

Joseph Mattera: 10 Attributes of the Church in Mission

Since the pandemic began in 2020, I have noticed that people are giving in to fear instead of moving in the faith. Fear can stop the kingdom from advancing. The church is always called to thrive, even when there are insurmountable difficulties. The key to continual advancement is for the church to stay focused on the mission.

The following are ten attributes of the church in mission (based upon the book of Acts.)

1. The church in mission is to continue the ministry of Jesus as His body. Acts 1:1 implies that the Gospel of Luke depicted what Jesus began to do, whereas the book of Acts narrates what Jesus continues to do through His body. The church is called the body of Christ in passages such as 1 Corinthians 11:12-13 and Ephesians 1:22, 23.

Hence, as His witnesses, the church functions as the hands, feet and voice of Jesus (Acts 1:8). Thus, the church in mission continues the works of Jesus. It is the visible manifestation of the invisible Christ (John 14:12).

2. The church in mission should pray corporately until there is a great outbreak of the Spirit. Acts 1:14 says, "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers." They did this until the Holy Spirit fell on the day of Pentecost.

This prescriptive account illustrates the connection between protracted seasons of corporate prayer and the outpouring of the Spirit. If the contemporary missional church desires to experience similar Spirit outpourings, it must have the same intensity and commitment to corporate prayer as the early

church.

3. The church in mission will continue to practice the four essentials of apostolicity mentioned in Acts 2:42. “ They continued steadfastly in the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in the prayers.”

Based upon this passage, the church in mission must be a teaching church that regularly focuses on the centrality of Jesus through the Lord’s supper, prayer and fellowship (which has to do with doing life with those focused upon the gospel).

4. The church in mission looks at every challenge as an opportunity to go to another level of kingdom advancement. Acts 6:1-7 depicts the time Hebrew-speaking believers were neglecting the Greek-speaking widows. This prejudicial action resulted in the apostles sending in seven men to oversee food distribution. This eventuated in the establishment of the office of deacon, which has blessed the church for the past two millennia (1 Tim. 3:8-13).

The book of Acts also illustrates that the persecution of the early church resulted in the gospel being planted in the cities of Samaria and Antioch (Acts 8:1-8, 11:19-21). Therefore, no matter the situation, the church in mission continually problem-solves and advances in effectiveness!

5. The church in mission demonstrates the power of the Resurrection in the marketplace (Acts 5:15). Acts 5:15 says, “they even brought the sick out into the streets and placed them on beds and mats, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might touch some of them.”

Consequently, the church in mission demonstrates the reign of Christ in the streets, not merely in church buildings.

6. The church in mission produces martyrs (Acts 7:54-60). Acts 7 narrates the martyrdom of Stephen, the first person to die for the sake of the gospel. In his death, Jesus stood up to

receive him (Acts 7:55).

Consequently, the church in mission has people that know that their life is not worth living unless there is something worth dying for. Christianity is about living a crucified life. If we lose our life, then we will find it (Mark 8:35).

7. The church in mission witnesses dramatic conversions. Acts 8:1-3 shows how Saul was the primary persecutor of the church. Acts 9:1-6 shows how God earmarked Saul for conversion, which resulted in many salvations. Eventually, as Paul the apostle, he wrote one-third of the New Testament! I believe this shows us that the church in mission will experience many dramatic conversions of some of the most influential people in their generation.

8. The church in mission produces disciples. In Matthew 28:19, Jesus called the church to focus on making disciples. (A disciple is a student committed to sitting under the tutelage of another more mature person.) Acts 14:21-23 illustrates how the church of Acts followed this command of Jesus, as shown in the first part of verse 21: "When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples."

The church in mission is thus focused on making disciples, not merely drawing crowds.

9. The church in mission positively affects its surrounding community (Acts 8:3-4; 17:6; 19). Acts 8:8 shows that the result of gospel preaching was that "there was much joy in that city." In Acts 17:6b, they said of Christians coming into their region, "These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also."

Acts 19:10 shows how the ministry of Paul resulted in "all who lived in Asia hear[ing] the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks." Thus, the church in mission turns the world upside down and impacts cities, not merely individual sinners (Isa. 61:4).

10. The church in mission continues to proclaim the gospel unhindered despite difficult circumstances (Acts 28:5).

Acts 4:29-31 shows how the persecuted church prayed for more boldness to preach instead of stopping the persecution.

Acts 28:30-31 (ESV) says about the apostle Paul, “He lived there [under house arrest in Rome] two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.”

Thus, the final words of the book of Acts dealt with preaching without hindrance. This is how the contemporary church in mission should be defined moving forward amid the present crisis.

(I just released my latest book, *The Purpose, Power, and Process of Prophetic Ministry*. To purchase, [click here](#).) {eo}

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