

ME

I have the privilege of helping run the Space, this building that you are sitting in right now. During the week, we use this building as a conferencing centre where we hire out the place for conferences and events. And it can be easy to see that as just a money-making function. But that's only a small part of why we do this. What we do is provide an excellent service that also gives us inroads into the business world that we would otherwise not get as a church. Every year, Norfolk Chamber of Commerce runs its annual B2B exhibition, a forum for businesses to present themselves to other businesses. And every year, we now receive 2 invites, 1 for the Space and 1 for Church to go and be part of the exhibition. This is an incredible opportunity, and we are the only faith or even community group that is present there. And this came about because about 15 years ago, Pastor Tom set forth a vision for our church. He captured in the 'Church I see' document that he wrote 15 years ago and is available on our website for everyone to see. It's a powerful and thrilling document that is as relevant now as it was when it was first written. And 2 of the lines in that document that really stood out to me, I think centre around a similar theme.

I see an innovative, creative church filled with pioneers, groundbreakers and inventive people who will stir the hearts and minds of a generation inspiring people to fulfil their destiny in the world around them.

...

I see a church that serves our community and beyond with the belief that what grows out of our church will have significant implications around the world.

The vision of our church has always been to have significance. Our church has always aimed to be a force for positive change in society, to have influence in the community around us. It was this vision that pushed us to set up a social enterprise that would create opportunities for us to sit at the table in spheres that churches are usually not expect to be in.

Our church has always been outwardly focused, in the way that we as a community act, but also how we want the individuals in our church to be prepared to fulfil their destiny and impact the world around them.

I remember sitting in a dinner party, or connect group as we called them back then, with Phil Temple and trying to convince one of the most shy girls that I had ever met that she should join welcome team. Much to the surprise of both of us, this girl actually agreed and jumped on team that next Sunday. About a year later, that same shy girl that would never voice her opinion, that would shy away from any interaction with people and who would sit at the back quietly was actually on stage during a student welcome party, sharing how she had found a home at Proclaimers.

There are so many things that church offers us. But one thing I think we often underestimate is how the vision of our church push us to see people step up as leaders that also have the ability to influence their own world. That the skills, character and opportunity to develop abilities actually sets people apart in the world today.

And I think that's one of the things that attracted me most to our church. So often Church is thought of as just a bunch of people that meet in an old building on a Sunday. But I believe that Church has a much bigger role to play. I believe that Church and the people that make up that Church should be influencing society at every level. I believe that we as a church should aim to be significant to the local community. I believe that even as individuals we should aim to make a difference.

WE

And I think this vision resonates within everyone here because I think there is something inside of everyone that wants to be significant. That there is an intrinsic desire within us to be part of shaping our world.

Regardless of who you are or where you've come from. Even if you wouldn't call yourself a Christian, or even believe in God. Everyone wants their life to matter.

Maybe you have always wanted to be someone that is held in high esteem by the people you deal with. That your friends would come to you when they have problems, that they would consult you because they know you can provide wisdom and insight, that people would trust you because they know of your character.

Or how about just setting things up so that the next generation, can have the best platform to start their futures from. Whether that your children, or like our amazing kids team, helping other people's children. Maybe you want to do whatever it takes to ensure that they live a good life.

I'm sure that there are people here that want to make money so that they can finance good things, provide services to society, to do well in business not just so that they have a good bank account balance but because they can use that to create a legacy.

I know so many people in the room that have already committed to helping people, even at the lowest levels of society. People that have full-time jobs in charities and social enterprise, and also people that give up any spare time they can to help those less fortunate.

Very often we have social justice projects that come up and its inspiring to see how people respond. Maybe you felt that burning desire to eradicate slavery when you walked in the A21 walk for freedom, or you diligently organised Christmas Hampers at your workplace so that you could provide another family that wouldn't get to celebrate Christmas the chance to do so.

There are so many causes we see in the news or on social media - refugees, climate crises, war, discrimination, the list is endless. And theres a feeling on the inside that you want to do something about it.

I believe there are people in this room that want to solve problems. That want to act when they see something wrong.

## GOD

We were created to influence this world. God made us so that we could have an impact on people and situations. Right from the very start of creation, when God created man, the Bible tells us that, **Genesis 1 “28 God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”** From the beginning, mankind was given authority, responsibility and power to rule over all living creatures. God started mankind off on a journey where they were influential, were people were designed to have lives of purpose and impact.

And God was intentional. Every single person is created uniquely and designed intentionally. In Jeremiah 29: 11, it says, **“11 For 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.”** Gods design was intentional. He made you as you are. As you should be. Even King David recognised how incredible God personal design was and was inspired to write

**13 For you created my inmost being;  
you knit me together in my mother’s womb.**

**14 I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;  
your works are wonderful,  
I know that full well.**

**15 My frame was not hidden from you  
when I was made in the secret place,  
when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.**

**16 Your eyes saw my unformed body;  
all the days ordained for me were written in your book**

before one of them came to be.

David's emphasis again resting on this revelation that God had created him intentionally. That he was Made for a purpose. Designed specifically to live out a life set before him by a God that has a unique plan for his life.

The Bible keeps on showing us again how humans were intended to be creatures of action. To be involved in changing the world around us. In the great commission, Jesus instructs the disciples with him at the time but also anyone to come that would see themselves as a follower of Jesus to (Matthew 28) 19 “go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” An instruction to stop humans sitting back on a life of mediocrity, but rather to inspire then to go and fulfil the life of significance that each and every one of us is called to.

Our authority is renewed by the power of Jesus, as we are given the ability to in Jesus name stand against all attacks from the enemy, opposition and situations we may encounter. As Jesus sent his disciples out, he declared, Luke 10:19 I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you.” Despite the importance that God has placed upon us, we will still be met with opposition, problems and issues. But if you accept Jesus' authority then you also receive authority from him to stand against any such force that comes against you. The power of Jesus is unrivalled. The power he offers us can even defy the laws of nature and science as we know it. The book of Acts accounts how the disciples, Peter and John were walking through the temple when a man, lame from birth stops them to beg for money. Peter says to the man (Acts 3:6) “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.” Immediately the man gets up and dances out of the Temple gates.

The Bible, and history itself, is full of examples of how humans that recognise the authority that God has given them, step up to change the world in the most incredible, and even unlikely ways.

Historical accounts of people that were intentionally and specifically designed. Of humans created to walk in authority and who carried the power to overcome anything thrown at them. Accounts of individuals who recognised that God had called them to live a life of significance, garnered influence and maybe even changed the world.

People, Specifically chosen, empowered and created to influence people and situations they encounter.

When you read stories like this, you realise that we were made for far more than just sitting at home watching netflix.

We were designed for significance.

We were created to make a difference.

We were made to change this world.

YOU

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I see a church that serves our community and beyond with the belief that what grows out of our church will have significant implications around the world.

God created us to be people who are influential, powerful, with the ability to change things.

#1 Our Identity

#2 Our Innovation mindset

#3 Our Influencers

#1 Our Identity

But to enable us to live up to the lives that God has called us to we need to always ensure that we acknowledge that it is in God that we find our identity.

If we do not accept that God created and designed us uniquely and specifically then our confidence in our purpose to be significant can be shaken.

If you find your identity in your own ability and strength then you will achieve only what you can achieve. But if you can recognise the authority and power that God has placed on you then you can far exceed what your own ability should be because its no longer based on your strength but His.

If you are willing to live by what God says about you rather than how things look around you at the time then you are moved into a position of faith.

Maybe you are here today and you don't know what God has said about you. Can I encourage you to find out more about this. Throughout the Bible, God says things that are so profound and personal that they can even speak to you today.

David, wrote psalms, essentially poems, that reminded him that 'he was fearfully and wonderfully made.' And I don't know if David was using this as positive affirmation but sometimes we need to remind ourselves of who we are in Jesus. There are so many Bible verses that can help you maintain your confidence during harder times.

I remember writing Joshua 1:9 on a picture and using that as my background on my phone during a time when I felt really unsure about my future. And it helped me because everytime I opened my phone I saw the words **"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the**

**LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."** And it would regularly remind me that "Ok, Gods got this."

And maybe thats something that could help you. Write a specific verse or promise that God has given you and stick it somewhere you will always see it. Or everyday as you wake up, remind yourself that God is still in control.

You need to remember who you are in God. Who He says you are. How He has a future in store for you.

## #2 We have the ability to Innovate

If we want to be people of significance, If we want to see change that ripples through our local community and beyond then we need to actively involved in causing that change.

Every single person here has the ability to innovate. Regardless of how you see yourself, you have the ability to innovate.

I like Pastor Tom's definition of Innovation best. And that's innovation: A new answer to an old problem.

We all encounter issues everyday. But what's key is our mindset to these problems. When you do come across something, do we look to see if you can provide an answer or are we content with allowing things to remain the way they are.

In the 1960's, the US were afraid that a soviet missile attack could wipe out the phone system and therefore render the US military unable to communicate during a Russian attack. An American MIT & ARPA scientist, Licklider, proposed a 'galactic network' of computers that could talk to us, thus starting the birth of the ARPANET, or what we now know as the Internet.

In the 1990's, Tim Berners-Lee became frustrated by the difficulty in locating information and found a way to turn the internet from just a means of communication

into a web of information that anyone could retrieve, now known as the world wide web.

In 1995, Pierre Omidyar started ebay as a way to 'democratise commerce' so that small businesses and individuals could stand toe to toe with large retailers.

All of these examples started with someone faced with a problem and finding a new way to solve it. But the truth is each of us are faced with problems that we can find new answers to.

Here a really easy example of something that me and Jason came up with this last week. Every week, when home team sets up the chairs in the morning, we have a problem when it comes to the sides. Trying to keep that angle consistent throughout all the rows is a nightmare. So we now have this gadget. (Laser liner attached to stick) This rudimentary tool now allows us to draw a line across the floor that will be consistent for each row.

Now I don't know if this idea will exactly change the world but it helps us develop a mindset that looks for innovation.

Very often we get overwhelmed by what is before us but start by breaking it down. What the problem? How can I fix that problem? It doesn't have to be something massive but it sets you apart as someone looking for positive change in the world.

As Thomas Edison said, "Theres a way to do it better - Find it!"

For us to be people that have significance, inspire generations and impact society on a wide scale, we need to have a mindset where we look to fix things.

As Steve Jobs put it, "Innovation distinguishes between a leader and a follower."

### #3 We are Influenced to

We can have all the best intentions in the world but one of the deadliest threats to any aspirations we may have to make a difference is if we are not aware of who is influencing us.

We all are influenced by the people that we surround ourselves with. We can have people that build us up, or people who break us down. We have people that can push us to be better, or those that hold us back. However, you have the power to decide who it is that you allow into your life to influence you.

As Pastor Tom says, "You become the average of the 5 people you spend the most time with."

If you want to be significant, it is essential that the people you allow into your life aren't going to lead you off track.

### #1 Our Identity

### #2 Our Innovation mindset

### #3 Our Influencers

## US

Our society and culture is being moulded and changed every minute. All the time, new people and organisations are introduced into our narrative that have an affect on how things occur, what actions take place and everything that happens. I think we need to be part of that change. Rather than just being reactionary, I think we need to

have good people involved in changing society for the better. I think those people are us.

Whether its role of significance in Norwich, or your workplace, or even if its amongst a few people you are close to, God created us to be influential here on earth. To act in a manner that impacts people and situations we encounter. To live lives of significance. This is what he created you for. This is what he wants for you so that you can fulfil your destiny. It's a desire that is at the core of our church and we will always seek to see it lived out through us as a community and through individuals as we build up world changers.

God created you to be someone of significant influence. You were designed to carry out His will on the earth. Imagine what would happen if we stepped out inn this. If we decided to accept everything that God has called us to and actively sought significance in our world.

If were able to show that our church, our community was full of understanding, innovation, skill and character. That our lives could be a demonstration of everything God has called us to.

We could be bringing Biblical wisdom into situations where there is confusion. That they actively sought after us when then needed help. We could be taking compassion and justice into the darkest areas of society.

What if when people had problems they came to the church for answers. Imagine if we were able to inspire people to decide that it would be them that would make a difference. Children, teenagers, new generation ready to step forward and make a mark on the future.

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Those words are as true, relevant, powerful and thrilling now as they were when they were first written. They are who we are as a Church, its who we will always choose to be. And as we pursue this vision, our worlds will never be the same.