*VBC*

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*Mission Statement*

*September 28-29, 2013*

**“The Reason We Exist”**

A STORY

I loved the people in my first church—but when I arrived, it was a mess

-the church was listless and lifeless—like a ship at anchor, rusting in the harbor

-sometimes it felt like the Costa Concordia off the coast of Italy, turned on its side

-one Sunday, I preached out of Acts 19

-Paul had come to Ephesus, to a pagan culture filled with idols, to preach the gospel

-but it was met with fierce resistance

-Paul disturbed the vested business interests

-created problems with *Ephesians Silversmiths Union, Local 186*—in charge of manufacturing (19:23-24)

-and so the city turned on Paul and the believers—and at one point, people rushed into the amphitheater asking for Paul’s head

-this became chaotic, as the writer of Acts recounts—

*-19:32—“Some were shouting one thing and some another, because the assembly was in confusion, and most of them did not know why they had come together”*

-I asked my church that morning if this could be descriptive of us—and other churches

-people assembled together—sometimes confused, sometimes even shouting

-congregants—outside of habit—not really sure why they were there on Sundays

-uncertain of their MISSION

*-the sermon did not go over well—but it made the point*

-we decided to get missional

*WHAT DO WE MEAN BY MISSION?*

-one way to describe it—mission is a *broad statement of why* we are here, why we exist

-it declares *our core purpose, our collective commitment*

-a mission serves as the compass heading, the internal gyroscope

-any effective organization has one—

*-Marriott—*

*“Our mission is to make people away from home feel they are at home”*

*-Starbucks—*

*"Our mission: to inspire and nurture the human spirit – one person, one cup and one neighborhood at a time."*

*-Nike—*

*'To bring inspiration and innovation to every athlete\* in the world.' (\*'If you have a body you are an athlete.')*

*-even Twitter has a defined mission—*

*“To instantly connect people everywhere to what’s most important to them.”*

-how about you—do you know your mission?

-each of us must have a sense of mission—reason to be

-or we are directionless—adrift

*WHAT MAKES FOR A GOOD MISSION STATEMENT?*

-it should be—

1. FOCUSED—creating undistracted devotion
2. INSPIRING—a cause that stirs the imagination—hence a purpose should be idealistic
3. CONCISE—expresses succinctly why we exist
4. MEMORABLE—something we can recall—state to one another

*-Walt Disney is a great example—*

*“Our mission is to make people happy”*

-focused, concise, memorable—and somewhat inspiring

-even the writer of John had a clearly defined mission—

*“These things are written so that you may believe Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and by believing you may have life in His name”—20:31*

-this was John’s core purpose for writing the book

*WHAT ABOUT THE CHURCH?*

-is there an organization on earth that has a higher mission?

(I don’t know of one)

-if this is true—we should have absolute clarity

-so here is a test question—“*What is the mission of Village*?”

-could you answer?

-if a guest came in and sat down and asked—so what are guys about?—could you answer?

(Renjy)

*-one of the things we discovered in numerous interviews is that our mission is not so clear*

*-Villagers as a whole could not articulate our mission*

*-and we did not help matters adding a cumbersome vision statement*

*-we realized we needed to rework—be more concise—bring clarity*

*-we have spent weeks on this—going back to Scripture to discern the mission God gave the church*

*-and since it involves all of us—and requires our affirmation*

*-we decided to bring the whole church together to both explain and affirm*

*-here’s where we landed—this became our start point—*

*A Multicultural Community in Christ*

* *Although the mission should look pretty similar in other churches, our tag line distinguishes us.*
* *We are a multicultural community in Christ*
* *We strive for this, not because it is a nice thing to do or just for diversity’s sake*
* *We are multicultural because that is what God designed the church to be*
* *Take a look at this picture of the community of God in heaven.*
* *“Behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb…” — Rev 7:9*
* *Not some nations, not a few specific people, not the elite, not English speaking only, but EVERY nation, from ALL peoples*
* *The gospel of Christ is good news to all people, regardless of ethnicity, age, gender, class or background. For ALL people*
* *When we come to Christ, we are all united as one… Christ binds us together*
* *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus —Gal 3:28*
* *Here’s the thing… the church is not to wait until heaven to that community… God calls us to be the community of heaven, here and now.*
* *(Story of visiting a local church and being the only person of a different color out of 1000 people)*

(John)

-story of coming back from NL

-Scripture commands us be an inclusive ethos—a community where there is no default ethnicity

-where the evidence of being a multicultural community begins with our leadership

-why our staff is taking the shape it is

-from here—we came to a settled conviction the mission of the church has these four non-negotiables—

(Renjy)

*1. PURSUING TRUTH*

* *Our first mission point… we are a community pursuing truth—it has to be—and here’s why…*
* *The fall of humanity began with a lie…*
* *But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. 5 For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God… — Gen 3:4-5*
* *This lie destroyed God’s beautiful creation and we live a in a world that continues to distort the truth*
* *When I look at our culture, I believe people are looking for the truth, but they often find it in the wrong places.*
* *God has given us his truth, through his Living Word and written word.*
* *Truth is not simply right facts or statements… it is first and foremost a person..*
* *Jesus is the Truth—Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. — Jn 14:6*
* *And this Truth, Jesus has come to set us free from the lies and deception of this world*

(John)

And so our mission, in part, has to be about going after truth—something that is a lifelong quest

*-God mandates us to use our minds—Jesus said, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all of your soul, and with all your mind”—Matt 22:37*

-Jesus is saying—thinking is essential to loving God

-thinking that is soaked in word, that thinks rightly about God, is indispensable to a life that brings glory to God

-but too often the church is ambivalent about the mind

-ever since the enlightenment—the church has been suspicious of faith that is merely rational

-our tradition draws from a pietistic anti-intellectualism

*-and so our education—particularly at an adult level—has tended to be less vigorous*

-Mark Noll put it this way—

*“The scandal of the evangelical mind is that there is not much of an evangelical mind”*

-and this has contributed to our inability to articulate our faith, engage with culture, and earn respect

-*we need to recover our mission of chasing after truth—truth that transforms and unleashes us*

-but the mission of the church is not simply to be a think tank—there is another vital part to our purpose—

*2. RESPONDING IN WORSHIP*

-God has given the church this mandate

-but we don’t always get worship right—in our culture, worship can sometimes seem *less like the company of the saints and martyrs and more like a nightclub that forgot to close*

-worship can sometimes be the most divisive part of the church—and this is because we miss what worship is about

*-it’s not about styles, entertainment, nor preferences*

-it is about responding to God’s words and God’s acts

-Scripture declares this over and over—

*-God spoke to Abraham, and Abraham built an altar*

*-God revealed His might in the exodus—and they sat down and worshipped*

*-Ezra read the Word and the people fell down and wept*

-hence—*revelation precedes worship*—something we have backwards in most church practices

(Renjy)

* *This means we do not gather to initiate something— come to God with our self-expressions—so much as come to be confronted by God who initiates, reveals, speaks*
* *We are not trying to conjure an emotion or create something artificial*
* *We are trying to listen to the Spirit’s leading, to rightfully respond to the truth of God*
* *The climax of the service is the moment when the truth of God has been revealed and now we are called to wrestle with it, to respond*
  + *Whether through confession, through repentance and committing to change, or through adoration, and maybe being compelled to serve someone*
  + *It is a time for us to commune with God and listen to what he is calling us to be as a community and as individuals*
* *Our worship must not end here… it cannot be confined to these walls*
* *Worship is a lifestyle of responding to Him*
  + *That day in and day out we are listening and responding to him*

(John)

Biblical worship that finds God will also find our neighbor…this is another core purpose of the church…

(Renjy)

*3. MARKED BY LOVE*

* *Jesus was once asked, what is the greatest commandment.*
* *Jesus’ response was clear: Love God and love others*
* *It was love that drove Him here… It was love that came forth through his interactions with people…. And it was love for His Father, and for you and I that held him on the cross*
* *Through his death and resurrection, he has marked all those who follow him with this love*
* *So as ones who are saved and marked by love… how should we be identified?*
* *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” —John 13:34-35*

(John)

-all of this underscores that love is a non-negotiable for the church

-but it is all too absent in a lot of American, suburban, large churches

*-as well as small, urban ones*

-there are moments when it is obvious

-a loving response to a crisis that shows what the church is capable of

-a missional endeavor that calls us to mobilize—and reveals Christ’s dynamic presence amongst us

*-when we love as God calls us to love—there is no community on earth that can rival this community*

ILLUSTRATION—story of the quilt

(Renjy)—*story of conversation with new couple*

(John)

-we don’t always get this right—sometimes people get hurt

*-when we don’t love as God calls us to love—there is no community on earth that can do so much damage*

-this is why we have to keep learning how to love

-recently as a body worked through twelve “*mutuality demands*” (stir up, encourage, bear up, forgive one another, etc)

-these paint a picture—not of commuters or customers who come to a building filled with customized programs

-but of people who have decided *to lay down their lives to love one another*

-without the “one anothers”—we are free form, a random gathering, a non-impacting club

-with them—we can become a radical, life giving community—fulfilling its missional mandate

-there’s one more part of the mission—

(Renjy)

1. *LIVING THE GOSPEL*

* *Ever since that fall of humanity, God has been on a mission to redeem and restore all creation—*
* *The Bible reveals that mission – a mission that is centered on the gospel: the good news that through the person and work of Jesus, God’s kingdom is breaking in and changing everything*
* *What’s amazing about this mission is that he chooses to invite humanity, us into that mission.*
* *And created the church to carry this out*
* *The church is a gospel community… a community so radically different with the living truth, powerful worship and extravagant love to go out into their world, in their neighborhoods and abroad, to LIVE THE GOSPEL*
* *To live the Gospel, is to say that we are so transformed and saturated with the gospel that we are people who carry that gospel in word and deed to point people to Jesus*
* *It is not simply with your words alone*
* *It is not simply with your actions alone*
* *It has to be both… with all of our lives—Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ… standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel.—Phil 1:27*

(John)

Here’s what living the gospel looks like, at a local level, and on a global scale

1. first, we are a community committed to showing COMPASSION—feeding the poor in Beirut, clothing the homeless in downtown Portland, downtown Beaverton

b. second, we are a community committed to standing for JUSTICE

-addressing the unjust structures, policies, personalities that have created injustices

1. living the gospel also involves sharing the GOSPEL—sharing the good news that our God has entered into our world to pay the price for our failure and breathe into us new life through Jesus

ILLUSTRATION—story of Grant

CONCLUSION

In a concise way, this represents the underlying reason for our existence. It cannot be reduced to two or three of these. The church is called to all of the above.

And no mission statement is worth much unless it is passionately lived out. The easiest part is behind us—crafting a mission statement that reflects the heart of God. The real challenge is to adopt, embrace, and flesh out. Will you do this?