

# The Mandate

by David Orton

<http://lifemessenger.org/the-message/the-mandate/>

## Our Vision

We see a world – from individuals through to families, peoples, nations, and entire cultures – transformed through the regenerating power of the Gospel of Christ, yielding to God’s government of righteousness, peace, and joy, returning human and creational flourishing to the earth.

## Our Mission

- **To proclaim** *the Gospel of God and his government* through teaching and writing, utilising the worldwide web, electronic media, schools, think-tanks, and conferences.
- **To teach** *from the Scriptures the Gospel of God's government for all spheres of life:* family, law, education, economics, church, civil government, arts, media, entrepreneurship, etc.
- **To declare** *God's sovereignty and purpose* over church and culture.

## Our Values

- The **knowledge** of God » through *Revelation* · Jesus the *Truth* · *Informational*
- The **ways** of God » through *Association* · Jesus the *Way* · *Transformational*
- The **acts** of God » through *Observation* · Jesus the *Life* · *Inspirational*

## Our Sphere

Our primary sphere is the church and culture of the post-Christian West.

As a prophetic teaching ministry our call is to the “lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Mtt 10:6; Ezk 3:4-11)—primarily to the church as the “pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim 3:15), to call her back to the “ancient paths” (Jer 6:16; 18:15) and the “age-old foundations” (Isa 58:12)—to covenant obedience. As the church goes, so goes the culture.

While the developing world cries out for apostles, evangelists, and teachers, the Western world is in need of prophets. Only then will it be called back to its covenant with God and its historic Christian roots.

## Our Scope

The scope of the message of God’s government is cosmic, infusing the totality of life with value and meaning.

It will play out in the recovery of God’s ways and laws for:

- Relationship to the true and living God
- Human value and dignity
- Social relationships, ethics and public policy
- Jurisprudence and justice
- Political and religious freedoms
- International relations and peace
- Epistemology and the academy

- Science, medicine, environment and technology
- Family, marriage and sexuality
- Church and State relations
- Economics and entrepreneurship
- Arts, aesthetics and media
- Sports and recreation

***Biblical pluralism***

We advocate a *biblical pluralism*—a plurality of institutions under divine law. Through the four covenantal spheres of the *individual*, the *familial*, the *ecclesial*, and the *civil*, government and law are not exclusively in the hands of any one institution or sphere; all other spheres – education, economic, justice etc. – arc from at least one or more of these four.

Biblical pluralism would correct any Constantinian confusion and conflation of church and state roles, obviating the tyranny of either one over the other.

This entails rethinking the nature of the church and of ecclesial authority (*spiritual* versus *official*). This has reformational implications for how the ecclesia functions internally (*organic* versus *organisational*) and its role externally in the world (*incarnational* versus *institutional*).

While the state, as a “minister of God”, is required to obey God’s law and thus bear the sword of justice as the “avenger of God’s wrath” (Rom 13:1-4), the church likewise bears the sword, but in its case the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God (Eph 6:17). The state enforces justice through the power of life and death, but the church through the power of the word of truth.

Thus the role of the church in society, as the light of the world, is as *prophetic-teacher*. Its mandate is *educative*—to disciple nations, baptising them and teaching them to obey all that Christ has commanded (Mtt 5:14; 28:19-20). Just as Christ taught, this entails ethical continuity between old and new covenants—he reinstates the law of God as humankind’s objective ethical standard (Mtt 5:17-19). Law and Gospel are thus in harmony.

And consequently, history will climax with the law going out from Zion and the nations flowing up to her, to the church of the living God (Heb 12:22-23), to learn of his ways:

Now it will come about that in the last days, the mountain of the house of the LORD will be established as the chief of the mountains, And will be raised above the hills; And all the nations will stream to it. And many peoples will come and say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; That He may teach us concerning His ways And that we may walk in His paths.” For the law will go forth from Zion, And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

Isaiah 2:2–3

***Our Mandate: Interpreting the Contemporary***

Our mandate is to provide prophetic intelligence: the wise *interpreting* of the contemporary situation through biblical principles. In fact, the ministry of God’s Word is inherently prophetic, underlining the fact that the prophetic function is a teaching one, shining light into darkness, as Peter points out:

And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts;

2 Peter 1:19 (NKJV)

Similar to a nation’s need of security intelligence to safeguard peace and defend its borders, the “holy nation” – God’s people – have need of spiritual intelligence for their protection and for the increase of God’s government in the earth.

The prophetic function, therefore, serves as God's early warning system. Prophets, as seers and watchman, are graced with long-range vision so as to warn and alert God's people for strategic action and war—to, in fact, equip them as a prophetic people (Eph 4:11).

Our mandate and mission is, therefore, to provide:

***A Countercultural Commentary of the Contemporary.***

**Two aspects**

This has two aspects:

- *Distinguishing 'things that differ'*—between the true and the false.
- *Interpreting 'times and seasons'* in the flow of history.

This mandate for prophetic intelligence focuses on biblical *orthodoxy* (correct belief) and *orthopraxy* (correct practice).

It involves *renewing our thinking*, so as to "think the thoughts of God after him" (Johannes Kepler; Rom 12:1-3) and *adjusting our behaviour*, so as to "be holy as he is holy" (1 Pet 1:15; 1 Jn 2:4-6).

To be prophetically intelligent, demands: *first, a renaissance of Christian thinking*—learning to think God's thoughts after him will demonstrate that Christian-theism is the worldview that actually coheres with reality and is, thus, consummately rational; and *second, a reformation of Christian ethics* and social relationships that authentically reflects the moral nature of God and, hence, obeys his law.

**Jeremiah's mandate**

Our prophetic mandate is encapsulated in the call of Jeremiah.

Jeremiah was sent to God's people, calling them to return to the Lord and to covenant fidelity:

Go and proclaim these words toward the north and say, 'Return, faithless Israel,' declares the LORD; 'I will not look upon you in anger. For I am gracious,' declares the LORD; 'I will not be angry forever.'

Jeremiah 3:12

God's people had forsaken him by worshiping other gods.

**Worshipping Yahweh *and* the gods of the nations**

Nevertheless, they were rarely guilty of outright rejection of Yahweh. Rather, they worshiped syncretistically; that is, they worshipped deceptively—the gods of the nations alongside Yahweh.

Thus, humanity's root sin (Rom 1:22-23) – idolatry – was proscribed in the first commandment: "You shall have no other gods *beside* me" (Ex 20:3), that is *alongside* me. The true God demands covenant fidelity.

**Distinguishing *things that differ***

This required the prophet to "extract the precious from the worthless" (Jer 15:19)—to distinguish between the "things that differ", between the authentic and the inauthentic, between the true and the false, between worshipping the gods of the nations and the living God (1 Jn 4:6).

Like the Zadok priesthood, true prophets must distinguish and teach the difference between the "holy and the profane" (Ezk 44).

They distinguish between those things that are either born of God or of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

This demands rightly handling the word of truth for what it is, the Word of God, not of men (2 Tim 2:15; 1 Thes 2:13; Heb 4:12). Prophets will be imbued with a view of the Scriptures as God-breathed and, hence, authoritative—as inerrant and sufficient (2 Tim 3:16). They are, thus, infused with a vision of God as ultimate and sovereign.

Additionally, like the sons of Issachar, the prophet's call is to discern and understand times and seasons in the purpose of God:

... the sons of Issachar, men who understood the times, with knowledge of what Israel should do ...

1 Chronicles 12:32

Prophets are, thus, imbued with a sense of history as a display of God's sovereignty.

### **Prophet's message: *reformation and reconstruction***

Jeremiah was sent to the nations to:

... uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant

Jeremiah 1:10

Four negatives followed by only two positives. The ministry and message of prophets invariably seems more negative than positive.

Even so, it progresses from *reformation* (4 negatives) to *reconstruction* (2 positives):

- ***Reformation:***

A destruction of idol-strongholds through deconstructing mindsets, false belief-systems, and structures that resist the knowledge of God.

- ***Reconstruction:***

A reconstructing of the earth, as God's dwelling, through obedience to the *Great Commandment* (to love the Lord and others as ourselves), demands ecclesial and cultural reconstruction, the renewal of our thinking and our behaviour in the totality of life.

The reformational message of the prophet will disturb the status quo:

Let us examine and probe our ways, And let us return to the LORD.

Lamentations 3:40

This work of prophetic probity will always begin with the individual, familial, and the ecclesial. God's judgement begins in the house of God (1 Pet 4:17), moving out to all spheres of society, ultimately realigning culture to the will of God, and, hence, filling the whole earth – as God's dwelling place – with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord (Num 14:21).