

Personal Mission, Vision, and Values Statement

It has been said that if you do not know where you are going, not only will you not know how to get there, you would never even know if you got there by accident. Every Christian should take some time to think through and put on paper (one sentence will do) a personal mission statement, (what am I here for?) a vision statement (how am I going to do this?) and a statement of core values (what values you have that are non-negotiable beliefs).

This is for your own use and you will not be asked to share it with anyone but it will determine what you share with all who cross your path. Every Christian should know that their chief purpose in life is “to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.” (1 Corinthians 10:31) The issue here is “how do you do this?” This exercise helps you think about who you are, why you are here, where are you going, and how are you going to get there. It will help you define why you want to go on a short-term mission trip, what role will this play in your life and the lives of others.

Vision defines (optimistically) where you want your life (ministry, group, etc.) to be in the future

Mission defines where you are going and your understanding of why you exist

Values are core beliefs you hold as “non-negotiable” which establish your priorities

The following is from some notes of mine and I am not certain if I wrote this during a revitalization workshop I attended, or if I copied it, but it does communicate well our ministry.

Our **mission** is to model the gospel of Christ in Word and deed before the people of Uganda.

Our **vision** is to partner with pastors and churches in Uganda to use every means open to us to evangelistically preach and teach the Scriptures, and to serve the people with deeds that touch their daily lives to alleviate suffering and promote Christian community, mercy, and justice.

Core Values -

In the Christian life, some things are primary, some secondary, and some tertiary. The ability to understand this is essential for Christians to work together to build Christ's kingdom. Things that are primary, are core values, non-negotiable, essentials we must hold in unity. This does not mean the secondary and tertiary items are not important, everything about knowing and serving God is important. Nothing should be taken lightly. But we must also recognize that good and Godly people who dearly love God and His Word honestly and truly disagree in their understanding of the Word in some matters of faith and practice. It has been noted that Christians agree on 90% of faith and practice but many manage to focus their attention on the 10% where there is disagreement. Somehow we get the idea if we can convince others that our 10% is right and theirs is wrong, we have somehow done God a favor. “We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment.” Isaiah 64:6a (ESV) King James say “filthy rags”

It is helpful to think through your own core values and then what values you also hold secondarily or even tertiary, that are important to you but will not be an obstacle to working with those with a different view. For examples, the issues of baptism and the how and when of Jesus' second coming are very important to me, but I am happy to work side by side with someone who holds differing views as long as we share the same core values. You might then ask, what do you do in a teaching situation in a missions context when someone asks you about baptism for example. I typically

respond by saying up front, good and Godly Christian disagree on this matter. I then give a summary of the views and almost always close with my view and why I believe it, but then reaffirm I have dear Christian friends who hold the other view. Or if there are two views present on our team, I very well may say I will present one view and let my friend present the other. We must remember our task is to make disciples for Christ, not for ourselves. I have seen too many instances on the mission field where some have brought American Churchianity rather than Biblical Christianity.

An example of core values:

- The Scriptures are the sufficient, infallible, inerrant Word of God
- The Gospel of Grace is the basis for all we do in Christ with good works flowing from grace
- The work of missions and evangelism is at the heart of the Christian faith, not incidental to it
- The worship of God exalts His glory, edifies believers and motivates holiness of life
- The faithful preach and teaching of God Word are marks of a faithful church
- The study of God's Word individually and in groups promotes understanding and faithfulness
- The stewardship of time, talents, and money are evidence of a growing Christian
- The consistent and systematic commitment to Kingdom focused prayer is our greatest weapon
- The development of Godly leaders who shepherd and assimilate the flock
- The Holy Spirit empowers all of the above in life of true believers

By contrast, the following is a non-exhaustive summary statement of faith which elaborates on the above and adds other items that would be secondary or even tertiary.

Summary Statement of Faith

- The Bible (the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testament - the Scriptures) is the inspired and inerrant Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and life
- There is but one God, eternal and self-existing in three persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) who are to be equally loved, honored, and adored
- All mankind participated in Adam's fall from his original sinless state and is thus lost in sin and totally helpless
- The Sovereign God, for no other reason than His own unfathomable love and mercy has chosen lost sinners from every tribe, tongue, and nation to be redeemed by the quickening power of the Holy Spirit and through the atoning death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ
- Those sinners whom the Spirit quickens (born again), come to believe in Christ as Savior by the Word of God, become sons of God, and will persevere to the end
- Justification is by faith alone and through it the undeserving sinner is clothed with the righteousness of Christ
- The goal of God's salvation in the life of the Christian is holiness, good works, and service for the glory of God
- At death the Christian's soul passes immediately into the presence of God and the unbeliever's soul is eternally separated from God unto condemnation
- Baptism is a sign and seal of God's covenant promise to those who believe and their children
- Jesus Christ will return to earth, visibly and bodily, at a time when He is not expected, to consummate history and the eternal plan of God.
- The Gospel of God's salvation in Jesus Christ must be published to all the world as a witness before Jesus Christ returns.

Samples of examples of mission statements (same principles apply to vision and values)

NO: "My mission is to provide used books to poor neighborhoods."

YES: "I wish to stimulate a love of learning and reading in young people."

NO: "My mission is to help people search for their roots and build genealogy charts."

YES: "I hope to enrich people's lives by helping them enhance their ties to their past."

NO: "Our theater is the venue for the most contemporary ballet in our area."

YES: "We wish to enlighten, excite, and educate the audience through dance."

Some food for thought:

There are two common attitudes toward being a Christian.

- The first sees faith as a "special day" lifestyle, that is, Sunday, Easter, Christmas, Mother's Day, etc.; with the rest of days as being on their own. This view sees life divided into two realms, spiritual and secular. They behave differently depending on which realm they are in.
- The second understands that being a Christian influences every hour of every day and because they are Christians, everything they think, do and say is impacted by a desire to love God with all their heart, soul and strength and to love their neighbor as themselves. Even when they are in the "secular" world, their walk and talk is Christian, not necessarily "God words" but talk that consistently demonstrates Christian ethical values.

There are three commonly recognized categories of those who make short-term mission trips:

1. **Tourist** - just visits at a distance, always an outsider, takes memories home that fade overtime
2. **Adventurer** - gets somewhat involved, has some real contact with the folks, leaves some memories as well as take some home that will always linger in their minds
3. **Servant** - takes very active role, ministers to people, makes a difference in the lives of others, remembered when gone, and keeps memories in his or her heart for rest of life

One churches statement about how it sees its purpose

- UpReach - Worship and Celebration
- OutReach - Missions and Evangelization
- InReach - Enfolding and Assimilation
- DownReach - Discipleship and Maturation