

Where We Are Going Series

Mission Statement Explained

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At A Glance:

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These sermon study notes are designed to be a tool used after listening to the sermon. This resource is a guide to help deepen understanding regarding the Scriptures and ideas presented in the sermon. Those who use these study notes are encouraged to look up, read through, and think about Scripture references in this guide. There is more information in these notes than what is presented in the sermon. These study notes are designed to be used as an independent study tool to help the formation of Biblical convictions, character, and conduct.

Mission Statement Explained

I. Introduction

A. Illustration: Going to Menards

1. I am the direct opposite of my father. When we lived near a town with a Menards in it, every time my dad came to visit, he would find some reason to find himself at Menards. Once he was in the door, he could happily and easily spend half if not the whole day just looking and drooling. I think he has every aisle memorized. He can walk into any Menards and almost immediately find what he is looking for. My dad is drawn to Menards like a moth to light.
2. When I walk into Menards, I instantly start to feel out of place. I start to feel my own incompetence weighing me down. I don't fix or build things, I unintentionally break and destroy them. If I ever have to go to Menards to find something, my face will express a look of terror. Trying to find what I need in Menards might take me half a day or a full day simply because I have no idea where to look for what I need. Even if I find the right department and aisle, I still have a hard time finding what I'm looking for because I'm just not familiar with tools or materials.
3. When I need a specific item from Menards, I usually spend a lot of time merely wandering around, hoping I will eventually stumble on what I need. It can actually be a stressful experience. Even if I find the right item, I may get the wrong size or kind. The worst case scenario for me is to have to take the near fatal return trip to Menards. I don't enjoy having to go to Menards because I know I frequently end up being lost. For me, going to Menards is mostly frustrating more than anything else.

B. Getting lost can be uncomfortable, frustrating, scary, time consuming, inefficient, and even dangerous. I could share plenty of stories of getting lost from time to time—especially in new places. The tragedy is, many churches are lost—even though they don't think or feel like they are. The overwhelming majority of churches (ninety-five percent) in our country are lost.¹ When churches aren't focusing on doing the one job Jesus gave them to do, they are lost.

C. Unfortunately, we have not been the exception to this rule. Community Alliance Church is not one of the five percent of churches who have a reproducing disciple-making culture. We are like most other churches in our country, for good and for bad. However, we don't want to stay that way. We want to do better.

D. Our leadership team (the elders) wants to see our church move closer to becoming part of the five percent of churches whose heart and culture is centered around the mission given to the church by Jesus (Mt. 28:18-20). In order to do this, we have updated and clarified our current mission statement. We also want our recently formulated mission statement to become our central point of focus.

¹ According to the “national study on disciple making in USA churches: high aspirations amidst disappointing results” conducted in 2020 by Grey Matter Research, “fewer than 5% of churches in the US have a reproducing disciple-making culture.” (pg. 3).

- E. This is not just another sermon series. The messages being shared in the next few months is something we won't be moving on from. Rather, what we are going to be talking about is intended to become a permanent fixture in the life of our church. It is to be a continual emphasis that is repeated frequently so that anyone and everyone who has contact with Community Alliance Church will know what we are about.
- F. It is the hope of the leadership team that this mission statement will move us from being lost to being intentional and effective in having a kingdom and fruitful impact in our community. We want to go from the ninety-five percent to the five percent. Our heart's desire is to be faithful in the task Jesus has given us to do for His honor and glory. We are going to take a careful look at our now current mission statement.

II. Updated Mission Statement

- A. After much prayer, thought, and input, the elders have landed on the following updated and clarified mission statement for Community Alliance Church, "Transforming convictions, character, and conduct to those of Jesus." Mission statements communicate what organizations are trying to accomplish as a group. Mission statements unify people and help individuals determine if they can fit into a group or not. They can discover common cause and values or see differences. In this case, as the people of God in the world, this mission statement answers the question: what are we supposed to be doing? This question is answered by the information provided by Jesus. As the person in charge of His church (2 Cor. 5:9-10, Eph. 1:22, 4:15, 5:23, Col. 2:10, 1 Pet. 5:4), Jesus tells us what we are to be doing.² Aubrey Malphurs, a well-known church expert, defines a mission statement as a, "broad, brief, biblical statement of what the ministry is supposed to be doing."³ Mission statements give organizations, including churches, direction and focus.
- B. Our updated mission statement begins with the word "transforming". Genuine encounters with Jesus change us. A person can't experience Jesus and remain the same—at least not if our response to Him is healthy. When we commit ourselves to Jesus's way of life, it continues to change us throughout the rest of our lives, and this change process never ceases. Only when a person reaches their eternal state does our growth in Jesus likeness cease. This change process is the difference Jesus makes in the lives of those who understand who He is. As a person comes to understand who Jesus is, they desire to be like Him and actively take steps to move in that direction as a result of God's work in their life. Paul described the Jesus-focused, life transforming process this way, "¹⁸ But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit." (2 Cor. 3:18). As individuals come to understand the glory of God, they are transformed into that same glory with a change that comes from the Spirit of God.
- C. Not only is being transformed a natural expectation for the Christian life, it is commanded, "but be transformed" (Rom. 12:2). Paul commands the church to allow themselves to be changed by God. Those who follow Jesus will be changed on the outside because God has changed them on

² Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15, Luke 24:45-49, Acts 1:8

³ Aubrey Malphurs, [*Advanced Strategic Planning: A 21st-Century Model for Church and Ministry Leaders*](#), Third edition. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2013), 111.

the inside—their nature or essence.⁴ God, through Jesus and the Holy Spirit, changes who a person is on the inside so they then live differently on the outside. This is the basic nature of the Christian life and what it means to follow Jesus. The Christian life is one of ongoing change. Christianity is a process of transformation from start to finish, which is why our mission statement emphasizes this reality in its first word.

- D. Jesus put transformation this way. First, He said “learn from Me” (Mt. 11:29). Jesus wanted people to see and hear Him in order to acquire knowledge and skills.⁵ Second, the result of this learning will be, “⁴⁰ A pupil is not above his teacher; but everyone, after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher.” (Lk. 6:40). Jesus both expects and encourages a transformation that moves people from where Jesus finds them to becoming like Him in the way they live their lives. Jesus describes transformation in discipleship as learning from Him in order to become like Him.⁶ Those who learn everything Jesus intends for them to learn will be like Him. While Jesus didn’t use the specific word “transform”, He described the process of transformation. Individuals who commit themselves to Jesus’s way of life will be transformed. They will not be the same person they once were. Knowing this is a central component of following Jesus and the Christian life, our mission statement starts with the word: transforming.
- E. The next natural questions are, what is being changed and how are those elements actually changed? As people align themselves with Jesus, what happens? This is where the next three words come in. Convictions, character, and conduct refer to what about us is being transformed. These are three major areas of life that affect every person’s spiritual growth and discipleship. As a person follows Jesus, they will think differently, become a different person, and act differently. The order is important, as the process of change starts with convictions and progresses eventually to conduct. A person will never act like Jesus unless they first learn to think like Jesus. A person will not act like Jesus unless they previously started to value what He says is good and important. Convictions lead to character, which results in conduct.
- F. Here at Community Alliance Church, we will be referring to convictions, character, and conduct, as the three C’s. We want anyone who becomes familiar with us to hear “three C’s” and immediately know what we are talking about—not just to know they stand for convictions, character, and conduct but to know what conviction, character, and conduct are referring to. These C’s are going to become a point of emphasis for us moving forward. These are three important areas of life that must come under the influence of Jesus if we are to become like Jesus. Authentic Jesus-centered, Bible-described, and Spirit-empowered life transformation requires each of these spheres of life to be drastically changed by the influence of Jesus.
- G. While each of these C’s will be discussed in greater detail in the next few messages, an introduction to each of the C’s will be provided here. We begin with convictions. Simply put, convictions refer to what people think. A conviction is a strong persuasion or belief.⁷ Understanding Jesus changes the way people will view themselves, others, and the world.

⁴ Logos 9 Bible Study Software Exegetical Guide on Romans 12:2 “transformed”

⁵ Logos 9 Bible Study Software Exegetical Guide on Matthew 11:19 “learn”

⁶ Ephesians 4:11-15, 2 Corinthians 5:17

⁷ Inc Merriam-Webster, [Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary](#). (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 2003).

Convictions refers to the life of the mind and how we understand the nature of reality. What a person thinks is true and how a person goes about the way they think will be impacted by Jesus. What we think and how we arrive at what we think matters. Jesus will have an impact on our intellectual life and the use of our mind. In fact, how we think is part of how we love God and carry out the Greatest Commandment, “you shall love the LORD your God with all...your mind” (Mt. 22:37). The use of our mental abilities will be changed by Jesus.

- H. Convictions refers to the idea, not of what others teach us or of views we give lip service to (claiming to believe something), but that which we have adopted as our own personal understanding. What views do we personally adopt and own for ourselves? Convictions are the views we actually hold, which are revealed in the way we live our lives. The set of beliefs and perspectives that we as individuals hold onto as true defines our convictions. The apostle Paul put the idea of convictions this way, “²² The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God.” (Rm. 14:22). Faith here refers to the view a person adopts regarding a specific moral issue: meat sacrificed to idols. This conviction is being used in a specific context, the notion of convictions as a matter of our personal individual perspective as a principle can be used much more broadly. What we think is good and true is our genuine conviction. At Community Alliance Church, we are striving to help people know what Jesus said is true.
- I. Character refers to who we are on the inside. Character is shaped by our attitudes, values, desires, motivations, passions, intentions, morality, feelings, and habits. Character is that which makes up and distinguishes who an individual is.⁸ The Biblical term most commonly associated with our character is the heart. What happens inside us greatly influences how we behave. Character generally refers to our common and regular lifestyle patterns. A person who regularly and consistently pursues peacemaking has a peacemaking character. Our character is at the center of our true identity—it flows from our nature. At Community Alliance Church we are striving to help people value what Jesus said is good.
- J. Paul communicates the work of God in a person’s life this way, “³ And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; ⁴ and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope;” (Rm. 5:3-4). Difficult times lead to an intentional effort to stick with God. Those who have the inner fortitude to withstand hardship or stress in a faithful way will grow spiritually.⁹ Remaining attached to God, even when things get tough, will produce character. Not just any character, but proven character. Character is the quality of being proven to be dependable and reliable.¹⁰ Proven character demonstrates consistent, faithful godliness over time—even in difficult circumstances. This is what we are after. This type of character is developed from an understand and assurance that comes from the nature of God (Heb. 13:5).
- K. Jesus didn’t use the word character, but He frequently talked about the aspects of what make up character, from greed to love of God. Jesus clearly understood and promoted the need for every person to transform their character. Jesus said the core problem facing the human

⁸ Inc Merriam-Webster, [Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary](#). (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 2003).

⁹ Logos 9 Bible Study Software Exegetical Guide on Romans 5:4 “perseverance”

¹⁰ Logos 9 Bible Study Software Exegetical Guide on Romans 5:4 “proven character”

condition resides in our character, “¹⁹ For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders.” (Mt. 15:19). Every person’s character needs to be transformed in order to live a life that is pleasing to God. Jesus pointed out this reality in many different ways.

- L. The third main area of life impacted by a genuine Jesus influence is a person’s conduct. Conduct is a mode or standard of personal behavior.¹¹ Conduct refers to our actions and behaviors. Jesus changes the way a person acts. Ongoing behavior modification is a major part of the process of discipleship. Biblical transformation is behavior change that is motivated by a change in heart and character. Some people run into trouble by thinking they can follow Jesus by only changing their behavior. This type of behavioral change usually doesn’t last long term and is typically done disingenuously—it is done from some external pressure or influence against the person’s will. To get real, long-lasting transformation in conduct, the change must flow from the inside out. The reason a person acts differently is because they think differently and value different priorities. If a person’s convictions and character are driving the change in conduct, the change will be much more likely to remain over time. At Community Alliance Church, we are striving to help people carry out what Jesus said to do.
- M. As Peter instructed, “¹⁵ but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all *your* behavior” (1 Pet. 1:15). An understanding of the nature and character of God should naturally result in holiness in all a person’s behavior. Jesus influences all of our conduct, or at least He should. Disciples are to be like God in the way they act, which Jesus reinforced frequently.
- N. Jesus specifically said His teachings were to be put into practice: “²⁴ Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man...” (Mt. 7:24). According to Jesus, it is wise to act on what He said. There is an expectation on Jesus’s part that a proper response to Him includes specific conduct. Jesus also said only those who DO the will of God are part of His kingdom (Mt. 12:50). Conduct matters to Jesus.
- O. Now that we know what is being transformed and why, our mission statement ends with the destination toward which we are traveling as disciples of Jesus: “to those of Jesus”. We want people to adopt and consistently embody the convictions, character, and conduct of Jesus as much as is humanly possible. Being like Jesus is our target. Jesus sets the standard toward which every disciple is traveling.
- P. Paul says church leaders are to be equipping and building people up in the church so each person grows into “...a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.” (Eph. 4:13). The activity and work of the church is intended to shape people to be like Jesus. He is the definition of spiritual maturity. The maturity that belongs to Jesus is the standard to which disciples are striving to achieve. Remember, a fully trained disciple will be like His teacher. As previously mentioned, followers of Jesus “are being transformed into the same image” (2 Cor. 3:18). What image are we being transformed into? The image (likeness) of God, as expressed most clearly in Jesus.¹²

¹¹ Inc Merriam-Webster, [Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary](#). (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 2003).

¹² Ralph P. Martin, [2 Corinthians](#), ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 215.

- Q. Jesus put Himself as the destination of the Christian life this way: “¹⁵ For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you. ¹⁶ Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor *is* one who is sent greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷ If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them. (Jn. 13:15-17). While Jesus said this in reference to His serving the disciples by washing their dirty feet, He immediately generalized it by attaching it to a principle of a slave not being greater than his master. For Jesus, this principle of being an example was given in a specific context with a concrete expression, but it was applied more broadly regarding the life of discipleship. Jesus is essentially telling His disciples to follow His example as their Teacher and Lord. Do as I have done is Jesus’s message. This orientation applies to more than humbly serving others for their spiritual good. It is relevant for all areas of the Christian life. Jesus didn’t literally expect His disciples to only wash one another’s feet when they are dirty. Jesus repeatedly encouraged the disciples to follow His example.¹³
- R. The three C’s are not just a marketing gimmick or nice words to put down on paper or on a wall: they will inform what we do. Some of the ways this new mission statement is already starting to influence the direction and decisions of our church include the selection of the curriculum we use. This is true of both the adult Sunday school classes and the children’s ministry. The *Believe* class curriculum was specifically chosen because it is designed to disciple people in the three C’s. The *Believe* curriculum is structure to help newer Christians understand the basics of what to believe (convictions), who they are to be (character), and how disciples are to live (conduct). While using different language, this curriculum is promoting the very ideas that are important to us. The first ten weeks of this class focus on the life of the mind, the next ten weeks on how to act as a disciple, and the final ten weeks center around who we are to be as followers of Jesus. This curriculum was selected because it matches our desired emphasis on the three C’s.
- S. Another example of the impact of our updated mission statement includes our desire to use the Discovery Land curriculum for our Wednesday night children’s ministry. The primary reason why this curriculum was chosen was because it focuses on discipling kids of various ages in the three C’s. Every lesson in Discovery Land is broken down into the following structure:
1. Know Right: understand the truth of the Bible
 2. Think Right: in light of what the Bible says, how should I think?
 3. Do Right: the proper reaction to the truth of the Bible
 4. Feel Right: the result of doing what God tells us to do
- T. Here are some of the other ways this updated mission statement, and the three C’s, are already affecting us:
1. Influenced decision regarding food pantry closure
 2. Impacting discussion of what ministries to have and where to spend resources (personnel and finances)
 3. Realization of our need to improve welcoming environment for new people and a greater emphasis on outreach to the community
 4. Motivated the decorating changes in sanctuary, entrance, and nurseries

¹³ Jn. 15:20, Mt. 10:24, Lk. 6:40, Lk. 22:27

5. A greater emphasis on training (including the children's ministry training event)
6. Changed conversations on both leadership teams: elders and ministry board
7. Caused a re-evaluation of our ministry methods for greater kingdom impact
8. Created desire for a greater digital footprint

U. A critically important question for each individual person to ask themselves as we begin implementing this updated mission statement is: what is my personal role and contribution to this mission? Where do I fit? Every Christian has both giftings and good works prepared for only them to accomplish according to God's plan.¹⁴ Everyone who is attached to Jesus has a unique and special role to play in the kingdom building agenda of God. No one ought to be sitting on the sidelines. The church will not reach its growth potential unless everyone is contributing to its work, "according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love." (Eph. 4:16). Knowing this is the case and each one of us carries this personal responsibility before God, what will you do?

III. Conclusion

- A. Change is a scary word. Yet, it is also at the center of God's plan for our lives. God meets us for the purpose of continually changing us. While this updated and clarified mission statement builds on the old one, at the same time, it also moves us forward in healthy ways. As this updated mission statement becomes the core of our identity, our DNA as a group, it should create positive change. While scary, this is a good outcome.
- B. As a leadership team, the elders are excited and optimistic about the future of our church. We have so much potential to make a difference in the lives of those who are here and those who are out in the community. The harvest truly is plentiful, but we need faithful workers. As we clarify the direction we are heading, we expect to see healthy forward movement.

IV. Questions for Further Thought

- A. What do you think about the updated and clarified mission statement? Do you have any reservations about it? Is there anything you are excited about?
- B. How does Jesus's promise to build His church impact us moving forward (Mt. 16:18)? How does it influence our attitudes and expectations?
- C. If our mission is to change the way people think, how might this actually be accomplished?
- D. If our mission is to transform who people are, how can we make this happen?
- E. If our mission is to renovate how people act, what can be done to encourage this?

¹⁴ 1 Peter 4:10, Ephesians 2:10