

## Mike Palombo Philosophy of Ministry

### Personal Vision Statement

Glorify God by equipping a grace centered community of disciple makers, growing towards maturity in Christ, and serving on mission for the flourishing of persons, families, communities and all creation.

### I. The Normative Element: “The Biblical Mandate to Accomplish My Mission” My Theological Convictions

#### Equipping

Paul calls church leaders “to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,<sup>13</sup> until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,” (Eph. 4:12).<sup>1</sup> Leaders equip with the goal that the church grows in the faith in such a way that they fully embody the maturity of Christ’s character. This maturity of character flows out of a vibrant trust and knowledge of Jesus as our victorious King and saving Messiah.

God has not called me to do the work of ministry myself, but rather to equip the rest of the church to join me in this work of ministry. As an equipper, I seek to develop people in a way that they have sufficient knowledge and love to grow in maturity and to serve in mission. I seek to fully train disciples that they might be like their teacher, Jesus (Luke 6:40).

Equipping disciples requires directing, coaching, supporting, and delegating. First we must give direction by clear teaching on what Scripture calls us to be and do. Then we must coach them by giving them practical tools and a lived example so they know how to do it. Next we lend them support and accountability as they attempt to live out what they learn. Finally, we delegate and send them out as competent kingdom leaders who direct, coach, support and delegate to others that they may become equipped. Throughout this process we pray for the people that God would ultimately equip them with everything good that they may do his will by working in them that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ (Heb. 13:1).<sup>2</sup>



<sup>1</sup> All verses quoted from the ESV.

<sup>2</sup> Randy Pope, *Insourcing: Bringing Discipleship Back to the Local Church*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishers, 2013), 36-41.

### **Grace centered community**

Grace centered communities orient their lives around the grace God provides in loving his people, giving them a new identity in Christ, and forming a people who demonstrate love to one another. Colossians 3:12-14 reveals how a community rooted in the love of God extends that love toward one another. Paul declares that Christians who have been united to Jesus in his death and resurrection have put off their old self and put on a completely new self that is being renewed after the image of its Creator. Their fundamental identity is wrapped up in their union with Jesus and not their national/racial/religious heritage or occupation so that Christ is all and in all.

He then calls them to relate to one another in a way that fits this new identity as a grace centered community. “<sup>12</sup> Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, <sup>13</sup> bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. <sup>14</sup> And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony,” (Col. 3:12-14).” These communities have been so formed by the reality of God’s love and holiness that they express that love to each other in all the listed character attributes above.

### **Disciple makers**

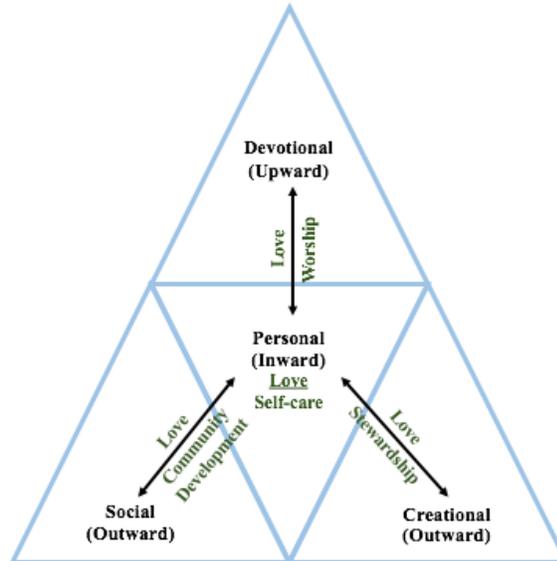
Jesus not only called his followers to discipleship, but also to go and make disciples. “<sup>18</sup> All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age,” (Matt. 28:18-20). Now that Jesus has risen from the dead and been installed as the reigning King over creation and is with us, we have the confidence that his mission of saving and developing learners (disciples) who will follow him in every sphere of life will be accomplished. Make disciples functions as the only command in this text and the other participles teach what practices continue throughout the whole process of making disciples: baptizing and teaching as we continue to go to new places with the Gospel message. As we continue to grow, we invest our lives in a few faithful people who will be able to teach and train others (2 Tim. 2:1-2). Through this process we hope to multiply our impact to many successive generations of disciple makers.

### **Maturity in Christ**

Maturity in Christ assumes that all growth flows out of a loving union with Jesus where I embrace His love and am willing to be taught by Him “<sup>22</sup> to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, <sup>23</sup> and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, <sup>24</sup> and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness,” (Eph. 4:22-23). Paul encourages Christians to grow toward maturity by putting off those practices which characterized our old corrupted lives when we embodied the original sin of Adam (the old self), to discern truth and beauty by the renewing of our mind, and to put on those practices which

characterize our new life that follows the pattern of righteousness and holiness of God and embodies the character of Christ (the new self).

Growing in maturity means growing more in the likeness of the image of our creator. “<sup>26</sup> Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” <sup>27</sup> So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” Maturity means growing progressively in the four key relationships: Relationship with God, ourselves, our community, and creation. We need to help people develop Devotionally (upward: in worship to God), Personally (inward: in self-care and character development), Socially (outward: in love toward people), and Creationally (outward: in stewardship toward the physical world). We become formed more in God’s image in relationship with God as we worship and practice spiritual disciplines (Bible Study, Prayer, Fasting, Sacraments), in relationship with ourselves as we practice reflection and self-care, in relationship with others through loving relationships and community development, and in relationship to the creation through works of service.



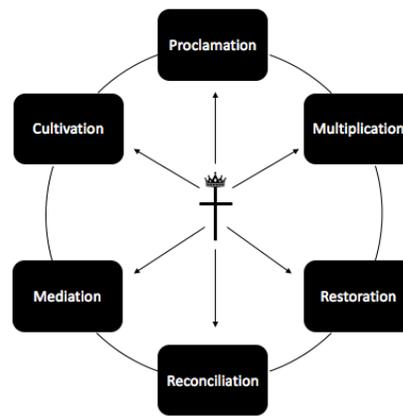
### Mission

Jesus declared his mission by quoting Isaiah 61:1-2, “<sup>18</sup> The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, <sup>19</sup> to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” Isaiah 61 clarifies other aspects of this mission to the exiles to include the physical labor of rebuilding (61:4) and ministerial care of priest (61:6). You could sum up Jesus’ (and our) mission on earth as one of Proclamation, Multiplication, Restoration, Mediation, Reconciliation, and Cultivation:

1. **Proclamation:** To preach the Gospel of the kingdom and forgiveness of sins (Mark 1:15; Matt 1:21; Matt 4:23; Mark 4:13-20; Mark 2:17; Mark 10:45; Matt 9:6; Matt 9:35; Matt 26:28; & Luke 24:46-47).
2. **Multiplication:** To equip disciples (learners) to grow in maturity and make disciples (Mark 1:17, Mark 3:14; Matt. 4:18-20; Luke 5:10-11; John 8:31; Matt. 5-7; Matt. 9:35-

38; Matt. 10:1-33; Luke 9:23-25 Luke 10:1-20; Matt. 28:18-20; 2 Tim. 2:1-2; & 1 Thess. 2:8).

3. **Restoration:** To seek the restoration of people physically from suffering and the effects of Satan (Matt. 4:23-25; Mark 6:65; Luke 4:17-19; John 9; & Luke 11:17-20).
4. **Mediation:** To pursue justice and mercy among the marginalized, voiceless, hurting, and poor (Matt. 25:31-46; Luke 16:19-31; & Luke 4:17-22).
5. **Reconciliation:** To befriend and unite different people groups and to break down the barriers that divide through the Gospel (Luke 11:19; 15; Mark 2:15-17; 2 Cor. 5:18-20; & Gal 3:28).
6. **Cultivation:** To do good work for the glory of God and the good of creation (Luke 12:35-48; Matt 25:14-30; Luke 19:11-27; & Gen. 1:26-28).



## II. The Existential Element: "How I Uniquely Represent Christ in Ministry" My Calling as Identified through my Spiritual Gifts, Style, Values

### Spiritual Gifts

As a **shepherd-teacher** many of my teaching gifts are used to care for the congregation by equipping them in ways that nourish their spiritual hunger, guide them how to live out their faith, and protect them against false teaching. My teaching gift best expresses itself in how Paul encouraged the Ephesian elders to lead in Acts 20:28-31.

“<sup>28</sup> Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. <sup>29</sup> I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; <sup>30</sup> and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. <sup>31</sup> Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears.”

I realize that there are wolves from within the church and outside the church who seek to devour God’s people by compelling them of an alternative visions of the good life and leading them away from the kingdom life that God has called believers to follow. I want to counter these truths in my teaching by communicating a compelling vision of the Biblical word and life view so that the congregation will know how to think, what to love, and how to practice their lives in light of the story of scripture. This means equipping the church to discern those errors of belief, love, and practice in the culture and providing robust answers to challenging questions. My gift of **wisdom** enables me to

teach with insight into the mystery of God's word and apply it to particular scenarios in the lives of people. This enables me to give counsel to those who experience difficult situations and decisions.

Finally, my gift of **evangelism** enables me to communicate the Gospel to people who are outside the faith and to come alongside those struggling with belief. I am able to listen to people's questions and provide a reasonable response to their objections and difficulties in believing. God enables me to connect with a variety of people from different backgrounds and has given me favor to contextualize the Gospel to their unique story.

## **Ministry Style**

### **Vision:**

In every aspect of ministry I seek to communicate a compelling vision of what God could accomplish. I dream of the possibilities for growth, expansion and fruitful progress through the faithful witness of God's people by the empowerment of the Spirit. Dreaming through possibilities, planning a strategy, and uniting people in teams around the vision lay a foundation for fruitfulness and enable the congregation to overcome obstacles. Ephesians 3:20 inspires the vision "20 Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen."

### **Small Groups:**

I believe that one of the most crucial organizational developments in the church are small groups. I prefer small group interaction because people can develop closer friendships, tease out and apply scripture to their lives, and work through complex issues in culture by application of the Biblical worldview together. This is also a context for accountability and support in living out what they learn.

### **Analytical and Creative Contextualizing:**

Because I naturally analyze ideas through cause and effect thinking, I love to think through different barriers toward belief in cultures and develop approaches to communicate the Gospel to those cultures. I am driven by a desire to know why people practice and believe what they do and to communicate a comprehensive explanation of how the storyline of scripture and life of fullness in the Gospel connects with their own cultural longings and desires. I love creating practical tools to help people learn how to more effectively reach their neighbors, coworkers, and friends and become "all things to all people," (1 Cor. 9:23-24).

## **Ministry values**

- 1. Cultural Renewal:** I will equip the church to serve the city for its welfare by affirming what is good and beautiful, developing what is broken, and confronting what is evil.
- 2. Outward Facing:** I will seek to equip the church as servants who serve their neighbors and reach out to the lost, hurting, helpless, and broken within my community and outside my community.
- 3. Vulnerable Community:** I want to create an atmosphere where we talk honestly about struggles, sorrows and suffering with deep confidence in God's love and conviction that the Gospel heals our brokenness.

4. **Discipleship:** I will establish a discipleship focus which encourages people to enter life on life and Gospel centered apprenticeships which seek to equip people to grow as mature and missional disciple makers who will be able to equip future generations of disciple makers.
5. **Story:** I want to listen to the story of other people and places where I serve so that I can better know how to love and serve. I also want to interpret the story of people and places in the grander story of the Biblical worldview.
6. **Integrated Life:** I want to communicate a comprehensive approach to maturity including health in relating to God, myself, my community, and God's creation. This means living under the Lordship of Christ in all spheres of life.
7. **Creativity:** As an image bearer of a God who creates, I am called to create that which is beautiful, functional, and beneficial for the wellbeing of creation. Creativity should guide any new endeavors that I pursue.
8. **Flourishing:** The goal of my ministry is to pursue fruitfulness resulting in the thriving of persons, families, communities, and all creation.
9. **Rooted in Scripture:** Whenever giving advice or teaching I want to have a firm rootedness in God's word as the foundational text on which to build convictions.
10. **Dependency:** My ministry is an overflow of dependency on God's Spirit to satisfy, empower, and accomplish the mission of God in the world.

### **III. The Situational Element: "What Values Guide the Mission of the My Ideal Place of Ministry"**

As I continue to seek out a call in ministry, I will be seeking a church that sees itself as an outpost for kingdom work in the city. They will avoid the two extremes of becoming a closed off, isolated and judgmental community and the other extreme of becoming a compromising, flimsy and morally adaptable community that assimilates to the immoral ideals of the culture. This church will first champion those aspects that are commendable in culture and seek to mobilize the church to use their gifts, resources and relationships to continue to contribute to the culture.

The church will have multiple layers of leadership equipping beginning with elders/deacons, discipleship/small group leaders, down to members, regular attenders and visitors. Everyone in the church will be established in how to cultivate their own relationship with God and how to live on mission in their context. The goal will be that each member knows not only how to do this, but also how to teach others. This requires thoughtful consideration in regards to preaching expositionally through all of scripture, curriculum development and also specific training sessions.

The church will also have a clear plan on how to pursue pastoral care across the whole church. I prefer to divide up the congregation into multiple parishes based on geographical location. Each elder should have responsibility over at least one particular parish and should regularly contact families and coordinate community events. This way the church will be able to discern needs in the community and carry out a proactive pastoral care process. This will also enable the church to remain a "small feel" as it grows larger.

### Characteristics of an Entrepreneurial church<sup>3</sup>

<b>Strong Points</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manages chaos, crisis and problem solving well</li> <li>• Often optimistic and dreaming of possibilities</li> </ul>
<b>Weaknesses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• So caught up in the work of the moment, may miss the details of the future</li> <li>• So absorbed with new and exciting that may not continue with routines</li> </ul>
<b>Primary Ministries</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Innovative, adventurous, creative, and risky</li> </ul>
<b>MINISTRY TEMPO</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action oriented and quick paced</li> </ul>
<b>WHAT INSPIRES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A ministry setting that is evolving, challenging, and empowering</li> </ul>
<b>WHAT DE-MOTIVATES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rigid guidelines, regulations, and overly defined structure</li> </ul>
<b>UNDER STRESS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thinks negatively and about future possibilities</li> <li>• Heightened emotional reactivity</li> <li>• Decision making/problem solving becomes hindered</li> </ul>
<b>DECISION-MAKING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analytical, logical, critical, seeks connections between ideas, cause and effect reasoning, and relentless desire to know why</li> </ul>
<b>DESIRE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministries that provide space to create and try new things which provide opportunities to improvise and adapt</li> </ul>
<b>PRIORITY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trying different approaches and methods for the wellbeing of other people</li> </ul>
<b>MINISTRY ETHOS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Laidback/relatable, Team player, flexible structure, freedom to act</li> </ul>
<b>OUTWARD APPEARANCE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focused use of resources and tension to accomplish quick and maximum impact</li> </ul>
<b>GAINS SELF-ASSURANCE THROUGH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having new opportunities and spinning ideas off with others to create</li> </ul>
<b>FEARS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ideas that have no prevalent relevance, incompetence</li> </ul>

<sup>3</sup> Adapted from Philip D. Douglas, *What is Your Church's Personality: Discovering and Developing the Ministry Style of Your Church*, (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing Company, 2007) 154

### **Worship style:**

This ministry's worship style...

- Includes a variety of different liturgical dynamics: call to worship, confession of sin, confession of faith, prayers of the people (including Lord's prayer), scripture readings.
- These liturgical elements change service by service both in content, placement in the service and mode of expression (through music, responsive readings, declarations, etc.)
- The music expresses contemporary style contextualized to the community with a full band playing both ancient hymns and new compilations for a modern context.

### **Leadership Style:**

- Persuasive/Coaching/Teambuilding
- This church's ministry style seeks to persuade the community through clear and compelling, and regular communication of the vision of the church in the community.
- The leadership has a heavy focus on equipping every member in ministry by coaching small group leaders who coach the rest of the congregation.
- From the staff team down, there is a real camaraderie where teamwork is valued and implemented. Gatherings of people seek to discover individual gifts and work together as a community to use gifts for the good of the community.

### **Evangelism Style:**

- Relational style Evangelism: People seek to build relationships with people where they live, work and play and engage over the Gospel in those relationships.
- Emphasis on establishing trust and genuine conversation with people about life's meaning and challenges.
- Equipping emphasis on training multiple members on how they can best share the Gospel with their peers in a way that is winsome and compelling.
- Train members on how to lead small group evangelistic bible studies so that like the Bereans they can examine the scriptures to investigate the truth of Christ (Acts 17:11).
- Apologetic emphasis: Occasional Labri-like discussions and Question Forums where we can invite non-Christians to engage over deeper questions about God, meaning and the Gospel.
- Cultural analysis and understanding where we gather to discuss trends in culture in light of the Biblical worldview.

### **This church specializes in reaching with the Gospel those who:**

- Enjoy dialoguing through complex intellectual issues in faith, society and culture.
- Desire to serve their community through creative expressions of love and care.
- Seek to integrate the Gospel message to their daily work and find ways to apply teachings to their vocations.
- Have an expansive vision not only for the flourishing of themselves but also for families, communities and creation.
- Want to understand their unique gifts and ways to apply these gifts in ministry in the church and in their vocation throughout the week.
- Dream about the possibilities of what God could accomplish in and through them for the sake of their community.

- Appreciate cultural creation through the arts, music, and design.
- Want to have an impact on friends, families and co-workers by sharing the Gospel with them.
- Are motivated to take risk in the community and overcome obstacles by creative problem solving.
- Value a practiced based model of discipleship where they will receive training in how to live out the spiritual disciplines of the faith.
- Are willing to be vulnerable with others around them and open up their lives for transparent growth.

## **Bibliography**

- Douglas, Philip D. *What is Your Church's Personality: Discovering and Developing the Ministry Style of Your Church*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing Company, 2007.
- Randy Pope, *Insourcing: Bringing Discipleship Back to the Local Church*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishers, 2013