



From Purpose to Mission Statement

Notes on TEAM's Mission Statement

by Dave Hall - May 2021

In September 2019, the TEAM Board requested staff to standardize the wording and use of our mission and vision statement, approved in 2016 in TEAM's *Guiding Principles*. There was confusion between the purpose and vision, as well as redundancies in both. In January 2020, the Board reviewed two options presented as possible mission statements -- both derived from prior vision and purpose statements. Staff was again charged with gaining appropriate input, especially from younger generations, and deciding on a refreshed and updated version. Not only was our task to reflect TEAM's *Guiding Principles*, but it was also to choose words that reflect the globalized multi-directional nature of today's mission context.

Mission Statement

*TEAM's mission is to **partner with the global Church** in sending **disciples** who **make disciples** and **establish missional churches** to the **glory of God**.*

You will notice that the core meaning of the statement stays the same. However, there are significant concepts embedded in this statement that will shape our strategy and guide our practices within the global community of Jesus followers. Great care was taken to choose words that intentionally guide us now and into the future. We intend to use it to spark widespread conversations in TEAM around missiological topics, multi-directional sending, and the ongoing role of the West in sending and receiving global staff. Our prayer is that it will result in shared understanding and increased ministry effectiveness for God's glory and the blessing of all people.

1. From "Help churches" to "Partner with the global Church"

Partner - The Gospel is spread most effectively and in God-honoring ways when His people collaborate, both on individual and corporate levels. Since the Body of Christ is composed of many parts with varying gifts (Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4), no one person or organization can fulfill God's missional intent to redeem all the peoples of the world. This is true in local, regional, and global contexts. For this reason, we should always be asking, "*With whom can we partner to more effectively extend the Kingdom through word and deed? What other members of the Body of Christ is God moving toward a common objective?*" We believe that God is most honored and we find great joy as we journey together with other streams of the global Church, sharing vision, control, and resources within relationships characterized by grace, trust, and fellowship in the Gospel.

Global Church - TEAM is a small part of a very large movement of God around the world. Since our founding in 1890, there has been a dramatic growth of the church, especially in Central and South America, Africa, and Asia. God is raising up gifted leaders and organizations from around the world who are dedicated to making disciples. TEAM will increasingly seek ways to serve and assist the global Church as it fulfills God's call to make disciples among the nations. While we will not abandon our commitment to serving the church in North America, the future of missions will be increasingly shaped by our global brothers and sisters outside North America. This is something God is doing. Much of TEAM's future fruitfulness will be discovered in serving and following global leaders with whom we can link arms as we serve Christ together. This will require new postures of humility and collaborative practices across cultural lines. However, such endeavors hold the promise of significant Kingdom advances in some of the world's neediest regions.

2. From “Sending missionaries to make disciples” to “Sending disciples who make disciples”

Sending Disciples - TEAM desires to mobilize people to the nations who are ardent followers of Christ, growing in their likeness to Him in all areas of life, personally and professionally. This is not limited to the traditional “career religious worker” niche, which has historically been labeled “missionary.” TEAM is looking for people who have an integrated view of their relationship with Christ that permeates all aspects of life, whether in the marketplace, education, the arts, healthcare, and more. Following the tradewinds of an increasingly globalized world, TEAM seeks to find and open pathways for committed and called followers of Christ who desire to live out their vocation among people and places of great need.

Make Disciples - Jesus gave one primary instruction to his first disciples as he transitioned from his three-year ministry on earth: to “make disciples” of all the nations (i.e., *ethne* or people groups) of the world (Matthew 28:18-20). So, this primary task given to the church is focused not on busyness, activities, or even conversions. Rather, it is to see people transformed by the power of the Gospel, the work of the Holy Spirit, and the truth of God’s Word into ardent followers of Jesus. Such Christ-followers, learning to order their lives rightly, will make other disciples. This results in the transformation of individuals, families, and communities as they learn to live in the loving, just, and gracious Kingdom of Christ.

3. From “establish reproducing churches” to “establish missional churches”

Establish - TEAM and its partners seek to multiply local communities of Jesus followers where they currently do not exist, multiplying the collective witness of the Gospel. This means pioneering in places and among people where such a local witness does not exist. And it means a commitment over time to identify and disciple gifted leaders who at the earliest possible time will exercise those gifts and lead the local ministry. TEAM personnel will seek to build deep relationships of trust as we orient our strategies and activities around developing and empowering local leaders whom God will use to grow flourishing and sustainable communities of Jesus followers (disciples) who will extend the ministry of the Gospel in their contexts.

Missional churches - TEAM is committed to multiplying the redemptive influence of the church on local, regional, and global levels. This requires the establishment of churches that from their earliest days have a vision and heart for holistic ministry outside the confines of their local assembly. They are marked by an apostolic impulse to proclaim and embody the Gospel in the spiritually dark and needy places to which God calls them. These are churches that embrace and seek to embody the *Missio Dei* (“Mission of God”) and His redemptive plan for all of creation, centered on the reconciling work of Christ through his death and resurrection. This mandate has been given to His church, and TEAM seeks to multiply churches with that expansive vision for the nations.

4. For the “Glory of God”

TEAM is not about brand identity, “market share,” or any other secular metric that draws attention or fame to itself. TEAM is a temporal organization. One day it will be a part of history. All our work is motivated by our love for and worship of the Eternal One whose honor and reputation we seek as we gather more worshippers of Him--people, redeemed by Christ, who will praise and honor Him above all else and throughout eternity.

I hope that together we can embody this mission statement in our lives and ministries, calling others to join us in the pursuit of the same for His glory among the nations!