

Discovering Your Church's Mission

Session Description

A ship without a working rudder goes wherever the tides and winds will ... until it runs aground. A church without a working mission statement suffers the same malady and fate. One of the most contentious processes in the church seems to be discovering the answer to the "Why are we here?" question, and yet of all the parts of the DNA, why your church exists is the easiest to discover. In the episode Drs. Kris and Bill tackle the Mission Monster, tame it, and teach how you can do the same.

Session Outline

The Issues:

- Many churches don't know "why" they exist. In a study years ago, 89 percent of church members said that the church existed to serve their family and their needs.¹
- A church (or any organization) without a clear mission that guides its every decision is left to the whims and desires of its leaders' preferences.
- Mission statements often reflect popular theology and thought rather than a clear biblical mandate.
- Clubs exist to serve their members. The church exists to reach, serve, and disciple those who are not there yet.

The Problems:

- Many churches have developed mission statements through a contentious and fractious process
- Many church mission statements are long and convoluted and even self-defeating
- Many church mission statements are works of art that are framed and hung on the wall ... but do little besides looking beautiful or official.
- Many other church mission statements are developed, adopted, printed on the bulletin, and may even be quoted, but they carry no weight.

Effective Mission Statements:

- Are to the point
 - Are memorable
 - Guide every decision made
- "If you can get your mission statement on a T-shirt, it probably is a good one."
Peter Drucker.

¹ David Parks. "Service or Serve Us." *Focus*. In it the author quotes Win Arn regarding the purpose of the church: "Win Arn, a church consultant, once surveyed church members asking the question, 'Why does the church exist?' Of those surveyed, 89 percent said 'the church's purpose is to take care of my family and my needs (serve us).' Only 11 percent said, 'the purpose of the church is to win the world for Jesus Christ (serve others).'"

Famous Mission Statements

Disney

"We create happiness by providing the finest in entertainment for people of all ages, everywhere."

Coca Cola

"Everything we do is inspired by our enduring mission:

- To Refresh the World... in body, mind, and spirit.
- To Inspire Moments of Optimism... through our brands and our actions.
- To Create Value and Make a Difference... everywhere we engage."

Google

"To make the world's information universally accessible and useful"

Developing Your Church's Mission Statement

Good news ... there's very little for you to do other than personalize it. Jesus already specified the mission of the church.

- Mt 16.18: I will build my church and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.
 - Two keys: (1) It's Jesus' church; and (2) the purpose image.
- Mt 28.19–20: Make disciples.
- Acts 1.8: Be my witnesses.

The church exists to make disciples. This has two parts to it:

- To make more disciples
- To make more effective disciples

Everything the church does reflects this mission

Steps to Mission Development

- Small group of leaders do a Bible study on the mission of the early church
- Together develop a proposed Mission Statement & Mission Motto
- Use the stone-in-a-pond process to gain wider feedback and assent
- Adopt it at the church level
- Live in to organizing around it

Sample Church Mission Statements

"To lovingly and relationally invite people into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, to help them grow as disciples, and to send them out into the world."

"We exist to welcome people to faith; equip people with a faith that works in real life; and send us in service into the world in Jesus' name."

Session Questions

1. What do the three sample (non church) mission statements have in common?
2. Can you quote your church's mission statement?

3. How do you think a church would behave if *everything* it did was guided by one of the sample church mission statements?
4. What would have to change in your congregation if it was decided that everything your church did was guided by its mission statement?