

HOPE
Partnership *for* Missional Transformation

Leading from the WHY

**Embracing God's Mission for your
project**

by Rev. Dr. Gilberto Collazo

The Declining Reality of Churches

- According to experts in the field approximately 90-95% of all congregations across denominational lines are in some form of decline.
- While there is still growth in sectors of some of the evangelical movements, it seems across the board in the US, the most rapid growth is occurring among communities of color and first generation churches.
- While the reasons for this decline are many, one of the most important factors seems to be a lack of clarity of the **purpose** of the congregation.
- Declining congregations seem to lack a clear understanding of their **God-given purpose**. This in turn leads to a loss of relevance as bearers of the good news in the community in ways that resonate with the people the congregation has been called to serve.



Leading from the WHY





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One of the most basic truths is, if you don't know where you want to go, does it really matter which path you take?

For a church to be a relevant, life-changing agent in the community, there needs to be a clear sense of purpose which in turn leads everything the church does.

As church planters you are offered the unique opportunity to “wire into the DNA” of this emerging God-given vision a clarity of the purpose for which this new church is being called into existence.



Embracing a new way of being/doing church

- Although growth, financial stability and adequate facilities play an important role in the development of vital congregations, ultimately **it is a clear understanding of what the church has been called to do in Christ's name what will allow a congregation (new or existing) to experience vitality and relevance and become a bold witness for today's world.**



- If the task of the church is to help people grow in their faith and to equip them to be disciples and deliverers of the gospel news, how do we articulate a story and a plan that allows us to live out our call to be the hands and feet of Christ in our communities?





Embracing a new way of being/doing church

- We cannot depend on the old economic models of being church.
- We cannot depend on people “coming to us”.
- We must flip our assumptions about what a church does in a post-modern environment.
- We have to stop asking questions that lead us nowhere.
- AND...we must rethink the Membership Model of being church.

So how do we reclaim our God-given purpose?



Jeremiah 29 : 11 - 13

¹¹For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. ¹²Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. ¹³You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.



Claiming our Why

- In order for us to reverse the decline of the church, which is probably the context of many of the congregations we represent, we need to name a new reality.
- To avoid the temptation of copying other's styles and strategies, we need to be clear in our calling and methods.
- If we are to find renewal and excitement in how we live and practice the gospel message, we need to think of our reason for being as church.
- The foundational piece to this is discovering what is our

- **WHY**

God's Plan is reflected in how we live out our WHY

- Defining the **Why**.
- We usually operate out of our mission statements.
(Can you name yours?)
- The main difference is that mission statements often focus on **what** an organization does, whereas purpose statements describe **why** they do it.
- **Mission statements** usually speak about “success”, while a **Why statement** speaks to purpose. This takes into account the social, emotional and spiritual benefits of the work that is being done.



How do we define the Why?

- The Why within our context refers to:
- **Those deep spiritual convictions we hold as individuals and as a congregation that guide all our actions, engagements and pronouncements. They are born out of biblical imperatives and have as a purpose the affirmation of the value of all human beings and the commitment to the task of restoration and transformation of all of God's creation.**

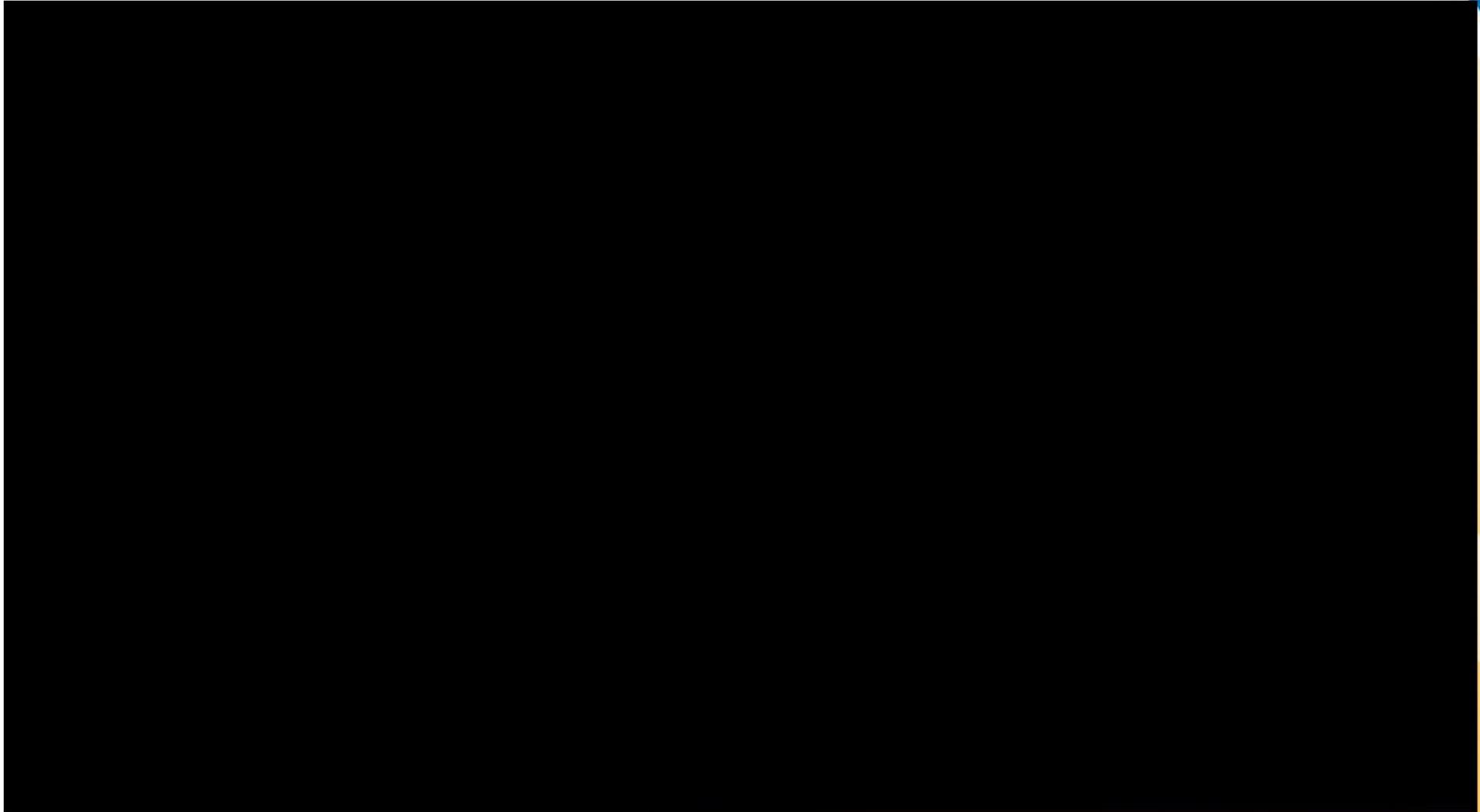


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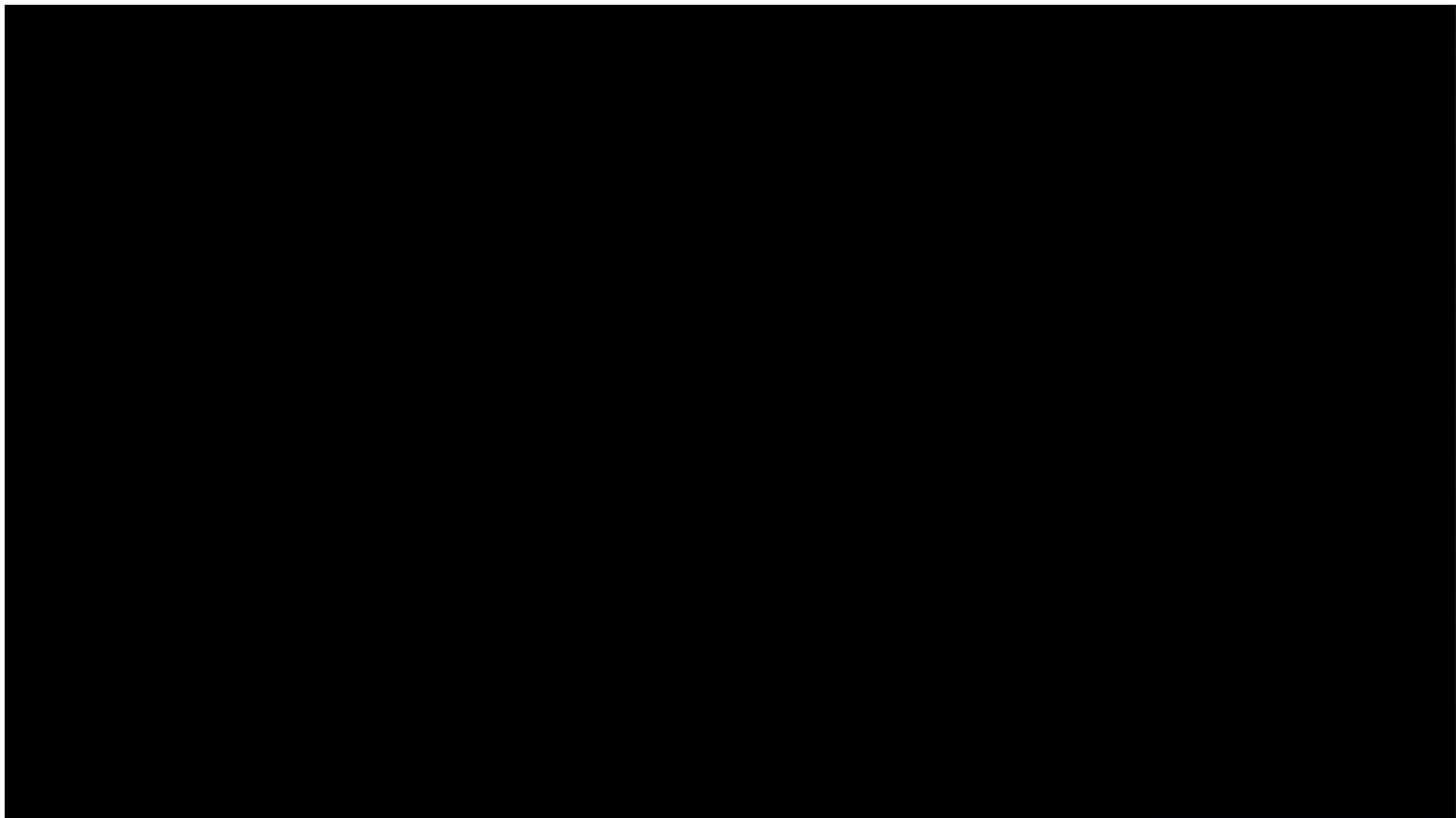




Living from the Why



Sharing Stories





In summary

- All churches have a purpose.
- Part of our ongoing task is to gain clarity of that purpose
- That purpose will be fueled by a clear sense of our **Why**.
- The living out of that purpose should result in **empowered, equipped believers and followers of Christ fully engaged in community transformation, as well as a community engaged with the church developing their full contextual potential.**



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