

## HEARTBEATS Staying Connected 4-14-2021

**GO** *and Make Disciples*



Dear Friends in Christ,

In the church, we talk a lot about our mission. We develop mission statements, which often are transferable from one church to another because they are broad and general and fit just about every congregation. We also talk about vision statements which are more specific to each congregation in their context and would not be applicable to many other congregations. But I've come to the conclusion that there are some things that are not quite right about these kinds of statements. They are about us and what we want/should be doing. And what I want to say is this:

The church doesn't have a mission; God's mission has a church.

You see, we're starting from the wrong point, the wrong perspective. It's not about us and our mission. It's about God and God's mission. I've said before that God should not be the object of our sentences, as in "St. Andrew's mission for God." God should be the subject of our sentences: "God's mission through St. Andrew."

The church doesn't have a mission; God's mission has a church.

While the Bible talks about the church and gives a lot of information about being the church, establishing the church was not God's or Jesus' purpose in the world. Before Jesus ascended to heaven, He gave us a mission, recorded at the Great Commission in Matthew 28: "Go, make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them all I have commanded you." That is God's mission. Unfortunately, many churches have rewritten that mission, adjusting it a bit to "Go, make members..." But, while that may be the mission of many congregations, especially when the focus becomes getting enough money to run the church by getting more members, we have lost God's mission.

The church doesn't have a mission; God's mission has a church.

God's mission is not to make members; it is to make disciples. Toward that end, Christ's followers have formed into churches that baptize (the first part of the Great Commission from Matthew 28) and teach about Jesus (the second part of the Great Commission). The church is where God's mission—the Great Commission—should be completed. God's mission is designed to send us out into the world seeking disciples. Too often we have taken the attitude that, "if you build it, they will come." More often than not, it seems that, "if you build it, they will just drive by." We have to see that God's mission invites us to be making disciples every chance we get. The Great Commission begins with the word, "Go." Actually, that word is not an imperative or command; it is a preposition and should be translated, "while you are going," or "as you are going." So, God's mission for us is that while we are going to work, we should make disciples. As we are going to the store, we should make disciples. Everything we do should include looking for opportunities to make disciples, by telling people about Jesus and inviting them to God's church where they can learn more. That is God's mission for us and why we gather to carry out that mission as a church.

The church doesn't have a mission; God's mission has a church.

In Christ's love,  
Pastor Jeffrey