

# St. Paul's Dorking Small Groups. Sept 25th 2005

## Whose Church is it anyway?

### "Called to love the world"

Matthew 28: 16 – 21 Acts 8: 26 - 40



#### Word: Key points from Sunday's sermon

**Genesis 1** and **2** tell us of God's desire from the beginning of time to be in relationship with his creation and in particular with humankind

*'So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them'. We are created to be like him and to reflect what he is like. We are told that God is love and those who live in love live in God (1 John 4:16) There is within the heart of each one of us, the desire to be loved and to be in relationship with one another and with God,*

**John 3: 16** tells us *'God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son.'* There is an ache in the heart of God expressed in that small word 'so.' He so longs that everyone should know him and be in a deep and loving relationship with him.

**Matthew 28: 16 - 21** describes the great commission to go and make disciples of all nations; to bring all humankind into the kingdom of God that they might know and experience the love of God. This is our mandate to love the world:

*"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup>Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup>and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you"*

This passage teaches us at least three things:

- God has chosen weak and fallible human beings to take the message of his love, power and grace to the world. St Paul understood this when he wrote to the Corinthians *"But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us".*(2 Corinthians 4: 7)
- We have no authority of ourselves but we go under his authority and by his direction. In our reading from Acts 8 we read how Philip was directed by an angel who said to him; *'Go south to the road – the desert road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza*
- We are commanded to go and make disciples. We are being called to make relationships, to build friendships and to place them under the authority of Jesus. Our reading of the story of Philip and the Ethiopian shows us that their relationship began with a very ordinary question – "do you understand what you're reading?" We are called to be supernaturally natural and naturally supernatural.

**John 10: 16** teaches us that God has a passion for the lost; he is always seeking them out; he never stops in his searching. Jesus has made his home in us, knowing that we are weak and fallible, but as we live under his authority we can go and make disciples, convinced of the urgency of loving all in God's world.



#### Witness: Questions to discuss

1. Our mission statement says that we are convinced of the urgency of loving all in God's world. How well do you think we at St Paul's fulfil this vision?
2. Do we let our own weaknesses get in the way of going and making disciples? How does God's word help us overcome these weaknesses?
3. Are we sufficiently confident in the presence of the Holy Spirit within us to 'go' as he instructs us?
4. How good are we at building relationships and making friends outside the church family?
5. What can we do to rediscover or to stir up our passion for the lost?
6. What do we need to pray for in order that we have a fresh vision for loving all in God's world?