# THE FIVE MARKS OF MISSION: THE GREAT COMMISSION 12

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**Categories:** Bible & Mission, Mission, Observations

We are coming towards the end of my mini-series on what is often called, the Great Commission. This post is partly knicked from a talk given by Chris Wright at Keswick and looks at the Five Marks of Mission in the light of the *Great Commission.*

As long-time readers of this blog will know, the Five Marks are a definition of mission developed by the Anglican Community and widely accepted elsewhere, they are:

> *To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom*
> *To teach, baptise and nurture new believers*
> *To respond to human need by loving service*
> *To seek to transform unjust structures of society*
> *To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth*

It is should be clear how proclaiming the Good News and nuturing new believers fits within Matthew's record of Jesus words, "make disciples, teaching them to obey everything I have taught you". However, it may not be quite so obvious how the three other marks of mission can be found in the *Great Commission.*

Let's start with responding to human need and transforming unjust structures of society. Once again, this comes within the rubric of teaching people to believe everything that Jesus taught. The thread of justice and caring for need run like a thread through Jesus' teaching in the Gospels and if we are not practicing and teaching these things we are clearly not obeying Jesus' words or passing on his teaching.

The issue of the integrity of creation is a little more tricky and I think that Chris Wright's exposition was a little weak at this point. Chris suggested that we can find this in the very introduction to the *Great Commission*.

> *I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth.*

We tend to concentrate on the 'authority in heaven' bit and not think too much about Christ's authority over creation. As Christ has authority over creation and as the ultimate end of mission will be to usher in a new heaven *and a new earth*, we should take the issue of creation care very seriously. I must admit, I'm not entirely convinced that you can shoe-horn creation care into Matthew 28 in this way and given that the issue runs right through Scripture, I'm not entirely convinced that we need to anyway. Then again; some people reduce all missional thinking to these verses in Matthew so there is value in showing that Jesus clearly intended the Church to do more than dash around the world getting people to make a 'decision for Christ'.