

Faith Community Vision & Mission 2

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Vision: **Gospel** and the **discipleship** to every open door.

HOW DO WE ACCOMPLISH THIS VISION?

MISSION / OBJECTIVES / TO-DO LIST (BIG PICTURE)

So you may be wondering, how do we accomplish the vision of getting the gospel and discipleship through every open door? Today I would like to lay out the way we design ministry, the values on which we focus and the role of key leaders. All of these are components in accomplishing our vision and mission.

VALUES

LAVISHING GRACE

One of the primary things we want visitors to experience is having people lavish grace on others. Here are a few ways we can make this lavishing of grace seen.

LETTING PEOPLE TRY THINGS (And Sometimes Fail and Try Again)

One of the ways to lavish grace is to be embrace a permission giving culture.

ILLUSTRATION: When I was in my mid twenties I was attending bible school at Bethel College in Saint Paul. I have always been eager to teach. So after mastering a few skills and a bit of teaching content I approached the leadership of the church I was attending. I asked if they could use help teaching sunday school or adult education. The answer was that I could teach a class 18 months from now but I had to read the script given to me exactly word for word as it was written.

The message I received loud and clear is that one had to be an insider in order to be trusted or given permission to do anything. And one could not try serving in various areas of ministry in order to discover one's area of giftedness. And if you do get to serve you had better be perfect.

Contrast that with Romans 12.

Romans 12:6-8

^{12:6} (speaking to both men and women Paul says:) ⁶ **We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us.**

If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; ⁷ if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; ⁸ if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

_____ The best way to summarize this passage is that if you have a spiritual gift or a talent that God has given you use it, don't sit on your gift. You have God's permission to use your gift. And much of the work that I and staff do is to set the stage in such a way that you can use your gifts and talents to serve the Lord. We need to be a permission giving culture. Are there boundaries and guidelines? Of course. But the boundaries are not so high that we shut out everyone that is not exactly like us.

LOVING OUR MISSION FIELD

Another means of lavishing grace on others which sets the tone for the gospel and discipleship is this: Love the people in our mission field.

By Ed Stetzer

It's fascinating that a lot of Christians don't seem to like non-Christians, often referred to as the *lost* or the *unchurched*. Often we want to keep away from messy people—perhaps missing the obvious that we are messy as well.

Who's on Your Friends List?

It's interesting that after coming to Christ and growing in knowledge, we often distance ourselves from former friends. We seem to have less time for the hurting and struggling. We've found the thing that meets the need in our lives, but keep our distance from those who need the very thing we've found. I don't think this separation is intentional, but it happens, and in the end, our intentions don't matter.

One of the common criticisms Jesus faced was that he spent too much time with sinners.

Jesus lived differently.

How many of us could be accused of spending too much time with the unwelcome and unappreciated? It wasn't that Jesus was waiting for Paul to write, "Bad company corrupts good morals" in 1 Corinthians. No one better understood the importance of spiritual maturity, scriptural knowledge, a robust prayer life and positive influences than Jesus.

But he also knew these things were not for his personal benefit, but need to be shared with the lost. The Christian life is not about safety and comfort, but rather about finding yourself in a dangerous place of vulnerable compassion.

LOVING ONE ANOTHER

In addition to loving the people in our mission field we must love one another. Envy, malice, slander, fault finding is for non Christians. That is not for us. **Galatians 6** tells us to bare each other's burdens and fulfill the law of Christ.

ILLUSTRATION: I was first attracted to Christ because I went to an event at which there were people who authentically loved one another. It was so easy to see Jesus emerge. Ask me then what Jesus might have been like and I would have pointed to the people at the church picnic who had no posturing, ego problems, gossip or agenda....they just loved one another. And they were willing to invite me into that love that to me seemed quite miraculous. We do a lot of high level learning around here. But we can't forget that people will know we are Christians by the way we love one another.

HAVING BIBLICAL STANDARDS

If we are led by The word of God and the Holy Spirit we are going to be walking in the power of the resurrection. Be Spirit led and biblical rather than led of the flesh measuring things by human standards demanding our rights.

If we discern by the Holy Spirit how Jesus is at work then we can join Him where He is at work and be assured that nothing can stop that work.

And if we are people of the book and grow in our ability to handle God's word we will have the mind of Christ and a growing ability to know what God desires of us.

Here is how the word of God puts it;

Romans 12:1-2

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. ² Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

MINISTRY DESIGN

Now let's turn our attention to the way in which we design ministry.

BUILD A DISCIPLE-MAKING PATHWAY

We know that making disciples is not only mentioned in the bible, it is commanded.

Matthew 28:16-20 [Full Chapter]

16 Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. 17 And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. 18 And Jesus came and said to them,

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

_____ All authority in heaven has been given to Jesus. And how does Jesus want to use His authority? By commanding us to make disciples.

And as we go and seek disciples (which are simply people who want to follow Jesus) we baptize them into the faith as a sign that their old life is dead and that person is now raised to new life through Jesus Christ.

The mistake many churches and people make is to be satisfied with leading people to faith in Christ and baptising them. But that is not where Jesus stops. Jesus said that we are to teach those new believers to obey all that He commanded. That is the hard work on getting next to people

who believe, sacrificing some of our time and energy and pouring into those who want to grow in Christ. That is the nature of making disciples. It is teaching people to follow Jesus well no matter his or her calling.

Brian Cole, Tyler, Dave Kallenbach, Tonee Martin, Kami Scott, Judy Thompson, Andre Abraham (an emerging leader whom you will be able to meet in few weeks if our schedules line up), Mark Halvorson, Emily Eichstadt and several people overseas in various countries.

These are a sample of names of people that are in ministry today either partially or in whole because we have provided a pathway to begin where you are and end up as a skilled and mature Christian Minister.

There are also countless people who were baby Christians and who now are witnessing to others and living the Christian life. They may not be called a Minister, but they live the gospel and share the faith. This is one of the ways we build the body of Christ strong and mature. It is the heartbeat of functioning as a disciple making church.

EQUIP GOD'S PEOPLE TO SHARE THE FAITH

In our ministry design we also want to make it a priority to teach people in our church to share the faith with others.

Matthew 9:37

Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few;

In this passage Jesus is talking about the general work of building up the church but His emphasis is on sharing the gospel with others. In the next line Jesus tells us to pray that God will raise up workers for the harvest. I don't know if you have ever tried to share the faith with someone that God had not yet prepared to hear it. It does not go well. We must pray that God will lead us to those people that He has already been working on. And we must pray in the Spirit that God would use our words and actions and add the Holy Spirit's power to our words so that they sink into the heart of those with whom we share the faith.

ROLE OF KEY LEADERS

MAKING DISCIPLES RATHER THAN AN AUDIENCE

ILLUSTRATION: Joe Witt - Packers Defensive Backfield Coach

There is a defensive back who went undrafted, but he is so good that he had offers from several teams to come and play on their team. He specifically chose to come to the packers. Why? Because Joe Witt is the defensive backfield coach. Joe Witt takes the time to personally develop each new player. Joe observes the strengths and weakness of each player and then makes a development plan that fits that player. That is why the Packers are known for taking little known players and making them into starters.

That is the way I feel. I want to take little known players, ordinary people like us and get them off the bench and in the game. Sometimes there is a little tweaking, a little healing or a bit of teaching to get future leaders and people engaged. And sometimes we start from scratch.

WE'RE NOT A BUSINESS! (Leading With Grace and Truth)

The last thing I think we need to remember in order to keep the gospel and discipleship explosion is this; we are not a business. We are the church. One cannot just put business people into places of leadership and expect to build the church and expect God to power it up. Listen to the warning Jesus gives to those who would run the church like a business.

Matthew 20:25

25 But Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. 26 It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, 27 and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, 28 even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Some have put great pressure to come and Lord their authority over others and rule the church like a business. The church is not a business. We have Elders who are following the scriptures rather than the world. That is why our elders are appreciated and known throughout the state. We are to be servants of all and not Lords over that who report to us.

SUMMARY / APPLICATION

Our Values, Ministry Design and the Role of Leaders are three of the primary ways in which we seek to get the gospel and discipleship through every open door. We value people over specific programs. We are

designed to equip those who desire to grow in ministry and in living the Christian life and share his or her faith. And we expect leaders to be servant leaders who equip others and who pour into the body of Christ rather than Lording authority over other people.

Numbers will fluctuate every 5 years. Immature people will get upset with something their church is doing and will come here rather than working out their problems or issues where God has called them. So numbers is not the primary sign of health. The sign of health is whether God's people are sitting on the bench or on the playing field. The sign of health is whether God's people are preoccupied with getting his or her way and making unnecessary enemies or whether he or she is focusing on loving the lost and showing love toward one another. And another key measure of church health is whether we are reproducing leaders. Are there people who come to faith in Christ and then continue to grow until he or she is using his or her gift, even at a Vocational Ministry Level?

TAKING IT HOME

1. Do you love the people in your mission field? If so do they know?
2. What step is God calling you to take in order to grow in your knowledge of God's word and spiritual discernment?
3. How are you giving people permission to break into your area of ministry?
4. Who are you inviting into your life to encourage or disciple?
5. What is your ultimate God-given role in ministry and in the church? Have you worked out a pathway to get there? If not will you make an appointment with PM or PJ?