

a Resource Guide for the “90-day micro-strategy”

Excerpted from “Facilitators Guide for Ministry & Mission Conference”

(Content contributed by Dwight Zscheile, Dave Logan, Robbin Whittington and others)

**ADAPTED WITH PERMISSION FROM THE EDITOR, ROBBIN BRENT WHITTINGTON
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Strategy Mapping

We can use strategy mapping as a tool to help us map out and live into God's promised future, rather than our current default future. Strategies are a bridge from a default future to an invented future that honors our values and highest aspirations, both individually and communally. We call these maps micro-strategies because much experience has proven that it is essential to take small, steady steps in the direction we want to be traveling. Otherwise we risk the likelihood that we may dream big and yet have no way of planning, implementing, or testing our assumptions about how we can live into that future.

So, how do we get started? The 90-day micro-strategy is an effective tool for personal and communal transformation. In his book, *Tribal Leadership*, Dave Logan describes specific steps involved in creating effective strategy maps with a deadline. (Note, the process has been introduced by Logan; we have added theological language for our particular use.)

Acknowledge the core values of the group and its vision. Do this by asking questions about what we stand for and deeply value, and what we live for.

Have three separate conversations.

1. Discern and Commit to a specific **outcome** (what God wants).
2. Explore and list the **gifts and abilities** and resources God with which God has equipped us.
3. Commit to specific **actions** in order to move toward the outcome.

Two important notes from Dave: 1. Most progress toward the 90-day outcome/mission will take place between days 41 and 80, so don't be discouraged if progress is slow to observe and measure at the beginning. And, from *Tribal Leadership*, an outcome is very different from a goal. "A goal refers to something off in the future, and implies a failure in the present; an outcome, is a present state of success that morphs into an even bigger victory over time. The difference is the contrast between 'I hope we make it—it'll be great when we turn this around' (setting a goal) and 'we have already succeeded, and this is how it looks at this point in the process' (succeeding now with an outcome)."

The strategy mapping system is self-correcting when used as intended. If we choose an outcome that's not in alignment with our deepest values, or if it requires something we don't feel called to do, then we will get feedback from the process that is both realistic and valuable. We can choose at any point in the process to either acquire an missing assets, or we can go back to our core values and vision to help guide us into what God is calling us to do and be in the world. We need to continually ask ourselves, "What is God up to in the world?" and, "How has God equipped me/our community to help with his vision and hope for the world?"

"There are countless Episcopalians who have enormous gifts to offer the church as it participates in God's mission. Too often, those gifts remain undiscovered and under-utilized. Helping people to hear God's call, discern how God has shaped them for ministry, and share in the church's life and leadership is critical."

—Dwight Zscheile, from *People of the Way*

We offer one example strategy map using the concepts from Dwight's book to guide the map; and one in which we begin to think about and name Jesus' core values and noble cause or vision.

This is a valuable tool and a resource for helping us to sustain our focus, our passion, and our commitment.

Core Values

Core Value is whatever is most important to you as a child of God. Core values are our spiritual fuel; they are what matter so deeply to us that without them, life wouldn't be worth living.

It also helps to consider who has inspired us; even asking what historical figure we'd most like to emulate; or what we want people to remember most about us after we're gone.

Revisiting the past is one way to discover core values. We have included an activity: Mountains and Valleys, to help us record the life changing events and major milestones from our lives that point directly to our core values. We can easily find our core values by noticing which values are touched upon or triggered when remembering the high and low experiences—our Mary and Martha experiences—from our past.

Vision

A shared vision will be a statement that expresses the highest aspirations for the group. A shared vision will be a pronouncement of a future state that will happen through a communities' coordinated actions. It will be bigger than what one person can do alone, no matter how many people are offering technical support; it requires people's best efforts and passions.

The reason to find a shared vision is that it will give us a vision that transcends individual differences, produces alignment and an environment where we can partner with people we don't even like. It unites the community. It is at its heart about alignment.

According to Logan, "The second technique to setting a noble cause is to ask what we call the Big Four Questions. As we watched leaders do their work, we noted that they tended to ask, "What's working well?" "What's not working?" "What can we do to make the things that aren't working, work?" and "Is there anything else?" These questions capture a group's current assessment of its situation and its aspirations about what should change and why." Continue to ask these questions.

This process and journey is a call to personal and communal transformation; to a new conversation. And if we can call out shared values, a noble cause, and an outcome that is bigger than any one of us, we will be inspired to participate in a committed communal effort (even working alongside those we don't like in day-to-day life) to move toward the shared future to which God is calling us.

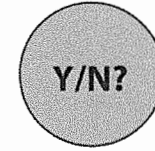
Missional Vision: Cultivating attentiveness to God’s presence and movement in our midst and beyond us, especially in the lives of our neighbors.

Sample 90-day Micro-Strategy Map using principles from Dwight Z.

Due Date: 7 / 15 / 12

Outcome/Mission

Host at least two community gatherings to organize two “plunging” teams that will spend time at the Community Center in order to get to know the people who live nearby. The teams will ask questions about the hopes, dreams, challenges and opportunities of the surrounding area.



List every gift and strength you have:

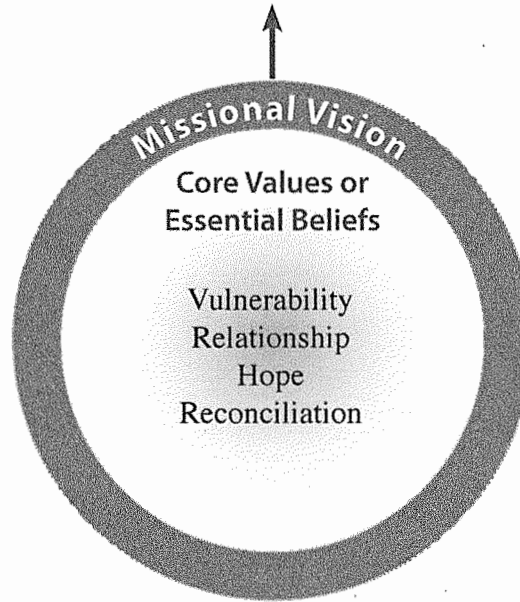
List everything you will do:

GIFTS

ACTIONS

- Biblical warrant: Luke 10:1–9.
- Congregational strengths/spiritual gifts in hospitality, prayer, service.
- Twenty people in congregation who are committed to this outcome.
- Many books written about this that we can use as resources and inspiration.
- Many relational connections with neighbors in wider community.
- Holy Spirit’s presence and guidance.

- Create sub-strategy to offer opportunities for community conversation around this topic.
- Invite members of community to engage in plunging at the Community Center that is located a block from the church.
- Contact members (phone calls) of the five neighboring church to invite them into this conversation and experience.
- Create an announcement to share with churches for a Sunday bulletin or e-announcement.



Find/discover gifts and/or people with necessary gifts:

- Critical mass in the community who want this outcome (20% of active average Sunday attendance).
- Ask three more people to host community gathering in their neighborhoods.

Pitfalls or Untested Assumptions:

- That people are looking for a church and that they will know how to find us—that we can simply welcome them when they show up (especially if they look and act like us).
- That people come to us already Christian, and that we can just make them church members.
- That everyone must learn our charming and antiquated customs and language, rather than claiming more deeply the vernacular principle that lies deep in our Reformation heritage of translating the church’s life into the language of the people, even as language and culture change.
- Our historical approaches to mission tend to assume a place of privilege, where we dispense resources or power from the center, as benefactors.

Missional Vision: A statement that expresses God's deepest yearning; God's highest aspirations for us as a community. That which we are aiming for. The one essential thing (Martha and Mary). A pronouncement of a future state that will happen through a community's committed actions.

90-day Micro-Strategy Template with Instructions

Due Date: ____/____/____

Outcome/Mission: (What God wants from us; what God is up to in the world)

Think about where you are you now and where you want to be in a certain time frame.

What is the outcome you would like to achieve? Make sure the outcome is S.M.A.R.T.:

- Specific: You need a clear and specific goal. Something you can use as a mission statement
- Measurable: How will you know you've reached your goal? You need something measurable.
- Attainable: Can you achieve this outcome within your time frame?
- Relevant: Is this outcome important to you; to God?
- Time-bound: Need a specific time frame to reach your outcome.



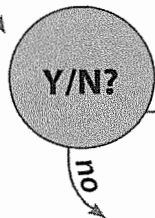
List every gift and strength you have:

(The particular gifts and resources with which God has equipped you and your community to fulfill God's calling for you and your community):

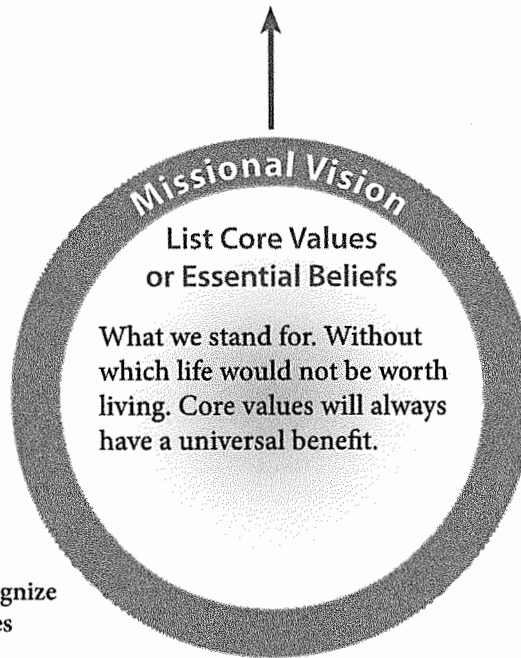
Identify the assets you currently possess that would help you achieve your desired outcome. For example, an asset can be any of the following:

- Networks of relationships: professional, personal, familial
- Education / certifications
- Available sources of education
- Applied knowledge or skills
- Life and work experiences
- Available budget
- Available sources of funding
- Available equipment
- Discernment and other Awareness Practices

Ask: "Do we have and recognize all of the gifts and resources we need to accomplish the outcome?" If "yes," go on to Actions; "no," identify what's missing and build sub-strategies for each asset you want to acquire. When the answer is "yes," proceed to Actions.



Find/discover gifts and/or people with necessary gifts:
Identify any gifts or strengths you need in order to achieve the desired outcome. These will become outcomes for sub-strategies.



List everything you will do:

(Our Apostolic actions; from "Apostle," which means, "One who is sent"):

What actions, strategies or behaviors do you need to carry out to achieve God's desired outcome? List specific ways you are being sent. The specific ways you are being called out into the world to fulfill God's mission and purpose.

Actions can be any of the following:

- Actions to acquire missing assets
- Actions to achieve the outcome
- Sub Strategies you need to create in order to acquire missing assets
- New life habits you need to acquire
- Discernment and other Awareness Practices

ACTIONS

Pitfalls or Untested Assumptions:

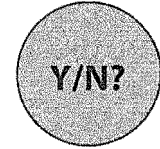
This is the place to identify any existing habits or beliefs that are preventing you from achieving the desired outcome.

Missional Vision: _____

90-day Micro-Strategy Template

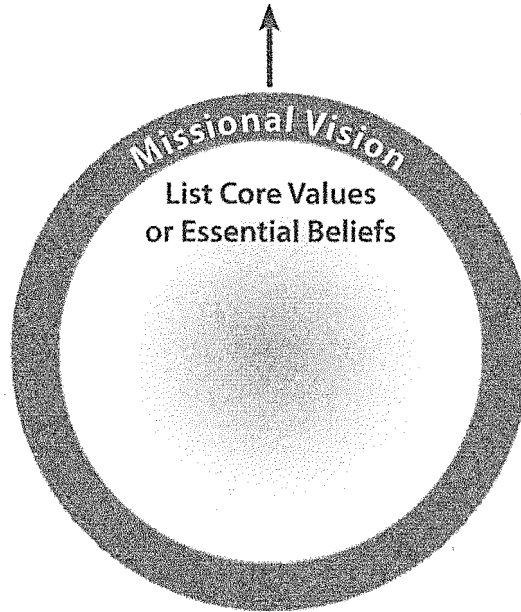
Outcome/Mission

Due Date:



List every gift and strength you have:

List everything you will do:



G
I
F
T
S

A
C
T
I
O
N
S



yes

no

Find/discover gifts and/or people with necessary gifts: _____

Pitfalls or Untested Assumptions: _____