

One Word Makes Your Mission Missional

One word. That's it... one word could mean the difference between your congregation merely liking – or really living – the church's mission. This idea surfaced last week on the latest [My Ministry Breakthrough](#) podcast.

Barrett Bowden, lead pastor of [Island Community Church](#) in downtown Memphis, and I discussed one word in their mission. Using “our” instead of “the” when talking about a calling to the world immediately made ICC's missional mandate intensively relevant to each person.

One word may seem minor, but imagine the difference between “being transformed by Jesus to impact **the world**” versus “being transformed by Jesus to impact **our world**.” One names an ethereal, general notion of outreach. The other forces people to consider how the Gospel will impact their neighbors, co-workers, and classmates – as well as distant people groups in other countries. As Barrett stated it:

“We should have that shared ownership of our local context, our neighborhood, but also distant peoples. God gives us, the local church, that burden... and opportunity. It is ours to own, and to joyfully see it, and then go after it.”

One word will make the difference between people smiling and nodding when you cast vision from the mission – or being moved to imagine and envision themselves on-mission in everyday life.

One word engages people beyond fellowship around a phrase into ownership of a purpose. Here are a few other church mission statements in which one simple word moves people from appreciation to invitation:

Visalia Christian Reformed Church in Visalia, California: **Grafting each person into Gospel shaped community**. Using the word each, instead of all or every, brings the object of the calling to know the unique individual, not merely a nameless group.

Calvary Christian Church in Burke, Virginia: **Guiding people to forge a life-long reliance on God**. Now renamed as Foundry Church, using the word guiding instead of helping leads every member of Foundry to both be forged and lead others to do the same. Guides cannot lead from the seats in worship, they have to be on the trails of life.

Northwoods Community Church in Peoria, Illinois: **Inviting broken-world people to experience complete freedom in Christ Jesus**. For Northwoods, it took courage to use broken-world instead of a safer, user-friendlier word like “all people” or “every person.” Naming this broken world draws every member into the understanding that “the world” is broken, “our world” is broken, and “my world” is broken, and therefore we must be actively inviting people to experience freedom in this brokenness.

St John Lutheran Church in Cypress, Texas: **Connecting our neighbors to true riches in Jesus.** Similar to Island Community Church, the word “our” in front of neighbors make it every person’s responsibility to connect in an upwardly mobile suburb of Houston, not just the staff’s.

Highland Park Baptist Church, Muscle Shoals, Alabama: **Mobilizing all people to live as Jesus-followers.** For HP, it was adding one word, the word “all” to an already well-established mission that shifted their focus from organizational purpose to an individual and missional mandate.

If one word could make a difference in your mission, it could just be an eternal one.

Auxano provides church leaders with a **free 30-minute vision assessment call** with one of our team of vision-crafting practitioners. To evaluate the words of your mission, [schedule an assessment call here](#), or shoot me an email with a specific question ([contact details here](#)).

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