

In the book Total Church, Steve Timmis wrote this, **“We are in a missionary situation and all that we do must be missionary.”**

Sounds urgent. Everybody thinks they want to be missional.

Well, that is kind of a buzzword. What does it mean?

The church where I pastor, City on a Hill, is the only Soma church in the Midwest. Well, what does that mean?

Well, a lot folks think that Soma has “missional” figured out because we base most all of our discipleship in the missional community context, so I get contacted from all over the place to help train what mission looks like in many contexts.

From Bangkok to Prague to Zambia to Ste Genevieve MO, maybe even O’Fallon once in a while, the questions roll in.

Well, you guys are doing a sermon series on it, so here I am. Mr. Mission. Ha! They should all see us stumble around.

Maybe, would it be helpful if we started with a definition of mission.

Jesus said that the greatest commandment is for us to love God with all that we have because the cross and empty tomb have loved us really well, AND love your neighbor.

Well, **Mission is just God revealing His glory through you by loving your neighbor.**

And, the way that you best love your neighbor is by giving them the Gospel - the good news of Jesus.

And, every local faith community like Summit is tasked with getting figured out how to create environments where you can be a conduit to letting God’s glory shine by loving your neighbor.

Let’s give a couple of Scriptural basis for what we are doing.

**Habakkuk 2:14 (ESV)**

*[14] For the earth will be filled  
with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD  
as the waters cover the sea.*

So, apparently, according to Habakkuk's prophecy, God is going to blanket all of His creation with a knowledge of his glory at some point.

Well, the question for us is - Is that prophecy only for end times when Jesus returns, or is it possible that God would like to reveal His glory in our city as the “waters cover the sea” now?”

We have a vision at City on a Hill that enough folks can actually be brought to Christ that every person in our city gets a daily touch of the love of Jesus in word and/or deed.

Maybe even save our whole city -- He has done it before!

I know that is rather high vision, but the EARTH being FILLED with Christ is a rather high one as well.

Why should we expect less than what God wants to bring?

God’s glory is the same always, so we don’t elevate his glory by going on mission.

But, apparently, we have to ability to put the light of His glory under a lampshade.

As incredible as His glory is.

As amazing and His love expressed on a rugged, bloody cross is, apparently we can actually take that amazing light and put under a basket.

### **Matthew 5:14–16 (ESV)**

*[14] “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.*

*[15] Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. [16] In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.*

Jesus is suggesting that when He indwells you with His Spirit, His light is your light, but that your sin nature can set a basket over the top of that light and your neighborhood, your city, my neighborhood, my city, cannot see it.

But, as usual with the Gospel challenge, God brings all that we need.

### **Acts 1:8 (ESV)**

*[8] But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*

Expressing love on mission is a slow grind of relationship.

It is not a "drive by" project.

Here is how we do mission at City on a Hill to our Jerusalem.

4 P's....

**People** -- We do not talk about going on mission to a large group of people with our missional community life.

We don't take on an entire neighborhood.

We ask the Spirit, remember Him, the One who actually does the mission, actually does the loving, we ask Him to give us 6-10 NAMES of people that we can give our best to, our best prayers, our best blessings, our best service, our best time, and our best money.

Now, here is the kicker, for the Spirit to reveal those folks, we may need to engage 100 people in our missional context.

So, we encourage all members of our MC's to develop their own personal list with this **<Gospel Wheel>**

So, if 10 members of your MC have 10 names of not-yet-believers that you are in relationship with, we have a pool of 100 folks to figure out the 8-12 on which together we will pour our best into.

If the definition of mission, is to LOVE like Jesus loved, we cannot serve an entire neighborhood, these lists must be whittled down to a few that we are going to give our best because we are convinced that the Spirit is doing work there. That forces us to talk together, to pray together, to go to places together. 2nd P...

**Places** -- This places thing is an uncomfortable press on our lives as God begins to shape our Jerusalem mission.

Where are the places that your family of missionary servants will run into the people that God is saving by your expression of love? And, are you willing to change your rhythms -- where you go, who you hang with -- to make that happen?

This past summer God told me pretty clearly that it was time for me to make some changes in personal places to re-enter the mission field of our city.

I was a college basketball coach for 25 years, and the Spirit opened a path for me to join the basketball staff at Fox High School which is literally one mile from my front door.

I went home and told my wife Kelley about it.

Since she suffered from being a basketball widow for a long time, I thought she would kill the idea.

I am a little busy as I serve as an elder at 3 churches that we have planted, so I thought that those staff and elders would all say, "you have no time now. Why would you do that?"

But, Kelley and all of those folks said, "that is amazing, you should do that!"

Felt like Kel maybe just wanted me out of the house. But as usual God has provided time and energy for me to do this.

The coaching is rusty, but the relationship building and now my entire missional community coming alongside me to love on these kids and their broken families.

Out of 25 sophomores thru seniors, I believe there is ONE family that goes to church, and less than half have 2 parents in the home.

But, four months in, the only Gospel conversation I have had so far is with the varsity head coach.

Working around the wheel, I am developing trust.

These kids trust no one relationally. But, we are getting there.

The superior story of the Gospel will come, but I am letting the Holy Spirit determine when.

The school also has not had a winning season in 25 years, and they may not get there this year either, but they are learning how to.

I don't have any awesome stories about multiple salvations or anything miraculous except a couple of wins at this point.

But, at some point, a couple of kids or some of these jacked up parents, or a coach or a manager, somebody is going to receive Jesus. I can feel it. That is mission. Not just feeding folks, but baptisms because folks have received Christ.

So, what is the Spirit doing with this?

Well, for one thing, I am modeling mission for everyone who looks to me to see what living the Christian life is about.

This has been a RADICAL change for our family and our churches. How are you modeling mission for those who look to you to see how a disciple lives?

Back to my 4 P's:

**Prayer** -- First priority, before we do any of that people and places stuff, we SATURATE the entire process in prayer.

I believe Americans struggle with mission for three main reasons:

- 1. Lack of Prayer.** We don't ask God to supernaturally actually perform the mission through us. Pretty prayer-less. I am sometimes a chief offender here.
- 2. Lack of Spirit Dependence.** We are not Spirit-dependent. We perform most mission on our own power, which Americans are pretty good at. We are amazingly resourceful. Acts 1:8 said that we receive amazing power when the Spirit comes. I often wonder how much of our mission work is powered by the Spirit and how much is just hard working American spirit. One results in salvations and glory to God. The other just looks good and may be fleeting as church members just move from church to church.
- 3. Lack of MARGIN.** Maxed out in time and money. Especially time. So, the Spirit comes and says, I am doing something with these high school kids and their parents, make some space to give them your best. And, many times because our schedules are so jam packed, we have to quench His call and just say something stupid, like, "I can't make it this week." I can't, or I won't.

I am not sure this is retrievable for our culture.

Parents, your kids will stay self-centered as they leave your nest if you do not model margin and Spirit-dependence.

They may have some soccer trophies or some dance awards, but may not understand how to love their city with the Gospel because they just plain do have time in their schedules.

Their schedules??

That is our problem, we think we own our schedule.

### **Luke 9:23–24 (ESV)**

*[23] And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. [24] For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.*

Who owns my schedule if I am a disciple of Jesus?

What is the lie to repent of?

That our main calling in life is what culture tells us our calling is.

If you are joining me as a Christian in this room today,

Our calling is to make disciples. End of calling discussion.

We have been given our marching orders.

Love our neighbor means that I will sacrifice for my neighbor. That means I have to go talk to them, get to know them, listen to them, serve them, share resources with them.

Sounds hard. Why would we do that?

Because Jesus moved across the neighborhood and did those things.

He is the great missionary.

So, being Christlike DEMANDS being a missionary. With urgency

Aren't you glad that Jesus came to our neighborhood with good news?

Let's pray to the Lord of the Harvest to bring a harvest.

It is not like He does not want to.

And, let me add this. In this prayer time, we need to pray that the Lord bring emotional, spiritual, and physical health to our church families. Our church has every Christian counselor in St Louis with full stockings this Christmas trying to get healthy. One of our counselors pays off his very expensive motorcycle just with City on a Hill members. I ask them all the

time, “Why would God sent us His best when we are such a mess?” We will always be a bit of a mess, but there is a difference between a bit of a mess, and a train wreck. Let’s repent of sin, let’s ask God to heal us from abuses and pain where necessary. Let’s get healthy.

The last P is **Proclamation**.

The Gospel is good news to be proclaimed.

If you go back to that wheel, at some point in ALL of these relationships - sometimes day 1 and sometimes day 500 as the Spirit directs -- the superior story of the Gospel.

All the broken people around you have a story, and they have developed a narrative to deal with it.

But, you possess a superior narrative.

A story of victory.

A story of life, a life of abundance.

A life of satisfaction. A life of joy. Will you proclaim it?

What is to be proclaimed?

That Jesus looked down upon our rebellion and our brokenness, that He loved us so much that he submitted to the Father to reveal their great glory and their great love by coming down, but putting on human flesh, by qualifying as the perfect sinless sacrificial lamb, by going to cross and satisfying the wrath of God by taking the death that we deserve, and then by defeating that death and walking out the tomb alive.

Jesus ascended into heaven and He is currently sitting at the right hand of a good, good Father awaiting a return to restore all things to good, right and perfect.

May we make that the dominant story of our lives and therefore, take the shade of our expression of the glory of a glorious God that at this point, we can just imagine.