

Marks of Mission

What is mission? The word is used to cover so many aspects of church life, in fact almost everything we do, that it can become almost meaningless. That is why I sometimes prefer the word Growth, which at least we can see and measure. So in this diocese we encourage parishes to have Growth Action Plans, rather than the more vague Mission Action Plans that are seen in some other places.



However, we must not lose the word Mission, which is vital for our living faith. So what does it mean? The Anglican Communion (the C of E and its sister churches round the world) has come up with the **Five Marks of Mission**, which I think is a very good way to focus our minds. These are

- To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
- To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
- To respond to human need by loving service
- To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth

(Some people abbreviate these into Tell, Teach, Tend, Transform and Treasure. That doesn't do a lot for me, but if it helps you, use it!)

Taken together, and in their right order, these are a good summary of our calling as God's Church. Sadly, sometimes people just focus on one or two of the five, thereby losing the point that mission should cover all of life. The Anglican Communion website, in introducing the Five Marks, makes the point that the first mark, proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom, is talking about personal evangelism, and ***"instead of being just one, albeit the first, of five distinct activities, this should be the key statement about everything we do in mission."*** Similarly, former Archbishop Rowan Williams wrote that if we work towards any of the third, fourth, and fifth marks without doing the first and second, we are not doing Christian mission. In other words, the first two marks are at the very heart of what we should be doing; the last three are important once we are doing the first two.

I am asking our new Mission and Development Team, based at Bouverie Court, to help us all attend to the five marks, beginning with the first. Watch this space!

With best wishes

+Donald

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Donald". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Diocese of Peterborough - Magazine Resource – September 2017

Produced by the Diocesan Office, The Palace, Peterborough PE1 1YB

Tel: 01733 887000 Email: communications@peterborough-diocese.org.uk

www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk