

Having #2020 Vision: A Missional Congregation

Welcome/Prayer

Foreword

Our #2020 Vision is designed to guide our ministry efforts for the next five years (through the year 2020) such that we become “a fruitful congregation for Christ” by changing lives, changing our community and changing the world for His sake. For this message/discussion guide, we’re looking at the fruitful practice of Risk-Taking Mission and Service that will make us a missional congregation so that we can, individually and collectively, become more like Christ.

Introduction

The word, “mission,” comes from the Latin, *missio*, which means literally “to send out.” Jesus clearly saw his earthly life and ministry as missional, having been *sent* by God. To describe our church and congregation as missional, we need to see ourselves as being “sent” as an extension of Jesus’ mission (ref. John 20:21 NLT). Our mission must focus on how the kingdom of God can make a positive difference in people’s lives right here and now. In particular, we are sent to the same people that Jesus came to save—the poor, the disenfranchised, the oppressed, the lost.

1. What do you think of when you hear the word, *mission*?
2. What was Jesus' mission?
3. How is our mission as Christians an extension of Christ's own mission?

Preparation

Read the following scriptures related to (and referenced in) today’s message:

Luke 4:18-19 (NCV)

³⁹ “The Lord has put his Spirit in me, because he [sent] me to tell the Good News to the poor. He has sent me to tell the captives they are free and to tell the blind that they can see again. God sent me to free those who have been treated unfairly ¹⁹ and to announce the time when the Lord will show his kindness.”

Luke 19:10 (NIV)

“For [I] came to seek and to save the lost.”

Matthew 28:19-20 (NLT)

¹⁹ Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. ²⁰ Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Break it Down

Being missional requires a different way of thinking about the church. The church growth movement followed an attractional model, or “get ‘em in, entertain ‘em, make ‘em happy, and send ‘em home” ...and then do it all again the next week. But, curious crowds don’t equal committed disciples. Rather than creating attractions to lure people to church, the missional church model takes the church to them; it is actively moving out and engaging the world in the places of greatest need, rather than marketing the world into the church. In order for this model to develop in the Lynn Haven Church, we have to grasp three important biblical mandates.

1. How do you see the "attractional model" of church growth in evidence?

2. What are the pros/cons of this model?
3. How and where have you experienced "taking the church to the world"?

1) The Great Requirement

According to the prophet, Micah, God requires three things of His people (Micah 6:8 NIV): to act justly (do what's fair and right); to love mercy (give people what they don't necessarily deserve, such as grace); and, to walk humbly (serve others without expecting anything in return). We will become a missional congregation when we take the great requirement seriously and begin to look around for needs—both locally and globally.

1. What are some of the biases or prejudices that keep us from ministering effectively to those in need?
2. What issues do you see that Christians should address, or what problems we should seek to remedy here in our community? Our state? Our nation? Our world?

2) The Great Commandment

We serve a God who cares about people, and His children should reflect the Father's heart—to "love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind" and to "love your neighbor as yourself." (Luke 10:27 NIV) In fact, we're required to do something about situations that trouble the Lord. To be a missional congregation and allow the great commandment to guide us, we have to love God so much that we're willing to get involved in the lives of every person who is in need, even if we don't like them, even when it's messy, and even if it requires us to take great risks.

1. What keeps us from being a neighbor (and acting neighborly) toward others?
2. In what ways do Christians exhibit a lack of love?
3. Describe a time where you experienced or witnessed disciples of Jesus demonstrating authentic love.

3) The Great Commission

The final words of Jesus (ref. Matthew 28:19-20) are commonly called, "the Great Commission," or, literally, "co-mission;" i.e., we have a shared mission with Jesus. Just as His mission required Him to leave the security of His Father's side in heaven, our mission forces us to leave the comforts of our homes and go out into the community and world. To truly be a missional congregation, we have to see ourselves as missionaries because we are called to go.

1. What attitudes keep us from "going" into the world with the gospel?
2. How would your life look if you lived like a missionary right here in Panama City?
3. Share some ideas on ways to take the gospel into our community, our world.

Conclusion

Christ says "going" is how we're going to turn people's hearts toward God and fulfill our purpose of making disciples. When we fulfill the Great Requirement to act justly, obey the Great Commandment to love our neighbors, and carry out the Great Commission to go and make disciples, we truly will be a missional congregation that has 2020 vision.

1. Prayerfully consider to whom you are being sent, where your mission might take you, and what being missional might cause you to do.
2. Write down your thoughts, and resolve to act on them this year.

Close in Prayer