

# PRESENCE

*John 17:15-18 I do not pray that You should take them out of the world,*

*but that You should keep them from the evil one.*

*They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.*

*Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.*

*As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.*

That bodes the question– How do we posture ourselves in this world?  
Church has taken various positions:

**The Protesting church** – sees the world as evil and we must posture against. There is a time to be a prophetic voice – but that should not our only identity.  
*Picket lines, demonstrations, and public protests are hallmarks of this approach*

## **The Absent church**

Christian community seeks to isolate itself. Where the Church abdicates its role in society – Society quickly moves on without it, seeing the church as irrelevant. We are not of the world, but need to be present in the world. *Absence = Irrelevance*

## **The Cultural church**

The pendulum swings to the other side with the church assimilating the value system of Babylon and is indistinguishable from the world.

## **The Incarnational church**

What is being incarnational? It is found in the truth of how Christ came and lived us.

*John 1: 14 NKJV And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us,  
and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten  
of the Father, full of grace and truth.*

*John 1: 14<sup>Message</sup> The Word became flesh and blood,  
and moved into the neighborhood.*

When we do live in and for and through Christ, something extraordinary happens, we become carriers of His grace. *As Jesus – we engage with GRACE and TRUTH.* A working definition of incarnational ministry is *“the immersion of one’s self into a local culture and ‘becoming Jesus’ bringing Kingdom influence to that culture.”*

This means that when we are present - we are taking the presence of Christ into our world.

*Eph 1:20-23 Message All this energy issues from Christ: God raised him from death and set him on a throne in deep heaven, in charge of running the universe, everything from galaxies to governments, no name and no power exempt from his rule. And not just for the time being, but forever. He is in charge of it all, has the final word on everything.*

*At the center of all this, Christ rules the church.*

*The church, you see, is not peripheral to the world; the world is peripheral to the church. The church is Christ’s body,*

*in which he speaks and acts,*

*by which he fills everything with his presence.*

We can understand **PRESENCE** in three dimensions: **Fathering / Faithful / Fruitful**  
**FATHERING presence** - a burdened heart. The **AWARENESS** of the need in the world.

A beautiful example from the Bible we find in the book Nehemiah. It’s the story of the building of the walls of Jerusalem towards the end of the Babylonian exile. There are so many parallels with that story and the church in modern society and how to be present in the world as the church of Jesus Christ.

*Neh 1:4 So it was, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned for many days; I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven.*

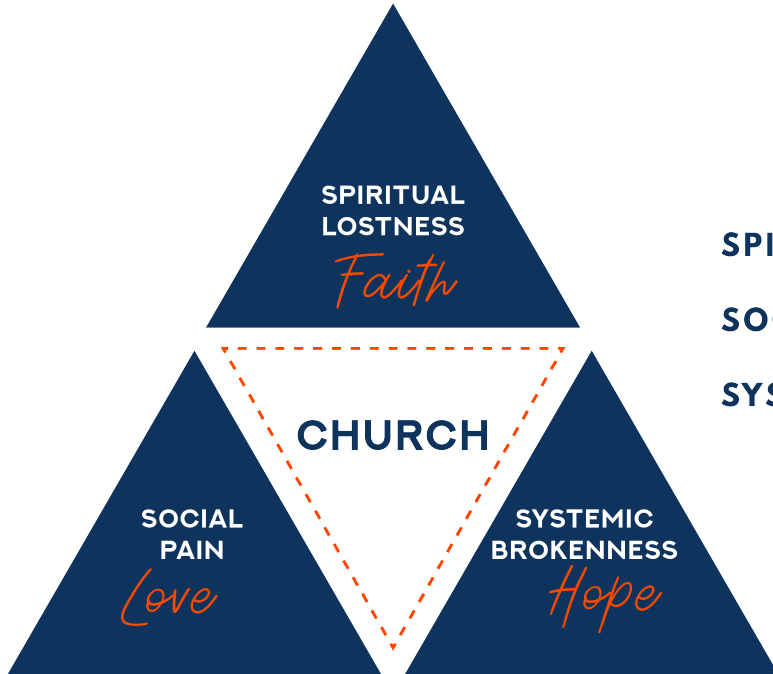
**FAITHFUL presence** – an attractive life. The **CHARACTER** of Christ in the world Before we rush out to DO, we should start by focusing on how to BE Being an "incarnational church" means we have a grasp on who Christ is and who we are in Him, and how that translates to my everyday life. This effects how I relate and treat my fellow believer and lost neighbor? Christ, being fully God, chose to come down to us, to be one of us. In knowing this, we as the church are the people of God living out the new life just as Jesus, who dwelled and moved among us did. We are called to inculcate the character of Christ into the Community. The aroma of Christ filling the world, as we choose to exhibit Kingdom principles - not as a program - but a transformed life. We are called to engage in the power of the opposite spirit as lambs among wolves. People see the church by how they see Christians in action. How they see God is how He is displayed and deployed in the life of believers.

*2Cor 2:14 <sup>NKJV</sup> Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place.*

**FRUITFUL presence** – a life taking **Faith Love** and **Hope** to our world. The actions of Christ in the world.

As representative of God's kingdom, we need to engage society in a way that God's glory would become evident in every aspect of life.

*Prov 11:11 TLB  
The good influence of godly citizens causes a city to prosper.*



**SPIRITUAL LOSTNESS :** *Faith*

**SOCIAL PAIN :** *Love*

**SYSTEMIC BROKENNES :** *Hope*