



# ACTS

## Principles

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### Building Abundant Communities

We are called, as individual believers, and as the Church, the collective body and bride of Christ, to a higher purpose. That purpose embraces a humble faith walk with God lived out in the world through acts of mercy and justice (Micah 6:8). To guide our paths on this faith walk, God gave us the Great Command, the Great Prayer and the Great Co-Mission.

Through these scriptures God reveals his agenda for the world and summons us to join Him in shaping history's unfolding story. In the Great Prayer (Matthew 6:10) Christ charges us to pray that God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven. If heaven is a place of abundance, then God's will, His agenda, is to see the world, here and now, marked by abundance, by shalom.

To accomplish this aim, Christ enjoins us through the Great Command (Mark 12:31) to love God with our whole selves (heart, soul, mind and strength) and to love our neighbors in similar fashion – completely, holistically and relationally. The story of the Good Samaritan reminds us to be a neighbor whenever we are needed and to realize that neighbors can come from surprising places.

This is not just a good idea! It's at the heart of God's agenda and, therefore, our purpose. In the Great Co-Mission (Acts 1:8), Christ calls on us all to join with him as witnesses and ambassadors of the ministry of reconciliation. God has chosen to fulfill his agenda through you and I and through the Church as a whole. We have been invited to be co-creators of abundant communities.

The act of co-creation is an incredible privilege and an incredible responsibility. The ACTS Principles below are designed to serve as sign posts keeping us moving in the right direction as we walk in faith to fulfill our part of the reconciliation process, the abundance agenda.

## 1 God Intended Us To Live In Abundant Communities.

God's original design (and our future story) is for ALL people to live the fullness of life within Abundant Communities. Our souls cry out with Christ for God's will to be done here and now, "on earth, as it is in heaven (Matthew 6:10)."

## 2 Abundant Communities Produce Abundant Living.

In Abundant Communities, people experience individual dignity and purpose, affirming relationships and social networks, a vibrant faith community, just systems, and economic and physical security.

## 3 Broken Relationships And Systems Hinder Abundant Living

Broken personal relationships between people and God, themselves, others, and the creation, combined with fallen systems, hinder the development of Abundant Communities and move us toward a scarcity worldview.

## 4 Poverty, In All Of Its Forms, Is A Result Of These Broken Relationships And Systems

Some of the most destructive consequences of broken personal relationships or systems can be especially found in such social issues as racism and other types of prejudice, as well as material poverty and opportunity inequity.

## 5 The Church Is Charged With Reconciling Broken Relationships And Systems

The Church was, and is, Co-Missioned by God, through the ministry of reconciliation, to bring healing to wounded lives, restoration to broken systems and relationships, and economic security where once there was hardship.

## 6 Living God's Reconciliation Agenda Produces Abundant Churches

Churches become abundant communities when they faithfully and intentionally live their collective purpose, which rests at the nexus between God's reconciliation agenda and the unique giftedness of the church in Christ.

## 7 Abundant Churches Reconcile By Ministering With Those Affected By Poverty

Abundant Churches live their missional journey by ministering WITH, rather than TO/FOR, those affected from a relational, holistic, and collaborative approach. This requires that we build radical alliances among and between racial, socio-economic, and other groups.

## 8 Ministering With Others Requires Abiding With Each Other

As uniquely gifted members of the Body of Christ, sustaining ourselves along this missional journey requires that we walk WITH each other in humility, love, grace, truth, brokenness, and solidarity.

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