

I. Introduction

A. Humanity 101 (Rm 1-3)

1. All history from Cain and Abel onward had demonstrated that destruction and stupidity, navel-gazing and bloodshed, the universality of fools, and the thin line between civilization and anarchy, are the norm.
2. This year just so happens to be a very colorful example of our commonly shared low anthropology.

B. Four reasons 2020 was a great year for the church

1. We call all to repentance.
 - a. Human = part of the problem of which you are not the solution
 - b. Solution = Jesus of Nazareth, God in flesh
2. We teach that we are in the midst of a spiritual battle.
 - a. We delude ourselves if we think that what plays out in our streets or on social media feeds is a merely human conflict.
 - b. There is no demilitarized zone, it is all active battle.
3. Justice and love between people cannot heal our fractured society.
 - a. Work for? Yes. Important? Yes.
 - b. Only God's love displayed in His crucified and resurrected Son, Jesus, can heal broken hearts, restore shattered communities, and give us the grace to forgive even our enemies.
4. We are not the church of Chicken Little but the church of Jesus Christ.
 - a. No panic necessary, "Sky is falling"
 - b. Every government since the Resurrection is a lame-duck administration because every tongue will confess and every knee will bow.

*These are all things that, if you can see with eternal perspective, have been highlighted in 2020. And they are all strengths inherent within the church of Jesus Christ.

*In 2021, we are going to build on these things and on what God has revealed about the state of our faith, hope, peace, and love.

II. Our objective

A. Surrender and obedience

Peter began to say to Him, "See, we have left everything and followed You." Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for My sake and for the Gospel,"

(Mark 10:28-29)

1. "We have left everything and followed you." Peter, Mark 10:28
 - a. Why follow Jesus?
 - b. "For My sake and for the Gospel." Jesus, Mark 10:29
2. True surrender and obedience to Jesus (following Jesus) is a personal explicit preference for Jesus Christ Himself.

- a. "I want to give myself to God to be delivered from sin, because I want to be made holy."
- b. Being delivered from sin and made holy are results of being right with God but surrender and obedience resulting from this perspective is not the true nature of Christianity.

*Our motive should not be for any personal gain, not to get something from God but simply for God Himself. Many of us have a vision of what that means but lack the actual experience.

B. Our objective

1. To develop into a people who understand and reflect the mission of Jesus to the world, anchored up and dependent on Jesus alone.
 - a. "Understand and reflect": expressly from the Word of God void of any cultural or preferential additives
 - b. "Anchored up": one anchor in Christ, pulling away from all other anchors
 - c. "Dependent on": the vehicle of success is Jesus, not anything else, not dependent on station or circumstance
2. Mission = evangelism, discipleship, and community

*What this means is that at the end of the year, should you choose to accept, your understanding of Jesus' mission will result in a deeper and clearer reflection of Jesus in your life. You will be markedly different from what you are now. Not more like you but more like Jesus.

III. The roadmap

*Worldview: we have a political/national worldview, not a biblical worldview.

- A. Recover the biblical teaching and perspective of the spiritual reality of Creation - heavens (spiritual reality) and Earth (physical reality) our 6th sense
 1. Joshua 5:13

When Joshua was by Jericho, he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing before him with his drawn sword in his hand. And Joshua went to him and said to him, "Are you for us, or for our adversaries?" And he said, "No; but I am the commander of the army of the Lord. Now I have come." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped and said to him, "What does my lord say to his servant?" (Joshua 5:13-14)

2. Ephesians 6:10-20 (v 12)

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. (Ephesians 6:12)

3. Reshape our perspective so that we focus on the real rather than the perceived (Elisha and servant, 2 Kings 6)

B. A biblical and personal realization of the whole family of God

1. Revelation 7 and Galatians 3

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on

their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen."
(Revelation 7:9-12)

But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise. (Galatians 3:23-29)

2. Evangelism and conversion happens at an exceptional rate in the global South.
3. We will use our resources to connect with and learn from our brothers and sisters around the world.
 - a. Gaining a bigger picture of God
 - b. Reflect the church Jesus prayed for more accurately

*The missional response to seeing the world accurately through God's eyes

C. Prioritize evangelism

1. Newsom winery
2. Apologetics and evangelism
 - a. Apologetics has lost touch with evangelism. It has come to be all about argument and in particular about winning arguments rather than winning the hearts and minds of people.
 - b. Urgent need today is to reunite apologetics and evangelism, to make sure our best "arguments" are about winning people and not just winning arguments. And to seek to do this in a manner that is true to the Gospel itself.
3. Re-humanize
 - a. Restoring our vision (sight) and heart (feeling/desire) for people who haven't heard of or haven't yet accepted Christ
 - b. Dehumanizing culture - abortion, yet the church has done the same principle to people and groups that offend. We will re-humanize and rekindle our love for the lost.

D. Discipleship: strengthens souls, encouraging them, and facing tribulations (Acts 14:22)

1. Discernment: our 6th sense
 - a. Learning to think God's thoughts after Him, practically and spiritually; having a sense of how things look in God's eyes and seeing them in some measure as uncovered and laid bare. (Hebrews 4:13)

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from His sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of Him to Whom we must give account. (Hebrews 4:12-13)

*Note: Biblical discernment is very different than judgmentalism

- b. Four things:
 - 1) As a means of protecting, guarding us from being deceived spiritually (conspiracies, false teaching, wrong emphasis, bad exegesis, etc.)

- 2) As an instrument of healing when exercised with grace (seeing spiritual needs in others to help them, not just prove them wrong)
- 3) As a key to Christian freedom (how do I use my rights, etc. in a way that glorifies God and accomplishes Jesus' mission?)
- 4) As a catalyst to our spiritual development (Proverbs 14:6)

*We've replaced wisdom with information.

2. Discipleship pathway
3. Core of disciples well equipped who will develop others

*The goal of discipleship is to become like Jesus Himself: to think as He thought, to feel as He felt, to act as He acted, and to desire what He desired.

IV. Conclusion

A. I believe God is speaking clearly through His Word and His works.

1. We are accountable to seriously and urgently carry out the mission.
2. My conviction
 - a. Passion, Modesto Inn, and my future ...
 - b. That's where I am right now.
 - 1) Sure of what I am to do
 - 2) If I can't do it, the mission is more important than my tenure and legacy

B. Whose side are you on?

1. "Are you with me?" is not the right question
2. "Is this what God wants?" If yes, then ...
3. "Are you willing to join what God wants to do regardless of how you have to change or what it costs?"