

INCUBATION - B VIBRANT

Aligning with God's Purpose and Intention

[\[YouTube Link\]](#)

As we begin, let's demystify a few myths about church vibrancy.

Churches often say that they need two things:

More _____ and more _____.

They are confident that all their problems would be solved with more money and more people.

Although more people and more money, can be really good things, it is not the _____ for being a vibrant church.

There are churches with multi-million-dollar endowments that never need to pass an offering plate, and they can be oh-so-not vibrant. Money isn't where it's all at.

So, what does it take to be a vibrant church?

I used a word a moment ago that I want to say again. Conduit.

It is not a word that we use very often—but it's a word with an image. It means a _____ for conveying something.

Think of children and the cardboard tube from a roll of paper towels, or even those shorter ones from toilet paper. Can't you just picture a child, holding one of those up to their eye. Close one eye, look through that tube, and you have a focused vision. It is a conduit for _____.

Here it is. To be vibrant, a church must be a conduit for the purpose and intention of God. A VIBRANT CHURCH MUST BE A CONDUIT FOR THE PURPOSE AND INTENTION OF GOD. It has to be a *CHANNEL* for the *purpose* and *intention* of God.

To be a conduit for the purpose and intention of God a church has to know what is the _____ and _____ of God.

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There is where we often fall short and we go to the easy places. The easy place is that the we go to our default solutions – more money, and more people – not bad things, but not necessarily the place we start.

We start with knowing what is the purpose and intention of God and how do we be a conduit for that as the church – that is what being vibrant looks like.

Let's incubate on that for a bit and see what germinates with this idea that the church is to be a conduit for the purpose and intention of God.

Presbyterians are a church body that has a _____. That constitution contains a Foundations section—that section of the Constitution is what everything else is built upon.

In it – right on page 2 it says:

“The Church is the Body of Christ.” (Yes, right out of Scripture) – and it goes on to say these words: “Christ give to the Church all the gifts necessary to be his body. The Church strives to demonstrate these gifts in its life as a community in the world.”

A *COMMUNITY IN THE WORLD* – those are great words. Not an enclave apart from the world or an escape from the reality of the world—no, a community _____ the world.

And it says:

The Church is to be a community of faith, a community of hope, a community of love, and a community of witness.

How does the Church be a conduit of God's purpose and intention? It lives as a community of _____, _____, _____ and _____.

God's purpose and intention is that we _____ by being a community of faith. The Foundations of the Presbyterian Constitution say this of being a community of faith, *“entrusting itself to God alone, even at the risk of losing its life.”*

Entrusting itself to God alone – not entrusting itself to the amount of money it has in the bank or having the nicest building, or even a building at all. Entrusting itself to God alone? What

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does your church put its trust in? I've been in many a meeting where the financial report feels more like the place where trust is being put.

What is the purpose and intention of God. – that we peer through that conduit and see that our trust is in God alone and not in other things.

A community of faith.

A community of hope. It says in the Foundations:

“The Church is to be a community of hope, rejoicing in the sure and certain knowledge that, in Christ, God is making a new creation.”

That sense that God is doing something _____...that in Christ even the wonder of the Garden is being restored. That happens at the initiative of God and even at the labor of our hands, minds, and hearts.

What is the purpose and intention of God - that we peer through that conduit and see that we are the very conduit through which God works to transform this creation into a new creation. That happens out there – yes, in our pew, but the real transformation happens out there in neighborhood which is the garden being restored.

A community of faith. A community of hope.

A community of love. Yes,

“A community of love, where sin is forgiven, reconciliation is accomplished, and the dividing walls of hostility are torn down.”

What is the purpose and intention of God – that we peer through that conduit and see God's intention that all those walls, all those divisions, all those labels, all that them and us is not there...that is not part of Being Vibrant.

A community of love.

A community of faith, hope, love, and witness.

A community of witness,

“pointing beyond itself through word and work to the good news of God's transforming grace in Christ Jesus its Lord.”

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Pointing beyond itself. Oh we point to ourselves so much in the life of the church. Indeed, as things have gotten smaller and more challenging we turn in. No. That is not the direction.

Pointing beyond itself – that is the work – that we point beyond, reach beyond, grow beyond ourselves. We like “come and see,” when it really is more, “Go and tell.”

What is the purpose and intention of God – that we become that conduit. That we point beyond ourselves. That we have no walls of division, that we live in the present as if the Garden of Eden has been restored, and that entrust it all to God – the Church and ourselves too.

So how are you doing? How vibrant are you?

How is the church a community of faith?

How is it a community of hope?

How is it a community of love?

How is it a community of witness?

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All of that happens as we reach beyond, reach out, and step out. Such community grows in a church that is more than inward focused. It understands its life and work in the intention of God's purpose for the Church *to live its life in the world*.

When we build such community in the world then we are about God's mission. God's purpose. God's intention.

When we live into that – God's mission, God's purpose, God's intention – we are _____.

The missional church is the vibrant church.

Incubate on that – in what ways is my church a missional church? How is it about God's mission, God's purpose, God's intention?

Incubate on that. B Vibrant.