

Our New Mission and Vision Statements

Introduction

A New Year and a New Mission and Vision

- A. It's the beginning of a new year. And today is the first Members' Meeting of the new year. And I thought: it's as good a time as any to introduce new Mission and Vision Statements for this church.
- B. About 5 years ago or so I wrote Mission and Vision Statements for my life, and they've been orienting and guiding me ever since.
 - 1. As I've been trying to develop a Members' Class for our church, I found myself really wanting to incorporate into it these statements, something I'm personally fired up about that I hope comes to define us as a church.
 - a. Last month, I brought these statements first to the Elders and then to our Central Leaders. They gave me good feedback, helped me discern where clarification was needed, and ultimately gave me the green light for presenting them here this morning now as the new Mission and Vision Statements for this church.

Why Do We Need a Mission or Vision Statement?

- A. Why does Mercy Hill need a Mission or Vision Statement at all?
 - 1. A text that is often cited in argument for the great importance of having mission and vision statements is [1 Cor 14:8](#). The context within which Paul is writing here is different, but the principle is the same: ["If the trumpet gives an indistinct sound, who will get ready for battle?"](#)
 - a. A trumpet was used back in the day for the purposes of war. A certain blast from it would alert the soldiers that they needed to assemble; another blast from it and they would march forward into battle; charge; retreat; and so on.
 - i. If the trumpet were to give an ["indistinct sound,"](#) as Paul refers to here, there would be no mobilization; there would be no unity; there would be no victory in the war.
 - ii. But when the trumpet gives a distinct sound, it can unite a large group of people behind one single mission as they march towards one ultimate vision.
- B. These Mission and Vision Statements, then, are my attempt at a distinct trumpet sound.

1. So let's go! We will spend the majority of our time unpacking the new Mission Statement, but we will come out and look briefly at the new Vision Statement, and then we'll bring them both together at the conclusion.

(1) The New Mission Statement

A. The new Mission Statement is as follows: "Mercy Hill Church exists to Adore, Manifest, and Proclaim the glory of God as revealed in the gospel of Jesus Christ."

1. The new statement functions like a chain with each link connected to and building upon the others. Let's briefly consider these links one by one that we might more clearly perceive the grand mission that is represented by the whole.
 - a. Before we tackle the action verbs (Adore, Manifest, Proclaim), I want to look at the objects of those verbs: namely, (1) "the glory of God"; and (2) "the gospel of Jesus Christ."

"The Glory of God"

A. The glory of God is best understood as the radiance or outshining of all His perfections. It is the beauty of all that God is put on display.

1. This is why when Moses asks that daring question: "Please show me your glory [at least he says 'please']" (Exo 33:18), what does God do? Does He merely show Moses some bright light? No.
 - a. He declares to Moses something about Himself, who He is: "⁶The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness,⁷ keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation"" (Exo 34:6-7).
 - i. He is loving and gracious but holy and just. That's God's glory! It's who He is being put on display.

B. The Bible leaves no room for confusion: all things that exist do so ultimately for the glory of God—to display something about Him.

1. This is true of all creation. As I've often quoted: "The heavens declare the glory of God" (Psa 19:1). And, in Rom 1:20, Paul tells us what sorts of things the heavens are declaring: "His invisible attributes, namely His eternal power, and divine nature."
2. This is especially true of humanity, the capstone of God's creation. For man and woman alone are made in His image (Gen 1:26-27). Another way of saying this is that we are created to image, reflect, or display something about Him. We are created for His glory.

3. This is true of creation in general, man in particular, and it's true of all things. Let David drive this home: "Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours" (1 Chr 29:11a).
- C. When we consider the underlying Greek and Hebrew words that are translated as "glory" in our English Bibles, a compelling image comes into view that aids in our understanding of this.
1. In the Greek (doxa), the sense is one of shining. But in the Hebrew (kavod), the sense can be one of weightiness, heaviness (which is why when His glory shows up people often just fall to the ground).
 - a. God's glory, then, involves something not only radiant but massive. The image that emerges is that of the sun in our solar system. It is both brilliant and bright, but weighty—so heavy that it pulls everything in our solar system into its orbit.
 - i. God's glory is like that. We could understand Him as the Sun of suns—the Sun not just at the center of the solar system, but of the universe—pulling every star, everywhere, around Himself. Everything that exists ought to be orbiting around Him.
- D. O how I want our church to follow in this orbit.
1. I don't want a church that's busy in all its ministry trying to create a name for itself in the community or among peers.
 2. I want a church full of members like Paul and Barnabas. When the people of Lystra began to glorify them for their ministry, they tear their garments and cry out: "Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men, of like nature with you, and we bring you good news, that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them" (Acts 14:15).

"As Revealed in the Gospel of Jesus Christ"

- A. But it's hard right. There's something in our original nature that resists falling into orbit. "I want the seat of honor. I don't want to find my joy, my reason for being, in Your glory, I want glory. I don't want to see You or show You...I want to be seen!" In the words of the ancient serpent: "I want to 'be like God' (Gen 3:5)".
1. This is the big problem in the universe. As Paul would describe it in Rom 1:22: we "exchanged the glory of the immortal God" for other stuff, we traded it away like something cheap and detestable, we refuse to honor Him.

- a. We try to shine bright in ourselves but we end up spiraling out into darkness. And consequently we don't fill the earth with God's image, with His glory. We fill it rather with sin, guilt, shame, and death.
- B. Adam, it appears from [Gen 1-3](#) was to pass the period of probation and step up into the glory of God. Because of His rebellion, and descent into darkness, God, in His mercy, sends His glory down, ultimately, in the person of Jesus Christ.
 - 1. The Sun of suns becomes the Son of Man: "He is the radiance of the glory of God..." ([Heb 1:3a](#))—"the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" ([2 Cor 4:3](#)).
 - a. He's come to bring us back into orbit. But in order to do that He Himself would have to be hurled out into the darkness. He's going to take our sin, our guilt, our shame, our death, our curse, our hell...on that cross.
- C. But intriguingly, it is at the cross, the place of His agony, the place of His utter shame, that we also see the brightest display of God's glory.
 - 1. I came across a quote from John Piper I had saved that fit amazingly well into all that I'd prepared up to this point. Listen to him climb up the ladder of all my previous points towards the climax of the point I'm attempting to make right now: "Where should our mind focus in order to know God most fully and deeply? We could focus on nature because the heavens are telling the glory of God ([Psa 19:1](#)). We could focus on the human soul for we are made in the image of God...We could focus on the life of Christ because he is "the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature" ([Heb 1:3](#)). Or we could come to the event where more of God is revealed than any other event in history, the death of his Son. All the other revelations of God in Christ are like rays of sun breaking through the clouds. But the death of Christ for sinners was like a bolt of lightning."
 - a. Where do we go to see the glory of God in fullest display? Where do we go to see that God is almighty and yet gentle and kind. Where do we go to see that God is high and lifted up and yet He dwells with the lowly? Where do we go to see that God is holy and righteous and just and cannot look upon sin with favor, and yet also gracious and merciful, forgiving iniquity? This is it! The cross of Jesus Christ brings all the perfections of God, all His holy attributes, into high definition.
 - i. This is the reason for the qualifying phrase in our Mission Statement: "the glory of God...as revealed in the gospel of Jesus Christ."
- D. The gospel of Jesus Christ not only provides for us the clearest display of God's glory, it makes a way for us back to that glory.
 - 1. Here is the big solution in the universe. If the big problem is our exchange of His glory in pursuit of our own, the big solution is found in Christ's exchange: He takes my sin, I get His righteousness! He brings me back into orbit where I belong!

- a. This is why we must be a gospel-centered church. If we lose the gospel, if we lose the person and work of Jesus Christ, we lose everything!

“Adore”

- A. When we see it, when we truly get what God has done for us in Jesus Christ, when the veil is lifted and we see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, do you want to know what happens? We fall in love.
 1. As John would say: “We love because he first loved us” (1 Joh 4:19). Or to paraphrase Jesus’ point in Luk 7:47: “He who is forgiven much, loves much.”
- B. So here now we are making our way back to those action verbs, beginning with “Adore.” To adore the glory of God as it is revealed in the gospel of Jesus Christ is to love, cherish, and worship all that God is for us in His Son.
- C. I don’t know what you think Christianity is all about. It’s about doctrine like a university, or its about community like a country club, or its about service and philanthropy like a non-profit or charity.
 1. But while Christianity certainly is intellectual, communal, and missional, before it is anything else it is a love affair with a holy and gracious God. Before it is anything horizontal it is radical affection, adoration in the vertical.
 - a. The men in this room are now getting uncomfortable. We like to put our hands to stuff, get er done, but we don’t talk about love and affection.
 - i. This has to change. Not because I say it does, but because God says this is the most important piece in all the Bible: “³⁶ ‘Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?’³⁷ And he said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.³⁸ This is the great and first commandment’” (Mat 22:36–38).
 - (1) Jesus sums up the entirety of OT revelation with a call that boils down basically to be infatuated with God. Take every faculty, every aspect of your being, and set it on fire with love for God.
- D. I want to be a church that does everything from love for God. May it never be said of us what was said of Israel: “This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me” (Mat 15:8). This mission statement is a call to fall in love with the God who first so loved you!

“Manifest”

- A. But we don't stop with adoration, we only begin there. When a man's heart is truly set on fire for God, he will not be able to keep the flames from breaking out into his everyday life and activity.
 - 1. A vital dynamic is initiated at this point: as I see Christ's glory as revealed to me in the gospel, and as I fall in love with Him so that I can't take my eyes off of Him, I find that I begin to look more and more like Him. This is what Paul writes of in [2 Cor 3:18](#): “And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord [in the face of Jesus Christ], are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.”
 - a. The marring of the image of God in humanity by the first Adam is regained and perfected in Jesus, the second Adam. And as we come to see and adore Him, we start to look more and more like Him. We start to manifest the glory of God as revealed in the gospel of Jesus Christ.
 - i. People may be looking at me, but they start to see Christ. And, even more, they start to see the cross.
- B. Let me show you this in Paul's life. “⁸We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair;⁹ persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed;¹⁰ always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies.¹¹ For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.¹² So death is at work in us, but life in you” ([2 Cor 4:8–12](#)).
 - 1. Here's what I want you to get: The gospel of Jesus Christ, and the glory of God therein, is being manifested in our lives. In the way we are dying and yet live, shamed and yet honored, weak and yet strong.
 - a. And all of this guided by the constraining principle of love for others: “So death is at work in us, but life in you.” The resurrection life of Christ in us, empowers us to walk the crucifixion road for others.
- C. Let us not be fooled. Real adoration for God will always evidence itself in manifestation of God in our lives. This is why Jesus would say: “If you love me, you will keep my commandments” ([Joh 14:15](#)). And what are His commandments? He tells us a few vv. later: “¹² This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.¹³ Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends” ([Joh 15:12-13](#)).
 - 1. Don't you want a church full of people like that?! A cross-culture church; a cruciform community; manifesting the glory of God as revealed in gospel of Jesus Christ.

“Proclaim”

- A. The accent in “manifest” falls upon our deeds. We see the glory of God, we savor it, we show it in our lives. But that’s not the end right? We speak of it. Deeds and words. We proclaim the glory of God as revealed in the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- B. I put Proclamation after Manifestation in this chain because too often the church has opened her mouth to speak the gospel to people she is not ready to show it to. Such words without deeds can hollow out the gospel. We deny with our lives what we proclaim with our lips.
 - 1. O that we would be more like Paul here: “I bear on my body the marks of Jesus” (Gal 6:17). The deeds are critical. The heart of love is essential.
- C. But the words, the proclamation is equally so. For it is not truly loving you if I show and show and show you the gospel but never speak of it.
 - 1. Paul makes this case plainly: “^{14b} ...How are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?¹⁵ ...As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” ...¹⁷ So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. (Rom 10:14b, 15b, 17).
- D. To show you the deeds of Christ but never speak the words that will lead you to trust in Him, is like taking a glass of water up to you on the second floor of your house to quench your thirst, but failing to tell you about the fire that’s spreading out from the kitchen on the floor beneath you.
 - 1. That glass of water won’t help you with the big problem in your life. My deeds will save no one. You need His! My little glass of water is meant to draw you towards the fountainhead of His grace that can quench not only your thirst but even the fires of hell!
 - a. O let’s be a church that never grows tired of proclaiming the gospel to one another and the world!

Gospel AMPLification

- A. A closer look at the action verbs in our statement provides us with an acronym and corresponding image to help us both remember and visualize what it is that we’re doing. Adore, Manifest, and Proclaim become A-M-P.
 - 1. In other words, Mercy Hill Church exists to AMPLify the glory of God as revealed in the gospel of Jesus Christ. We exist to turn up the volume on His glory by adoring, manifesting, and proclaiming the gospel of His Son.

(2) The New Vision Statement

Where Are We Going?

- A. Now we come to the Vision Statement. It's my understanding that a Mission Statement lays down the beat for our marching activity. It answers the question: What are we doing, day in and day out?
 - 1. A Vision Statement, on the other hand, describes what we are ultimately marching towards. It answers the question: Where are we going? What's the endgame of all this?
- B. For this statement, I simply lifted the words straight out of [Hab 2:14](#) (although similar statements are found in [Num 14:21](#); [Psa 72:19](#); [Isa 11:9](#); and elsewhere).
 - 1. Let me read the Mission & Vision together: "Mercy Hill Church exists to Adore, Manifest, and Proclaim the glory of God as revealed in the gospel of Jesus Christ...until that glory fills the earth as the waters cover the sea."
 - a. We want to get our Mission from God, and our Vision from God. Well, this is where God is going—towards a world of glory!
 - i. Writing of the New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven, John records: "²³The city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. ²⁴By its light will the nations walk" ([Rev 21:23–24a](#)).

(3) Bringing the Mission & Vision Together

Gospel Amplification for Gospel Reverberation

- A. Let me show you how the two statements work together.
 - 1. We turn up the volume on His glory in our own lives so that that glory would reach the lives of others.
 - 2. As we live this out it actually works its way back up: as we adore, manifest, and proclaim God's glory as revealed in the gospel, God may lift the veil for others to see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. They come to adore Him, be changed by Him, speak to others of Him, and so on.
- B. There's this dynamic that's set in motion—going out and coming back in, going out and coming back in—a sort of reverb. The amplification is multiplying, echoing, getting louder, reverberating. This is Gospel Amplification for Gospel Reverberation, until the whole earth is filled with the praise of His glorious grace!

From Genesis to Revelation

- A. Our Mission & Vision then stands as a summary of the mission and vision God has laid out for us in His word, encompassing it in its entirety from Genesis to Revelation. What Adam

lost, Christ regained and He brings us back into that partnership with God in turning the world to glory. Take my glory, love it, reflect it, speak of it, spread it everywhere!

1. Church, can you hear the trumpet? O I pray you can!