

CLASS 11: THE CHURCH, OUR CHURCH, AND A COMMON MISSION

*To me, [Paul] though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things, so that **through the church** the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.*

-Ephesians 3:8-10

“He cannot have God for his Father who has not the church for his mother” *-St. Cyprian*

“No man is an island”

-John Donne

WHY CHURCHES? FINDING AND FOLLOWING CHRIST CORPORATELY

A. CHURCH UNIVERSAL

1. Place of the church—The church is the only institution ever ordained on this earth by the Lord Jesus (Matthew 16:18). While there are thousands of great organizations, clubs, and non-profits that are worthy of our time, the church stands uniquely in history as the ‘mother’ of God’s people. The church is the gathering together of the people of God. I Peter 2:9 says it this way, You [the church] are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”
 - a. Church is the body of Christ—I Corinthians 12:12-31

C.S. Lewis: The New Testament does not envision solitary religion. For the Church is not a human society of people united by their natural affinities but the Body of Christ, in which all members, however different, must share the common life, complementing and helping one another precisely by their differences.

- b. Church is the bride of Christ—Ephesians 5:25-33
 - c. Church as the Temple of Christ—I Peter 2:5
2. Properties of the church—These have typically been known as the attributes of the church. There are four attributes, and they come from the Nicene Creed:
 - a. One—John 17:20-23, I Cor. 12:12-13
 - b. Holy—John 17:17, Eph. 5:25-27
 - c. Catholic (meaning universal or world-wide)—Matthew 28:19, Gal. 3:26-28
 - d. Apostolic—Eph. 2:20, Acts 2:42-47

Martin Luther King Jr.: The church was not merely a thermometer that recorded the ideas and principles of popular opinion; it was a thermostat that transformed the mores of society.

3. Purpose of the church—What makes a good church? What is a church supposed to do? When we read the New Testament, we see that the church is centered on the Word, Community, Sacraments, and Worship (Acts 2:42-47). Having said that, there are really four things that any good church must always do:
 - a. Be a place where God’s Word is taught and embraced—II Timothy 3:15-17
 - b. Be a place where the Sacraments are administered—Matthew 28:18-20

- c. Be a place where Public Worship happens regularly—Hebrews 10:25
- d. Be a place where Discipline is administered faithfully—I Cor. 5:1-13. The “D” Word is a scary word in our culture, maybe even bringing up cult-like connotations. But, as believers in the Bible we must recognize the spiritual need and truth of discipline (Matthew 18). Discipline is really the formal way of dealing with conflict that is inevitable. We practice conflict resolution all the time as individuals. Discipline is when the church, for the protection of its community and the honor of Christ, must step into this process. Below are the principles of church discipline based on I Corinthians 5. The steps of Discipline follow the natural pattern laid out in Matthew 18—first confront a person directly, second bring a few witnesses, and finally involve the church if and only if, those previous steps have failed.
 - i. Discipline must be done with *remorse* over any part or role the church has had in the conflict. It must also be done with *remorse* over the person’s sin, his refusal to return to Christ, and his dishonoring of the name of Christ
 - ii. Discipline must be done for the purpose of *restoration*. The goal is that the brother or sister in sin will repent and be restored to fellowship.
 - iii. Discipline must be *reserved* for church members. It is not our duty to discipline the world
 - iv. Discipline must be *rejection* only as a final option. If and only if, the person in sin fails to repent after a long process of intervention, prayer, pleading, and counseling, should he or she be put out of the church.

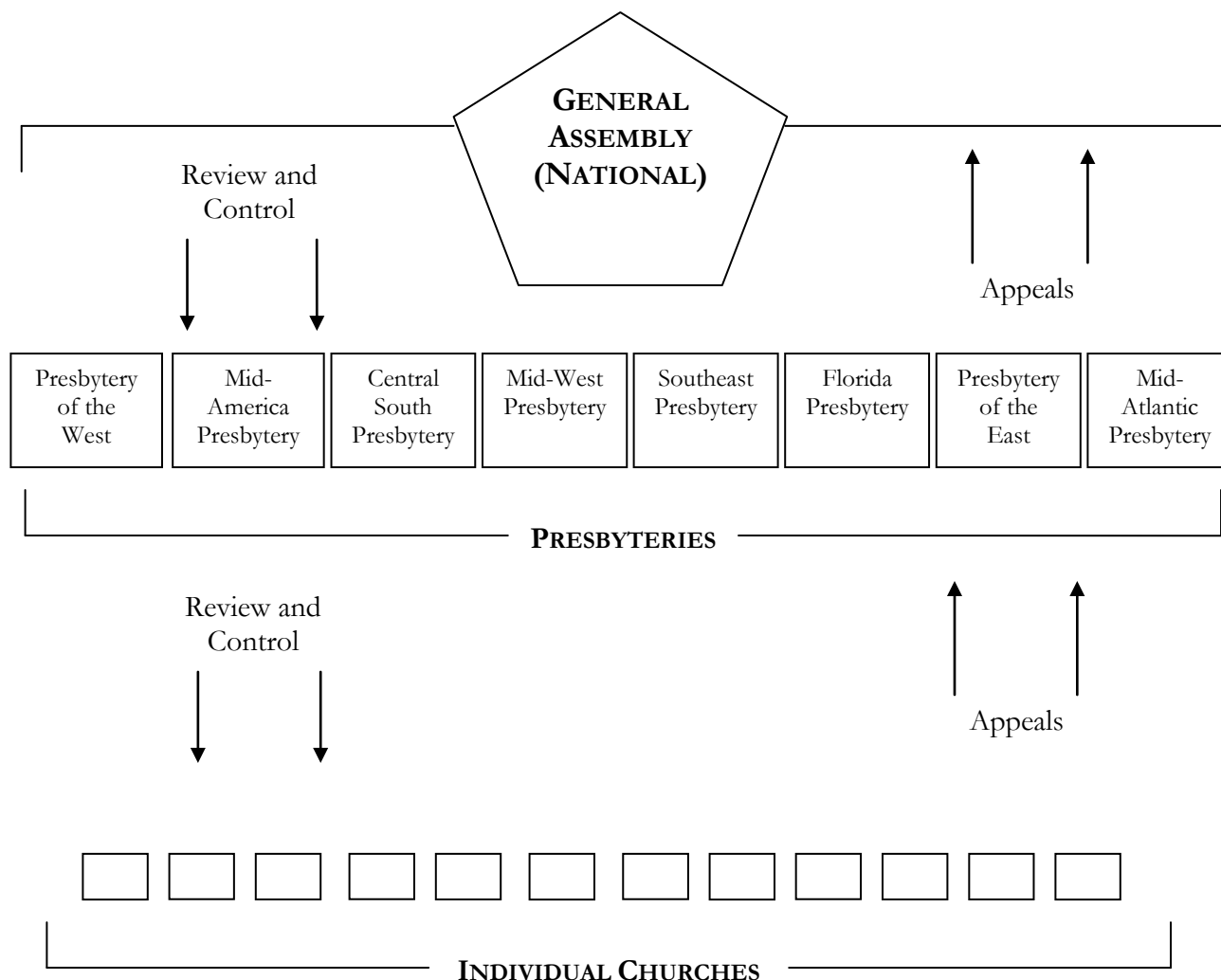
B. CHURCH DENOMINATIONAL

1. Church government—Every church is governed or ruled in a specific way.
2. 3 Types of church government
 - a. Hierarchical is top-down government and found in the Episcopalian, Roman Catholic, Methodist, and Eastern Orthodox churches.
 - b. Congregational is government from the bottom up, with each church independently governing their own affairs with little or no outside input. Examples include Baptists, Congregationalists, and non-denominationalists.
 - c. Presbyterian—“Presbyterian” is taken from the biblical Greek word *presbyteros*, meaning “Elder.” Presbyterian churches, then, are Elder-led. It is a REPRESENTATIVE form of church Government. At Greentree, we are “reformed in faith, Presbyterian in government.” Officers of the Presbyterian church, both Deacons and Elders are nominated by the MEMBERS. The

members “elect” their leaders, collectively affirming God’s call for those with the wisdom and character appropriate for each office (Acts 6).

3. The Courts of the Church

- a. **Elders** (Session)—At Greentree, there are MULTIPLE officers. Our church is governed, led, and cared for by multiple leaders, not just one person (Philemon 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Acts 21:17-18). The office of Elder is one of AUTHORITY and LEADERSHIP. Elders set the course for the church. They admit, discipline, and release members. They are accountable for the overall health and well-functioning of the church. They equip members for ministry. At Greentree, this particular office is open only to men, in line with 1 Timothy 3.
 - i. Ruling Elders—laymen elected to shepherd the congregation
 - ii. Teaching Elders—vocational pastors of the church
- b. **Deacons** are not a court, but is an office of SERVICE. Deacons assist the Elders in making sure that the needs of the church and overall work of the ministry are planned and executed in a faithful, timely fashion. Deacons also lead the congregation in cultivating an atmosphere of care for the hurts of people both inside and outside the church (particularly those “hurts” that cannot be cared for by a House Group alone). Unlike the office of Elder, the office of Deacon is open to both men *and* women (Acts 6:1-4; Romans 16:1).
- c. **Presbytery** is a group of regional churches who work together in oversight and advice of the local churches. The officers of Presbytery are made up of the Ruling and Teaching elders of the Local churches who meet 3-4 times per year.
- d. **General Assembly**—is the whole denomination, the gathering of the national church body. The GA exercises review and control over the individual Presbyteries



4. **Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC)**—We were founded in 1981 and now contain about 100,000 members in 275 churches. Our denomination has a strong world missions program with a priority on evangelizing un-reached people groups, and we are eagerly planting churches in urban settings and college towns across the U.S. We are both evangelical *and* Presbyterian. We are evangelical in our zeal for the Gospel and evangelism and missions and living obediently as followers of Jesus. At the same time, we are rooted deeply in the Protestant Reformation and especially the theological and pastoral work of John Calvin. We embrace the Westminster Confession of Faith as our doctrinal standard and the rule of spiritually mature elders linked together regionally as the best way to guide local congregations. When we started our denomination in 1981 we determined that on the basic essentials of the Christian faith, we would not disagree, but on anything that was not essential, such as the issue of ordaining women as officers or practicing

charismatic gifts, we would give each other liberty. Above all, we committed ourselves to loving each other and not engaging in quarrels and strife. The result is that when we get together in our regional and national meetings, we spend most of our time in worship and fellowship and almost none in arguing with each other.

EPC Motto: In Essentials, Unity; in Non-Essentials, Liberty; In all things, Charity.

C. CHURCH PARTICULAR: GREENTREE COMMUNITY CHURCH

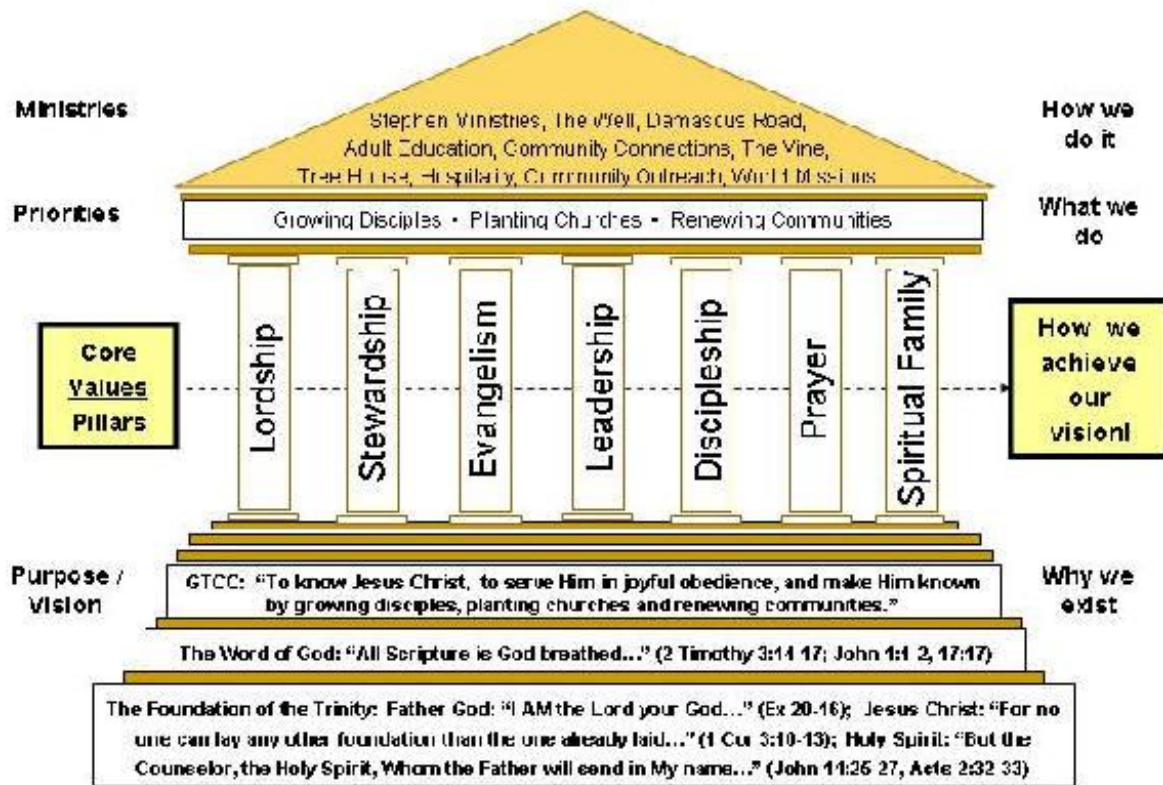
1. Our History: A brief history from Scott Holley

Motivated by a desire to be a part of a community-based church with a strong commitment to evangelism and discipleship, a group of roughly 15 families began meeting in the fall of 1996 to discuss the possibility of being a part of a new church in the Kirkwood area. Though each person involved felt led to this process for different reasons, it soon became clear that God had assembled a group of families with a vision for a church whose identity would not be found in a building or even a pastor; instead, the founding families hoped that the church that would eventually become Greentree would celebrate the joy of a life lived in recognition of God's mercy and would communicate that joy in everything the church would do. Forming a steering committee of seven people to define a mission statement, a vision statement and core values and assigning volunteers who tackled responsibilities ranging from bookkeeping to room set-up to childcare, the founding families began to plan for the first-ever Greentree church service, which was held on January 5, 1997, at Westminster Christian Academy with approximately 45 people in attendance. During the next 18 months Greentree grew to about 75 regular adult attendees as the families involved sought to understand God's direction as defined by the documents submitted by the steering committee. The lay leaders involved in the church preached the sermons, taught the Bible studies, led the worship, donated the money and did all of the detail work necessary to keep the church alive. At the end of that year-and-a-half process, the leadership felt that God was calling the church to move from Westminster to North Kirkwood Middle School so that Greentree could begin to minister in its target community. Some five months after that, Tom Ricks accepted a call to be Greentree's first pastor, and he began the process of formalizing our association with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church that culminated in our becoming an official part of that denomination. After 10 years, our zeal to make Kirkwood a better place to live, to plant churches, to grow disciples, and to do intentional evangelism has not waned but increased. We are more committed to that mission more today than we were at our inception. Our official mission statement is:

- 2. Our Mission—To know Jesus Christ, to serve him in joyful obedience and to make him known by growing disciples, planting churches and renewing communities. The mission statement serves as a filter or paradigm for all present ministry and any new ministry that we propose. Based on our mission statement, we are striving to constantly do 3 things:**

- a. Grow Disciples—Matthew 28:18-20, Ephesians 1:4. You may be asking how you can grow here at GTCC. The answers are broad and varied, because we offer a wide-ranging number of ministries and events.
 - i. Community Groups
 - ii. Sunday School
 - iii. Care Groups
 - iv. Women’s Teaching Ministry
 - v. Youth Ministries
 - vi. Network Class
 - vii. 20:28
 - viii. Missions
 - ix. Worship Ministry
 - x. Helps Team
- b. Plant Churches—Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 16:9-12. In our first 12 years, we participated in planting 5 churches and we are working on our 5th in 2007.
 - i. Boulder, CO
 - ii. Kalimazoo, MI
 - iii. Webster Groves, MO
 - iv. Columbia, MO
 - v. City Church, STL?
- c. Renew Communities—Jeremiah 29:7—We want Kirkwood to be a better place to live and work because GTCC is here.
- d. Core Values—Our ministry model is laid out in what is affectionately known as the Greentree Community Church House.

The Greentree Community Church “House”



3. How do we do ministry?

- a. Team Approach—Each Greentree ministry is led by a TEAM of people which includes church leaders and church members. Each team works together to ensure that its particular area of ministry is (a) true to Greentree’s mission and core values and (b) utilizing its available resources (finances, people, etc.) toward the accomplishment of the mission. The PURPOSE of teams-based ministry is simple: The leaders at Greentree believe that God’s wisdom works best through the hearts and thoughts of the PEOPLE, not just the leaders themselves! That is why the leaders are active in every way possible to involve the abilities, ideas and dreams of all people in the church!
- b. A Community Approach—We seek to build Biblical community no matter what we do. Whether it’s building a parade float or hosting a Bible study, fellowship is at the center of all we do.
- c. Biblical Approach—Above all, we want to do ministry as the Scripture commands. The Bible is our only rule for faith and life

and as such should be honored by obedience and reverence. We don't do any ministry or event if we can't make a strong Biblical case first for why we should do this.

- d. A Risk-taking Approach—We believe that as those walking by faith, we must take what look like risks from our side to ask God to do the things we could never accomplish in our own power. Putting ourselves in places of dependency as we “risk it” for the Lord allows for the growth of the staff and congregation.
4. Expectations of the church: Ours of You—No Spectators allowed. We want all of our members to be involved in at least one Sunday morning event (besides worship) and one non-Sunday morning event every week.
 - a. Worship attendance and participation—we not only desire your presence for worship on Sunday mornings but want you to be part of a welcoming presence to all who attend. One of the best ways non-Christians and visitors feel connected to a church is by the way they are treated during their first 4 visits.
 - b. Be Pro-active about your growth—Feed yourself on God's Word, Prayer, and other good books, and take advantage of what GTCC offers regarding community and Biblical education.
 - c. Live with whole life devoted to God—All of life is sacred, not just the things you do at church. Therefore, your relationships, work, family, and recreation are all done to glorify God.
 - d. Honesty with God and others—The Gospel frees you to stop keeping up appearances and openly acknowledge sin and struggle. This will allow the church community to walk beside you and open opportunities for you to walk with others.
 - e. Patience with fellow members—We ask that you view everyone around you with “Gospel eyes,” rather than being quick to condemn.
 - f. Stewardship—We expect all members to tithe faithfully and steward their resources in acknowledgment of the fact that God owns all that we possess. This means we are stewards and not owners of our money and property. We offer our Freed Up Financial Living seminar at least once per year where you can learn budgeting and Biblical stewardship. For more info contact the church office at 314.909.9197.
 5. Expectations of the Church: Yours of us
 - a. Integrity—You should expect the staff and elders of GTCC to be “above reproach” in all we do.
 - b. Competence—You should expect the staff to be competent and knowledgeable in their area of ministry
 - c. Service-oriented—You should expect the staff to be servants at heart, seeking to meet the congregation where they are, empathize, and develop ministry that bears real fruit

- d. Hard-Working—You should expect the staff to work hard each and every day.
- e. Sinners—You should expect that the staff are sinners too, broken and hurting, needing God’s grace and the fellowship of the community
- f. Vulnerability—You should expect the staff to be vulnerable about their weaknesses, not to shield themselves with pride and self-righteousness
- g. God-pleasers—You should expect the staff to seek to please the Lord and not the congregation. People-pleasing is a form of bondage and ultimately unhealthy for the staff-person and the church.
- h. Communication—You should expect the church leadership to be forthcoming on matters of upcoming events, ministry taking place, church decisions, and church finances.

6. Church Membership

- a. Meaning—In membership, we make a covenant with God and the body of Christ
- b. Necessity—We should commit ourselves publicly and formally to the only institution ordained by Christ. We proclaim our unity with Him when we commit to the same things in which he was/is committed.
- c. Benefits—When we become members, we receive, accountability, oversight, community, and voting rights.

7. Member Vows—It is important that you understand the vows you will take if you choose membership at GTCC. In our last section, we will discuss the vows and take any further questions.

- a. Do you acknowledge yourselves to be sinners in the sight of God and without hope for your salvation except in His sovereign mercy?
- b. Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the Savior of sinners, and do you receive and depend upon Him alone for your salvation as He is offered in the Gospel?
- c. Do you now promise and resolve, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, that you will endeavor to live as becomes the followers of Christ?
- d. Do you promise to serve Christ in His church by supporting and participating with this congregation in its service of God and its ministry to others to the best of your ability?
- e. Do you submit yourself to the government and discipline of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church and to the spiritual oversight of this church session, and do you promise to promote the unity, purity, and peace of the church?

For too long, the American church has divorced its ecclesiology from its missiology as if missiology was simply an easy add on at the end of the journey. But Biblically speaking, missiology is not just an addendum or even just part of who the church is but the very core of who the church is in the world.

I. MISSIONAL _____

A. PERSONAL JOURNEY

What will it cost me to become a missional person? Am I willing to see my sin?

B. _____—A FALSE BEGINNING

“There is a fundamental schism in American cultural, political, and economic life. There's the quicker-growing, economically vibrant...morally relativist, urban-oriented, culturally adventuresome, sexually polymorphous, and ethnically diverse nation...and there's the small town, nuclear-family, religiously-oriented, white-centric other America, [with]...its diminishing cultural and economic force.” (Michael Wolfe, Two Nations)

People are no longer attracted to church through typical life events like childbearing, crises, and despair. 90% of Americans believe they can have a good relationship with God without going to church. Only 17% would go to church if they were seeking spiritual guidance and 8% believe that the church is only place to learn what it means to be a Christian.

I am not interested in a church that is a cultural phenomenon, a flash in the pan of today but gone tomorrow because the culture will be ever shifting and changing. The church is not built on the changing tides of the world but on the reality of who God is in Christ.

Who was the very first missionary?

C. _____—A TRUE BEGINNING

Genesis 1.26-27:

Genesis 1.28:

God purposes to place His image in His creation? Why? What does an image do? Representation. Once he tells us who we are, He immediately follows up with a command. We normally separate it. Gen. 1.28: Be fruitful and multiply—this is not just a command to have a lot of sex and kids though that is part of it, but the center of the command is to multiply God's image, to multiply God's glory/representation throughout the world. This is crazy—in a world without sin, from the very beginning, God was a missional God—He was on mission.

If God is working in Christ to restore His image and mission is at the core of His image, then to be restored in the image of God is to be given God's heart for God's mission in God's world. If

God is not missional, then we have no business travelling that road but if God is a missional God, then we should be a missional people from our core.

“Mission belongs to our God. Mission is not ours; mission is God’s. Certainly, the mission of God is the prior reality out of which flows any mission that we get involved in...It is not so much the case that God has a mission for his church in the world but that God has a church for his mission in the world. Mission was not made for the church; the church was made for mission—God’s mission.” (C.H. Wright) Culture is not our beginning—God is. Culture cannot create mission; it can only form the shape and context for mission.

Therefore, to be “Missional” means to participate with God in His mission of restoration and redemption to the entire world.

D. GOD’S MISSION AND OURS

1. “The ultimate factor in a church’s engagement with society is the church’s engagement with God.” (Os Guinness)
2. Mission is at the _____ of God’s image
3. Our _____ cannot excuse our lack of desire

"If some of us need to repent, all of us need to take action. The authentic Christianity of the bible is not a safe, smug, cozy, selfish, escapist little religion. On the contrary, it is deeply disturbing to our sheltered security. It is an explosive, centrifugal force, which pulls us out from our narrow self-centeredness and flings us into God's world to witness and to serve." (John Stott)

4. We have not _____ if people in our church are not missional
5. Our job is not just to help people _____ to church but to help people _____ the church

II. MISSIONAL _____

Why do we have the Bible? **Luke 24.45-47:**

“The writings that now comprise our Bible are themselves the product of and witness to the ultimate mission of God. The whole Bible renders to us the story of God’s mission through God’s people in their engagement with God’s world for the sake of the whole of God’s creation.” (C.H. Wright)

The mission of God to be known and glorified is the driving force of the entire narrative of Scripture (Exodus and Ezekiel). There is not simply a Biblical foundation for mission but a missional foundation for the Bible.

A. THE BIBLE ITSELF IS A _____

Read the Gospels again and ask, what did Jesus see? You will suddenly start to look through the lens of the Savior of the world; you will soon start to see the world as He saw it, you will soon start to notice people you never before noticed. Without taking on a large survey, you will easily notice that Jesus met people from every walk of life, prostitutes, thieves, religious leaders, rich, poor, lame, blind, sick, desperate, needless, broken, and fixed. When I look out at the world, I see a mass of humanity but Jesus saw individuals; when I look at the world, I see people as units of service, workers who are paid to provide for me but Jesus saw people to serve and bless; when I look at the world I see a blur of self-sufficient faces but Jesus saw need and brokenness; when I look out at the world, I see a lot of slow people who are in my way or causing me to be late but Jesus saw people who needed Him. How much I need to grow the eyes of Jesus! In fact, the dominant emotion Jesus expressed when he met people was described in the Gospels as “compassion.” (Matthew 9.36, 14.14, 15.32; Mark 6.34, 8.2, 9.22; and Luke 7.13). Every opportunity to teach the Bible is an opportunity to tell the story of God’s mission.

B. THE BIBLE IS THE _____ OF GOD’S _____ IN THE WORLD

What is the Bible about?

From Beginning to end: Gen. 1-2, Is. 11.12, 40.5, Habakkuk 2.14, Rev. 21.1-2, 22.1-2
Gen. 12.1-3, Exodus 19.4-6, God is so much of a missionary that He comes Himself—He sends His own Son. (Luke 4.18-20, John 4.34, John 12.44-46, Gal. 4.4-5) Mark 1.16-20.

God only calls people _____. Once we’re gathered, we don’t like to be scattered any more. Jonah/Matt. 21.33-44, John 20.21

Biblical Language: EXILE—Jeremiah 29/I Cor. 10. God exiled us, not culture—removes animosity for “those people” and gives a theology shaped by the cross rather than by human power and glory. Do ordinary things with Gospel intentionality.

C. THE BIBLE HAS A MISSIONAL _____ THAT WE LARGELY _____ TO OUR OWN _____

III. MISSIONAL _____

What is the mission of the church? To bring God glory in all things by being the people he’s called us to be in every place and to make disciples who make disciples so the whole earth is full of the glory of God.

“The church exists by mission as a fire exists by burning.” (Emil Brunner)

“The church is God’s mission strategy. At the heart of God’s plan to bless the nations are the people of God. The church is formed by mission and for mission.” (Tim Chester)

“New generations are thirsting for truthfulness, not trendiness. They long for someone to speak to them truthfully about a time and a place other than their own, about something and someone

other than themselves. They want desperately to invest their lives in something worth dying for, not some here-today-gone-tomorrow fad. Yet just when our culture is yearning for something different, many churches are developing creative ways to be the same....Contrary to what we've been hearing, our greatest need as twenty-first century churches is not structural but spiritual. Our main problem is not that we're culturally out of touch; it's that we're theologically out of tune." (Tullian Tchividjian)

"God has entrusted His intention for the nations to the witness of His people." (C.H. Wright)

"Men are God's method. The church is looking for better methods; God is looking for better men." (Bounds)

"We can't engineer God's transcendent presence; we can only fall on our faces and beg for it. In fact, we rob this world of the opportunity to see God high and lifted up—above and beyond us—when we try to program him and fit him into contemporary categories of "cool." When the size of God grips us more than the size of our churches and leadership conferences, and when we become obsessed with surrendering our lives to God's sovereign presence, only then will we be redemptively different and serve as God's cosmic change agents in a world yearning for change. (Tullian Tchividjian)

A. CHURCH AS MISSIONARY

1. Church is not a place but people, not a what but a who, not an institution to support but a movement of God with the purpose of God. I Peter 2.9 plays on Exodus 19.5-6 affirming that God's purpose is still to create a people for Himself who will serve as His representatives, people who will mediate His presence on the earth. We declare God's character and heart to the world.
2. "Mission is not ours; mission is God's. It is not so much that God has a mission for His church in the world, but that God has a church for his mission in the world....Mission was not made for church; the church was made for mission." (C.H. Wright)
3. This is not a way of doing church better, it is a way of being church better. It is not a new strategy for church or reaching out; missional is a way of life together, a way of being the church in the world. Missional is not a different strategy or another activity to add on or feel guilty about, but an intentional approach to the things we already do.
4. In such a model, every member sees himself as a missionary in a post-Christian society. We must become missionaries in our own culture in the same way we would be if we moved to Japan as a missionary. We purposefully learn to speak our culture's language and understand their stories. They ask questions like, Where has God strategically placed me? Will my neighbors and/or co-workers come to me naturally if they have needs? Is there anything that I am giving up or strategically doing to form relationships with neighbors/co-workers? Do I know the lives and needs of those around me?

B. EXTENDING THE FRONT DOOR OF THE CHURCH

It is no longer at NKMS on a Sunday morning but in the community, at work, next door, etc. People are no longer attracted to church through typical life events like childbearing, crises, and despair. 90% of Americans believe they can have a good relationship with God without going to church. Only 17% would go to church if they were seeking spiritual guidance and 8% believe that the church is only place to learn what it means to be a Christian. So, we must be a Kingdom of priests, going to others with Jesus.

1. PRAYER—When is the last time you prayed for your community’s businesses, educators, politicians, administrators, poor, non-Xians, etc? We must begin to focus our prayer OUTWARD in missional ways. **To Try:** Take an hour, go to Wal-Mart, Target, Kaldi’s, etc., sit, observe, and pray, “Lord, show me what you see here.”
2. DEFINE THE MISSION FIELD—Where has God strategically placed me?
3. HOSPITALITY AND FRIENDSHIP—how can we be priests to our neighbors (Ex. 19.4-6) if we don’t know them? How can we be asked to “give a defense” in non-Christians don’t know us? (I Peter 3.15)
 - a. Live Missionally: become a regular at local places, engage neighbors, eat with non-Xians at work and other places, commit to community, volunteering for non-profits, serving neighbors, live in with and for the city.
 - b. Invite others into your life, get to know your neighbors, host parties, wine tastings, BBQs, play dates, etc. Listen to them, understand them and their values.
 - c. Ask yourself questions like, Will my neighbors and/or co-workers come to me naturally if they have needs? Is there anything that I am giving up or strategically doing to form relationships with neighbors/co-workers? Do I know the lives, stories, and needs of my neighbors and/or co-workers?
4. BLESSING
 - a. How can I bless others around me?
 - b. How can I serve them?
 - c. What place in the community can I serve/be involved?

C. 8 EASY WAYS TO BE MISSIONAL

Missional is not an event we tack onto our already busy lives. It is our life. Don’t make the mistake of making “missional” another thing to add to your schedule. Instead, make your existing schedule missional. Mission should be the way we live, not something we add onto life: “As you go, make disciples...”; “Walk wisely towards outsiders”; “Let your speech always be seasoned with salt”; “be prepared to give a defense for your hope”. We can be missional in everyday ways without even overloading our schedules. Here are a few suggestions:

1. **Eat with Non-Christians.** We all eat three meals a day. Why not make a habit of sharing one of those meals with a non-Christian or with a family of non-Christians? Go to lunch with a co-worker, not by yourself. Invite the neighbors over for family dinner. If it's too much work to cook a big dinner, just order pizza and put the focus on conversation. When you go out for a meal, invite a non-Christian friend. Or take your family to family-style restaurants where you can sit at the table with strangers and strike up conversations. Have cookouts and invite Christians and non-Christians. *Flee the Christian subculture.*
2. **Walk, Don't Drive.** If you live in a walk-able area, make a practice of getting out and walking around your neighborhood, apartment complex, or campus. Instead of driving to the mailbox, convenience store, or apartment office, walk to get mail groceries, and stuff. Be deliberate in your walk. Say hello to people you don't know. Strike up conversations. Attract attention by walking the dog, taking a 6-pack (and share), bringing the kids. Make friends. Get out of your house! Last night I spend an hour outside gardening with my family. We had good conversations with 3-4 neighbors. Take interest in your neighbors. Ask questions. Engage. Pray as you go.
3. **Be a Regular.** Instead of hopping all over the city for gas, groceries, haircuts, eating out, and coffee, go to the same places. Get to know the staff. Go to the same places at the same times. Smile. Ask questions. Be a regular. I have friends at coffee shops all over the city. My friends at Starbucks donate a ton of left over pastries to our church 2-3 times a week. We use them for church gatherings and occasionally give to the homeless. Build relationships. *Be a Regular.*
4. **Hobby with Non-Christians.** Pick a hobby that you can share. Get out and do something you enjoy with others. Try City League sports. Local rowing and cycling teams. Share your hobby by teaching lessons. Teach sewing lessons, piano lessons, violin, guitar, knitting, tennis lessons. Be prayerful. Be intentional. Be winsome. Have fun. *Be yourself.*
5. **Talk to Your Co-workers.** How hard is that? Take your breaks with intentionality. Go out with your team or task force after work. Show interest in your co-workers. Pick four and pray for them. Form mom's groups in your neighborhood and don't make them exclusively non-Christian. Schedule play dates with the neighbors' kids. *Work on mission.*
6. **Volunteer with Non-Profits.** Find a non-profit in your part of the city and take a Saturday a month to serve your city. Bring your neighbors, your friends, or your small group. Spend time with your church serving your city. Once a month. *You can do it!*
7. **Participate in City Events.** Instead of playing X-Box, watching TV, or surfing the net, participate in city events. Go to fundraisers, festivals, clean-ups, summer shows, and concerts. Participate missionally. Strike up conversation. Study the culture.

Reflect on what you see and hear. Pray for the city. Love the city. *Participate with the city.*

8. **Serve your Neighbors.** Help a neighbor by weeding, mowing, building a cabinet, fixing a car. Stop by the neighborhood association or apartment office and ask if there is anything you can do to help improve things. Ask your local Police and Fire Stations if there is anything you can do to help them. Get creative. *Just serve!*