31-34 ³¹ The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ³² It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt-- a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. ³³ But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my

law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴ No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, "Know the LORD," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

John 13:31-35 When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. ³² If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. ³³ Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.' ³⁴ I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

John 20:19-22 When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. ²¹ Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." ²² When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

Matthew 28:18-20 ¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Acts 11:15-18 And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as it had upon us at the beginning. ¹⁶ And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' ¹⁷ If then God gave them the same gift that he gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could hinder God?" ¹⁸ When they heard this, they were silenced. And they praised God, saying, "Then God has given even to the Gentiles the repentance that leads to life."

Acts 13:1-3 Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a member of the court of Herod the ruler, and Saul. ² While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." ³ Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

Acts 16:6-10 They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. ⁷ When they had come opposite Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them; ⁸ so, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas. ⁹ During the night Paul had a vision: there stood a man of Macedonia pleading with him and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." ¹⁰ When he had seen the

vision, we immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia, being convinced that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them.

Acts 20:22 And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there.

Church—*ekklesia*—“the called-out ones”

Chronologically, first use of the word in the NT in **1 Thessalonians 1:1**...

*Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the **church** of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.*

1 Corinthians 1:2...

*To **the church of God** that is in Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours...*

- church belongs to God who brought it into existence—not simply a human association or religious club but a divinely-created entity
- “of God”: God is source of church’s life and existence, summoning people to himself through the preaching of Christ crucified, forms them into his church
 - rhythm of calling in/sending out

Romans 12:1...

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

- although universally claimed Christians meet together in church to worship God, Paul insists we are meant to worship him in every aspect of life
 - individual, collective sphere of influence
- purpose and function of church, therefore, not worship alone but upbuilding and edification: *oikodome*
 - means growth and progress of God’s people...to what end?

Ephesians 4:11-13...

¹¹ *The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers,* ¹² *to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,* ¹³ *until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.*

- to what end?... works of service for building up the body of Christ
- “body of Christ”: all believers, not just one congregation

Church @ Antioch as a case study: Acts 11:19-26; 13:1-3

In early church, goal of mission was not evangelism (to save individuals) though it involves this, but to call out a people in God’s name

- Antioch third largest city in ancient world, church founded by followers of Stephen exiled from Jerusalem
- here people first called Christians rather than Jewish followers of Christ or Gentiles (Acts 11:26)
- Barnabas sent by Jerusalem church (Acts 11:22) to keep an eye on events causing alarm to church in Jerusalem but ended up encouraging the believers
- no discrimination @ Antioch: Jews, uncircumcised Gentiles ate together (no parallel in ancient world to that time)
- eventually, through leadership of Paul, Barnabas, church became community with concern for people never met, sending missionaries (13:1ff)