

**Title:** Narrative Missions

**Abstract:** Mission is one of the greatest chapters of the story of God. However, these chapters are often excluded from the priorities, focus, and storytelling of the local church. By elevating storytelling a new culture will emerge in which stories become a new currency.

These stories of mission will not only serve to catalyze the individual, but be spread throughout the church to catalyze the DNA of the entire congregation. In the same way, individuals will be shown that their story is tied to a larger narrative, therefore binding the *imago dei* with the *missio dei*, and then creating a sense of community and purpose.

**Terms:** *narrative, story, imago dei, missio dei, mission ID, reverse engineering discipleship, development.*

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**To access the Prezi that accompanies this paper, visit:**  
[https://prezi.com/f5xpkkx\\_9ki9/narrative-missions/](https://prezi.com/f5xpkkx_9ki9/narrative-missions/)

## Narrative Missions

**Scope:** To reprioritize missions in the local church by elevating stories.

**Goal:** To tell more enduring stories both at home and on the mission field.

### Connecting *Imago Dei* with *Missio Dei* 30,000-foot level

- We are all uniquely created to be used by God on mission.
- It is no coincidence that children, students, and adults carry certain proclivity towards particular interests and skills.
- For many there is an ever widening gap between the image of God within them, and using that created spark on mission.
- Finding the connection between image and mission is both **rediscovery and creation**. All people have a deficit, a brokenness that is only uncovered by the love of Jesus Christ and by living in community.
  - **Rediscovery:** All people were created unique. Uncovering the *imago dei*, and ridding it of layers of brokenness will reveal passions and purpose vital to living missionally.
  - **Creation:** All people were created to create. True discipleship is a life long endeavor.
- **Mission ID:** Through self-assessment, individually and in community, individuals will sort through what is covering their innate spark, and create systems to learn new methods that allow their skills and leanings to grow to fruition.
  - **Assessment Tools:** DISC, spiritual gifts, Strengths Finders, Emotional Intelligence, leadership mapping

### Reverse Engineering Discipleship 15,000-foot level

- Riding the post-modern pendulum, new methods must be employed to reach an ever-increasing post-Christian American church.
- By leveraging the millennial value of altruism, the local church may invite those outside into the church through mission.
- A Reprioritization
  - **Traditional attractional model:** People are targeted by churches with tools such as music, children, students, and preaching. Over time, the elite disciples sense a call to mission and take steps in that direction. However, mission remains, at best, an appendage of the church's strategy.
  - **Reverse Engineered Missional model:** Individuals are presented with diverse mission opportunities both locally and globally, that are tagged as a way for them to find their purpose and calling in life.
    - Mission becomes more than an appendage, but the core value of the local church.

- Individuals even outside the church (non-believers, local schools, the marketplace) are invited to join the local church on mission.
- Outreach into community and world, employing “shocking grace” will rattle perception of an agnostic generation.
- With a renewed perception of the local church, individuals will find that previously held altruism is a pillar of the Christian tradition.
- A new culture will grow in which individuals are becoming disciples through mission on a regular basis.
- No longer will only the elite be on mission, but mission will become integral to the story of every individual within the context of the narrative of the kingdom of God.

### Telling the story Ground level

- **Ministry Moments:** Each week tithing is tied to mission and discipleship from the platform. “When you give....”
- **Story sharing:** Individuals are encouraged to share God stories with one another and the church staff at [stories@saalemchurch.org](mailto:stories@saalemchurch.org).
- **Perspective Catalysts**
  - **Perspective Catalysts = Prepare + Go + Tell.** In other words, the entire process does not culminate in the “Go”, but in telling more enduring stories in country and on return.
  - **Key idea:** In America we are in desperate need for global perspective. Strategically, stories gathered from around the globe will be told to catalyze the local congregation.
  - **Goal: To tell more enduring stories on the mission field and at home.**
    - **Stories must be elevated both at home and abroad.**
    - The greater narrative is of all of God’s people pouring into one another and learning from one another.
  - **Training**
    - Team members will join in on four Salem meetings, and two partner meetings, beginning six months prior to the trip.
    - The four Salem meetings will cover; **Storytelling, Spiritual, Cultural, and Leadership Development.**
    - Going as storytellers and story collectors puts the American tendency towards **paternalism** into tension; therefore training will include *Helping Without Hurting* and other developmental lessons.
    - Major themes include storytelling, image of God, asset mapping, cultural differences, mentoring, and empowerment.

- **The Perspective Catalyst**
  - **Emerging leaders** who will covenant with the team and church to tell the story in diverse ways on returning.
  - **Scholarship.** The church will under-write half the cost of their trip.
  - The catalysts goal is to collect fresh perspective, to catalyze their own worldview as well as Salem Church.
  - Furthermore, the prayer is that at a pivotal point in their life mission will be inextricably tied to their faith.
  
- **Documentation**
  - Each trip will include dedicated documenters. These team members will be responsible for telling the story of the trip through video, pictures, and other creative elements.
  - **Scholarship:** The church will underwrite one-fourth of their trip.
  - The efforts of the documenter will relieve the distraction for members of the team who get caught in a tourist mind set on the trip and allow them to stay on task.
  - The documenter will be tasked with involving everyone on the team in storytelling.
  
- **Mentoring**
  - Each emerging leader will be required to enter a mentoring relationship with a more seasoned member of the team
  - Monthly meetings will take place starting six months before the trip, daily meetings on the trip, and at least two post-trip debriefs.
  - Mentors will be given resources to assist the perspective catalysts on their journey while always recapping the previous meeting.
  - The mentor's goal is to help their mentee navigate the task of tying *imago dei* to *missio dei*.
  
- **Storytelling**
  - On their return, perspective catalysts will be required to tell their story, shaped with help from their mentor, in at least three diverse arenas.
  - Arenas include: main stage, kidmin, stumin, adult classes, life groups, community organization, video, social media, etc....
  
- **Diverse Regions**
  - As our program develops and evolves our goal is to go deep with partners in diverse regions around the globe in order to enable more individuals to tie *imago dei* with *missio dei*.