

Oasis Core Value #1 – Outward

By Derek R. Iannelli-Smith, August 2008

This is part one of a 5-part series on the topics of Outward, Authentic, Serving, Incarnational, and Simple, the core values of Oasis... a non-denominational church plant in Goose Creek, SC.

The heart of being 'outward' is the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ to ourselves and our city and the growing awareness of WHERE God has placed us. Being 'outward' is not another program of the 'church', but a mentality of humility, intentional engagement and investing in others. Because we have been shown great mercy, we do not hold onto that revelation. We do not 'have' to share it, we do not 'want' to share it, we "get to" share it with others. Scott Thomas of Acts 29 Network wrote in 2006,

"A missional church is a theologically-formed, Gospel-centered, Spirit-led fellowship who seeks to faithfully incarnate the purposes of Christ. The mission of the church is found in the mission of God who is calling the church to passionately participate in God's redemptive mission in the world (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8)."

Using Scott's outline, I think he does a PERFECT job outlining characteristics of what an 'outward' church looks like with some personal further emphasis edits;

1. A outward church primarily understands the centrality of the gospel (1 Cor. 15:1-4; 2:2; Gal. 6:14). We have been broken by the knowledge of our sin, and even greater knowledge of Jesus Christ's obedient atoning mercy and grace. We are people who are the most confessional and repentant without excuses (Col. 3:13).
2. A outward church embraces the calling of God to act as a ambassador into its own culture (Mt. 4:19; Acts 16:20; 17:6). Its members approach natural relationships, activities, community, and occupation or school as opportunities to influence for the gospel. We do not need to go to another country (although international missions are needed, we should be grieved that mission agencies are sending missionaries to the US now!!!) because we do not even know our neighbors, towns, cities, and states in which we live. We get involved.
3. A outward church acknowledges its purpose is to glorify God by taking Jesus Christ into the irreligious world (Mt. 28:18-20). It is not self-absorbed in its own life but rather absorbed in the life-giving call of Jesus Christ. Getting involved with others, many times is messy. But relationships are a mess worth making as God uses them to sanctify us and others.

"Biblical evangelism emphasizes the faithful following of Christ over and above an on-the-spot response. That is to say that we are commanded to make disciples, not entice decisions. The emphasis is not on procuring a sinner's prayer, a raised hand, or an altar call. The emphasis is on making fully-equipped disciples of Christ and teaching them to obey all that Christ commanded in submission to His Lordship." -- Unknown

4. A outward church boldly and intentionally encounters unbelievers like Christ (Luke 7:34; Acts 16:20; 17:6). Its goal is not separation but redemption without compromised values. The best out working of this in scripture is the woman at the well in John 4, "But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." So the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought him something to eat?" Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work. (Joh 4:32-34 ESV)

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5. A outward church actively seeks to be trained and equipped as a ambassador through its gospel community (Eph. 4:11-16). Every member is personally equipped to engage friends and neighbors with the gospel because they, themselves have been impacted by the gospel (Gal. 2:20)
6. A outward church is deeply dependent upon the Holy Spirit as an agent for evangelizing the lost world (Acts 1:8; 4:8, 31; 13:9). Lost people are saved by the Holy Spirit when and how He determines.
7. A outward church commits to the authoritative, infallible, inerrant, inspired, all-sufficient Scriptures (2 Timothy 3:14-17; Acts 2:42). The authority of all ambassador work is founded in the truth that God has a clear Word to communicate to the world.
8. A outward church develops relationships with the lost for the purpose of incarnating Christ (Matt. 5:13-16). It seeks to intentionally develop meaningful relationships with the numerous acquaintances in their lives.
9. A outward church uses sacrificial love as its means of witness (John 15:12-17; 1 John 4:19-21). Every believer is constrained to practically and sincerely demonstrate extravagant love to non-believers.
10. A outward church helps others to find Jesus in their own way and timing, without using manipulative tactics or fruitless discussions (1 Cor. 9:20-23; 1 Tim 1:3-4). It is the sovereign God who uses us as we humbly relate to other's misperceptions of the gospel. We are patient, kind, and non-antagonistic as we realize that Jesus Christ 'loves them too' (2 Tim. 2:24-26).

"Jesus is not a vending machine that dispenses what we want to feel good about ourselves. He is the Holy One who comes to cleanse us, fill us, and change us. He does not do this according to our agendas. He will not serve our wayward needs. He loves us too much to merely make us happy. He comes to make us holy." Tim Lane, Executive Director of Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation, helps put a better understanding on change, in his book, 'How People Change'.

11. A outward church is affected in every area of its life through a calling by God to be an agent for the gospel (Acts 4:13, 31-35). As the gospel redeems our lives it changes us and challenges us toward God's call.
12. A outward church practices its faith in community-groups of people together (Acts 2:42-45; Phil. 1:27). It seeks to participate in true community through care groups like our triune Godhead. *And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. (Act 2:45 ESV)*
13. A outward church worships God in an authentic, personal and evangelistic way (John 4:23-24). We worship a Savior who left us here to be captured by His call.

From our friends at Sovereign Grace Ministries, they lovingly remind us of some cautions (1 Pet 2:12-15) which is desperately needed:

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1. Missional Churches Tend to Be Mission-Centered Rather Than Gospel-Centered. 1 Cor. 15:1 -3. A trinity of questions we will be asking regarding our 'center' are as follows (thank you Kaleo Church);
 - a. What is the purpose/goal/vision of the ministry? Do these goals agree with the Bible? Are those involved in the ministry aware of the theological convictions guiding their ministry? Have we taught on these areas as needed?
 - b. Is the ministry grace centered? What is the motivational structures people use to serve in the ministry? Is it the gospel? Does the ministry take the needs of the people into account?
 - c. What people, systems, resources does the ministry need? What needs to happen to improve the ministry? What development, training or other coaching would benefit the people involved?
 2. Missional Churches Tend to Have a Reductionistic Ecclesiology. Meaning that in being outward, it would become another method or program and the importance worship, spiritual growth, and edification would be marginalized. Or said another way, making other 'things' the main thing rather than the 'main thing' being the main thing!
 3. Missional Churches Tend to Confuse Culture Engagement with Cultural Immersion Matt. 10:16.
 4. Missional Churches Tend to Downplay the Institutional and Organizational Nature of the Church. Acts 6:1-7; I Cor. 14:40. Being outward does not mean we are reactionary, caustic, or prideful when it comes to engaging our culture or other believers. We do not compare our 'church' to other 'churches' or other teachers. We really have not got it all figured out. This is Jesus' church and He will grow it...He is the senior pastor. *"An organic church is a living, breathing, dynamic, mutually participatory, every-member functioning, Christ-centered, communal expression of the body of Christ"*. - Frank Viola
 5. Missional Churches Tend to Have an Insufficient Understanding of Apostolic Ministry. John 20:21; Eph. 4:8-16. Essentially a lack of understanding of multiplication, church planting, and discipleship.
 6. We Want to Avoid Identifying Our Churches as Missional and Maintain a Self-Designation of Gospel-Centered or Cross-Centered.
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E-mail devotional:

Saints,

I just wanted to let you know that I am thankful and praying for you. Below you will find this week's Inspirational E-mail. I pray you will enjoy it and forward this thought on to your friends as well as offer them an invitation to a 'church' this weekend. Thank you for taking a moment to read our weekly newsletter.

This week we start a 5-part devotional outlining the core values of Oasis. These 'devotionals' accompany articles that I will be posting on my [personal blog](#) if you desire to go deeper on the topic. This week's topic is OUTWARD. Because Christendom is enamored with the term 'missional', Oasis' desire is that we clarify that this is not just a 'buzz word' for us, but a call. It is not a church-growth method, Jesus will grow HIS church, we are along for the ride. So what is behind the core value of Outward?

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2. Something to drink...

*The heart of being 'outward' is the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ to ourselves and our city **and** the growing awareness of WHERE God has placed us. Being 'outward' is not another program of the 'church', but a mentality of humility, intentional engagement and investing in others. Because we have been shown great mercy, we do not hold onto that revelation. We do not 'have' to share it, we do not 'want' to share it, we "get to" share it with others.*

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6. We Want to Avoid Identifying Our Churches as Missional and Maintain a Self-Designation of Gospel-Centered or Cross-Centered.
7. We Want to Avoid Using Missionary Language to Describe the People of God.

What is Missional - A Short Answer

"Jesus told us to go into all the world and be his ambassadors, but many churches today have inadvertently changed the "go and be" command to a "come and see" appeal. We have grown

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attached to buildings, programs, staff and a wide variety of goods and services designed to attract and entertain people.

"Missional is a helpful term used to describe what happens when you and I replace the "come to us" invitations with a "go to them" life. A life where "the way of Jesus" informs and radically transforms our existence to one wholly focused on sacrificially living for him and others and where we adopt a missionary stance in relation to our culture. It speaks of the very nature of the



Jesus follower." ---Rick Meigs

Questions to ponder this week:

- a. Have you been a testimony this week to the greatness of Jesus Christ with both your words and actions?
- b. Do I thank God that I am not as other people, especially as the Pharisee who despised the publican?
- c. Are you a "go and be" or a "come and see" Christian?
- d. What are you going to do this week to "go to them"?

3. Admin stuff:

- a. We will be having a 'full meal' together as a tribe, which will also include the Lord's Table. Begin to prepare your hearts this week for the sacrament.
- b. We will be on week 3 of the [Future Church](#).
- c. Saturday morning we will be canvassing a neighborhood to begin inviting for the Aug 30th cookout.
- d. Men's Tribe will meet this week at 6:30pm at a local coffee shop. Write/call for details if you would like to attend. The tribe has decided this format for our time (it has been growing and changing each week...which is a good thing... 1) get something to drink 2) laugh, 3) opening prayer, 4) Whoever got asked a '[warm and fuzzy question](#)' last week, gets immunity this week, but is able to ask a W&FQ this week, but must... 5) pray for the brother who was asked the W&FQ specifically, 6) what is said in the group, stays in the group.

4. Prayer Requests (PR) and Community Needs (CN):

- a. Updated prayer requests can be found at: <http://oasisgc.wordpress.com/prayer-board-facts/>
- b. CN: A single father needs a car so that he can take care of his kids, and get a job.
- c. CN: A family requires some work on their A/C unity along with some parts.

stunned by the gospel,

Derek R. Iannelli-Smith

Oasis Website - <http://oasisgc.wordpress.com>

"Oasis...where relationships are a mess worth making..."

Facebook: http://www.facebook.com/people/Derek_R_Iannelli-Smith/1356726220

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