

M3 – Vision for the Future
Multi-Site
Multi-Generational
Proverbs 29:18

The birth of the Church and multi-site:

The Church grows.

- Acts 11:19-21

The Church goes.

- Acts 11:27-30; John 20:21

The birth of the Church and multi-generational.

- Joel 2:28-29

The Church changes.

- Acts 2:17-18

The Church ranges.

- Psalm 71:17-18

love.learn.live.
westvalleychurch.com



West Valley Church
11/20/22
Michael O'Neill

M3 Vision for the Future: Multi-Site, Multi-Generational

In Simon Sinek's book, "Start With Why," he writes this story: "Most people don't know about Samuel Pierpont Langley. In the early 20th century, many people were pursuing the dream of flight. And Samuel Pierpont Langley had, what we assume, to be the recipe for success. Langley was given \$50,000 by the War Department to figure out this flying machine. Money was no problem. He held a seat at Harvard and worked at the Smithsonian and was extremely well-connected; he knew all the big minds of the day. He hired the best minds money could find and the market conditions were fantastic. *The New York Times* followed him around everywhere, and everyone was rooting for Langley. Then how come we've never heard of Samuel Pierpont Langley?

A few hundred miles away in Dayton, Ohio, Orville and Wilbur Wright, had none of what we consider to be the recipe for success. They had no money; they paid for their dream with the proceeds from their bicycle shop. Not a single person on the Wright brothers' team had a college education, not even Orville or Wilbur. And *The New York Times* followed them around nowhere.

The difference was, Orville and Wilbur were driven by a cause, by a purpose, by a belief. They believed that if they could figure out this flying machine, it would change the course of the world. Samuel Pierpont Langley was different. He wanted to be rich, and he wanted to be famous. He was in pursuit of the result. He was in pursuit of the riches. And lo and behold, look what happened. The people who believed in the Wright brothers' dream worked with them with blood and sweat and tears. The others just worked for the paycheck. They tell stories of how every time the Wright brothers went out, they would have to take five sets of parts, because that's how many times they would crash before supper.

And, eventually, on December 17th, 1903, the Wright brothers took flight, and no one was there to even experience it. We found out about it a few days later. And further proof that Langley was motivated by the wrong thing: the day the Wright brothers took flight, he quit. He could have said, "That's an amazing discovery, guys, and I will improve upon your technology," but he didn't. He wasn't first, he didn't get rich, he didn't get famous, so he quit."¹

I think you can see how that story applies to our life in Christ and our church. If we don't have clear vision and purpose for our lives and our church, we won't be able to move forward in the direction that God has in front of us. Proverbs 29:18 says:

¹ Source: Simon Sinek, *Start with Why* (Penguin Group, NY, NY 2009) 97-99

“When there’s no vision, the people get out of control, but whoever obeys instruction is happy.” (Proverbs 29:18, ceb)

If we don’t have a vision for where we are going, we start wandering in all kinds of directions. But with a clear sense of direction and destination, we will discipline our lives to make it there. Without that clear sense of direction, we become undisciplined.

Today we are concluding our short sermon series called M3. Let me explain why we call it that.

For any church, if we are going to be healthy and grow, we must understand our mission, our vision, and our strategy.

As a church, our mission is this:

Introduce people to Jesus Christ
Equip people with a faith that works
Live as people with purpose
(love.learn.live.)

That’s our mission: we are here to introduce people to Jesus who’ve never met him. Then together, we and they grow in our faith and put our faith to work in the community. And we live our lives with intentionality and purpose for the Kingdom of God. That’s your mission as a Christian, and that’s our mission as a church. We have a purpose that will transform our community and world not just for a season or a generation but for eternity; as Christians who are filled with God’s Spirit, this is the life of purpose that we are to live.

That’s our mission. Then is our vision, which is what we will look like as we are accomplishing our mission.

I said this last week, but I’ll say it again: in January I will have been your pastor for thirteen years. It was during this time of year in 2009 that we were praying about accepting the call to come be your pastor. As we prayed for West Valley Church and for direction from God, God revealed to me what his vision is for this church. For the last 13 years this is the direction we’ve been moving toward as we carry out our mission. Everything we’ve done has been in alignment with our mission and moving us toward our vision. So what is it that we will we look like?

Our vision used to be what we called the “four M’s.” But now there are three M’s. Let me remind you what those are in case you don’t know or weren’t with us last week:

Our vision has been that as we accomplish our mission, our first “M” would be we become mortgage free. So you know that we started Here For Good in February of 2020 in order to eliminate our church’s 30-year mortgage. That loan was taken out over 20 years ago for around three million dollars, and by 2020 when we started Here For Good, there was still \$1.1 million, and ten years left on it! So we needed to be mortgage free. In addition to paying off the mortgage, we still need to raise funds to renovate some of the oldest and neediest parts of our great facility. And amazingly, despite being in the middle of the pandemic, just one year later we burned our mortgage! We paid off the entire debt! Now, we are continuing to give in order to raise as much as possible to work in three areas: to update our foyer restrooms, making them ADA compliant and adding a family restroom.

We want to consolidate our children's area in order to make their space more safe and secure and more convenient for parents, and then we will use whatever we have left to do as much as we can to update our worship center, which desperately needs it! But we will not go into debt again.

Anyway, now we are now mortgage free! So we don't have *four* m's anymore – we have *three* m's! Here are the remaining three M's, not in any priority order:

We will be a **multi-generational church, a multi-site church, and a multi-cultural (or multi-ethnic) church.**

Last week we focused on our vision of being a multi-cultural church, and we are well on our way to that vision becoming reality. We held our first Spanish speaking worship service two weeks ago, and soon we will be holding those services every week. Which really leads us to the next of the three M's, which is that we need to be ***Multi-site***.

Last week we saw how it has been God's desire for his church to be multi-cultural since the very beginning of his promise to Abraham, and then we saw it on full display at the birth of the church in the book of Acts.

It didn't take very long then to see that God's blueprint for the church was that it would become more than one site or location; we see from...

The birth of the church and multi-site:

...it came naturally as...

the church grows.

We need to notice a couple of things about church growth in the first century. The first church was in Jerusalem, and it didn't take long for them to experience persecution, which resulted in a scattering of believers.

This is what we're told in that chapter:

“Now those who had been scattered by the persecution that broke out when Stephen was killed traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, spreading the word only among Jews. Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.” (Acts 11:19-21, niv)

As the Christians scattered and went back to their hometowns, they began to start new church sites in their towns. So as they did, the church monitored the growth of these new sites. Because of this, they sent Barnabas to check out what was happening in the town of Antioch. You can read about it in Acts 11; it's a cool story. The chapter starts out with Peter telling about God's vision for the church to be multi-cultural. Then it tells about the multi-site church in Antioch. When Barnabas gets there, he sees evidence of God's grace in the fledgling church, and encourages them. In the power of the Holy Spirit, Barnabas tells the church to persevere with a devoted heart. He says, “sell out to Jesus for the long haul!” And more people became Christians. So their efforts were focused over the next year at making disciples. But the church

grew so much at the Antioch site that Barnabas could no longer manage it by himself, so he had to go to Tarsus (over 100 miles away) to get Paul to help him disciple these young believers. As these disciples grew, the whole city began to call them “Christian,” or Christ’s people. This was the first time that they were called Christians.

The principle is that churches grow and create new church sites. Local church involvement is key in the New Testament. These new church sites were not just disorganized groups who may or may not have been true to the mission and vision and biblical theology; they planted healthy, doctrinally sound, practically faithfully, Christ-honoring churches. If we are going to stay true to the blueprint that God gave us when he started the church, that is what we will do too, with new church sites.

That’s because as the church grows, the church also goes.

The birth of the church and multisite:

the church *grows* and the church *goes*.

When Jesus met with his disciples after he had risen from the dead, he told them, and he tells us this:

Peace be with you; as the Father has sent me, I am sending you. (John 20:21, niv)

A growing church is a going church because Jesus sent us to grow and go.

For us, West Valley Church is growing, and we actually already have one new site, which is our online church. When God gave us the vision for being multi-site, having an online church wasn’t even in our imagination; that kind of church didn’t really even exist yet. But the pandemic changed the way a lot of things happened, including church. In our effort to adapt, our church’s leadership invested in the equipment and Nathan Durnan and Mike Broom in our church built everything and put together our studio, and now we have a worshipping community that joins us in an online church site. A conservative estimate of the number of folks who make up our online church site is between 80-100. That’s how many *views* we have, but we know that behind some of those views are more than one person. There are a lot of you that make up our online church. We are so grateful for those of you who join us as a part of our church online. But we want you to know, you are not just spectators; you aren’t just watching TV or watching your computer; you are a church. So you need to engage with other believers and grow as disciples. That’s why we ask you every week to please let us know who you are so we can connect with you and help you grow in your faith. If the totality of your Christian experience is watching a 75-minute video, you are not going to grow much in your faith. You need to interact with other believers in a small group, class, and in mission – even if it is in a digital setting – so you can encourage each other to grow. So please – reach out to us; click the information tab on the website, or if you are watching this on YouTube, click on the links and tell us who you are.

You are an important part of West Valley Church, and we want to help you take those next steps in your faith.

In addition to our online church site, you heard last week about the birth of our Spanish speaking church site. We are very excited about that!

The third of our three M vision is to be **multi-generational**. Clear back in the Old Testament, when God was casting vision for what his church would be like when Jesus died and rose again and when the Holy Spirit was poured out on his people, this is what he said:

And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days. (Joel 2:28-29, niv)

That covers all generations! If that is going to happen, we are going to experience changes, aren't we? Changes in our own lives and changes in our church. So way back then, God was saying that when the church was born, it would be **multi-generational**, and as a church it would constantly be going through...

changes.

As people age, they change, and right behind them is the next generation. Built into the birth of the church was a constant cycle of change. The problem is that just as one generation begins to move into places of authority, they want to freeze the church at that spot because that's where they like it. Isn't that true? So our tendency is to try to make the church monogenerational. But we are to be multi-generational and accept the changes. God considers his church to be his what? His family. So naturally, there are going to be generations.

There's something very interesting going on in our culture today that has never been a part of modern culture, and it is this: there are now five generations who are in the workplace and in the church at the same time. We've never had that before. But you can imagine, that makes for a very broad spectrum of interests and needs.

Let's try a little experiment:

Is there anyone here who was born between 1925-1945? You are considered the "Traditionalist" generation.

Anyone here today born between 1946-1964? You are considered the "Baby Boomer" generation. How about between 1965-1980? You are called "Generation X." Who here was born between 1981 and 2000? You are the Millennials. Finally, anyone here born between 2001-2020? You are called "Generation Z." We have five generations of adults *in this room* all contributing to the culture of the church, worshipping, serving, giving, and making decisions. And right now, in our church nurseries, the sixth generation is waiting their turn; they need to be changed and we need to accept change. The challenge is that each generation likes things different and has different values for how and why they come to church and give and serve. So it is inevitable that there will be clashes.

What has been the most obvious area of the church where we see this clash? Worship style! But if each generation isn't willing to make changes for the sake of the other generations, the church is in trouble.

God put an exclamation point on this issue of multi-generationality during the very first sermon ever preached in the Church, in the book of Acts. Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit,

stood up to preach and repeated God's vision for the church that the prophet Joel declared hundreds of years earlier:

In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. (Acts 2:17-18, niv)

There it is again! From the birth of the church God intended multi-generationality.

Let me ask you: is the Holy Spirit who is in one of our teens different than the Holy Spirit in one of our senior adults? Same Spirit! So we need to honor and celebrate the Holy Spirit's presence across all five (and soon six) of the generations that call West Valley Church home! Because since the birth of the church it's been clear that not only are there changes in the church, but the church also covers all the...

ranges of generations.

Our focus needs to be not on ourselves, but on all the other generations and what they need. And every generation needs to prioritize teaching and demonstrating how great God is, to the generations younger than they are. Here's the pattern that God has given us through King David in Psalm 71:

Since my youth, God, you have taught me, and to this day I declare your marvelous deeds. Even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me, my God, till I declare your power *to the next generation, your mighty acts to all who are to come.* (Psalm 71:17-18, niv)

Look at this verse! Our job, generations, is not to just sit there enjoying our preferred worship style and gaining more knowledge in a church class. Our job is to declare the very POWER OF GOD and his MIGHTY ACTS to ALL THE GENERATIONS that follow us!

Friends, that is our vision! To be a church that honors, celebrates, and passes on the power of God himself to every succeeding generation. For those of us who are older, you have a choice: you can focus on feeling upset that we didn't sing the type of music you like, or you can focus your life on demonstrating and declaring the Holy Spirit Power of God to the next generations. Because the church is made up of ALL generations.

Consider this picture. What is it? Maybe it's a picture of Buffalo New York right now with their huge snowstorms. Or you might think it's a blank page. But actually, it's a diamond – if it remained uncut. None of the beauty, none of the opportunity for the light to refract and bring out its brilliance. It would be like a mono-cultural, mono-site, mono-generational church. But when all the different people – all of us of all generations and cultures and worshiping groups come together as West Valley Church, we move from a plain white image to this: Look at its beauty! When a diamond goes from one side to multi-faceted, it's a brilliant gem! So is the church. Let's honor and celebrate each generation and determine to declare and to demonstrate God's power and mighty acts to *every* generation.

Prayer

Now in our efforts toward our 3M vision, we've realized some things, especially as we came through the pandemic. We realized that we need to get serious and earnest about praying for God's Kingdom to come and his will to be done on earth like it is in heaven. So we've started our monthly Wednesday evening prayer services. Eva Lounsbury has agreed to become our director of prayer ministries, helping us incorporate prayer into everything we do as a church. We must be praying for the mission of the church, in addition to praying for each other's needs.

We also realized that we've got to be engaged in more meaningful evangelism. We have all these great relationship opportunities with our community; we want to make sure we are finding ways to intentionally give people the opportunity to respond to God's Good News by introducing them to Jesus.

Finally, we realized we need to do a better job of caring for each other. If we as a church are going to focus on sharing the Gospel in our community both visually and verbally, then as a church we need to take care of each other.

We rely on several ways to find out how you are doing. We pass the connection books and ask you to sign in online, so we can identify who has NOT been here for a several weeks, so we can reach out and see if everything is okay and let you know we are praying for you. It's not to be controlling or coercive, but just to check in and make sure you are doing okay.

We also rely on our small groups. If you are in a small group, they will know your struggles and pray for you and support you in any way that they can. Your small group leader will let the pastors know if there is something else the church can do. But during the pandemic we didn't have connection books or small groups. And we realized we were missing the mark when it came to being a multi-generational church that cares for each other.

So our leadership spent a great deal of time praying through the pandemic and planning and strategizing, we came up with a plan. And Pastor Roger courageously agreed to provide leadership to this effort. First, he was trained in Grief Recovery Method and began leading support groups and offering them on a regular basis. Then he was trained to be a leader in a system of Congregational Care. I am so grateful for his friendship and leadership in our church. So I'm going to ask Pastor Roger to come tell us about it.

Pastor Roger

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." ~ Jesus (John 13:34-35)

- ***Our Purpose***

- *To reach out and surround each other with love, assistance, and spiritual growth through prayerful, caring support, in good times and bad.*

- **Scope of care**
 - *We seek to respond to the needs of our congregation by caring for those who are adjusting to new life stages (births, deaths, job changes, divorce, etc.); those who are grieving, sick, hospitalized, in care centers, rehab facilities or the homebound as well as reaching out those who have formerly been a part of our church, but who we may be missing from our church community*
 - *Responsibility list of around 80 people that is ever changing*
- **Means of care**
 - *Including (but not limited to) prayer; communication through face-to-face conversations, phone calls, texts, emails, and cards; visitation, providing meals and meeting tangible needs when possible*
- **Introduce the CCM's**
 - This team is made up of seven individuals with a passion for this work who have agreed to give a minimum of 5 hours a week to this ministry, have received over 5 hours of specific training and have committed to attend monthly meetings. They are willing to serve our congregation in a variety of ways.
 - Our CCM's - **Lois Froula, Dee Johnson, Jeff Johnston, Maxine Lydin, Lynn Massong, Cathy Rouse, Diane Woods**

Commissioning for Ministry -

Leader: Dear friends, you have been called and chosen by the people of God for leadership in the church. This ministry is a blessing and a serious responsibility. It recognizes your special gifts and calls you to work among your people and for your people. In love we thank you for accepting your obligation and challenge you to offer your best to the Lord, to your people, and to our ministry in the world. Live a life in Christ and make him known in your witness and work. Do you today acknowledge yourself to be a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ? If so, answer "I do".

People: I do.

Leader: Will you devote yourself to the service of God in the world? If so, answer "I will".

People: I will

Leader: Will you so live that you enable your church to be a people of love and peace? If so, answer "I will".

People: I will

Leader: Will you do all in your power to be responsible to the task for which you have been chosen? If so, answer "I will".

People: I Will

Prayer of Commissioning

Extension of the Congregational Care Ministry – you are an important part!

- *We need* ad hoc care team members; folks like you who may be unable to commit to 5 hours a week, intensive training, and monthly meetings, but who can pray with someone, make a phone call, provide a meal or send a card, etc.
- Please see me or any of our Congregational Care Ministers if you would like to be added to the list of folks interested in serving as an ad hoc care team member.

One specific way for anyone to help – The CCM team is hoping to connect with around two dozen of our homebound congregants this Advent season and express our care and concern for them by personally visiting them and gifting them with a poinsettia during the month of December – YOU CAN HELP by volunteering to pick up a poinsettia and delivering it to someone from our congregation. We'll make the arrangements and provide you with what you need for a successful visit. Watch for more information to come in December about how to help with this ministry opportunity.

Pastor Jason – benediction:

Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word. (2 Thessalonians 2:16-17, esv)