

Called, Sent, Empowered –

A Theology of Mission



As a people claimed by the Spirit of the gospel, we believe that God desires to gather all creation under the reign of Jesus Christ, to bring all creation into unbridled communion with and in God and with itself.¹ To this end, God – the very One who, in the movement of missionary love, continually broods over creation and initiates a friendship with Abraham pregnant with promise – elects a people called Israel, makes them into a priestly nation to offer worship on behalf of all the world's nations and peoples with a view to their reconciliation to God; and, in the fulness of time, God, in Jesus of Nazareth, moves anew into the world in order to reconcile all things to God; and God also calls forth a new community who, with Israel and with Jesus, participates in and bears witness (*martyria*) to God's own loving and reconciling activities in the world. Born of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, this new community is called 'the Christian community' (or 'the church').

We believe that the Christian community, a creation of God's Word in election, is a people *called* by God to participate and share in God's mission in this world – to be a humble, prophetic and celebratory sign, embodiment and hope-filled foretaste of life in the coming reign of God. It is a people *sent* by God in the name of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit to witness to, and to represent, the liberating, empowering, healing, and reconciling love of God wherever such is identified. It is a people *empowered* by God to embody in its own life the mystery of salvation and the transfiguration of creation.

Mission, therefore, is not an 'optional extra' for the Christian community but is of its essence, finding both its *genesis* and its *telos* in the trinitarian relations and in God's own movement into the world, the object of God's love. The Christian community cannot be true to itself apart from this action of bearing servant witness (*martyria*)

- (i) to God's will for the salvation and transformation of the world;
- (ii) to God's command to maturing discipleship;
- (iii) to God's compassion, mercy and advocacy for the poor, the needy and the marginalised;
- (iv) to God's vision for the flourishing of societies that reflect the justice of love and seek the end to unjust structures; and
- (v) to God's desire for the integrity of a creation liberated from abusive, irresponsible and destructive actions.

– Rev. Dr. Jason Goroncy

¹ See World Council of Churches, *The Nature and Mission of the Church: A Stage on the Way to a Common Statement* (Faith and Order Paper 198; Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2005); World Council of Churches, *Participating in God's Mission of Reconciliation: A Resource for Churches in Situations of Conflict*. (Faith and Order Paper 201; Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2006).