

## A Fish Discovers Water!

### Integrated Christian Communication - Biblical Foundations

It has been said that if a fish were a scientist, the last thing it would discover is water. In mission, we have demonstrated the accuracy of that observation. We have examined the parts of the mission task, but failed to focus on the central means of carrying out mission - communication. Why build the practice of mission around communication? Simply, because God communicates and He tells us to communicate. There are many valuable perspectives on mission - historical, church growth, cultural - but the central emphasis biblically is communication - not the arts of communicating, but fundamental communication.

Communication begins within the Godhead, where there is perfect communion, full and perfect communication. God has opened the way for us to enter that communion, in Christ, and invites us to enjoy perfect communication with Him. John 17:20-21 summarizes His desire for man, *"I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me."*

**God communicates** through the incarnation, John 1:1 *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."* Another way to express that fundamental truth is to say that God is communication, and He uses a vast diversity of communication means to reveal Himself.

**God communicates** as seen from Genesis to Revelation. Hebrews 1:1-3 *"In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being..."*

Job 33:14-19 explicitly states that it is God's nature to communicate, *"For God does speak- now one way, now another- though man may not perceive it. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls on men as they slumber in their beds, he may speak in their ears and terrify them with warnings, to turn man from wrongdoing and keep him from pride, 18 to preserve his soul from the pit, his life from perishing by the sword... Or a man may be chastened on a bed of pain"*

1 Kings 8:56-59 *"Praise be to the LORD, who has given rest to his people Israel just as he promised. Not one word has failed of all the good promises he gave through his servant Moses. 57 May the LORD our God be with us as he was with our fathers; may he never leave us nor forsake us. 58 May he turn our hearts to him, to walk in all his ways and to keep the commands, decrees and regulations he gave our fathers. 59 And may these words of mine, which I have prayed before the LORD, be near to the LORD our God day and night,*

Matthew 28:19-20 is often used as the summary of the task Christ has given the Church: In its essence, **the task is to communicate knowledge of Him - to make disciples, to baptize, to teach all things Christ had taught to the disciples.**

This is reiterated in John 20:21, "*As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.*" And in John 17:18, "*As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.*" How was He sent? He, the Word, was sent to live with the people and to speak and teach the works and commands of God.

John 10:14-17 again shows us that He communicates, and that is His primary way of drawing all men to Himself, "*I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me- 15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father-and I lay down my life for the sheep. 16 I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.*"

Mark 16:15-16, "*Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.*

Acts 14:21-25 "*They preached the good news in that city and won a large number of disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, 22 strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," they said. 23 Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust. 24 After going through Pisidia, they came into Pamphylia, 25 and when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia."*

Acts 8:12 "*But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.*

John 14:26-27 "*But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."*

1 Cor 2:1-14 "*When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. 2 For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. 3 I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. 4 My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, 5 so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.*

*6 We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. 7 No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. 8 None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9 However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him"- 10 but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. 11 For who among men knows the*

*thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. 12 We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. 13 This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, **expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.***

Col 1:28-29 *"We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. 29 To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me.*

**Integrated Christian Communication** begins in the very nature of God, uses the structures of human society to give knowledge of Him, using man's tools for creating understanding of God's revelation. Integrated Christian Communication provides a biblical, comprehensive and effective pattern for the central task of the Church - mission.

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