

Great Mission Statements

Greetings in the spirit of Christ... the Power of God to redeem the world!

My name is Tom Bandy. For over twenty years I have consulted with churches of all sizes, cultures, theologies, and traditions ... in North American and around the world. My website is www.ThrivingChurch.com.

Many churches are involved in visioning processes. Visioning is a matter of spiritual discernment ... not strategic planning. Visioning leads to strategic planning, and comes before strategic planning. However, the goal of visioning is to align ourselves with God's purpose to bless the world. Motivation and direction comes first ... tactics come later.

A good visioning process results in three very practical tools that will be used in future strategic planning: Theme Song, Inspiring Image, and Mission Statement.

Today I want to coach you to develop a great Mission Statement. Pastor and board will appoint a small team of faithful, creative members to draft a statement. They will use the Theme Song and Inspiring Image. They will listen to the feedback and insights you offer from other spiritual exercises.

A fresh Mission Statement is most important whenever you are doing strategic planning, but it is also crucial if you are preparing to call or receive a new pastor. Together with the song and image, this mission statement will be like a North Star guiding our strategic planning and leadership choices.

What does a great Mission Statement look like?

First, let me tell you what it is not. I do this, because so many churches make three common mistakes.

- **A Mission Statement is NOT about institutional survival. It's not about keeping the doors open or preserving a denomination. God's purpose for the church is always about multiplying disciples and blessing the world.**

- **A Mission Statement is NOT a brief summary of all the programs. It's not an index of our committees. It's about *who* we strive to bless and *how* we strive to bless them.**
- **A Mission Statement is NOT a theological essay. It is not a historical overview. It is everything a seeker needs to know about why your congregation is important for the diverse people of in your neighborhood or community.**

I've consulted and traveled among churches all over the country. Every thriving, effective church in America can summarize their purpose with a handful of carefully chosen words, a logo or image that can be printed on the side of a bus, and a theme song celebrated in every worship service.

A great mission statement is brief, memorable, and energizing. In a Strategic Plan, it is printed at the top of the page. Immediately following the Mission Statement will be 5- 10 measureable outcomes with which the church will evaluate its success in accomplishing the mission.

The Mission Statement for every thriving church is different. But they all have certain elements in common. A great mission statement is:

- ✓ **Clearly motivational.**

The mission statement is exciting to people in both church and community, and it is regularly celebrated by the congregation as the unique way in which they follow Jesus. The mission energizes people. It is a source of pride. Members readily speak of it among work associates, neighbors, relatives, and friends.

- ✓ **Clearly congregational.**

The mission statement is the sum of congregational life, and not simply one program of the church. Every member is enthusiastic and wholehearted about that mission. Each person is “on fire” for that mission, and they participate in this congregation specifically because these people are working toward that purpose.

✓ **Utterly distinctive.**

The mission statement uses words or metaphors unique to that particular congregation; in their unique demographic context. It distinguishes the purpose of this congregation from the unique missions of other churches even in the same denomination.

✓ **Profoundly sacrificial.**

No matter how large the vision or how great the challenge, a powerful mission statement is always reasonable and achievable. It deserves immense personal sacrifice. It will be used effectively in all stewardship campaigns and nominations processes.

✓ **Always prayerful.**

Individuals, leaders, and the congregation as a whole continually pray for the success of the mission. Prayer is both planned and spontaneous. The mission is constantly lifted into consciousness, and lies at the center of personal and corporate spirituality.

Your ultimate goal will be to articulate your mission in such a way that it can be easily printed on the side of a bus, on a park bench, or on a banner trailing behind an airplane above the city. In that brief space, you need to communicate everything necessary to capture the imagination of the public and motivate enormous sacrifice by church members.

Thank you! And thank God for your commitment to bless the world and renew the church. God bless all here!