



Cultivate Mission

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Creating Identity/Purpose/Vision Statement

This document outlines the process of thinking through identity, purpose, vision, and organization for a church.

The goal is to end with a concise and pithy purpose/mission statement that is shared by the leadership of the church, and one that makes people's hearts sing. The most important part of this work is the creation of a very short and memorable purpose/mission statement. It should be so memorable that people hear it, remember it and can quote it in meetings and conversations.

Often a church's purpose statement is what I call a "kitchen sink" statement. Everything is included, and even if it's one sentence, it is a convoluted run-on with lots of verbs. Something like, "*Worshipping God together we seek to be a caring community that builds disciples, listens to one another, goes out into the world, heals hurts, helps people, spreads the word, and works for justice.*" This may be due to the fact that it is hard to write a memorable sentence, or that it's hard to agree on what that one purpose is for which the congregation exists. If the latter is the case, it's helpful to write other statements to go with the purpose statement, such as defining core values (like listening to one another) or core practices (like worship, building disciples, etc).

I use an example from "Jumpin4Joy Church" in italics. They have used II Corinthians 5:11-21 as the theme of their work:

17Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! **18**All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: **19**that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. **20**We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. **21**God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Identity: Being

- Who has God called us to be?
 - ✓ Rooted in the Scriptural call for why God created the church.
 - ✓ The church could use imagery from Scripture, as in the example provided, or not.

God creates us for relationship before God calls us to action. What is the nature of this relationship?

JUMPIN4JOY CHURCH:

We are friends with God, through Jesus Christ.

Jumpin4Joy Church is a reconciled people, reconciled to God through Jesus Christ. Reconciliation is the process of strangers becoming friends. Once we were estranged from God through our sin, but now we are friends through the connecting ministry of Christ. Because of this friendship we are jumping for joy!

We are reconciled to one another through the possibilities God's forgiveness opens up for us. We are reconciled to our world, both the people and the planet through God's power which flows to us in God's Spirit. We are a people living into the reconciliation God has accomplished in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Purpose: Doing

- What are we called by God to do?
- What is the main purpose for which we are called?

Some call this a “mission” statement. Very important: **It should have the world or the community outside the church’s doors as its vista. It should NOT have internal practices of care and community as its vista.**

Churches often have difficulty creating a pithy purpose statement, but it needs to be short and memorable. It needs to “sing,” i.e. inspire and motivate people. One reason churches have difficulty in creating a compact purpose statement is confusing the *doing* of purpose with the *doing* of core practices. If so, they may want to list core practices first, such as worshipping, building disciples, etc. The purpose statement reflects the main purpose for which God created the church to exist. Compare the purpose statement to a marathon runner. His/her purpose statement would be to run marathons. Then core practices would be running practice trials once a week, working out every day, stretching before working out, eating healthy meals, finding a supportive team of people to run with, etc. These are practices which enable the runner to live out his/her main purpose: to run marathons.

Another reason churches have difficulty writing a compact statement is that this is challenging work. So I advise churches to write a paragraph and then word-smith it down. The example shows the paragraph along with the pithy statement.

JUMPIN4JOY CHURCH:

Connecting the world to God through friendship.

As a reconciled people, we are given a ministry (diakonos, service) and a message (logos, words) of reconciliation. We seek to participate in God's reconciliation of the world through our words and

our deeds as ambassadors. We understand that ambassadors are physically present friends, thus we seek to be physically present to each other and to our community.

- ❖ *We seek to participate in God's reconciliation of our planet and environment through our actions as stewards of the earth, and our words encouraging all to love our earth and sacrifice for its care.*
- ❖ *We seek to participate in God's reconciliation of all people through our actions of love and mercy, and our words sharing the good news of the grace found in God through Jesus Christ.*
- ❖ *We seek to participate in God's reconciliation of the diversity of God's people through our actions of seeking to initiate and relate to people of all ethnicity and our words of honor and celebration of these differences God has created.*

Vision: Context

- Based on who we are, and what we are called to do, how do we make that happen in our particular and unique context?
- ✓ Considers church's context: the local community
- ✓ Considers church's strengths: buildings, finances, people—time/talent/gifts/interests.

JUMPIN4JOY CHURCH:

We gather as God's friends here, and go out as friends into God's world.

We will seek to be friends and ambassadors of God's reconciliation in our community. This friendship is lived out in the unique Jumpin4Joy community which is characterized by:

- ✓ *Tremendous diversity of people, Hispanic, Asian, etc.*
- ✓ *Disparity between rich and poor*
- ✓ *Variety of worldviews: those who worship different than us, or not at all.*

We seek to be ambassadors of God's reconciliation with our planet through growing food and offering the opportunity to do so through the land given to us as a gift of God, and through our attention to care of our use of the planet's resources in our life together.

We will engage the ethnic diversity of our community by:

- ❖ *Serving as tutors at Los Amigos Elementary School*
- ❖ *Participating in friendship with the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, serving where possible*
- ❖ *Deepening our friendship with the Korean church that nests each week in our church facility, and growing a partnership for ministry with this fellowship God has placed in our midst.*

Core Missional Practices

- What does the congregation do on a regular basis to engage the context with the vision?

JUMPIN4JOY CHURCH:

- ❖ *Practicing Hospitality: We will offer the radical welcome of Christ to all who walk through our doors for worship, events, meals, services.*
- ❖ *Practicing Discipleship: We will meet regularly in smaller groups, to build a reconciling community of friends who know one another, forgive one another and seek to discern together God's calling in our lives to participate in God's work of reconciliation in our world.*
- ❖ *Practicing Community Engagement: We will regularly engage our community through focused efforts.*
- ❖ *Practicing Stewardship of the Earth:*
 - *Continue the Community Gardens which provide land for friends in our church and community to grow food for the world.*
 - *Continue our care of the environment through our spiritual practice of being a "Green Business" in our county.*
- ❖ *Etcetera...*

Values: Desired Characteristics

- What values will characterize our life and work together?

Some churches find it helpful to name these types of characteristics they seek to inculcate. The church could also name values that are cherished and which constitutes appreciated strengths that they want to carry into the future as they live out a newly discerned direction.

JUMPIN4JOY CHURCH:

- ❖ *Open Communication: We will communicate truth with love. Assuming the best about each other, we hope to communicate our difference directly and compassionately*
- ❖ *Joyous Celebration: Life was meant to be fun! We were created for abundant life, and the joy we find in this creation, the people and beauty of our earth.*
- ❖ *Etcetera...*

Organization: Infrastructure

- How will we organize ourselves to do what we are called to do?
 - ✓ What mission and ministry? (i.e. programs)
 - ✓ What plans and goals do we need to make to implement these ministries?
 - ✓ What is needed in terms of people, organization, facilities/location and finances? (infrastructure)

JUMPIN4JOY CHURCH:

1. *Develop Jumpin4Joy Los Amigos Tutor Friends ministry this calendar year. Seek to recruit 4 tutors who will tutor per week.*
2. *By Year 2 we hope to partner with Los Amigos Elementary school (and potentially other elementary schools) in developing activities for "Green" education.*
3. *Develop a pilot small group to deepen reconciling, spiritual friendships among our members, and serve as an equipping place for ministry in our church and community. Goal of starting one new group per year.*
4. *We will seek to deepen our partnership with the Korean church. Year 1 we will recruit and support an ambassador from our congregation to this group. Our goal will be to have one worship/fellowship event with them per year, and one mutual service to the community.*
5. *We will develop an expanded hospitality ministry for Sunday morning.*
6. *By Year 2 we will recruit and support an ambassador from our congregation to the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.*
7. *We will need to restructure our church board to make these ministries part of their oversight, and coordinate resources.*
8. *Etcetera...*

OUTLINE FOR EASY REFERENCE:

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