Devloping Your Church Planting Plan Pt. 1

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Hey, everyone. This is Bob Hyatt, and this is our Genesis session on developing your church planting plan. This is part one of two, and today we're going to talk a little bit about developing your mission and vision, strategy, and values. So, let's just dive right in. First, we need to define some terms. The first is mission. And the reason why we need to define this is because everyone uses mission and vision slightly different.

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Some people, when they're talking about mission, they're talking about it in such a way that others would use the term vision. Others, when they're using the word vision, they're really talking about what others think of as mission. So, we're just going to define it for how we're going to use it today. And that looks like this. Mission. And we're going to define it for how we're going to use it today. What I want to say is that really the mission of every church, and I hope the mission of your church plant, is the same. Every church, every pastor, every believer has the same mission, and that is making disciples.

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Jesus didn't commission his disciples to go and plant churches, to start new organizations. He said, go and make disciples. That's the mission of the church, whether we recognize it or not, whether we put it in a mission statement. That's really what we ought to be about, and I hope that in some way, as you talk about the mission of your church, as you develop your core team, as you lay out the vision for the church, that somewhere this mission is embedded in it.

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Now, the vision, how we're using the term, that's something a little bit different. The vision is the mental, spiritual environment. The vision is the emotional picture of the future that God is developing in you and will use. to call and motivate this community of people that you are calling together, that you are hopefully forming together. You are seeing a different future than what is, and you're calling.

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people around that vision of a preferred future. Now, strategy. Strategy is how you, your church, you as a leader, and those that you lead will reach others and make disciples. It's kind of, mission is what we're about. Vision is where we're going. Strategy is how we get there. And then finally, the values are who you will be as you live on mission, as you are pursuing.

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this vision. All right. So, mission, vision, strategy, values. So, mission, vision, strategy, values. We're going to start with the first one. We're going to use those terms, and that's how we're going to define them as. we move ahead. Let's talk a little bit about the DNA of starting a new church. The work of the church planner begins with a quiet and prayerful search for God's heart, as they seek to reach a people, a neighborhood, a city, and then translating that burden into.

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the practical framework that will establish the pathways, the ethos of your church. And this process of identifying and establishing the DNA of your church is really the most, ardent, the most challenging work for a church planner, far beyond the nuts and bolts of church planting. I can give you a list, a checklist of things you need to do, but until that, until that, until that, until the mission has grabbed a hold of you in such a way that you know that that would.

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What I am sent to do on this earth is to make disciples of Jesus, to help other people follow him. And you have this vision of what we need is a community that does it in this way or that reaches these people or that is contextualized for this city or this neighborhood. That's really the deep work that goes into the beginning stages of planting a church. Next to the calling and character of the planner, it is the single most important aspect of the future of your new church.

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It requires faithfulness. It requires attentiveness. It requires discernment because the call isn't just plant a church, right? The call is make disciples. And God puts on your heart this particular neighborhood or this particular people group. And to reach. them, our imagination has to be stoked. We have to be captured by this mission that God has given us and we need to seek him for a vision of what it could look like to see those people become.

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disciples of Jesus. And how will we get there? What's the pathway? The DNA is, it's the why of the new community, right? It's that mission that has captured you. It's the where you are journeying together towards. This is where we want to go. We want to see this people group reached. We want to see this age group engaged with the gospel. We want to see this neighborhood connected with Jesus.

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It's the what it will look like, the how you will get there, right? The strategy and the who are you. These are your core values as you pursue the mission and vision. All these things together, this is, the DNA. of this new community that God is birthing at this point. Now, we want to understand the mission. And again, we've talked about this in other sessions. We've talked about this in the discipleship section and other places. But again, just to reiterate, if you plant a church,

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if that's like your primary goal, you may end up making disciples, right? But if you set out to make disciples, you will have to plant churches. So let's build everything that we do as we start thinking about the nuts and bolts of planting, as we start thinking about the DNA of a new community. Let's build it on that foundation that this is the mission that God has given to us, right? Now, the vision, seeing and developing the vision that God has for your church, seeing.

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and imagining, and then, with others and discerning together, what is, the picture that God is drawing? What is this picture that is captured in our heart that is calling us into this future? Vision starts, I think, with being completely sold out to Jesus and his redemptive plan and mission. Again, I can't ring this bell enough, but it is about discipleship. It is about helping others to follow Jesus, right? And vision develops as we align.

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our hearts with God's heart so that he can reveal to us what he sees and longs to do through us in a particular place or a particular people, right? Vision is, it's a beginning of the clarifying work to discern what our plant will be and won't be. So for instance, for me, when we planted, we were coming out of a larger church, that was doing a great job at reaching boomers.

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It was a seeker-sensitive church. Excellence was a value. But I knew at that point in my mid-30s that my peers were less interested in excellence and more interested in authenticity, right? They were less interested in the larger institutions that had a lot of programs and a lot of activities. They were more interested in a place where community was a higher value and where they could really know others and be known by them.

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And so for me, part of the vision was clarifying down into we want to reach these – this church that we're coming out of is doing a great job of reaching people in their 40s, 50s, and 60s. But what's missing are the 20s and 30s. And that became a big piece of the vision that I planted our church with and that I called others to embrace and plant with us. right vision in a sense is it begins as a burden i can't get it out of my head for me it was i can't.

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get it out of my head that as i'm working at this large church i look around and there's not a whole lot of people like me there weren't those younger 30s and 20s singles and young marries right and so that helped me discern in a sense what we were what we were moving towards and and what we wouldn't necessarily need to be it's not that we had anything against excellence it's just that we knew that wasn't going to be a value for us because that wasn't going to help us to reach those that we wanted to reach um yeah i'll say more about that later maybe.

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unless this i love this quote by alan roxburgh he says unless as leaders we are willing to enter this in-between space that disrupts our settled assumptions and threatens our formulas and expectations, we will remain locked into a monologue, church questions and strategies. In other words, for me, I knew that we needed kind of a blank page approach, right? We knew that the traditional churches we had come from weren't doing,

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they were doing great at reaching the people that they were reaching, but, and this is an obvious statement to make, they weren't doing so well at reaching the people that they weren't reaching. So something new had to be birthed. This was 2004. We were kind of in the midst of that missional church movement, that emerging church kind of ethos that was everywhere around, and we began thinking about, well, what new ways of doing and being need to be brought to bear.

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so that those that God is putting on our hearts, our friends and neighbors that were much like us, that were much like us, that were much like, us, but weren't connecting with existing churches. What needs to happen? them, to see community, church community, become a viable option for them. We had to let go of those settled assumptions and formulas and expectations, right? Visions are often born in the soul of a man or a woman who is gripped by the tension between what is and what should be.

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And let me just say, it's not a critical spirit. It's not a, they're doing it wrong, I'm the only one who sees how it needs to be done. It's more about a holy discontent, that God allows to take root in our heart, a desire to see his kingdom move into new places and new spaces to reach people that aren't yet being reached. It's not about they're doing it.

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wrong, let's do it right. It's more about what new ways, what new places, what new ways, what new ways, what new ways, how, can we pioneer into these neighborhoods and communities in ways that will reach people that aren't yet being reached? At this point in your notes, I just want to encourage you, whether you come back to this part or you pause the video here, but the question I want you to ask is, what are the most important big rocks for what you want your church to be as you think about it?

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How would you describe it to people? People used to ask me all the time, especially coming out of this large church, because they had very well-defined senses of how things ought to be on stage and what community would look like. So they'd ask, well, what's it going to be like? And I tell them, honestly, I don't

know, because it depends on who shows up. If a bunch of skateboarders show up, I guess we'll be the skateboarding church.

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And this actually happened for a while. A bunch of rockabilly kind of folks were coming. And we were real close to being the Rockabilly Church for a long while. But the big rock for me was that together, we would form a community that really derived its aesthetics, its ethos from those that were present. And what did happen was that a lot of kind of artistic types showed up and a lot of counselors. Weird mix, but there you go. And so we were a community that talked a lot, that discussed a lot, that processed a lot.

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And there was a lot of art that was involved. The big rock for me wasn't art. It wasn't deep discussions of how we were all feeling about things. But it was a lot of art. And it was, for me, that the community would make sense to those who showed up and would really take its character and its feel. from those that were present. So I just want to ask you to take some time and think about what are the big rocks for what you want your church to be.

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Is there a sense of liturgy you want involved? Is there a particular style of worship? What will it take to reach the people that you feel a burden for? Think about those kinds of things, jot them down in your notes, and then come back in a minute. All right, so vision. A lot of churches, what they try to do is capture that vision.

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in a way that is succinct and easily repeatable so that as they share that vision, people are able to understand it, they're able to process it, they're able to repeat it, and it becomes a part of who they are as a people. Here are some examples, vision statements. I think they're all good. I don't know that they're great, but I think they give you a sense of, I shouldn't say they're not great. Some of these are great, but the point is.

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these are not the end-all and be-all. They're just examples. So here's a great one from another ecclesia church called the District Church, Aaron Grant planted, to be a multiplying network of churches that exist for Christ and the renewal of our city. What I love about that is, even though it doesn't mention the city, Washington, D.C., because that's where they are. The name of the church is the District Church. It gives a picture of what they want to happen in their local area.

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They want to be this multiplying network of churches that exist for Christ and that work toward the renewal of the city. And that gives you an insight into what's going to happen in their local area and what's going to happen in their local area and what's going to happen in their local area. indication of what they're going to be about. Here's one. It's from a Bible college, but Calvary Bible College exists to

train and develop men and women of all ages, backgrounds, and nationalities into Christ-like disciples and servant leaders who know God through his word are equipped by his spirit to serve him in every area of life for the glory of God.

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And that's Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa. Now, that's a little wordy, but you really get a sense of what's important to them, of what that future that they're working towards is, right? Here's another one. We believe God has called GBC to take the gospel to his people in Belize. I love it. There it is, that we are a local community. We have a focus on a particular area. For them, it's an entire country. It's the country of Belize. He is already working through.

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us to great things here, and we need you to come play a part. I'd just like to... Take that one. Germantown Baptist Church. I just like that one because of the call to action within it. I thought it was interesting. Here's one more. Redemption Church exists to glorify God by cultivating disciples. So there's the mission encapsulated in their vision statement through magnifying the wonders of the gospel so every soul in Pearl Land, where they are, and beyond.

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would flourish. Redemption Church. Love it. Love it. Let's talk about how we develop vision. The first thing is, of course, it's prayer. And here's what I want to encourage you to do. Take time to ask God for a specific vision for your church. Even if you've developed something in your head, you kind of know, spend some time processing that with him and listening. God, here's what I think it might be.

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And then listen, let him speak to you about that. If it's still unformed in your mind, be asking him, God, what are the important pieces of this? What is the future that you're calling us as a community towards? Ask God to prepare your heart and open your eyes as you look around, as you pray. Involve key people in the process of praying for vision. Ask others. You may have some folks that have said, listen, if you plan a church, I'm in. You may have some folks that have said, yes, I want to be part of the core team that helps you do this.

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Involve them in this process of praying for vision. Take what you already have, what you've already explained to them, and say, let's refine this. Let's see what God wants to say to us about this. Ask for key verses or passages to guide you. For us, it was Psalm 1 and Jeremiah 17. It was the image. God gave me this image of the. evergreen tree, the tree that in any season was green and producing this sense of life.

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that whether we're in the rainy season or the dry season, through the tough times, the ups and downs, life continues on. And that's what we ended up calling our church, Evergreen, because we wanted people to get a sense of an abundant life beyond the ups and downs of circumstance, the dry times, that kind

of thing. So ask God, what key verses, what passages do you want to plant in us as a community.

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that will help us to get a sense of the vision of what it is that you're calling us to? Consider fasting. Maybe together, take some time for focused prayer and fasting. Say, God, what does the future look like? That you're calling us to and give real attention to that. Study the scriptures to develop an understanding of God's heart and write down everything that you see, that you hear, that you sense, that God is telling you. And then bring it all together and see what congeals, what comes together as a vision that God is calling you to.

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There's a few key types of questions that you can begin answering, too, vision-type questions. Things like, if you knew that you could not fail, what would you do for the glory of God and the growth of his kingdom? Like, if you knew that without a doubt, if you step out in faith, God was going to bless it and fruit was going to happen, who would you go and reach? Where would you center this community?

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What would it be about? Right? It's a great vision-type question. How... You know, looking towards the future, how will your church have impacted your community? Like, what is, as you look ahead, what will you want to have been true ten years from now as you look back? Like, what's the picture of how you will impact? Is it going to be in the areas of social justice?

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Is it going to be in the areas of relational healing or racial reconciliation? What's it going to look like? You can't do everything, and I'm not saying that you should call one thing more important than another, but the question is, what is God really putting on your heart and on the hearts of those who are coming along with you? What kinds of people will your church be reaching? You can't reach everyone. As much as every church would like to say, we are going to be all things to all people,

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I think in some ways that was a great, or not in some ways, it was a great missiological principle for Paul. As he moved from place to place to place, and as he dealt with different kinds, different groups of folks, if you're going to plant an incarnational community among a certain group of people, right, what you have to really decide, what's it going to look like? How will we reach? What kind of people will our church be reaching? And don't just say the unchurched and formerly church, because again, everyone would like to reach the unchurched.

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It's what kind of unchurched? Are they the young professionals that Tim Keller's church has had a great impact in reaching in New York City? Are they the musicians and artists in Nashville that some great church plants have had

wonderful success in reaching there? Are they the marginalized communities that kind of live on the outskirts that many in urban areas have been able to plant? Are they the communities for who, who will your church be reaching?

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church be reaching? This is a great one to think about way in advance, and it's ideally how large will your church be? How will it multiply? Like, what's the sweet spot as you think about the future? And, you know, no judgment if it's 10,000 people, great, but, you know, I'd encourage you set your sights a little lower, because I think 10 churches of 1,000 can actually be much more effective than one church of 10,000, but we'll talk about that in the Q&A, maybe. If God would.

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have his way, what would your church look like 10 years from now? Like, what does the pathway look like? And I know you can't see it all, but as you're dreaming, as you are imagining this future and calling people towards it, what are some of the key markers of it, right? And if God could have his way, what would your church look like 10 years from now? And I know you can't see it all, but if God would have his way, what would your neighborhood look like 10 years from now? What would look different? What would feel different? What would be different?

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Right? Take all of that and then begin to seek confirmation from others, right? Invite others to see what you see as you look around, right? Do some show and tell. Here's what I see. What who is grabbing your heart now, right? Solicit feedback from partners and peers,

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right? Ask them to speak into this vision, right? Begin asking, oh, I think I went ahead on the slide. Sorry about that. Begin asking, do any of your burdens feel like a moral imperative? Like, yes, I would love to reach the, I'd love to have a skate church, like where? Where does that move from something I'd like to do to something that I feel like I have to do?

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Like what pieces of this feel as though if I don't do this, if I don't do this, then who will? I have to move into this, right? Begin to ask if you see a connection between the various pieces of vision and what God is up to in the world. And look for ways to describe that connection, right? As you feel a burden developing for refugees in your city, right?

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Begin to ask, what is God doing? What is God up to in our city, in our neighborhood with those who are fleeing oppression, fleeing violence, fleeing poverty? How does that connect with? My understanding of. kingdom of God, right? Does your vision have these four components? Does it contain a problem? Does it contain a solution? Is there the reason why something must be done? Is there the reason.

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why something must be done now? Like, does this picture adequately describe what it is we're trying to do and why? And why us and why now, right? Once you have kind of all those elements, you can begin to start to distill it down into a statement. And you can write something like a vision statement. I don't think that it's necessary,

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but I think it's helpful. If you don't have one, you're not going to not, But I think if you have one, if you understand it and it's compelling, it's something you can share with people to help them get on board with what God is doing in you and hopefully in your area, in your neighborhood, and in them, right? Is it clear and concise? That's what we want. Let me see where I am on the slides.

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Yes, clear and concise, right? Can you make it, as you write it out, ask, how can I shorten this? How can I make this more concise and pithy, right? How can this be said with fewer words but still capture the essence of what we're trying to say? Is it simple and passionate? Does it move the heart, not just the mind, right?

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Is it memorable? Is it vulnerable and portable? It doesn't have to be. You don't have to alliterate, you don't have to, it doesn't have to rhyme, but is it something that people can grab hold of? Is it something that they can remember? Can you put it on a t-shirt, right? And here's the thing, is it your vision? Is it, it has to fit you and your context? Or is it somebody else's vision from a church that you really admire somewhere else, right?

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They may have a great vision statement, but if it isn't owned by you and your people, I'm not sure it's going to take you where you want it to go. I'm not sure it will be the motivating, the motivating piece of community that you hope it would be and could be. Sorry, keep, keep flipping the slides. And then you test that vision, right? Does the vision, does it catch a glimpse of reality from God?

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Right? Does it really capture what you think God would like to do? Or is it just about what you want to do? Does it flow out of God's redemptive purposes? Does it recognize God's desire to bless people? Does it glorify him? Right? Does it bridge the present and future? Is it about what we want to do now? Or does it take us into this different future? The future, the place where God's kingdom has come, where heaven and earth are meeting. That's flowery language, but I think you get the sense that it's not just about what we want to do now, but where we want to go. Does it motivate and inspire people to action?

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Here's a couple of big questions to ask. Does it require risk to fulfill? If it doesn't feel risky. Maybe go back and rethink it. Right? Right? Does it promote faith because of that risk? Like, does it cause people to say, listen, this vision is, we

believe God is giving us this vision, but if he's not with us in this, it's not going to happen. If it's something that you and your friends and your core group can easily accomplish, dream bigger, right? Does it clarify your purpose and your direction? Does it help you understand, like, this is where we're going, these are our priorities, this is what we want to see happen, right?

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Now, the question is, how do you get there? So, let's talk about strategy. We've got mission. Making disciples. We've got vision. Here's what it's going to look like, right? Now, we're talking about strategy, defining your church's unique part in God's master plan. Here's how we, in particular, are going to live out this mission and get to this vision, right? Strategy is the specific who, what, and how of achieving your vision.

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It defines and details your intended pathways, your intended plans of fulfilling the mission of the church that, if followed, will lead to the vision. Your mission establishes the how of your ministry. Your strategy identifies whom do you seek to minister to? Like, who's the target here? Like, what will categorize or what will characterize your church's ministry style and why?

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Like, what is that about? Why? Why will having a more liturgical bent help you? How will you reach the people that God is calling you to reach, right? How will having country music help you reach the people group that you are trying to reach? And that is not a hypothetical. Just a few miles from here, there is a cowboy church. It's not the style that I would plant with because it's not a part of, I'm not passionate about it.

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God hasn't put on my heart to reach those who work in the rodeo circuit. But I'm glad that he did that for someone. And so for them, their church's ministry style is integrally tied into the people that they are trying to reach. What specific needs of the target group are we seeking to meet? And how are we going to seek to meet those needs, right? This is our strategy. This is what we're going to do to get us there, right?

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Okay. If vision. Paints a picture of a specific future. then strategy defines and details our intended plans, our pathway to achieve that vision. And for lack of a better term, I know it's a little bit confusing, but we're going to call that a mission statement, right? Even though we know mission with a capital M is that thing that we are all called to do, that every church should be about, our mission statement really describes our strategy, right? If vision paints a picture of a specific future, strategy defines and details.

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our intended plans and pathways to achieve the vision, and we're going to call that a mission statement. Vision statements are much more idealistic and

long-term than mission statements, right? Vision statements are 20 years from now. This is where we're going to be 10 years from now. This is where we're going to be. Mission statements can be updated along the way. Think about a five-year time. frame for a mission statement and 20 years for a vision statement, right? Mission statements should.

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capture where you are. Like, so maybe for right now, it's establishing a community that will do this. And five years from now, it's going to be something a little bit different as you've grown, right? 20 years from now, it's going to be very different. So think about vision as as something of a more of a picture that gets hung on the wall that helps you see where you're going. And mission as a page in the map that's going to bring you along on the next stage of.

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your journey, right? Mission and strategy statements answer, what will we do? Why do we exist? Why do we continue to exist? Right? At the beginning, five years in, why do we exist? After 20 or 30 years, you're going to have to say, why do we continue to exist? What is different now than back then? Like how have we as a people grown and changed and matured?

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And so what is our mission now that is a little bit different than it was back then? What is our unique calling and role in God's master plan to reach this city, this area, this region, right? Some keys to identifying a, well, we'll get to this next slide in a bit. Keys to writing an effective mission statement, right? Does it identify your ministry focus group? Who are we reaching? Does it clarify the needs that you're seeking to meet?

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Are they? Are they hungry? Well, are they hungry? Is it physical needs that are really going to open the door? spiritual conversation? Or is it something different? Is it a spiritual hunger that will be met through open and honest conversations? What are the needs that we're going to seek to meet? Does it identify three to five ministry areas and describe how the mission will be.

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accomplished through them? Do you have an idea of what that will look like, how you will get there? Is it accurate? Right? Is this really what we intend to do? Or is it just kind of what we hope to do? Yeah, is it is it more about maybe what some particular donors would like to see? Or is this really the heart of the community? Is it enduring? Is it concise? Is it memorable? Is it is it energizing? Can people see this mission and say, yes,

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I believe in that vision of where we're going. And yes, I love, I love how you're describing how we're going to get there. Is it measurable? Will you know when you are doing it? Like what are, and we've said this before, but count what counts, right? It's not just about, I love the three Bs, you know, buildings, butts,

and budgets. It's not about that. If it's about making disciples of Jesus through meeting the physical needs of the poor and.

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marginalized in our community, then I guess the question becomes, how many people have entered into discipleship relationships? How many people are we feeding? Who are we helping? Who are some folks whose stories exemplify the mission of this church as we help them, move from a place of poverty to a place of stability, right? And if any of those questions, if it's no, no, it's not concise. No, it's not energizing. No, it's not. Major.

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Then rewrite it, right? And if at any time you look back and you say, you know, this mission statement doesn't really capture who we are right now, then feel free to develop it again with your community. We're different people now than we were five years ago. What do we need? What do we sense God calling us to be about in this next season as we continue to move towards this vision, this future that God has put in our hearts, right? Here's some examples of mission strategy statements. The mission of Community at Watermark is to shepherd our body by connecting people in authentic relationships that lead to spiritual transformation.

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I love that. They know. They know what they need to be about, right? Relationships are important because it's those relationships and connecting people in relationship are important because it's those relationships through which they're seeking spiritual transformation. Right. Here's the mission statement of the Ecclesian Network to partner with, equip and multiply missional churches and leaders. See, that helps us to know. Right. That's not necessarily the vision of where we're going, but we know if we're not increasingly partnering with, if we're not equipping, if we're not seeing missional churches and leaders multiply, then we're not really living out our mission.

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Right. One more. Reach people with God's love, raise them to be like Jesus, release them to change the world. OK, that one had alliteration. Some of them do. And that's that's a pretty good one. Right. So mission, what we are to be about overall, making disciples, the vision, what's that going to look like? How how will that that mission be lived out in our area? In this particular group of people?

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What's our strategy? What's our mission statement? Like, how are we going to get there? What does it look like? And then values, right? Values are the, this is us identifying the unique characteristics that are going to guide and influence how we will be, how we will do church, right? Mission is what we're about. Vision is where we're going. The strategy slash mission, that is what we're going to do to get there.

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And the values are who we're going to be as we do that, right? Values answer the question of what will be important to us. They are often unwritten assumptions that guide our actions. Our values demonstrate our convictions or our heartfelt beliefs. But they also demonstrate our priorities, right? These are not doctrinal statements. They're not belief statements. Rather, they are convictions based on biblical principles that we hold dear, and that will determine how we will operate our ministry.

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Values provide the foundation for formulating goals and setting the direction of our ministry. They are the filter through which you fulfill your strategy. So, in other words, a group that has hospitality and justice and community, they may be led to start a dinner church. They may be led to lean heavily on ministries of feeding the poor, of being out and among the marginalized in their community.

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Those who put a high value on teaching, on worship, for them, gathering may really rise in importance. And though they may not say we're not interested in hospitality because, again, we should all be all of these things, right, but it may not live itself out in such a way that you could identify it, hospitality, as part of their culture.

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Many large churches don't have the ability, even if they have a hospitality team or a welcome team, they may have greeters. But I'm getting off on a tangent here. We'll talk about that in the Q&A. Anyway, the point is you can't have 15 core values. You've got to be able to boil down to, like, this core team of people. Like, what is it, biblically, that we sense is going to distinguish this community?

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It was the sense of mission. It was a sense that we are living as sent people. It was community. We wanted everything we did to be about not individual people kind of interacting with church, but rather we as a community moving together. We as a community moving by consensus, growing together, being formed and shaped as a community. Justice was one of ours, and that led us into a lot of different avenues of mission.

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Hope was one of our core values because I discerned just early on that a lot of folks had lost a sense of like church was not giving them hope. Church was giving them rules. Church was giving them was speaking down to them. we did, we wanted it to have a voice of hope. So one of our mantras was we wanted to talk more about coulds than shoulds. That grew out of our value of hope. And then finally, history was one.

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of ours. We wanted to really root ourselves in the history of God's people and keep ourselves from seeing ourselves as the pinnacle of ecclesiastical evolution,

right? We knew we were just another in a long line of communities of Christ followers, right? Values are values because you as a community actually value them, right? They ought to be descriptive, not prescriptive. Now, in one sense, values will always be somewhat aspirational. This is what we are living into and living up to.

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But if you have something on your list of core values that doesn't describe who you are, on some level, it probably doesn't belong there. Too many churches have mission statements, vision statements, core values that are entirely aspirational. It's who they wish they could be, but it's not who they actually are. So I'd encourage you with your core group, say, what is it that we value?

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And what is it that we as a community will value as we lean out into this mission that God is calling us to? Values reveal the heart, right? Right. Core values are not the values that you write down on a piece of paper or put on a plaque on the wall. They're what you and your community are really living, actually living out. One of the reasons why I believe we as a community should have made hospitality a core value, but we never did,

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was because as more and more people showed up, one of the things I began to see were people living together in community, houses, people. Always opening their homes to others. And hospitality, if we had taken the time, and we should have, to refocus, re-look at our core values, hospitality definitely would have been on that list because it was one of the values that we were actually living out. Values help your community in decision-making, right?

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They help you decide, well, should we do this or should we do that, right? Well, which one would help us better? Which one is our core value calling us to? Which one feels more like it exemplifies who we are as a people, right? And so in that way, values determine your church's life and your church's direction, right? Your life as a community, your direction is determined by the sum of your decisions.

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And if decisions are value-based. You know that you are moving in the right direction. the right direction, right? Or at least in the direction that's congruent with who you are as a people, who God has called you to be. People in their organizations behave in ways that are generally consistent with their core values, and core values are validated only through behavior. A stated value that is not backed by behavior is an aspiration or a preference, but it's not a value.

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So be as honest as you can. What we do want to do, though, is take those values and move them to action. Many principles and actions can be drawn out of a core value, and by linking core values to specific behaviors, you will help

people understand and clarify expectations. By translating those behaviors into specific practices, you help people grow in those values. Right? So people would, whenever I'm doing genesis,

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this, one of the questions that always comes up is, what would you have done differently? And the thing that I most often come back to is, yeah, we probably would have had core values. But even before that, we would have had core practices. We would have had those formational practices that link to the values that help us to live them out. And those would have been what we started with, as a community, right? So here's some examples. How do we link values to action? Well, say if you have a value, a core value of intimacy with God, right? The principle behind.

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that is intimacy with God empowers God's people for effective ministry. Like we need the intimacy with God if we're going to live on mission, if this vision is ever going to come to fruition, right? And this is what we're calling people to, this abundant life. Intimacy with God is a core, And so the action is we will regularly practice spiritual disciplines. Well, that's pretty good.

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But what are the practices by which that action can be lived out? I gave a couple examples, things like Lenten fasts. This is one of those practices that's going to lead us closer to intimacy with God. Shared devotional practices. Maybe we are all reading the same scripture in terms of doing the one-year Bible together. Maybe we are all praying the hours together.

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Maybe there are a lot of different practices which lead to intimacy with God. And what we want to do is if we're making that a core value of our church, we want to pick a couple of those and experiment with them as a community and call everyone to experiment with them, to engage in them together. And then see what God does with that. Another value might be relevance, right? We want to be the relevant church. Okay. And the principle behind that is a good one, I think.

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It's methods have to change to effectively reach new groups of people, whatever the ministry focus group is, the people that God has put on our hearts and minds, right? We want to make sure that things are contextualized for them, that they're relevant. So one of the things, a general broad action is we're going to make sure that our worship services are understandable to the unchurched person. Well, that's good. What practices will we do to accomplish that?

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One of the things that we did, even though relevance wasn't one of our core values, but one of the things we did was we narrated our worship. In other words, as we move from movement, we would call the movements. But as we move from section. The section in our worship gatherings, we would explain. This is

what. This is why we sing. This is why we come to this table. This is why we open scripture and dialogue about it. And we would try to have a lot of different ways to explain that. Sometimes we would lean on, we had a written description of everything we did.

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Here's why we use silence. Here's why we have dialogue. Here's why we have these prayer stations, right? Because we wanted people to understand. We wanted them to not feel like they were coming into a space that made no sense to them and therefore was not relevant to them, right? But also by narrating our worship, we equipped our people to do the same thing, to explain to those, to friends, to neighbors that they might invite, to newcomers. To help them understand, right? A couple others. Say a value of, we have a value of community, right? God calls us.

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The principle is God calls us out of radical individuality and into formational community. And so the action is we regularly gather together in various sized groups, one-on-one, huddles, small groups, worship gatherings. But the practice is, the practice that we call people to is we show up for worship. We give ourselves to others in small groups. We help each other learn to follow Jesus in discipleship huddles. We, in our community, we even nailed that.

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We even went more granular on that. And we would encourage people, listen, rotate your crops was the way we talked about it. Like between serving the poor, between engaging in discipleship huddles and theology discussions that we regularly have, and then being in one of our home groups. We said, listen, you can only really affect it. do two out of those three. So the practice that we encourage people to have was to do two of the.

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three for a season and then drop one off and pick up another. So if you're serving the poor with us, be in a small group as well. Be in a home group. After a while, as serving or if you move into a serving becomes more difficult because of life stage or you move into a season where work is particularly tough, maybe serving drops off for a season, but you do pick up being in a discipleship huddle. Or maybe we were in small groups for a season and then we let that go.

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while we serve the poor and we engage in theological discussions. But the practice was we can't do everything all the time, therefore engage in community in a way that makes sense, right? Practification might be a value, right? The principle is we want to multiply, not add. Leadership development is critical for a growing church. Therefore, the action is we develop apprentices at every level. The practice is every leader, every person who is serving has an apprentice, right? So on and so forth.

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How do we identify our core values? Let's talk about that a little bit. I think I'm out of slides, and that's fine. So I'm going to stop the share. One, identify important scriptural concepts that influence how you carry out your church's ministry. Like what's calling to you? What do you see in the Gospels? What do you see Jesus doing that really you feel like? What do you feel like fits in your ministry with and among those people that God?

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is calling you to. Start writing out some of those core values. Make sure that each one of them can be easily translated into action, right? And then those action can become regular practices, that you together engage in as a community, right? Group similar statements together. Highlight the ones that are most important. Write a tentative list of four to seven of them. And then start.

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asking, does this capture who we are as a community? Is it complete? Does our list of core values reflect all the essential facets of the church life and ministry that God is calling us to, right? And then does it describe the specific behaviors that demonstrate each core value in action, right? Be asking together, what practices could we experiment with to, undergrad, undergird these values. Like, yeah, hospitality, let's make that a value. Now,

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how will we as a community practice them, right? Probably another of those what I wish I had done things was I came up with five core values. I handed them to our community. I wish we had come up with them together. I wish we had worked through a communal process to develop those. All right, that's part one. Mission, vision, strategy, values. In your notes, you've got this section, my story, our story, why now? I'd love for you to just take some time and be thinking about.

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specifically, you know what the mission is. What thoughts do you have? What is God saying to you about that? Like, what are the potential pathways that you see that you might live out that mission with this community that you're calling together, right? What is capturing your heart? What are you calling people to? What's the preferred future that you're putting in front of them? Like, what are some potential strategies? How are we going to get there? What does it look like, right?

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And then maybe, what do I think should be on our list of values? Begin writing that stuff out, and we'll talk about it in our Q&A. Talk to you soon. Thank you.