

WRITING A "MISSION STATEMENT"

FOR THE WORKPLACE

(INCLUDING AN EXAMPLE)

WHY WRITE A "MISSION STATEMENT"?

A person *doesn't* have to write a formal statement about how he should perform his workplace duties. If he just maintains the attitude Jesus would have, if Jesus were in the same type of circumstances, that would be sufficient. One's success in doing this, however, will be dependent on his understanding of the Word of God. The better a person understands God's Word, and learns to live according to what it says, the better he will be able to do all things for the glory and honor of God.

However, though not an absolute necessity, a "formal statement," may sometimes be helpful for directing one's thoughts, or for helping a person focus on specific issues that may be at hand, in his own circumstances.

BACKGROUND

The sample Mission Statement, given below, was written a number of years ago, when mission statements were one of the latest "up and coming" buzz-words of many of the large corporations. All of a sudden, it seemed that corporations everywhere were writing mission statements. But since they considered God a "non-entity" in corporate affairs, they omitted some of the most important and binding principles - and some of the most basic reasons for having a mission!

Admittedly, they (the corporation) would claim that even if they *wanted* to include God (which they don't), they could not do so, because it would "promote religion" and would be "discriminatory" against all who held to differing views - along with all who claimed to not believe in any "god" at all. They would claim that they must keep their statements "neutral," as far as "religion" is concerned.

The Bible, however, does not promote such a view. It does not play "neutrality" games with us, for there is *no such thing* as a "neutral" attitude toward God. Instead, it warns us that all people everywhere will be held accountable to God for their actions - whether or not they claim to "believe" in him right now. It tells us that all people have at least some awareness of the true God of creation, though they instinctively try to suppress (or deny) that knowledge. (In reality, the claim of "neutrality" actually results in opposition to the God of the Bible, not a "neutral" attitude toward him.)

THE NATURE OF THIS SPECIFIC EXAMPLE

The following mission statement was developed within the context of a specific work place, one comparable to a chemical laboratory. In its present form, it has been slightly revised so as to make it more generalized, and also to leave the corporation anonymous. A person who wanted to write such a statement could use this one as a pattern, but he would have to modify it, adding specific principles that would make it more applicable to his own situation. Some parts of the statement could be greatly expanded - though they are presented here in an abridged form. (Some of the specific principles that would have been applicable in the original situation would be meaningless in a different kind of workplace.)

CAN A "CHRISTIAN" MISSION STATEMENT BE COMPATIBLE WITH A CORPORATION'S MISSION STATEMENT?

God, in his great kindness (his "grace"), enables even those who deny him to see at least some aspects of truth. So quite often, many parts of a Christ-centered mission statement can be written in a way that is compatible with a corporation's mission statement. At times the goals might look identical, at least on the surface. In many instances, the Christ-centered statement might be interpreted (by others) as simply "adding God" to the equation. It might be interpreted as being the same goal, but with a "religious flavor"!

There is, however, a radical difference between the corporation's statements and one based on the Bible. The corporation writes a mission statement hoping that the statement will somehow direct the employee's actions. And at times, these statements can actually do some good. But they can also encourage pretension and hypocrisy; for they are, at best, an "external" set of regulations which they try to superimpose upon the people: they are powerless to change the hearts and attitudes of the employees.

In contrast, a Bible-based mission statement, if carefully written, can be a document that the Spirit of God himself can empower his people to follow. Such a statement can be an expression of a changed heart; it can flow from a heart that seeks to follow God's ways. A Christian might not be totally successful in doing everything he includes in his mission statement, but he can be honest about his shortcomings and can continue striving to attain the goal. And as God develops him into a more Christ-like person, the Christian can improve both the content of his mission statement and his success in following it.

There are times, however, that certain aspects of the corporation's statement may have to be downplayed. In the situation for which the following statement was written, the corporation seemed to think that "complete perfection" was actually attainable, in certain (if not all) of its goals. If a Christian wants to maintain integrity, he will have to acknowledge that perfection does *not* exist in an imperfect world! *He* (the Christian) can acknowledge his weaknesses (because he

is striving to be honest), while *they* (the corporation) are promoting a mask of pretension (since they are living a lie).

Rarely will a person have to directly oppose parts of a corporation's mission statement. If it does become a necessity, one must be careful in how he articulates it. There may be situations in which something needs opposed, out of loyalty to God, but *the way the statement is worded* may strongly influence the way others react to what is said. Unnecessary problems should be avoided, if possible - that is, if it can be done without compromise! (In the following example, one statement did go directly against something the corporation said - though it was not a major issue.)

WE MUST BE FAITHFUL TO GOD

Ultimately, whether or not a person writes a formal statement describing his mission at his work place, *he must still perform his job in a way that honors God*. His greatest loyalty must be to God, not to his employer. And if at any time his employer wants him to do something that would require disobedience to the Bible, the employee would have to disobey *his employer*, rather than God. In an extreme situation, if a person's work place was totally incompatible with the ways of God, then *the person does not belong there*. For that matter, *nobody* belongs working there, for *all* people will stand before God at the final judgment. It would be better, if it were necessary, for a person to lose the whole world, because of his allegiance to God, than for him to lose his own soul.

EXAMPLE OF A MISSION STATEMENT

COMPREHENSIVE MISSION STATEMENT

PREMISE:

One of the teachers of religious law was standing there listening to the discussion. He realized that Jesus had answered well, so he asked, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?"

Jesus replied, "The most important commandment is this: 'Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is the one and only Lord. And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.' The second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' No other commandment is greater than these."

The teacher of religious law replied, "Well said, Teacher. You have spoken the truth by saying that there is only one God and no other. And I know it is important to love him with all my heart and all my understanding and all my strength, and to love my neighbors as myself. This is more important than to offer all of the burnt offerings and sacrifices required in the law."

Realizing this man's understanding, Jesus said to him, "You are not far from the Kingdom of God." (Mark 12:28-34a)

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Do for others what you would like them to do for you. This is a summary of all that is taught in the law and the prophets. (Matthew 7:12)

VARIOUS GOALS BASED ON THIS PREMISE:

GENERAL OBJECTIVES / GOALS:

[Based on the first command] My primary objective is to work as unto the Lord - to do all things in a manner that pleases him. (This applies to all areas of life, of course.)

[Based on the second command] My secondary goals, which are also important, include all of the following (and more):

- to perform my job in the best manner possible.
- to promote the quality of the product to the greatest extent possible (given the available supplies, the physical and material limitations that are present, etc.).
- to receive wages, etc., to provide for my family and for others.

I am fully aware that I will fall short of this goal. I will not reach 100% attainment to it. Therefore, as often as necessary, I will need to redirect my focus.

SOME SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES / GOALS:

- to explore, work with, and develop technology in whatever areas of God's creation that relate to [this specific type of product], thus displaying the power, wisdom, and design of the One who made it possible;
- to accept the technological boundaries that may already be built into this aspect of creation, and at the same time to have an openness to any technological possibilities not already known;
- to develop that technology in such a way as to be of benefit to the rest of mankind, keeping as minimal as possible any harmful side-affects of that technology.

>Doing this will be a demonstration of fulfilling the obligations expressed in the command to love one's neighbor as oneself.

>Doing this for God's honor will also be a demonstration of fulfilling the obligations expressed in the command to love God with all one's heart, soul, mind and strength.

CONCERNING VALUES, etc.:

The values to be expected (and encouraged) include all values that are the natural outcome of the above premise. The degree to which such values do NOT exist, is a measurement of the degree of failure to accomplish this goal.

Success will not be measured in monetary value alone (which would be idolatry), but by the TOTAL effect on others. On the other hand, my performance must be such that any lack of legitimate sales (if such a lack would exist) could not be rightfully attributed to negligence or wrongdoing on my part.

The rest of life shall not be sacrificed. This would be idolatry.

An employee's value exists not merely in the eyes of the customer (as [the company] claims), but in the eyes of God.

The above premise to this mission statement shall in no manner be violated.

If at any point some other "mission statement" contradicts this one, this mission statement has priority. This mission statement has precedence over all other "mission statements" of [the company].

If there are any failures or imperfections within this mission statement, the fault belongs to me and not to the premise stated above.