

## **Serve the World: Mission (Unfolding the Vision Bible Study Part 4)**

*Opening: Leader opens in prayer.*

### **1. Gathering (each member of the group can choose one of the following):**

- What are the top three things you would love to do before you die?
- OR: What's the wildest place you've ever been? How were you feeling at the time you were at that place? Why did you go there?
- OR: What's something in your life that really challenged you at the time it happened, but when you looked back on it, you discovered that you had grown and matured as a person?
- OR: Tell the group about a time when you stepped out of your comfort zone and God provided for your needs.

### **2. Wrestling with God's Word**

Read **John 20:19-22**.

What commands does Jesus give his church? What promises accompany it?

What is the church sent to give the world?

In your group, discuss the following statement:

‘The *only* life the church has is the life that is given away for the sake of others. The church exists to participate in the self-giving love of God to the world.’ (*missio dei*)

Do you agree or disagree? Why? How good is your church community at 'giving its life away' for the sake of others? How does that happen?

Read **Luke 9:23-25**

In what ways do Jesus' words apply to individuals? In what ways to communities, congregations and denominations?

In what ways have you personally experienced the truth of Jesus' words? (Share about a time when you gave something up or away and found more abundant life because of that action/decision). In what ways have you experienced the truth of Jesus' words in our community?

Read **John 1:1-14**. How did God conduct his mission on this planet? In what ways is this unexpected? How does it challenge our conception of 'mission'?

*‘The fact that God was in the Nazarene neighbourhood for thirty years and no one noticed should be profoundly disturbing to our normal ways of engaging mission. Not only does it have implications for our affirmation of normal human living, it says something about the timing as well as the relative anonymity of incarnational ways of engaging in mission. There is a time for ‘in your face’ approaches to mission, but there is also a time to simply become part of the very fabric of a community and engage in the humanity of it all. Furthermore, the idea of presence highlights the role of relationships in mission. If relationship is the key means in the transfer of the gospel, then it*

*simply means we are going to have to be directly present to the people in our circle. Our very lives are our messages...But one of the profound implications of our presence as representatives of Jesus is that Jesus actually likes to hang out with the people we hang out with. They get the implied message that God actually likes them.'* Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*.

#### **4. Wrestling with the World – getting involved with God's mission to the world**

##### Serve the World - vocation

In light of Hirsch's quote, read and discuss **1 Peter 2:9-12, 1 Peter 3:15-17**.

How are Christians to go about their God-given mission? How have you seen this working in your own life?

Has there ever been a time when someone 'asked you to give a reason for your Christian hope?' What happened? What did you say? How did that come about?

How do you see God's mission to *serve the world* at work in your *vocation* (family, workplace, study, recreation)? How might God be calling you deeper into his mission in that area?

##### Serve the World – Practical service

Read **Luke 22:24-27, Luke 12:32-34, and 1 John 3:16-20**.

How do these verses from God's word say we are to live out God's mission in the world as people who follow Jesus?

What are some of the practical ways you can do that? Individually? What are some of the practical ways our community can do that together?

##### Serve the World - Proclamation

Read **Matthew 28:18-20 and Luke 24:45-49**.

How does Jesus call us to serve the world in God's mission through *proclamation* of the good news?

What is the content of what Jesus' followers are to proclaim?

How has our community done this well? What are some ways we could do this partnering with the Risen Jesus in future, in order to make disciples of 'all nations'?

Have you ever sensed God's call for you to go deeper into his mission, getting involved with his plan to bless the world in some way you might not have thought of or dared to before?

What do you think that call looks like? What does God want to do with you as his partner?

(To answer this question more specifically, you might like to look at some of the opportunities in God's mission in our local context, in the second part of this study).

#### **Setting the Scene: Imagine a community of God's people ...**

Imagine a community that gives half of its offerings to mission.

Imagine a community that regularly sends people out on short-term and long-term mission projects to Australia and the world, to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to those who have not yet heard it.

Imagine a community that engages in mission in inner city Melbourne and on the University Campuses where God has placed our students.

Imagine the Word of God being planted in, around and beyond Tertiary campuses, so that many people are coming to faith in Jesus who haven't heard the Gospel before.

Imagine a growing group of disciples who make disciples.

Which of the above 'Imagine' phrases about getting involved in God's mission most fire your imagination? Why?

Spend a couple of minutes in silence thinking about this. Write it down before each person shares with the group if they are comfortable. *If you could add another 'imagine' phrase for this community getting involved in God's mission, what would it be?*

***CLOSING: end with prayer for one another and the group. Ask Jesus to fill you with his Holy Spirit so you can be part of God's plan to serve the world in mission, through vocation, practical service and proclamation of the Gospel.***

#### **5. After the Group: questions for personal reflection.**

Do you sense God calling you to get more involved in his mission?

Is this through *vocation, practical service* or *proclamation*?

*What practical steps would you have to take for that to happen?*

***Getting involved in God's mission through his community (this section is written with the LSF community in mind. You might like to adapt it for your situation): for personal reflection.***

***If you are willing, share the results of your reflection with at least one other person, your small group leader, Pastor Nathan, or a member of the CTM.***

*I believe God might be calling me to get involved with his mission in one or more of the following ways:*

*Serving the community: providing hydration stations at College events with Red Frogs*

*Serving the community: engaging in a shared meal and conversation at St John's Student Meals on a Tuesday night.*

*Local mission: working hard to ensure the safety of Schoolies with Red Frogs at Schoolies' week.*

*Local mission: joining a Scripture Union Beach Mission/Coffeeshop over summer.*

*Local ministry: becoming a small group leader for an LSF Bible Study*

*Global mission: joining the next LSF Red Centre Team (June 2011)*

*Global Mission: joining a YWAM overseas mission team.*

*Vocation: using your Uni degree to serve with an NGO in a third-world country.*

*Worship: Reading Bible readings or taking prayers in worship*

*Worship: Using your gift of music to enhance our Sunday worship*

*Evangelism: being part of a team which brings God's good news to others*

*Community and transformation: participating in a Life Transformation Group*

*Other: I have an idea for being involved in God's mission that hasn't been mentioned here, (Please describe below:)*

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**6. Appendix:**

**For Further reading**

(all of these books are available on request from Pastor Nathan)

*The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church* by Alan Hirsch

*The Forgotten Ways Handbook: putting into practice the Forgotten Ways* by Alan Hirsch

*Search and Rescue: Becoming a Disciple who makes a Difference* by Neil Cole (this book describes Life Transformation Groups, a simple and yet very powerful way of making disciples, and experiencing True Christian community)