



Session 6

A Purpose Driven Church: Our MISSION

God's greater purpose is what shapes, drives and informs everything the church does, it is the context for everything we do together as the *Abundant Life Church*. So, if a particular church activity does not contribute towards achieving God's greater purpose, we should not be doing it.

To illustrate this, over the next two sessions we will explore the mission and vision statements of the *Abundant Life Church*. In this session we focus on the **mission** emphasis contained in them.

Our MISSION:

Everything we do at *Abundant Life Church* helps us to achieve at least one aspect of our mission.

This is expressed in a simple acronym based on the word **REED**. We developed this from *Revelation 11:1* where God asked John to take a reed and measure God's House. We believe that these four things are the 'measure' of how we should build the church; as such they constitute our mission.

- R**each the Lost
- E**stablish the Church
- E**quip the Saints
- D**isciple the Nations.

Our primary mission is therefore to '**reach the lost**'. We first and foremost seek to obey Jesus' command to:

'Go and 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 to obey everything I have commanded you.' (Matthew 28:18-20).

Our VISION:

We accomplish the **mission** by having a very clear **vision** towards which we are working.

This is summed up by '*The Church I See*', our vision statement, prepared by Pastor Paul Scanlon some years ago now. Here it is:

The Church I See...

THE CHURCH I SEE is God centred, purpose driven and people empowering.

THE CHURCH I SEE is exciting and full of life. It is a church that is both numerically large and spiritually deep.

THE CHURCH I SEE is non-religious, naturally supernatural and incredible fun to be in. It is a church of renowned character and integrity. A church whose number one priority is to glorify God and bring his wonderful life to a lost world.

THE CHURCH I SEE is attractive, confident, victorious and overcoming. It is a church whose powerful proclamation and awesome worship are broadcast to the nations by every modern means possible.

THE CHURCH I SEE equips, enables and releases ordinary people to live extraordinary lives.

THE CHURCH I SEE is a deeply committed, loving, caring, family amongst whom the lonely and the broken find new hope and belonging.

THE CHURCH I SEE could well be this church, the Abundant Life Church.

Paul Scanlon, Senior Pastor

This is the kind of church we are seeking to build. As we look forward, plan, strategise, reach the lost and build the church over time, this is what we see. We are not there yet but we are working towards it, one step and one day at a time.

Outworking the Mission

Our mission is to first reach the lost. If we don't do this, the vision can never be a reality! The vision is to have a large church, a growing church and one which takes 'God's wonderful life to a lost world'. So we must be reaching lost people all the time.

How do we do this? Well, there are potentially many answers to this question but they can all be summed up in just one. We outwork our mission to reach the lost by aiming to **do good** to all people. As the Bible says:

'Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people' (Galatians 6:10).

Every day is an opportunity to 'do good' for someone. We are here to make a difference in our community by loving people in practical ways. It is really simple, we can smile, encourage, help, give, support, empathise, share, write, hug, forgive, pray, be concerned, show interest in them... and more.

This then becomes the basis of developing friendships and relationships, which may or may not result in us leading a person to Christ. That is not the measure of our success or

failure at this stage, our aim is simply to do good to all people and in so doing, be just like Jesus! Of Jesus we read:

*'God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and he went around **doing good** and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.'* Acts 10:38

Because Jesus was good to people, they loved him. They began to listen to him and many eventually became his followers. But it started by simply doing good for people.

All of our community outreach ministries are rooted in this principle. They are the practical expression of God's love for people. Some ministries are openly evangelistic, others are simply vehicles for helping people – we simply do things to keep people alive so they can continue to have opportunity to hear the gospel and respond in due course.

Have a look at the Love Bradford, Love Belfast and Love Leeds links on the website to see what community ministries you could get involved with. And if there is a way of helping people not listed that you have a heart to develop, please contact our Community Outreach Director to chat about your ideas. Together we can help more people, reach more people and fulfil our mission.

The purpose of God therefore shapes, drives and informs our mission as a church. Think about how you can help us continue to reach the lost with the wonderful love of Christ by finding a need and filling it.