

PM401 MINISTERIAL ORGANIZATION THE MISSION STATEMENT

I. Overview

A. Need: An effective mission statement will help churches . . .

1. Avoid the trap of merely responding to circumstances.
2. Implement a strategy with coherence.
3. Avoid the chaos of everyone pulling in opposing directions.
4. Clear up misunderstandings.
5. Unify the church in its sense of purpose and vision.

“In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes” (Jdg 21:25).

B. Objectives

1. Define what an effective mission statement is.
2. Increase the student’s sense of confidence in confronting ministerial challenges.
3. Delineate the elements of an effective mission statement.
4. List and describe the steps that lead to the creation of an effective mission statement.
5. Review examples of mission statements.

C. Main Questions this Lesson Seeks to Answer:

1. How can church leaders mobilize their congregations around a shared purpose?
2. Besides a lack of spirituality or a lack of commitment, what else might be happening in a church that seems divided by opposing parties?

II. Introduction

- A. A mission statement can serve as a practical tool for creating a strong sense of shared direction.

“As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming” (Eph 4:14).

- B. Review

1. The Star model
2. What is the function of the Star model?
3. How does the Star model help us to think systemically?
4. What is the definition of “strategy?”

- C. A mission statement is the part of the strategic plan that serves as a framework for all the other elements of the strategy. It is a written manifesto that declares what the church does.

III. Definition

- A. A mission statement is a written manifest of what the church does. It includes . . .

1. A description of the nature of the church. A very brief phrase that encapsulates the church’s convictions about the nature or essence of the church.
2. The audience that the church feels equipped and called to target.
 - a. Does the church plan to target primarily unbelievers or does it see its current members also as the target?
 - b. Does the church plan to target the highly educated?
 - c. Does the church plan to target young people?
 - d. Business men and women?
 - e. Blue-collar workers?
 - f. Particular ethnic groups (Hispanics, African Americans, Asians)?

“When you try to grab too much, you hold onto very little”
(Spanish proverb).

3. The needs that your church feels called and equipped to fill.
 - a. Only spiritual needs?
 - b. "The Church is never true to itself when it is living FOR itself, for if it is chiefly concerned with saving its own life, it will lose it."¹
4. The primary means by which the church plans to achieve its purpose.

IV. The Importance of a Mission Statement

A. Integration

1. The main value of a mission statement is in its capacity to create organizational integration, understood as "getting everyone focused on common objectives and working together to pull in the same direction."²
2. This value is not achieved automatically, simply by virtue of having a written purpose statement. It is the result of the entire process of first formulating and then operationalizing that statement so that its implications become integrated into the fabric of the entire organization.

B. A shared sense of direction does not happen automatically.

1. This value is not achieved automatically, simply by virtue of having a written mission statement. It is the result of the entire process of first formulating the statement and then putting it into effect so that its implications come to be integrated into the fabric of the entire church.

¹ Elton Trueblood. *The Company of the Committed* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980), 69.

² John V. Mullane, "The Mission Statement Is a Strategic Tool: When Used Properly," *Management Decision* 40, no. 5 (2002): 448-455. Journal on-line. Available from Emerald (28 January 2007). 448.

2. “The concept of '*measurables*' is key to the practical application of the mission. . . . It is not the physical document that provides buy-in to the company's values. Rather, it is a daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, and yearly focus on the measurables that have been set from the mission.”³

C. The mission statement is the seed from which sprouts both the roots and the branches of the church as a corporate presence, including its goals, objectives, strategies, policies, and reward systems—all of which should be aligned with that statement.

“For a mission statement to affect organizational behavior, it must be used to formulate internal policies that support it.”⁴

Without an effective mission statement, the church falls into a state of inertia. “Organizations without a clear mission are like objects at rest -- they tend to remain at rest. To change means overcoming inertia -- a gigantic task! There is nothing 'pulling' or 'pushing' them to change.”⁵

V. The Process of Developing a Mission Statement

A. You should begin with a period of prayer and reflection, because the Lord Jesus is the CEO of the Church. He is the source of the church’s mission.

1. Normally, the formation of a mission statement begins with the top leadership team (the elders and pastor).
2. These leaders, however, should not dictate the mission but rather should seek out what the Lord is telling this particular congregation, at this particular time, to do.

B. This occurs through a process of dialog about . . .

1. The nature of the church,
2. The ultimate goal that the church is called to accomplish,

³ Mullane, 450.

⁴ Mullane, 449.

⁵ Ken Matejka, Lance B. Kurke, and Barb Gregory, "Mission Impossible? Designing a Great Mission Statement to Ignite Your Plans," *Management Decision* 31, no. 4 (1993): 34-37. Journal on-line. Available from ABI/Inform Global, ProQuest (28 January 2007). 35.

3. The sector of the public toward which the church will direct its efforts, and
 4. The principle means that the church will utilize to achieve its goals.⁶
- C. Once the top leadership team has a first draft of the mission statement, the process enters into a phase of exposing that statement to other workers in the church (teachers, volunteers, deacons, and other key people).
1. "Obtaining the understanding and commitment of the workforce to a mission statement requires the collaborative involvement of the worker in the development process."⁷
 2. The idea here is not to impose the mission statement, but to seek (feel out) the reaction of these individuals and always remain open to the possibility of hearing the voice of the Lord through them.
 3. During this phase, it is important to discover the core values of the people. What are the themes that impassion them? God may be speaking through their concerns of His people.
- D. Now, review the mission statement with the leadership, making changes, perfecting the way it is expressed, and making sure that it expresses the call of God as expressed through His people.

VI. Next Steps

- A. Every level of the church's structure should be integrated into the mission statement.⁸
1. To achieve a common understanding of the components of the mission statement, it is necessary to establish and communicate a series of measurable outcomes that support it.

⁶ Janet Shapiro. "Strategic Planning Toolkit." CIVICUS World Alliance for Citizen Participation. 2006. [online]; available at <<http://www.civicus.org/new/media/Strategic%20Planning.pdf>>, (24 April 2006). 33.

⁷ Timothy Stagich, *Collaborative Leadership and Global Transformation* (Bloomington, IN: Authorhouse, 2001), 55.

⁸ Mullane, 454.

2. These measurable outcomes need to become integrated with a system of rewarding people and making them accountable to their achievement.
- B. Ten steps toward integrating the mission into the entire organization:
1. Decide what will change as a result of the church's accomplishing its mission.
 2. Provide everyone with a clear statement of the church's aspirations, intentions, direction, and priorities.
 3. Guide the daily activities and decisions.
 4. Provide a map toward the achievement of the vision.
 5. Establish tangible ways of measuring success.
 6. Establish a structure of relationships suited to the accomplishment of the mission.
 7. Establish an annual planning cycle.
 8. Seek alignment of action—everyone pulling toward the same goal.
 9. Establish a system for distributing funds.
 10. Explore and welcome new ideas that come to the surface through the church's membership.

Organizational experts Robert A. Watson and Ben Brown called the Salvation Army “the most effective organization in the world.”⁹ One of the keys to their effectiveness is “the fact that every decision and action, everything the army does, is based on evaluation in terms of whether or not it accomplishes the mission.”

⁹ Cited in Richard L. Daft, *Organization Theory and Design* (Mason, OH: South-Western, 8th ed., 2004), 337.

VII. Conclusion

- A. Like any tool, a mission statement will mean absolutely nothing if it is not used effectively. The simple fact of having a written mission statement will produce no effect if it is not integrated into every aspect of the life of the church. The true value of a mission statement is in the dialog and reflection necessary for its development and in the process of implementation and alignment. In this way, the mission statement becomes a living force that pushes the church toward change and toward continuous improvement.
- B. It is important to remember that the Lord Jesus is the one who gives the church her mission. It is not a matter of personal opinion or preference.

“The early church did not work itself up into an evangelistic community. It inherited a command from the risen Christ which it could not ignore. He did not give much indication on church organization, but he left in no doubt what the main aim of the community of his followers was to be. *The idea of a closed, inward-looking community finds no support from his teaching.* The message entrusted to his disciples was intended for all the world.”¹⁰

¹⁰ Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1981), 716, Emphasis added.