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God's Mission in the World – Our Calling

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> John 20:21 "As the Father has sent me, so I send you."
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> Jonah 3:1–10; Psalm 67; Romans 10:9–17; John 20:19–23

25 Sunday after Pentecost

WORLD MISSION SUNDAY

Introduction

On this World Mission Sunday, we are reminded of our sacred calling to participate in God's mission. Mission is not a department or program of the Church; it is the heartbeat of God revealed through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Council for World Mission (CWM) and other mission agencies emphasize that mission is God's initiative and we are privileged co-workers in that mission. The Church of North India, being a united and uniting church, shares in this global calling. Today, as we meditate on the theme "God's Mission in the World – Our Calling," let us hear God's voice through the Scriptures and commit ourselves afresh.

1. A City Repents: God's Heart for the Nations (Jonah 3:1–10)

The story of Jonah reminds us that God's mission extends beyond the boundaries of Israel to all peoples and nations. Jonah was reluctant, even resistant, to preach to Nineveh, the capital of Assyria – a cruel enemy of Israel. Yet, God persistently called him, and through Jonah's reluctant preaching, the entire city repented. This shows that God desires all to be saved and come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). The Church is called to be like Jonah, but unlike him, we are called to go willingly. The lesson of Jonah is this: when we obey God's call to mission, even our small efforts can spark great transformation. We must never underestimate what God can do through our witness. Today, God is calling the Church not to remain silent or self-centred but to be outward-looking and globally compassionate. In modern missions, William Carey felt the call to India when few were willing to go. His work laid foundations for generations. Like Jonah, he heard the call and obeyed.

2. The Blessing of the Nations: The Missional Prayer (Psalm 67)

Psalm 67 is a powerful missionary psalm that envisions the praise of God among all nations. "Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you" (v.3). The Psalm is both a prayer and a proclamation – asking for God's grace not just for the sake of Israel but so that God's ways may be known on earth and God's salvation among all nations. The Church today must live out this prayer. When God blesses us, it is not for self-glorification but to become a channel of blessings to others. The prosperity gospel fails to recognize this truth. We are

blessed to bless others. The Church must embody this spirit of generosity, hospitality, and openness to be a light to the nations. The CWM's work in education, justice, and community development across the world is a reflection of this Psalm. They are a visible sign of God's saving presence among the nations.

3. Proclaiming the Word: The Urgency of Evangelism (Romans 10:9-17)

Paul passionately proclaims the necessity of preaching the Gospel. "How can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?" (v.14). This is a clear mandate to the Church – we are not to be passive but active in sharing the good news. Mission is not merely a humanitarian effort; it is first and foremost a proclamation of salvation through Jesus Christ. We must not be ashamed of the Gospel (Romans 1:16). Faith comes by hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. Today, we need more preachers, more witnesses, and more missionaries. In the digital era, the mission field has expanded into social media, television, and mobile devices. Christian influencers, pastors, and young believers use these tools to proclaim the Gospel. We are all called to use our platforms to share Christ.

4. Sent into the World: The Missional Church (John 20:19-23)

The resurrected Jesus appeared to His disciples and said, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." This is the Great Commission in John's Gospel. Jesus sends the Church into the world with the same authority, mission, and spirit by which He was sent by the Father. Mission is not optional. Every believer is a missionary. This passage also shows that mission is to be done in the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit." Mission without the Spirit is merely social work; mission with the Spirit transforms lives. The Church today must recover its missional identity. We are not called to build empires but to serve the Kingdom. We are not called to comfort but to commission. The Church must go beyond its walls into the streets, communities, and nations.

In India, mission is often misunderstood as conversion. But real mission is about transformation – in love, justice, healing, and peace. The CNI, CSI, Mar Thoma Church, and CWM must lead in redefining mission as holistic and incarnational.

Meaning of Mission

The word "mission" comes from the Latin missio, meaning "sending." In Christian understanding, mission is the participation of the people of God in the redemptive work of God in the world. It is rooted in the nature of God as a sending God (Missio Dei), who sent the Son (John 3:16) and the Holy Spirit (John 14:26), and now sends the Church to the world (John 20:21). Mission is not an optional program of the Church; it is the very essence of its existence. It encompasses evangelism, service, advocacy, justice, healing, and reconciliation. It involves proclaiming the Gospel in word and deed, making disciples (Matt. 28:18-20), and manifesting God's Kingdom through love and service.

Theology of Mission

The theology of mission emerges from the understanding of God's character and God's

purpose for creation. Mission is rooted in:

- The Triune God: The Father sends the Son; the Son sends the Spirit; and the Trinity sends the Church. Mission flows from God's inner life to the world.
- Incarnation and Redemption: Jesus is the incarnate Word, who took on human flesh (John 1:14) to redeem the world. His earthly ministry – of preaching, healing, feeding, and forgiving – models the Church's mission.
- The Kingdom of God: Mission is proclaiming and living the reality of God's reign – where justice, peace, and righteousness dwell (Matt. 6:33).
- The Church as the Body of Christ: The Church is both the sign and instrument of God's mission. The Holy Spirit empowers believers to be witnesses "to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

Mission includes:

- Kerygma – Proclaiming or sharing the Good News of Christ's love and salvation.
- Didache – Teaching the teachings of Jesus Christ
- Diakonia – service to those in need, especially the marginalized.
- Koinonia – building communities of fellowship, justice, and inclusion.
- Prophetic Witness – speaking truth to power and confronting injustice.

The Need of Mission for Today's Church

In today's complex and broken world, the Church's mission is more urgent than ever.

a. Spiritual Hunger and Secularism

Many people today live without meaning, hope, or awareness of God. Secular ideologies, consumerism, and individualism dominate, leading to spiritual emptiness. The Church must offer Christ as the answer to deep human longing.

b. Inequality and Injustice

The world continues to grapple with poverty, gender discrimination, casteism, racism, and ecological crises. Mission today must be holistic – bringing justice, equality, and restoration.

c. Global Crises and Migration

War, climate change, and economic disparity have created refugees and displaced persons. The mission of the Church includes hospitality, advocacy, and peacebuilding.

d. Youth and Next Generations

The Church must engage creatively with youth, who are often disconnected from institutional religion. Mission must include discipleship, mentoring, and meaningful community-building.

e. Unity of the Church

Mission invites ecumenical cooperation. In the face of fragmentation, the Church is called to

embody unity as a witness to the world (John 17:21).

Conclusion

Mission is not just one of the Church's programs; it is its identity. The Church does not merely "do" mission – it is a missionary Church. Mission is worship in action, love in movement, and the Gospel embodied. As Lesslie Newbigin once wrote, "The Church is not the end of the Gospel. It is the instrument for the mission of the Gospel to the ends of the earth." The Church of today must rise with new vision, commitment, and courage – to bear witness to Christ, to serve the suffering world, and to work for the coming of God's Kingdom in every place and generation. World Mission Sunday is a wake-up call to the Church. The mission of God is not finished, and we are not excused. As Jesus said, "As the Father has sent me, so I send you." Let us take this calling seriously. Let our churches become mission stations, our homes become places of hospitality, and our lives become testimonies of God's grace. May the Church of North India, in collaboration with the global communion, rise with new commitment to serve in the mission of God. Let us be like Jonah – willing to go, like Paul – willing to preach, like the psalmist – willing to praise, and like Jesus – willing to be sent.

Prayer:

Gracious God, Lord of the harvest, we thank You for the privilege of being called into Your mission. You have sent Your Son into the world, and now You send us. Ignite in us the fire of Your Spirit. Open our hearts to the nations. Make us bold in proclamation, generous in compassion, and faithful in service. Let the Church in India and across the world become a living witness of Your love. Empower us to proclaim peace, justice, and salvation. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.