

Chapter 3

Defining Your Purpose

Where there is no vision, the people perish. (KJV)

-Proverbs 29:8

This chapter outlines the first step in the strategic planning process. Without a clear and carefully considered statement of purpose all other stages of the process will be misguided. We will therefore discuss the value of defining the ministry's purpose, describe how to write effective statements of purpose or mission, and present two examples of mission statements.

THE IMPORTANCE OF DEFINING PURPOSE

The first and probably most important consideration when developing a strategic plan is to define the purpose, mission, or "reason for being" for the organization or any specific part of it. This is usually a difficult process. Peter Drucker, a management consultant and writer, has led the way in stressing the importance of defining purpose. An organization develops to satisfy a need in the marketplace. Drucker states that the organization's purpose is defined by the want the customer satisfies by buying a product or service. Thus, satisfying the customer is the mission and purpose of every business (1974, 79). Organizations need a clear definition of purpose and mission. This raises the questions "What is our purpose," and "What should it be?" Drucker's answer is that only a clear definition of the mission and purpose of the business makes possible clear and realistic business objectives. It is the foundation for priorities, strategies, plans, and work assignments. It is the starting point for the design of managerial structure and jobs (1974, 75).

Clearly, if purpose is defined casually or introspectively, or if the list of key result areas neglects some of the less obvious threats and opportunities, the organization is at risk. As Calvin Coolidge put it: "No enterprise can exist for itself alone. It ministers to some great need, it performs some great service not for itself but for others; or failing therein it ceases to be profitable and ceases to exist."

It is in this purpose statement that the vision and the dream for the church or ministry must be reflected. This purpose statement sets the stage for all planning. Objectives, which are covered later in the text, must by their very nature contribute to achieving what is in the purpose statement. In a study of private Christian college and university administrations, it was discovered that all those surveyed had a purpose and mission statement, but only 50 percent had specific measurable objectives of what was to be accomplished.

A mission statement aids a church or ministry by

1. giving it a reason for being, and an explanation to members and others as to why it exists as an organization;
2. helping to place boundaries around the ministry and thus defining what it will and will not do;
3. describing the need the organization is attempting to meet in the world;
4. giving a general description of how the organization is going to respond to that need;
5. acting as the hook on which the primary objectives of the organization can be hung;
6. helping to form the basis for the ethos (or culture) of the organization;
7. helping to communicate to those outside what the organization is all about ("Defining the Mission" 1984,1,2).

WRITING A STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The following list (Lambert 1975, 28) provides several helpful tips on writing and evaluating a purpose statement.

1. Identify the mission of that part of the organization to which the group is accountable. A parish council may be accountable

to the parish at large, the pastor, bishop, diocesan pastoral council, or all of these. The liturgy committee will be accountable to the parish council. The director of religious education may be accountable to the religious education committee, pastor, or both.

2. Determine that portion of the above mission statement for which the group is responsible. While the parish council is accountable for the total parish operation, the maintenance committee, for example, will be responsible only for that portion of the parish council's mission that deals with maintaining the grounds and buildings in a usable and functional state.
3. Prepare a rough draft of the mission statement which covers the purpose of the group and the major activities it performs. With a working team, such as a parish staff or parish council, a rough draft mission statement can be developed at an all-day meeting, using an outside facilitator who is familiar with communications techniques, group processes, and the concept of mission statements. The meeting can begin with each individual writing a version of the mission statement on newsprint. When these drafts are all assembled, the group can review each one for clarity and understanding. Finally, consolidate those portions that are similar so that only areas of wide disagreement are left. At this point, negotiations can be carried out between members of the group until there is general agreement on all points. The final result is the rough draft of the mission statement.

A purpose statement must be built around several points:

1. *Congregational Care*-typically this includes corporate worship, administration of the sacraments, pastoral care, fellowship, and the nurturing, education, and training for Christian discipleship of the members.
2. *Outreach and Evangelism*-this part of the statement focuses on the imperative to go out and confront individuals outside the church with the good news that Jesus Christ is their Redeemer and Savior. While the first part of this outline was directed toward the parish's ministry to persons inside the

gathered community, this part emphasizes the parish's responsibility to individuals outside the church.

3. *Witness and Mission*-the emphasis here is on the church's responsibility to be a living witness for Christ to the groups, organizations, structures, and institutions outside the church in the world. This also helps the members to understand both the legitimacy and the imperative for the parish's involvement in the social, economic, and political issues in the local community. (Schaller 1965, 33)

SAMPLE MISSION STATEMENTS

It might be helpful at this point to examine a mission statement prepared by a church and a ministry. Note that these statements reflect the uniqueness of the organizations in terms of their reason for being and also serve as guidelines for what the organization should be doing. These statements were developed through a process involving many people and over a period of six to eight months. Initial statements were revised many times to add specificity and clarity to the terms used to define purpose.

Mission Statement

*Monroe Covenant Church
Monroe, Louisiana*

Statement of Purpose

Monroe Covenant Church is a full-gospel (charismatic), interdenominational congregation deeply rooted in the historic evangelical faith. Our basic purpose is to (1) glorify and please God, (2) edify and train believers, and (3) evangelize and saturate the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Our emphasis is on the three "Bs": Believing, Becoming, and Belonging.

Believing

We are a church that believes that our duty is to:

1. bring people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ as the only way to salvation;
2. help people experience the Baptism in the Holy Spirit with all His gifts and fruits;
3. train Christians to share their faith with others and to proclaim the Gospel;
4. do the compassionate and powerful works of Christ in the world;
5. give practical application to our Christian faith in the areas of (1) family life, (2) church life, (3) job, (4) ethics, (5) morality, (6) personal relationships, (7) financial integrity, (8) civic responsibility, and (9) community involvement;
6. seek ways to build the unity of the Church by recognizing and relating with individuals and Churches outside our local congregation, and in so doing identify with and incorporate into the larger Church in our city, state, and the Church Universal.

Becoming

We are a church that desires to:

1. increase in the knowledge and power of (1) God's Word, (2) prayer, and (3) fellowship with believers, according to Acts 2:42;
2. grow in our ability to worship God personally and corporately;
3. grow in our commitment to the Lord as expressed in our loyalty, faithfulness, obedience, integrity, and love;
4. grow in individual and corporate freedom in Christ by using all the means of grace, among which are healing, counseling, deliverance, and forgiveness, to be Christians who then might be able to help others also enter that same freedom in Christ;
5. increase in making a difference for the Kingdom of God in our society.

Belonging

We are a church that emphasizes belonging by:

1. committing to work out practical Christian relationships according to the "one another" passages of the New Testament,

- and, in so doing, to the best of our understanding fulfill what the Bible describes as covenant love and covenant relationship;
2. teaching, identifying, training, recognizing, and releasing the many diverse gifts in the Body of Christ so that believers better find and function in their God-given places;
 3. caring for the many diverse needs of the individual members of the church;
 4. attitudes and actions of friendliness and acceptance so that everyone will know that we care for them.

Mission Statement

*Beeson Center for Biblical Preaching and Pastoral Leadership
Asbury Theological Seminary
Wilmore, Kentucky*

Our Mission

The Beeson Center for Biblical Preaching and Pastoral Leadership exists to serve the church through serving pastors. Our purpose is the advanced training of pastors in preaching and leadership skills for the sake of Christ, to increase the effectiveness of their ministry, and to equip God's people under the authority of scripture and in obedience to the call for scriptural holiness and love.

Our Message

The Beeson Center for Biblical Preaching and Pastoral Leadership is committed to the following expression of this purpose.

1. Faithful proclamation of the Word of God is the foundation of ministry. Faithful proclamation begins with faithful pastors who experience and understand the truth of God's word in their own lives. Effective preaching requires rightly interpreting scripture. Effective communication implies not only speaking the truth, but speaking in terms which can be understood and appropriated by the culture in which we live. The Beeson Center exists to train pastors to better understand and

- communicate the gospel as teachers, preachers, and models of the Word of God.
2. Worship forms and energizes the community of God. The Word proclaimed by the preacher does not exist in isolation, but in the totality of worship which communicates the gospel on many levels. The Beeson Center exists to foster the creative integration of proclamation into overall worship in terms which honor God and speak to our times.
 3. Every church, informed by Biblical mandates such as the Great Commission, must form its own vision. Each pastor should articulate a personal vision and call. Pastors and churches have individual gifts that function best when applied to appropriate missions. The Beeson Center exists to foster the pastor's understanding of his or her own gifts and call, and to develop a vision for the church they serve.
 4. The church today exists in a world which is defined and formed by the growing power of media and technology. Each generation throughout church history has learned to use the technological tools of its day in the service of Christ. The Beeson Center is committed to the integration of excellent media and computer technology in the communication of the gospel of Christ.
 5. The ministry of the church consists of the work of all Christians as they are faithful to Christ. The pastor is called to equip and train the whole people of God for this ministry. The Beeson Center exists to provide training and guidance for pastors in the development of staff and lay ministry.

Our Market

1. The Beeson Center for Biblical Preaching and Pastoral Leadership at Asbury Theological Seminary begins with its base in the Wesleyan-Holiness and Methodist traditions of Christianity. We seek first to reach and to serve pastors in this tradition from the historic perspective of the seminary.
2. We seek to be inclusive, serving both those women and men from all races who form our historic constituencies, and also pastors and churches from other theological traditions. We seek to focus our service for young pastors of promise primar-

ily through a year-long program in Biblical preaching and pastoral leadership. We seek to focus our service to established pastors primarily through short-term, intensive programs in specific aspects of teaching and leadership.

3. We seek to serve the church-at-large through research, publications, and media instruction.

Our Measures for Our Future

1. The Beeson Center will incorporate through the existing Doctor of Ministry program a one-year, on-site DMin program in Biblical Preaching and Leadership which will be funded by the Beeson Scholars Program and housed in the Beeson Center. We seek, by 1993, to have 12 scholars on campus, and 24 by 1995. This program will concentrate on pastors early in their career who show unusual promise as preachers and leaders for the future of the church.
2. The Beeson Center will establish the Senior pastor Program of short-term study opportunities for established pastors. The program will offer intensive study and training opportunities in preaching, theological and spiritual formation, leadership, church administration, and programming for active senior pastors. We would like to have 40 pastors involved by 1993 and 80 by 1995.
3. The Beeson Center will establish a research and publicity program-beginning with a journal or newsletter on preaching and leadership in 1992.
4. The Beeson Center is committed to the use of advanced technology and media resources in teaching and for the use of the church. The Beeson Center will develop a system of optic fiber communication within the Asbury Theological Seminary campus to promote the use of media and technology for teaching in classroom settings. The Center will also promote the development of video instructional resources for pastors and churches, concentrating on preaching, worship, church programs, and related issues. The Center will develop the ability to offer teaching programs to pastors and churches through satellite relay for instruction away from the Wilmore campus.

5. The Beeson Center will sponsor and lead a program of computer communications, offering the library and media resources of Asbury Seminary to pastors through computer link-up. This will be in cooperation with the existing program of the library, expanding as resources and technology allow to make more and more of our resources accessible by computer link-up.
6. The Beeson Center will seek to network with pastors in order to identify pastoral needs to be addressed in the program, to provide resources to pastors, to identify potential participants in the various programs, and to provide ongoing opportunities for ministry for them.
7. The Beeson Center, in cooperation with the Pastoral Care Division of the Seminary, will sponsor the development of an Assessment Center for pastors and students. This center will offer personal testing and evaluation in order to help students understand their own gifts, values, and resources and develop personal vision and goals to guide them in their ministry.

Our Spirit

The Beeson Center for Biblical Preaching and Pastoral Leadership seeks to serve pastors and the church. We seek to form bridges between the academic world and the pastor, between the seminary and the church, between the gospel proclaimed and a culture in need of Christ.

The Center will be a focus for learning and personal growth. Excellence in ministry involves using the right tools for the right purpose. But, ministry begins with individuals who have surrendered their lives to service in the name of Christ. The church needs the Spirit of God unleashed through committed individuals who combine wisdom and skill in the execution of their ministry. We will seek to foster a marriage of mind and Spirit in the context of preaching and ministry.

We will not be a place where stock formulas are given. We will seek to grow a community where people bring practical needs and find wisdom, encouragement, and challenge.

We will listen to the world, respectfully and carefully. But, modern American culture will not ask all our questions, nor supply all

the answers. We will seek to be a community that listens most attentively to God and God's word, and to respond in obedience.

EVALUATING A PURPOSE STATEMENT

The list below can be used as a guide to evaluate a statement of purpose. The goal is to devise a statement that really represents what the organization wants to be or should be to survive.

1. Broadness of scope and continuity of application: The statement should be broad enough to cover all significant areas of activity expected of the organization without a specific termination period indicated.
2. Functional commitment: The nature of the works, tasks, or activities to be performed must be defined in terms that will determine clearly the validity of the group or organization.
3. Resource commitment: The statement should include a commitment to cost-effective utilization of available resources.
4. Unique or distinctive nature of work: Every unit in an organization should make some unique or at least distinctive contribution. If there are two or more peer units in an organization with identical mission statements, the risk of duplicated effort is obvious.
5. Description of services to be offered.
6. Description of group or groups to be served.
7. Geographical area to be covered.

Sometimes it is useful to use a series of questions to evaluate a purpose statement after it is written. A "no" answer to one of the questions means the statement needs to be reworded to more clearly reflect the organization's basic reason for being. The following lists of questions may be useful.

1. Does it contain all important commitments?
2. Does it clearly state the function?
3. Is there a clear determination of relationships to the rest of the organization?
4. Is it distinct from the mission statements of other groups in the organization?

5. Is it short, to the point, and understandable?
6. Is it continuing in nature?
7. Does it state to whom the group is accountable?

Generally, a purpose statement can reflect whether the church wants to be local, regional, national, or international, the needs to be met, and so forth. The word "service" is often included in the mission statement of any organization.

The purpose statement needs to answer the question of why your church or ministry is needed in the first place. Plenty of other organizations exist. Discuss and know specifically what need you are meeting. For example, Victory Christian Center in Tulsa determined it was a local church with an international outreach. Morris Cerullo World Evangelism, based in San Diego, is truly an international ministry. Victory Christian Center and World Evangelism are quite different, but their primary reason for being is the same.

In an established denominational church, the focal purpose statement must reflect the support of the overall church statement of purpose. For example, a local Methodist church purpose statement should reflect the overall beliefs and doctrine of the United Methodist Church. John Wesley's own statement of the purpose of a Methodist Society is described in *The Nature, Design, and General Rules of the United Societies* (1743).

A company-united in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their salvation.

Denominational organizations thus must make sure their purpose is aligned with the overall denomination's purpose. For example, when the pastor of one city's First United Methodist Church led his staff through this planning process, they all had to be constantly aware of the basic Methodist beliefs to be sure the purpose statement reflected those beliefs. This does not mean that the First United Methodist Church does not have the freedom of an unaligned or nondenominational church to have a vision and dream. It just means that the church had to be conscious of its roots to remain consistent.

SUMMARY

By verbalizing and putting in writing the vision God has given you for your church or ministry, you, in effect, state the unique reason God has brought your organization into existence. This provides the sense of direction and focus for what you do. What you do must be a function of who you are. The statement of purpose translates what God has divinely ordained into a mission for your church or ministry to fulfill.

PURPOSE STATEMENT WORKSHEET

This worksheet is provided to aid your church or ministry in starting the strategic planning process.

1. Write a statement for the following areas:

Congregational care statement: _____

Outreach and evangelism statement: _____

Witness and mission work statement: _____

2. Now evaluate the statement using the list of questions provided earlier.

3. Next submit it to others familiar with your organization to evaluate your statement of purpose and offer suggestions on improving the statement.. In other words, does the statement say to others what you want it to say?