



*Church &
Community*

*Helping the Church to
Discover God's Mandate
and its Mission, Structure
and Ministry Plan*

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Helping the Church to Discover God's Mandate? - The Why?

The following dialogue regarding church and community focuses specifically on how the local church will engage its surroundings. In this particular section we will develop a theological foundation for church and community. Why should the gathered community of believers be concerned with its surroundings?

1. COMMUNITY IS A GIFT FROM GOD

A. The Early Presence of Community

Community shows up early in the Bible as we observe the Triune God creating the universe. (Genesis 1:1-31) God created mankind on the 6th day of creation and with that we read a conversation among the Godhead:

Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground" (Genesis 1:28).

The Triune God created man and then creates woman underscoring the value of fellowship and community. We (humanity) were made to exist together in fellowship similar to the Triune Godhead.

"The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him" (Genesis 2:18).

B. Our Basis for Community Comes from the Lord

We understand the Trinity to be a word that describes the God of the Universe as One God in Three Persons. When we use 'persons' to describe the Godhead we are identifying how they relate to one another in unique ways. We see Their interrelation in the following biblical events:

- Public presence of the Triune Godhead at the baptism of Jesus (Matthew 3:13-17)
- Promised presence of God the Holy Spirit at Jesus' request of the Father (John 14:16)
- Distinct roles of the Triune God within the lives of the believer (1 Peter 1:1-2)

C. Humanity Exists Together for the Glory of God

I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' and to the south, 'Do not hold them back!' Bring My sons from afar, and My daughters from the ends of the earth—everyone called by My name and created for My glory, whom I have indeed formed and made. (Isaiah 43:6-7)

The picture of redemption's result is showcased in Revelation 7:9-10, where a multitude is standing before God giving Him glory.

After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice:

"Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."

2. COMMUNITY INTERRUPTED BY SIN

A. Two Aspects of Sin:

First, sin is something that created beings do against God. There are repeated explanations that also convey a breaking of a law or ignoring instructions given by God. There is also a deeper nuance to sin. There are the things that we do against one another. These deeds disrupt healthy relationships and the flourishing of humanity. If we juxtapose our understanding of sin against the Great Commandment then we are faced with a deeper understanding of sinfulness within human community.

In *A Community Called Atonement* McKnight provides further clarity on sin's relational pervasiveness, "Sin is, in other words, hyperrelational, or 'multi'-relational. It is active corruption in all directions."¹

1. Individual Sin:

- a. When an individual sins against another individual who has been created in the image of God it is an act that destroys God's intended peace. An individual holding onto a belief system or a mindset that promotes hatred of another human being, whether a believer or non-believer, reveals the spiritual core of that individual.

"⁹ With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. ¹⁰ Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be." (James 3:9-10)

¹ McKnight, Scot. *A Community Called Atonement*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2007, 22.



“Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen.” (1 John 4:20)

2. Structural Sin:

- a. It is important as we talk about sin that we observe that sin is expressed in unique ways and oftentimes perpetuated through the misuse of power. This kind of evil can be executed at various levels of human interaction.
- b. The presence of power alongside the sinfulness of mankind can create systems within society that oppress those without power.

“Because injustice is related to the social world. It cannot be reduced to the actions of individuals.”²

Biblical Examples:

b.1. Exodus 1:8-11

b.2. Esther 3:1-15

B. Sin Destroys Communities

1. The reality of broken communities exists in our world because of the fall. These communities exist because of both individual and structural sin.

² Gornik, Mark R. *To Live in Peace: Biblical Faith and the Changing Inner City*. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub., 2002, 48.



Broken Communities:

“When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.” (Matthew 9:36)

These communities are characterized by:

Poverty, Sexism, Racism, Abuse, Xenophobia, Greed, Addictions, Sex Trafficking, Educational Disparity, etc.

David Bosch says the following which gets at the heart of the experience of the marginalized, “As happens in our own time, the affliction of many of those on the periphery of society is occasioned by repression, discrimination, violence, and exploitation. They are, in the full sense of the word, victims of the society of the day.”³

2. Jesus came to earth to destroy the power of sin over humanity.

“For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.” (Luke 19:10)

3. COMMUNITIES EXPERIENCE SHALOM

A. Communal Shalom Defined:

“Also, seek the peace [shalom] and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper” (Jeremiah 29:7).

³ Bosch, David J. *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991, 27.

Theologians Eldin Villafane defines shalom in the following way:

Shalom means, “peace.” “Peace (shalom) is a rich word. The word and its derivatives are found (not counting proper names) more than 350 times in the Old Testament...It is in the Old Testament root meaning of shalom that we find its richness and the significant meaning of “completeness,” “wholeness,” “soundness,” and “welfare.” Its speaks of harmony and concord---it is a [w]holistic term---responding to needs of the whole person.⁴

B. Christ Reconciles Broken Communities

The good news brings real life relief and restoration. Jesus initiated the redemption and restoration of mankind--He ultimately is our peace and restoration. He brings life!

“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full” (John 10:10).

When we think through all the things that disrupts community we should be contemplating how to create vistas so that shalom would exist into our everyday settings. If our eyes and ears are open then we will find brokenness because the problem of sin is all around and where there is sin, there is some form of the fall. Christ creates a new community called the Church.

“And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it” (Matthew 16:18).

⁴Villafañe, Eldin, Douglas Hall, Efrain Agosto, and Bruce W. Jackson. *Seek the Peace of the City: Reflections on Urban Ministry*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995. 53



C. The Church Follows Christ Into Broken Communities

“We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:20-21).

Out of individual healing and restoration - the church takes the message of shalom (the Gospel) into a broken world. The church (ekklesia) establishes new communities within fallen communities inviting broken people to be healed.

“Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you” (John 20:21).

It is incredibly important that as the church attempts to be Christ like that we realize that this means that we take John 1:14 seriously. We must embody the incarnation in how we go about doing ministry within any context.

God gives His mission to the church and specifically explains that location is important:

- ▶ John 1:14 *“among us”*
- ▶ Matthew 28:1 *“of all nations”*
- ▶ Acts 1:8 *“Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the uttermost parts of the earth”*

Location and context are not incidentals - it should be intentional as Jesus’ selection of location was intentional.



Helping the Church Define its Mission - The Why?

Based on the previous discussion regarding mandate we must move and consider 'mission'. The church's mission is wrapped into the mission of Christ. There are so many distractions that can draw leaders and churches away from God's mission for the church. In this section we will examine the clear mission statements for the church with regard to church and community.

1. CHRIST-CENTERED ENGAGEMENT OF COMMUNITY

A. The Mission of Christ Focused on Bringing Kingdom Reality into Human Despair.

1. The incarnation is the movement of God into the direct reality of mankind.

"In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!" (Philippians 2:5-8)

An incarnational ministry is about identifying with the weak. The kenosis of Christ is his self emptying in order to identify and serve. Like Christ, the disenfranchised within society should be a high priority. The community of faith should be found in close proximity to these individuals as the sent people of God.

2. The Incarnation Is a Manifestation of Christ's Mission.

*"The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to set the oppressed free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."*

Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:18-21).

Since the Savior condescended to reach humanity, should not His church operate in similar fashion? Ross Hastings captures in this statement the ramification of the incarnational ministry:

"Jesus himself, as God the Son, entered by his incarnation into a specific human context and communicated the nature of God and the gospel in ways that were culturally relevant without ever compromising his holiness and without capitulating to sinful cultural trends."⁵

If the church follows in the discipleship paradigm commanded by Christ then the church must be diligent in replicating the incarnational ministry lessons first displayed by the Lord.

"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

⁵ Hastings, R. (2012). *Missional God, Missional Church: Hope for Re-evangelizing the West*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 61.

2. THE CLEAR MISSION TO CREATE COMMUNITY

A. Jesus Selected 12 Disciples and Established Community

“So the master told his servant, ‘Go out to the highways and the hedges and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full’ (Luke 14:23-24).

Missional engagement ought to be a critical focus for the local Christian community (church).

The church exits its comfort zone in order to invite others into the family of God, the church.

B. Jesus Creates a New Community, Especially for the ‘Least of These’

1. A critical element of the ministry of Christ is that He came to earth to rescue the oppressed within society; this includes those that suffer because of race, gender, class and ethnicity.
2. He exacts justice for the oppressed and downtrodden and provides relief to those who are marginalized and discriminated against. This includes an addiction to drugs, sex and gambling are conditions that Christ came to deliver mankind from.
3. Jesus’ parable in Matthew 25 provides a clear directive for the church to recognize that serving the poor and other of society is serving the Lord Himself.

“The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me’” (Matthew 25:40).

4. A key characteristic of churches which are Christ-centered and missional is that they understand that the Kingdom of God is about love and sacrificially serving.

C. Jesus' Mission Has a Church; A Community Motivated to Reach Its Context and Beyond.

1. Unique power to go to new places to share with new people about the gospel of Christ so that the broken can experience shalom and new life.

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

2. The authority from the Lord to create new followers who will replicate themselves throughout the earth; Disciples.

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:19-20).



Helping the Church to Design its Structure - “The What?”

The application of an incarnational community model for ministry requires a structure which will support the greater mission for the followers of Jesus. We will explore some of the beginning steps that a church would need to take if its willing to reach its context.

1. A LOOK AT EXISTING CHURCH STRUCTURE

A. Many Churches Have Become Inward Focused. A Generation Where the Church was Familiar and the Center of Community Life is No More.

1. A church that is disconnected from its community has already begun to decline.
 - a. Decline consists of becoming increasingly inward focused.
 - b. A glorification of the past without a vision for the future [Museum]
 - c. The church’s vision is difficult to grasp and/or without specificity.

B. A Church without a Contextual Ministry and/or Community Ties Needs an Objective Voice for a Good Diagnosis.

1. There are various tools available to ascertain where a church lands on the missional continuum.



- a. Missional Engagement Survey
2. An awareness of the ramifications of moving forward away from inward program focus towards an incarnational community focus is critically important.
 - a. There will be resistance to change.
 - b. These steps will not be without pain.
3. A commitment to be transparent, honest and patient is critical if a church is to transition from 'build it, they will come' to 'let's get outside of these four walls.'
 - a. This is not a change in polity but rather strategy.
 - b. This is beyond youth Sundays and casual dress once a month.

C. A Church's Calendar, Budget and Preaching Reveal the Need for Cultural Change.

1. Culture is a byproduct of belief - if a church believes that the mission of the church is to exist as a club for the comfort of its members, then the culture will always be inwardly focused.
 - a. Has the calendar and budget ever been examined to determine if the community is considered?
 - b. Are ministry events planned around member preference and not community impact?
 - c. The preaching never acknowledges the depth of missional theology within the Bible.
2. Peripheral tinkering will provide a short-term visceral response but does not equal repentance.



- a. Some churches will attempt to quickly have church outside in the summer and call themselves doing incarnational missional ministry.
- b. It is incredibly easy for people to fall back into patterns of their past.

2. AN EXAMINATION OF WHAT IT WILL TAKE TO REACH A COMMUNITY

A. Pastoral Leadership is a Critical Element to Transitioning Towards a Community Missional Focus.

1. If a Incarnational/Community focus is to take root then the pastor must be convinced of the following:
 - a. That community engagement is biblical and has strong theological reasoning.
 - b. That the survival of the local church is contingent on following the directives of scripture.
 - c. The ability to be a catalyst for change within the congregation.

B. A Few Can Influence The Masses: Gather Champions

1. A group of God's people can be the greatest catalyst for community change. A great way to begin to advance cultural change within a congregation is to pull a few aside and begin to introduce the topic of Incarnational/Community change.
 - a. Weekly gatherings to encourage dialogue
 - b. Book clubs - reading authors that are both trusted and dynamic. [Missional Authors]



- c. Encourage thinking outside the box. [New Wineskins/New Wine]

C. The Power of Persistence and Creativity

1. If a pastor is on board with an incarnational missional transition for the church, it is critical that they understand that it will take years to ensure that the DNA of the church has been changed. Some of the major hurdles will be:
 - a. Transitioning thinking from being 'program driven' to be 'biblical contextual' driven.
 - b. This is almost like a replant of a church - replanting is some of the most difficult Kingdom work that exists.
 - c. The introduction of new ministry strategy will probably alienate a lot of people who equate tradition with being biblical.

3. MOVING TOWARDS A CULTURE OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A. The Power of Kingdom Movements is that It Can Begin Small

Jesus also said, "The kingdom of God is like a man who scatters seed on the ground. Night and day he sleeps and wakes, and the seed sprouts and grows, though he knows not how. All by itself the earth produces a crop—first the stalk, then the head, then grain that ripens within. And as soon as the grain is ripe, he swings the sickle, because the harvest has come" (Mark 4:26-29).



1. A leader's ability to trust God for the results is key when it comes to community engagement and Kingdom advancement.
 - b. 1. Seeds planted
 - c. 2. He waits
 - d. 3. All by itself, the earth produces crop
 - e. 4. He swings the sickle at harvest

B. A Church Focused on Praying for the Community Will Result in Kingdom Advancement.

"When He saw the crowds, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then He said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest'" (Matthew 9:36-38).

1. The church is uniquely equipped to pray for the harvest (community)
 - a. Jesus saw a community of individuals who were struggling with their condition.
 - b. Jesus assigns the disciples with task of praying for the resources to harvest.
2. No one can advocate for their community like the church, but too often the church is only interested in the sickness, despair that is going on within their own fellowship.

"... So then, this is how you should pray: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven'" (Matthew 6:9-10).

- a. The key prayer that should be part of a church's normal mode of life is that there would be Kingdom reality here on earth. We should request an in breaking of God's standard for community and life.
- b. The local church prays about how it can properly transition existing structure towards a contextually sensitive church.

4. DEVELOP A CONTEXTUAL MINISTRY

A. The Church Engaged With its Community Should Understand Why it's Necessary to Both Know the Word as Well as its Surroundings.

1. Be like the "Sons of Issachar."

"from Issachar, men who understood the times and knew what Israel should do--200 chiefs, with all their relatives under their Command;..." (1 Chronicles 12:32).

- a. The men of Issachar understood how the world operated--they had cultural intelligence.
 - b. Cultural Intelligence is not antithetical to the ministry of the gospel.
 - c. Church leaders must be intent on developing a proper understanding of its context.
2. The Church Must Be Students of Their Community

The Apostle Paul understood that there is great diversity within culture and altered his presentation of the gospel in order to make a connection or create a bridge for the gospel.

Consider how he presented the gospel to the Athenians (Acts 17:16-34) versus those in Antioch (Acts 11:19-26).

Community Exegesis is the process of mining in order to retrieve an understanding of the place where God has placed the church. Men of Issachar - they understood the times.

B. Developing Ministries that are Gospel-Centered Answers to the Brokenness of Our World

1. If the church is asking questions of its surroundings then ministry will address direct needs of its context rather than cater to preferences of members.
 - a. Jesus often responded to needs presented.
2. Some ministries are irrelevant to the surrounding community but remain in place for decades. Answers questions that no one is asking.

Contextuality is vitally important

“We didn’t come back to Mississippi with preconceived ideas of what programs we would start. Rather, our programs grew out of the needs we found there. We lived among the people, we knew their needs, we felt their needs—in fact, we shared their needs. They were our needs, too.”

pg. 62, With Justice for All, John Perkins

“If we don’t know the people of the community or what the community is all about, how can we make intelligent decisions regarding ministry strategy?”

Pg. 71, The Urban Face of Missions; The Social Sciences: Tools for Urban Ministry, Susan Baker

Helping the Church to Develop a Ministry Plan - “The How?”

The following dialogue builds on the previous three delineations. The plan pulls together the elements that encourages theological understanding, the urgency of incarnational ministry as well as the application of contextualization. We exist in a post-Christian culture and the church has been all too ready to dismiss a biblical ministry model in exchange for a more comfortable, preference driven ministry. Here are some very practical steps over a two year period to help a church engage a particular community.

TWO-YEAR JOURNEY TOWARD COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

1 to 2 Months

Missional Engagement Survey

Early in the conversation with a pastor the subject of missional survey should come up. This particular survey will gauge where a church lands on the continuum of missional engagement. It will answer the question, “Is this church doing contextual ministry?” It should also determine if the church is in decline or not.

The survey should be answered by a pastor or pastoral staff. It can also be given to an elder board or anyone who has intimate knowledge of the church’s history.



Survey Disclosure

The process of disclosure of results should be done with confidentiality and sensitivity. Prayerfully consider how to provide results. Many times the results and openness to change will determine the next course of action. The amount of trust developed between consultant and pastor (leaders) will set the course for the next steps.

Providing a full disclosure of where a church lands on the missional continuum may be embarrassing for a pastor to hear, but in most cases the results will not be a surprise to them.

3 to 12 Months

Develop Leadership Cohort

In order to develop a missional community-focused culture within a church that has been internally-focused one may need to start with a small group of leaders. A cohort committed to reading through a book designed for newcomers to the subject of community engagement may be in order. Select 3 to 5 leaders who are open to new concepts and can think outside the box.



An example of an introductory piece for a cohort:

With Justice for All: A Strategy for Community Development
Revised, Updated Edition, by John Perkins

Love Walked Among Us: Learning to Love Like Jesus
by Paul E. Miller

Missional Sermon Series

The introduction of various concepts surrounding the church engaging community can be done through a sermon series. An exposition of the gospel of John or Luke or a thematic series touching on the major themes related to God condescending to meet humanity provides a runway to begin the process of transition thinking.

A pastor understanding the concept of meeting a community in the same way that Christ condescended to meet humanity is going to be critical. This will mean that a pastor along with leaders should comprehend that the Missio Dei (mission of God) is the foundation for the church being a “sent people”.

If a pastor struggles with this then there may be opportunity to provide that pastor with resources to read, conferences to attend and/or podcast, articles or discipleship to be able to fully ‘buy’ into this theological foundation.

The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative
by Christopher J. H. Wright

1 Year to 18 Months

Community Exegesis and Prayer Walking

The task of analyzing a community around the church is no easy task. It is not simply a venture into the sociological dynamics of a community but it should also be a plunge into ascertaining the spiritual temperature of a community. A community exegesis project should also be combined with prayer walking.

Getting a congregation into the field (community) in order to feel what it's like to exist within a given context is going to be one of the most critical elements of transitioning from inward focused to a community focused church. Walking, surveying residents and mapping a community will have a long term impact for a church attempting to move beyond itself.

While in the community, a pastor who is desiring to transition a congregation can interject questions for parishioners participating in a community exegesis project.

Neighborhood Mapping: How to Make Your Church Invaluable to the Community by John Fuder

Budget and Calendar

If a congregation has grasped what it means to missionally engage its community then these the creation of a new calendar and to reframe budget will follow.



The passion to reach outside of the four walls of the church into community will require real commitment. What is a congregation willing to sacrifice in order to fulfill the mission of Christ? Many churches relegate missions to something that exist overseas. Churches invite a full time missionary in every 5th Sunday to show PowerPoints of their work happening in a far country.

Community outreach must be more than an annual VBS or Thanksgiving or showing up with a bullhorn on a corner once a month. It goes well beyond ordering a ton of tracts. When the church understands that its mission is tied up in Matthew 28:18-20 and Acts 1:8. Small steps are realistic for a church looking to get engaged with its surroundings and not every model will work but consider the people that Jesus served--if the church is not engaged in its surroundings then it has missed the mission.

The church calendar presents the priorities of a congregation. If that calendar is filled with internally focused events that are celebrated simply because they have always been celebrated this is a sure sign of an inwardly focused church. During this phase the congregation may respond with resistance. There will be victories and defeats but transition is critical. Those who have been part of the cohort should be the ones who will understand the desired direction for the congregation.

Simple Church: Returning to God's Process for Making Disciples
by Thom S. Rainer and Eric Geiger



Vision Statement

During this season is a good time to evaluate the vision of the church to consider whether it is specific enough or maybe even relevant. Does the vision statement have a 'Kingdom concept.' This phase of transition towards community engagement will require an objective voice. Most churches have difficulty providing critique to their own vision. Some visions are not specific enough, some are old and most are simply a regurgitation of a few Bible verses. Without a contextually-driven vision statement a church can continue to remain irrelevant to its surrounding community.

The following resources are critical to establishing a relevant vision statement for a church looking to impact its community.

Comeback Churches: How 300 Churches Turned Around and Yours Can, Too by Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson

Church Unique: How Missional Leaders Cast Vision, Capture Culture, and Create Movement by Will Mancini and Max Lucado

18 Months to 2 Years

Contextual Creativity

If a church has matriculated through a series of early missional ventures this maybe time to explore developing solid ministries that are responses to community struggles. It is a hope that a fellowship has developed a missional filter. In other words, everything that is done within a fellowship is critiqued against the backdrop of scripture and the church's vision statement. The foundation for ministry is solid because it is a foundation established by Jesus and not tradition.

Most churches have simply failed to think outside the box because the box was created long ago for reasons that no longer exist. New Wine require New Wineskins (Mark 2:21-22).

Understand that this is not advocating a change or dismissal of the biblical account but rather a realization that Jesus was contextual in His own ministry and we ought to follow Him in our pursuit to be His disciples (John 1:14). This is where the rubber meets the road.

A Community within A Community

The necessary work of the Great Commission alongside the Great Commandment should not be neglected. It is a 'both' 'and' endeavor and not an 'either' 'or' endeavor. The church was established as God's chosen people present within the world in order to invite the world into itself. The church can not be the church if we are not tangible and observable. If we are making disciples we will resemble the church of Acts 4:42-47.

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

The above schedule is not comprehensive or perfect but it seems to address the beginning stages towards missional change. There are many more items that could be added to this list but for the sake of space we stop here with the understanding that churches, like individuals are in process.

The below descriptions shape what a missionally engaged church doing incarnational ministry looks like.

A Functioning Community Engaged Congregation Displays the Following:

A gracious congregation with various community vestibles where broken people can experience the love of God in very tangible ways.

A fellowship of people that understand that mission is not something for a few but a priority for all.

A church that recognizes that mission is everywhere and it is not charity work but Kingdom work.

This fellowship takes seriously its directive to make disciples and to love mankind because This is God's mission.

Ministry to the whole community bringing shalom to the broken and welcoming healed worshippers.

This congregation has specifically understood that its calling extends to all of life and in every circle imaginable.

Consider the following spheres of influence and suggested ways of involvement:



ECONOMIC:

1. The church can address issues economic issues with the following:
 - a. Job training
 - b. Debt relief
 - c. Wage Equality
 - d. Racial disparity
 - a. The church has a relationship with business owners

ENVIRONMENT:

1. The church understands that health is a biblical issues
 - a. Lead paint removal
2. The church is concerned with the renewal of the community.
 - a. Street Cleaning
 - b. Addressing dumping within impoverished communities

CIVIC:

1. The church knows the political leaders within the community
 - a. Local, state and federal level
 - b. The church shows up to community meetings
 - c. The church is aware of crime rates and incidents within the community



EDUCATION:

- a. The church has adopted area schools and serves both students and teachers.
- b. The church may open a school to address educational disparity.
- c. The church seeks to address shortages for teachers during the year.

See next page for a real world example of how an urban missionally driven church involves itself in the four spheres of society. Its involvement is not in place of gospel ministry but rather because of its understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ.



Real World Example of a Church Engaging Its Community:

Please note following categories and frequency and community ministry initiatives.

Table 8.1
GCC 2008-2016 Categorized Presence in WOL

GCC Outreach Activities Since 2008

Event/Ministry	Economy	Environment	Civic	Education	Frequency
Hope 4 Philly	X		X	X	Annual
Vacation Bible School				X	Annual
Thanksgiving Baskets	X			X	Annual
Youth Basketball Outreach					Seasonal
Stenton Family Manor	X			X	Weekly
Simon's Rec. Ctr: Renovations	X	X			Annual
Mentoring: PPE, MLK, PCAT	X		X	X	Weekly
Penny Packer Elementary	X	X	X	X	Seasonal
Black History Program			X	X	Annual
Fire Victims Emergency Crisis	X				As Needed
Chemo Care Packages	X				As Needed
Alpha Pregnancy	X			X	One Time
Girl's Circle				X	Weekly
Tabor Children's Shelter	X				One Time
Recovery House (Men's House)	X			X	Weekly
Prison Ministry	X			X	Weekly
Neighborhood Block Party	X	X	X	X	Annual
Phillies Game For Community Kids				X	One Time
Community Prayer Walk	X		X		Seasonal
Gift Wrapping at the Cheltenham Mall	X				Annual
Block Cleaning/Plants		X			Annual
Pop-Up Prayer Vernon Park		X	X		Seasonal
14th District Prayer Walks		X	X		Seasonal
A Few Good Men Father's Day Award		X	X	X	Seasonal
Muffins with Moms				X	Seasonal
Training for the Trenches	X	X	X		Annual
Donuts with Dads				X	Seasonal
Emergency Meals to Families	X				As Needed
Emergency Clothing Drive	X	X			As Needed
West Oak Lane Breast Cancer Walk	X			X	One Time
Walk for Autism	X		X	X	Annual
Women's Self Defense Training			X	X	One Time



*For additional resources and information on
exequiting your community,
please reach out to Dr. Kyle Canty,
SEND City Missionary/Church Plant Catalyst -
Philadelphia, North American Mission Board:
kcanty@namb.net | www.namb.net*

or

*Dr. Barry Whitworth, Executive Director,
Baptist Resource Network of PA/SJ:
helpdesk@brnunited.org
(800) 451-6599 or visit online at
www.brnunited.org | www.lovepasj.com*



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