

World Partners

a Global Mission of



Evangelical Missionary
Church of Canada
Following Jesus Together

The Foundation For “Following Jesus on Mission Together”: A Theology of Integral Mission

Why Every Christian Leader Can Benefit from This Tool.

As followers of Jesus in Canada, many are asking questions about our place in society. For EMCC, Jesus’ mission has guided our disciple-making focus: *“The EMCC is passionately committed to following Jesus together on mission together”*.

For World Partners, the Global Mission arm of the EMCC, we assist connection with our Global ‘disciple-making’ Partners by *“learning with, connecting, and mobilizing people to adaptively participate in Jesus mission everywhere”*.

Jesus’ Mission has been at the forefront in the EMCC in recent years by inviting our people to live **“the Way of Jesus”** in our neighbourhoods, as well as everywhere in the world that God invites us to participate in His life and His mission (see Way of Jesus in Appendix).

But the words “Mission” and “Missions” have such a variety of uses in our Canadian churches: some just think of it merely as a program or an activity of the church, or even a trip or a project, while others see it as the very core of the Church’s purpose. This latter expression promotes that the Church is a community of followers of Christ, who purpose comes from the character of God as a Sender, and the Church as the people sent by God¹. As Lesslie Newbigin, David Bosch, and Christopher Wright, among others, have helped us articulate, *“The Church doesn’t have a mission, but the Mission of God has a Church”*.² Mission is the first activity of God’s Spirit, as an overflow from Pentecost to the present time.

¹ John 20:21

² From Beyond Duty: A Passion for Christ, a Heart for Mission, Dearborn, T, pg. 2

Why is it an “integral” mission? Very simply, Integral Mission is ‘evangelism’ plus ‘social responsibility’, which some in the International Mission Community refer to as “the whole gospel”. We believe it upholds **integrity** as a core value of all our mission

**Integral
Mission:**
*‘Evangelism’
plus ‘Social
Responsibility’*

participation. “Our proclamation has social consequences as we call people to love and repentance in all areas of life. And our social involvement has evangelistic consequences as we bear witness to the transforming grace of Jesus Christ. If we ignore the world, we betray the Word of God which sends us out to serve the world. If we ignore the Word of God, we have nothing to bring to the world” (Lausanne Covenant). Evangelicals have a long, historical commitment to the Word which we must not lose as we equally commit to social involvement wherever we are sent by God.

So, along with the global church, let us in Canada continue to be a Community of Followers of Jesus on mission together. Let’s relentlessly commit ourselves to the way Jesus invites us to live, enabling *His life, mission, character, love and teachings to be experienced in a community of disciples committed together on the journey. (summary of the Way of Jesus markers).*

Through this paper, members of the EMCC community of Pastors, Church and Mission Leaders, Global Partners and Workers, friends and members of our global Church family are invited to ground ourselves upon this foundation of God’s Mission, upon which the Church may remain strong, and devoted as a healthy, multiplying and disciple-making community. We are Jesus’ followers, who participate in His mission. Let us encourage one another through shared dialogue and learning, and inspire others to radically follow Jesus in our everyday lives, everywhere in the world.

PART 1: Three Basic Affirmations

1. The Mission Is God’s

We do affirm that the call for a life of mission all starts with the mission of God (*Missio Dei*). His desire is to love and commune with human beings and to bless us, by including us in the benefits of His rule (that is, His kingdom). To this end, God created human beings as His image bearers, and he created the remainder of creation to be in harmony with Him, and declared every bit of it “very good”. But our disobedience broke our perfect communion with God, with one another and all creation. Yet God, who never stopped loving us, had a redemptive plan to restore all things to Himself.

He called Abraham and his descendants, Israel, to be the community through whom all nations would be blessed.³ He revealed the Old Testament Scriptures through them. He came to the world through Israel in the person of Jesus Christ, and paid for humanity’s

³ Genesis 12: 1-3

atonement, rising from death to show that this was effective⁴ to reverse sin's ultimate effect – death. Jesus showed those who followed Him that God's Kingdom was eternal and He sent his followers into the world to proclaim this to all nations⁵, and to offer, through faith in Jesus, forgiveness, the indwelling Spirit who transforms and empowers human character, and the eternal life, which begins to manifest in our lives now, and indeed is forevermore with God.

The transformed attitudes, behaviours, and character of believers in Jesus results in unity among them in the church. The church then, being sent to bless and invite, both proclaims God's offer of reconciliation to the whole world, and carries out loving action in this world. Believers become agents of God's love and demonstrators of the kingdom God is bringing in an integrated way. We are empowered to participate with God in His desired reconciliation and transformation of humans, systems, groups, nations, structures and the natural world, as part of an integrated, or "integral" mission. In the beginning, all was declared very good by our Creator, and in the end, we look forward to how God will renew all things forevermore⁶.

2. The Mission of God Has A Church

We affirm that there is one body of believers, a Global Church, who band together and are mobilized for God's purposes. We get to proclaim God's desire for communion with people, and the One Way provided for that to happen, through Jesus Christ. For it is He who invites us to die to ourselves and take up our cross in following Him⁷. All followers of Jesus are to imitate Christ, to let His life define ours, and to multiply. "Come, follow me", Jesus says, "and I will send you out to fish for people"⁸. This is a "whole life (integral mission), whole church" challenge: to enable others to be reconciled to God, to learn the ways of the Lord Jesus in 'life on life' discipling, and to participate in the *Missio Dei* as gathered, reconciled people formed in church communities. We are the Community of followers of Jesus on mission together in the world.

3. We are Sent into the World Together

Together with the Global community of followers of Jesus, we must work for the flourishing of all people in whatever ways God sets before us, walking side by side with Global brothers and sisters. We must do so, paying attention to how the good news of the Kingdom will enable transformation⁹ in varied cultural contexts. Let us steward God's blessings and resources given to all, persevere in a faith lived out together with all Jesus' followers, and dependent upon the Spirit's empowering to bear good fruit and to triumph over evil, so that God alone gets the credit¹⁰. We will witness His Gospel growing all over

⁴ Acts 4: 11-12

⁵ Matthew 28: 19-20

⁶ Genesis 1: 31, Revelation 21:5

⁷ Matthew 10:38-39

⁸ Matthew 4:19

⁹ 1 Corinthians 9: 19-23

¹⁰ Matthew 5:16

the world, giving the world a foretaste of Eternity. And our reward will be our sweet communion with God, others, and all creation, both now and forever.

PART 2: Key Considerations for Participation in God's Mission

As we seek to effectively participate with Christ and the Global Church¹¹, we acknowledge both opportunities and challenges. As we ask these questions of ourselves, we can hear Jesus' invitation to count the cost before we participate. We encourage you to wrestle with these issues.

1. The Primacy of Listening and Learning

How well do I know the worldviews of others I engage with? Do I seek first to be understood, or to understand? For example, in Canada, a growing secular worldview insists that spirituality is about opinions, that Truth is relative, or that spiritual belief systems are merely an aspect of a group's or individual's motives for power. This may affect the confidence of followers of Jesus in speaking at all, affect how hearers dialogue with us, and the heart conditions which affect receptivity of the message of Jesus' restoration.

2. Our Source of Assurance

The perception that the church is side-lined in Canada may give rise to protectionism, making survival the main, if not the only, priority. This perception can negatively impact how churches see mission participation with the Global Church as secondary or even a peripheral activity and a lesser priority. Rather, we affirm that Jesus will build His Church¹², and that our participation in His Mission is core to our identity and purpose, even when circumstances¹³ cause us to fear or forget our role as representatives of the Way¹⁴.

3. Evangelistic Zeal

The Evangelical tradition sometimes struggles to see how our acts of service and mercy integrate with gospel proclamation for authentic witness. We can even believe falsely that our deeds are less important to Jesus than our words. Always ready to proclaim the message of Jesus' Kingdom, we must discern others' readiness by being truly present in relationship. This is why integral mission, which involves both word and deed, is so powerful and effective. Rather than engaging in social responsibility, acts of mercy, care or blessing, only to preach, we affirm that deeds also communicate the beauty, kindness, and blessing of Jesus' good news. They are a natural outflow of the Spirit in our lives, which contribute to our witness and can give us opportunities to speak, with gentleness and respect, of our hope in Jesus¹⁵, or even be used by God to lead people to repentance¹⁶. In

¹¹ 1 Corinthians 3:9

¹² Matthew 16:18

¹³ Romans 1:16

¹⁴ 2 Corinthians 5:20

¹⁵ Ephesians 2:10; James 2:17; 1 Peter 3:15-16

¹⁶ Romans 2:4

authentic relationships, Jesus is our example for when to act and when to speak, led by the Spirit.

4. Confidence for Personal Witness

As imitators of Jesus, we are not perfect examples, but we are living examples. As an individually-focused culture, Canadian followers of Jesus may be fearful that we are so flawed that if people look closely at our lives, they will be turned away from the Jesus we claim to follow. We affirm that even though we are not yet fully like Jesus, He does not exclude us from participation in His Mission. And as we are becoming like Jesus in our attitudes, behaviours and character, we know that forgiveness is offered to us along the journey of being made holy.

5. How We See Resources

As Canadians, we can easily overestimate what resources we have been given, can elevate financial resources as those which matter most, or underestimate the resources given to others, which can lead to a participation in mission based on inequality, or even create a false sense of self-superiority. However, when we think of God's all-sufficiency as the foundation for all provision¹⁷, it leads us to a fuller understanding of resources, which we have framed as "7 Resources". We are able to express our equality before God. (see 7 Resources Brochure in Appendix).

6. Cross-Cultural Respect

The Canadian church has the potential to "distort" or misrepresent the good news by not embracing how people in other cultures can follow Jesus in their preferred forms and varied traditions. We must trust the Holy Spirit to help illuminate the Bible, so people can apply both affirmations and challenges within their cultures. We must renounce any false sense of cultural superiority or lack of cultural awareness and understanding that promotes judgemental attitudes about other cultures, or tries to export our methodologies.¹⁸

7. How We Define the Gospel

As followers of Jesus, within the EMCC, we love that the Gospel (which means "good news") is the totality of the message of salvation, together with the rest of what Jesus came to do. The depth or shallowness of our understanding of the Gospel is equal to the depth of our formation as disciples. To have healthy disciple-making, we therefore uphold both Relationship and Participation, which is revealed in the entirety of the Scriptures. First, since all people were created in God's image, and all creation was declared very good¹⁹, relationship is foundational to the Gospel. And even though relationships with God, self and creation are broken, they are met by God's self-sacrificial love on the Cross, to restore shalom with God²⁰. Salvation is central to the redeeming work of Christ Jesus in us and in the world. Jesus Christ is the only means of hope, salvation and restoration. Out of each

¹⁷ Psalm 104:13-16

¹⁸ 1 Corinthians 2:1, Acts 17:26-27

¹⁹ Genesis 1:31

²⁰ Romans 5:9-11

individual life fully surrendered and yielded²¹ to Jesus, and through the Church, “Jesus’ Body²²”, comes forth the good news which He proclaims and lives through us, to break bonds of injustice, and support God’s renewal of all things²³. We are not only actors, but also witnesses, through our words and deeds²⁴, of His new life in us, lived out in an integrated way as we participate in Jesus’ mission.²⁵

²¹ Galatians 5:16-26

²² 1 Corinthians 12:7, Ephesians 4:12

²³ Revelation 21:5

²⁴ 1 John 3:18

²⁵ Colossians 3:1

PART 3: Towards Best Practice

1. REMEMBER

We are invited to urgently, persistently, and confidently remember that the true story of history is that of God pursuing reconciled relationships with all creation, and our identity as Jesus' followers is that we are participants in His mission. Jesus Christ is the only means of hope, salvation and restoration. We join Jesus in what He is doing by our actions, mindset, and conversations.

2. LISTEN

We are invited to listen to God's Spirit together as a global community of followers of Jesus, who can advise and determine together how to carry the message of Jesus and His Kingdom to each culture. As we listen together, we can trust God and obey him together.

3. PRAY

We are invited to pray, seeking and depending upon God to give us the desire, boldness, wisdom, patience, and opportunities of making his Kingdom restoration known everywhere.

4. CONSIDER

We make it our practice to stop and seek the Spirit for wisdom in every context. Just as we recognize Canadian/Western worldview barriers, we too consider the

cultural keys that open up or challenge God's Kingdom in every context, everywhere in the world.

5. THINK HOLISTICALLY

We are invited to participate in integral development, equally valuing all aspects (physical, social, mental, emotional, spiritual) of Jesus' redemption, transformation, and restoration of human beings, their relationships, and all creation.²⁶

6. WALK TOGETHER

We will walk the road together with the Indigenous-led Church²⁷, enabling God's mission to advance. We are invited to humbly serve Jesus as we follow Him on mission together in the world, welcoming the wise contribution of Global brothers and sisters into our church and culture, and sharing in theirs in mutual love (see 4 Stages of Development in Appendix).

7. PARTICIPATE

Jesus invites us to give our whole selves to him. Ponder how you are invited to engage in God's mission, to surrender your heart, your job, your resources, influence, and more to the Lordship of Jesus. All our inner transformation, social care and mission participation is to the glory of the God of mission, for whom we live as one Global community of followers of Jesus.



Learn



Connect



Mobilize

²⁶ Colossians 1:15-20

²⁷ Philippians 1:27, see

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Appendices

Way of Jesus

His LIFE I have begun following Jesus, and am depending upon the Spirit of Jesus in my journey.

His MISSION I am being sent by Jesus to bless others and invite them to follow Him.

His CHARACTER I am learning to be like Jesus in my attitudes, behaviours, and character.

His LOVE I am learning to love God and love others.

His TEACHINGS I am learning the teachings of Jesus.

His DISCIPLES I am helping someone and someone is helping me to be a reproducing follower of Jesus.

His COMMUNITY I am participating in a community of followers of Jesus on mission to the world.

A simple language to describe our journey with Jesus

The Way of Jesus “markers”

What are the resources available to every community all over the world?

7 Resources:

NATURAL Natural resources, which God has put in creation.

PHYSICAL Physical resources, which we make from natural resources.

HUMAN Human resources, which are the skills of every person in the community.

SOCIAL Social (society) resources, which are groups of people who work together to accomplish something. (i.e. Farmers' Group)

SPIRITUAL Spiritual resources are wise elders or mentors, disciple-makers, churches, spiritual leaders, Scripture, prayer.

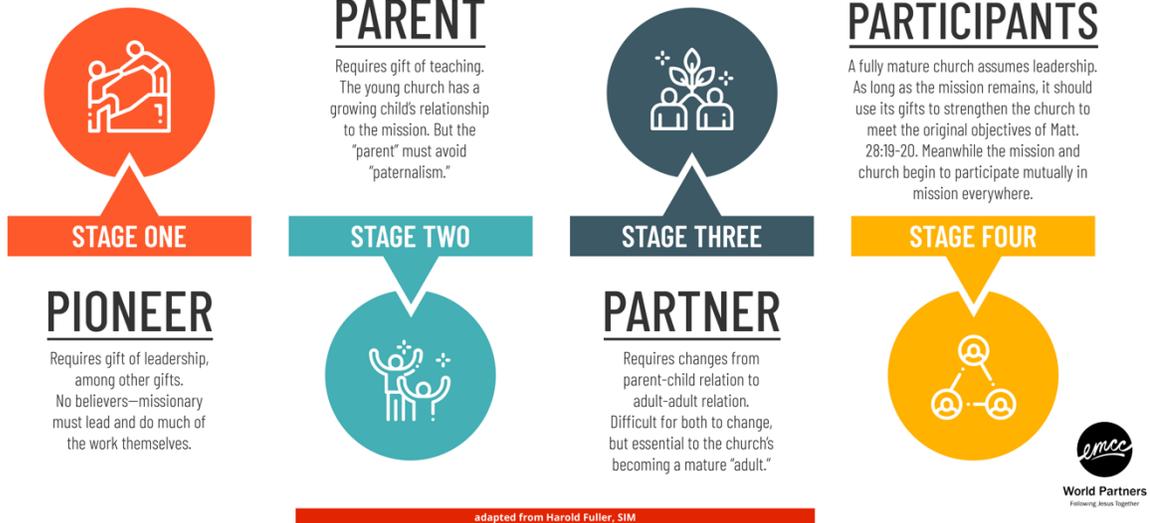
ECONOMIC Economic resources are the markets.

TIME Time is the last resource, which is precious.

https://www.emcc.ca/files/emccadmin/WP/7_resources_brochure.pdf

Four Stages of Development

MISSION-CHURCH RELATIONS FOUR STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT



https://www.dropbox.com/s/b0upuqf7chbj78/4%20Stages%20of%20Global%20Partnership_Graphic.png?dl=0