

I. Definition of Incarnate

- a. To give bodily form and substance to;
 - i. (Colossians 2:9) For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily
- b. To make manifest or comprehensible;
 - i. (I Timothy 3:16) Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory
- c. To give a concrete or actual form to;
 - i. (Philippians 2:6) who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped.

II. Incarnation within the Story of God

a. The Creation of Mankind

- i. Mankind was created in the very image of God (Gen. 1:26-27; cf. 5:1; 9:6; 1 Cor. 11:7; James 3:9)
 - 1. *Image* (Heb. *tselem*): a fashioned image, a shaped and representative figure, an image in some concrete sense (2 Kings 11:18; Ezek. 23:14; Amos 5:26).
- ii. Mankind was created to reveal the glory of God Himself (Gen. 1:26-27).
 - 1. This distinguishes man from all other parts of God's creation. Man is the only being created that bears the image of God's image (Gen. 1:1-25).
 - 2. Unlike creation, mankind was designed to reflect God himself. Humans were modeled after God. God-likeness is a part of our DNA, the very fabric of our being.
 - 3. Mankind was created to reveal specific glories of God Himself
 - a. Inanimate creation reveals invisible attributes of God (e.g. power, divine nature) while animate creation (mankind) reveals visible attributes of God
 - b. Mankind is the only part of creation that can reveal God's visible attributes (e.g. love, patience, kindness, justice, etc.).
 - c. Mankind is evangelistic by our very nature when we reflect His visible attributes.

b. The Incarnation of Christ

- i. Jesus exited the glory of heaven and came to the filth of the earth (John 1:1-18); left the voices of angels praising Him and subjected Himself to men insulting him (Isa. 53:3), stepped down from a throne and came to a manger (Luke 2:1-20), demoted Himself from a king to a slave (Phil. 2:6-7), removed His clothes of glory and put on clothes of humanity (Phil. 2:6-7), went from being renown to unknown (Isa. 53:2), although He was rich, became poor (2 Cor. 8:9), made Himself like us so that He could be our sympathetic high priest (Heb. 2:17).
- ii. Christ reached out to and became like the people He sought to save (cf. 1 Cor. 9:19-23); He was willing to leave the comfort of heaven and dwell with mankind. Christ could have demanded respect or recognition but instead He chose to remain in the constant state of humility (Phil. 2:5-8).
- iii. Jesus incarnated Himself in this manner to realign and restore us to the Story of God. (The Gospel)
 - 1. Redeemed through Christ (Cross) Gal. 3:13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree."
 - 2. Raised to be like Christ (Resurrection) Phil. 3:10 that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death.

c. The Vehicle of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (The Church)

- i. True design of the church is to be billboard for God (Eph. 2:10) For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.
 - 1. Workmanship (*poima*): -we, not "me", are God's piece of art.
 - 2. The body of Christ (church) should lead people to admire Jesus Christ.
 - 3. A tangible and living illustration of God Himself, namely Jesus Christ.

- d. The Mission of God in Scripture - to make Himself known through embodying Jesus by the transforming power of the gospel within the local church.
 - i. Mission of Cornerstone – to give every individual an accurate picture of God through helping those who believe become devoted followers of Jesus Christ.
 - ii. Identities of the Church are Displayed as we Embody Christ Making the Godhead (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) Known
 - 1. Chosen Race – Chosen One (Is.44:1)
 - 2. Holy Nation – Holy One (Acts 3:14)
 - 3. Treasured Possession – Purchasing Sacrifice (Tit. 2:14)
 - 4. Pillar of Buttress of Truth – The Truth (Jn. 14:6)
 - 5. A Royal Priesthood – High Priest (Heb. 2:17)
 - 6. People of the Kingdom of God – King of Kings (Rev. 17:14)
 - 7. Family of God – First-Born brother (Rom. 8:29)
 - 8. Flock of God – Good and Chief Shepherd (Jn. 10:11)
 - 9. Body of Christ – The Head (Eph. 1:22)
 - 10. Bride of Christ – Bridegroom (Matt. 25:1)
 - iii. God has called us out of our old worldly identities (“start”) by the transforming power of the gospel (cross – put off our old sinful identities; resurrection – put on our new church identities) (“means”) to form us together into His church (“means”) so that we as the church will make the Godhead (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) known as we embody Jesus Christ (“end”).

III. A Biblical Representation of Christ

- a. An Essential Question, A Pivotal Response...(Matthew 16:15) He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"
 - i. What we believe about Jesus has eternal and present implications.
 - ii. It is what we believe, not what our family, friends, culture, church, or even pastor believes.
 - iii. What we believe should be Biblically founded.
- b. Incarnational Qualities – WWJD (What Would Jesus Do) AND How, Where, and with Who
 - i. Foundational – A Submitted Will to God and His Mission
 - 1. John 6:38 “For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.”
 - 2. Mark 14:36 “And he said, “Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.”
 - 3. John 4:34, 5:30, 8:29
 - ii. Relocation (Incarnation)
 - 1. Sent by God
 - a. Sent on Mission
 - i. Luke 4:17-18 “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”
 - b. Sent to Represent
 - i. John 12:45 “And whoever sees me sees him who sent me.”
 - ii. Colossians 1:15 “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.”
 - c. Sent for Gospel Purpose
 - i. Romans 8:3-4a “For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us.”
 - d. Sent in Love

- i. I John 4:9 In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him.
- ii. The Nature of Love is Outward/Other-Focused – John 15:13 “Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.”
- iii. Love is Pursuing – I John 4:10 “In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”

1. “In a nutshell, the Bible from Genesis 3 to Revelation 22 tells the story of a God reckless with desire to get his family back.” - Phillip Yancey

2. Dwelt Among

- a. John 1:14 “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”
 - i. Jesus lived where he was sent to minister, not minister where he lived.
 - ii. He left the glory of Heaven to live in the filthy, sin-infested Earth.

3. Identification

- a. Philippians 2:7 “but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.”
 - i. Phillip Yancey quote - “He did not stay in the safe immunity of his heaven. Instead, he emptied himself of his glory and humbled himself to serve. He actually entered our world. He took our nature, lived our life, and died our death. He could not have identified with us more closely than he did. It was total identification, though without any loss of identity, for he became one of us without ceasing to be himself. He became human without ceasing to be God.”

4. Dual Nature – Humanity and Holiness

- a. Colossians 2:9 “For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily.”
- b. Not a Balance, but Both – Both was Necessary for His Mission

iii. Reconciliation (The Cross)

1. Teaching, Preaching, and Healing –

- a. Matthew 4:23 “And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people.”

Matthew 9:35 “And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction.”

b. Eliminated the Material and Spiritual Division

- i. His ministry was Both/And not Either/Or. To prioritize or set one above the other is at the expense of the other.
- ii. Word and Deed – Luke 24:19 “And he said to them, “What things?” And they said to him, “Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people.”
- iii. “In the incarnation of the eternal Word all false dualisms between the material and the spiritual, visible and invisible, human and divine, temporal and eternal, this-worldly and other-worldly, finite and infinite, were dissolved in the totally integrated person of Christ. “ - John Corrie

2. Sinless Friend of Sinners – Outcasts and Egregious Sinners

a. Reconciliation Embraces Equality

- i. Matthew 9:9-10 “As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, “Follow me.” And he

rose and followed him. And as Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples."

- ii. Sharing a meal demonstrated social equality.

- b. Sinners Drawing Near

- i. Luke 15:1-2 "Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them."
- ii. True Righteousness does not repel sinners.

- 3. Warning to the Religious (Hypocrites)

- a. Matthew 23 – Woe!
- b. Woe to Merely Hearers of the Word.
- c. Woe to those who do not respond to the full Word of God.

- iv. Redistribution (Resurrection)

- 1. Humble Servant (The Great Commandment Demonstrated)

- a. Humility

- i. Philippians 2:3-8 "Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death even death on a cross."
 - ii. Giving away Power, Position, Prestige.
 - iii. Not just in attitude, but in action.

- b. Servant

- i. John 13:3-5 "Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him."
 - ii. Jesus Served from a posture of humility.
 - iii. Service was not earned or deserved.

- 2. Re-sending (Making Disciples)

- a. Redistribution of Power

- i. Luke 24:49 "And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high." John 14:26 "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

- b. Redistribution of Mission

- i. Acts 1:8 "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."
 - Matthew 28:19-20 "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy

Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

IV. Incarnation of the Church – The Model for Mission

- a. Want to know what God is like, look at the incarnated Christ. Want to know what Christ looks like, look at the incarnated Church. (B.Merrick)
- b. Are We Capable of Christ's Characteristics
 - i. Common Experience – Human qualities in Christ that we share fully through our human experience.
 - 1. Body of Flesh - conceived in the womb of a human mother, and developed as a human.
 - a. Luke 1:31 "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus."
 - b. Luke 2:52 "And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man."
 - 2. Human physiology
 - a. Hunger – Matthew 4:2
 - b. Thirst – John 19:28
 - c. Fatigue – John 4:6
 - d. Physical suffering and death – John 19:34
 - 3. Human psychology
 - a. Love – John 13:23
 - b. Compassion – Matthew 9:36
 - c. Joy – John 15:11
 - d. Anger – Mark 3:5
 - e. Distress – Luke 12:50
 - f. Loneliness – Mark 15:34
 - g. Sorrow – Matthew 26:37
 - ii. Incomparable Qualities - Divine attributes that we are unable to share because of our limited humanity.
 - 1. Omnipotent – Matthew 8:26-27, Luke 8:53-54
 - 2. Omniscient – John 16:30, John 4:16-19
 - iii. The Gap
 - 1. Qualities that perfectly reflected the visible attributes of God that, as redeemed image bearers, we are capable of reflecting through the power of the Holy Spirit.
- c. Is Walking like Jesus required?
 - i. I John 2:3-6 "And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked."
 - ii. We are literally indebted – It is a "must have".
 - iii. We must conduct our lives in the same manner
 - 1. Follow the Leader, Attitude AND Actions
- d. Incarnational Qualities – What Should the Church Do, AND How, Where, and with Who?
 - i. Foundational – A Submitted Will to God and His Mission
 - 1. Submitted to Christ
 - a. Ephesians 5:23-24 "For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands."
 - 2. Submitted to the Word
 - a. II Timothy 3:16 "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness."

3. Greater Submission Results in Greater Participation – Not my way, but The WAY.
 - a. Luke 14:27 "Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple."

- ii. Relocation (Incarnation)

1. Christ was Sent by God and the Church is being Sent by Christ

John 17:18 "As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world."

John 20:21 "Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you."

2. Sent on a Mission

Matthew 28:19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

3. Sent to Represent

1 Corinthians 11:1 "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ."

4. Sent for Gospel Purpose

Colossians 1:27 "To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."

Mathew 9:37-38, Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

5. Sent in Love

Ephesians 5:1-2 "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."

- b. The Nature of Love is Outward/Other-Focused –

Romans 13:9 "For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

- c. Love is Pursuing

Romans 10:15 "And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"

- iii. Dwelt Among – Getting Jesus to People, not getting people to Jesus

1. Every Believer must struggle with the question of why do I live where I live? Where you live screams your values.

2. It's not where you live, but WHY you live there.

- a. Was the selection of my address missional or was it based on...

i. Safety, home values, quality schools, space, peace and quiet, being close to work, knowing people there, or other people like me are there

- iv. Identification – Shared experience = Shared needs

1. Philippians 2:5 "Have this mind amongst yourselves which is yours in Christ Jesus."

- v. Dual Nature – Not of the world but in the world

John 17:16-18 "They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world."

1 Peter 2:11 "Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul."

3. "We are a people who have been given a new nature (born from above) and are called out of the world to worship God, but we are also still members of humanity sent into the world to witness and to serve" – John Stott

4. Hotel Illustration

- vi. Reconciliation (The Cross)

1. Teaching, Preaching, and Healing – Ministering like Jesus

a. Discipleship, Proclamation, Physical Needs

- b. Opportunity through relationships
- c. Felt Needs as an entry point
- 2. Sinless Friend of Sinners
 - a. Reconciliation embraces equality
 - i. Jesus embraced sinners and hung out with sinners, do you?
 - ii. "Knowing sinners", not knowing of or knowing about.
 - 1. Proximity and Time
 - b. Triaging the Sick – Outcasts and Egregious Sinners
 - i. - Matthew 9:11-13 "And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples: "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" But when he heard it, he said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."
 - c. Sinners Drawing Near
 - i. Being a Sinner Magnet
 - 1. Do you repel or attract?
 - ii. "Jesus was the friend of sinners. He commended a groveling tax collector over a God-fearing Pharisee. The first person to home he openly revealed himself as Messiah was a Samaritan woman who had a history of five failed marriages and was currently living with yet another man. With his dying breath he pardoned a thief who would have zero opportunity for spiritual growth....Unfortunately, I believe the Church is viewed increasingly as an enemy of sinners." – Phillip Yancey
 - d. Priority of the One
 - i. Luke 15:3-7 "So he told them this parable: "What man of you, having a hundred sheep if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it? And when he has found it he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.' Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance."
 - 1. Heavenly Math 1>99
 - 2. Efficiency does not always equal effectiveness
 - a. "Yet efficiency, too, is a part of us that must die if the gospel is to be preached to the poor. The choice of seeming inefficiency is a choice that ultimately brings effectiveness. By neglecting our customary patterns of effectiveness, we find our Lord's patterns beginning to manifest themselves." – Viv Grigg
- 3. Warning to the Religious (Hypocrites)
 - a. Matthew 23 – Woe to you Hypocrites!
 - i. Avoiding Self-Focus
 - ii. Submit to the Full Word of God
 - iii. Declaration and Demonstration
 - 1. A Gospel without truth is powerless and a Gospel without action is useless.
- vii. Redistribution (Resurrection)
 - 1. Humble Servant (The Great Commandment Demonstrated)
 - a. Humility
 - i. We must be aware of our privilege. Want to understand privilege, ask someone who doesn't have it.

1. Privilege Classes

- a. Age
- b. Gender
- c. Ethnicity
- d. Nationality
- e. Physical Ability
- f. Sexual Orientation

ii. Recognizing privilege, we GIVE AWAY our position, prestige, and power.

b. Servant – Realized from a Posture of Humility

- i. John 13:12-15 "When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you."
- ii. Matthew 20:26-28 "It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

2. Re-sending (Making Disciples)

a. Sending the Church

- i. Acts 1:8 "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."
- ii. Matthew 28:19-20 "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

b. Light was Made for Darkness (Not to Congregate)

- i. II Corinthians 4:6 "For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

V. Go to the World and Love the World (B. Merrick)

- a. Not Cocoon - Run away from the World
- b. Not Conform - Look no different than the World
- c. Not Combat - Fight/battle/judge unbelievers

The more we embody or incarnate Christ, the more we live out a full demonstration and proclamation of the Gospel.