

# Envisioning and Strategy Toolkit

A 4-Session Missional Living Tool  
to loving and reaching your city

Participant's  
Handbook

# Welcome!

Our desire is this tool will be a launching point to see people activated to love their communities in greater measure. This Envisioning and Strategy Toolkit was originally created by our team in Asia, to use in closed countries to equip and empower leaders to collaborate and live on-mission in the cities in which they find themselves. The more we worked with this tool we realized what a great mobilizing piece it is, and we want to make it more widely available. As people on mission, we have a love for missional living and yet we see a gap in most believer's understanding of missions. As the North American Church, our focus has become short-term missions driven. While we've facilitated many of these experiences, and see that there's place for short-term trips, if this is a believer's sole encounter with missions it leaves much lacking.

We believe that we are all entrusted with a mission, and we are all commissioned to bring the peace of God to the places where we live. We believe that you are called to where you've been planted, not to the exclusion of other places, but as change agents right where you are. As we all find our place in this mission of restoring the Peace of God to the cities where we dwell, we will change our cities and nations. Short-term missions can be a catalyst into this roll of city transformation; but without tools to help connect dots, often short-term missions exist as the purpose, rather than a launching point. We hope this tool will serve as a launching point for you into city transformation.

This tool was designed with a foundational reading on Peace, and 4 group exercises. This can be used in a small group setting, a staff team building setting or as a tool to foster inter-denominational collaboration. The dynamic nature of this tool requires groups to come together around intentional discussion and then provides interactive opportunities to walk that out.

Our prayer for you is that as you work through these pages and exercises that you would catch a vision for what God is already at work doing, right in the places where He's planted you. As we lean into this moment to foster relationships for the good of the city, our prayer for you is that you would have eyes to see what God is doing in the city where you are planted and that you would be a catalyst for Shalom, a peace-bringer to your city!

Cheering you on,

The SOS Team

"Seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper." Jeremiah 29:7

**SOS** INTERNATIONAL

*"Our basic predisposition should be to see communities - including their natural resources, people, families, neighborhoods, associations, schools, businesses, governments, culture, etc-as being created by Jesus and reflective of His goodness. Hence as we enter a community, there is a sense in which we are walking on holy ground because Christ has been at work in that community since the creation of the world!"*

Steven Corbett  
When Helping Hurts



# WHY CARE ABOUT YOUR CITY

ENVISIONING AND STRATEGY  
TOOL 1.1





# BIG PICTURE

## What is our God-given purpose?

It's easy for believers to assume that our God-given purpose is solely to focus on saving the lost. While this is an important part of our commission, there are other assignments the Lord has for our lives, including loving our neighbors and therefore our neighborhoods. Some believers are called overseas to foreign mission fields, while many are given the grace to tend and nurture the very mission field they call home. Both callings are invaluable. We might tend to believe that in cities as large as our own, we're too small to make a noticeable difference. However, that's not Kingdom perspective.

As Christ-followers, we are invited to be used as vessels for God's redemptive plan. This isn't just for the people around us,

but for institutions and circumstances inside our own city. God intends for us to bring shalom peace in the places we're planted. Shalom in the Bible is used to talk about peace, but the fullness of its definition encapsulates wholeness, perfection, and utter completion. Nothing is missing when a person/place/region experiences the shalom of heaven.

Therefore, as missional people, unless we're directed elsewhere, we are meant to look at the cities we live in as the fields were called to. We are called to look fully at our city - not just focusing on the parts that feel accessible or easy. Through our interactions and engagements with our neighborhoods and city, we are meant to partner with God to bring transformation and release Kingdom shalom wherever we go.

# SEE



What do you notice about these photos?

Is there anything that surprises you?

Is there anything you would want to see changed?

How can you help bring change to the issues facing your community?

Poverty and wealth coexist all around us, but many times it goes unnoticed. This dichotomy creates an invitation for us to be people of shalom. There's a principle we've watched at play the world over, and that is, you don't see what you aren't looking for. As we intentionally engage with the world around us and embark on this journey together, ask the Lord to give us eyes to see what's going on in our communities. As we adjust our eyes to see, may we have the wisdom to know where and how to engage in what the Lord is doing to bring the Peace of God to the cities that we live in.

*Seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.*

Jeremiah 29:7





# WHY CARE ABOUT YOUR CITY

This exercise will help participants understand why they are called to care for their city and how being kingdom-minded is an invitation for us to be agents of change. You will utilize the county exercise worksheet as well as the information about creating a vision for your time together to complete this exercise.

**If we can identify God's plan for our city, then we will be able to understand our unique purpose inside this plan and take ownership of the role that is waiting for us.**

## Instructions:

There are no wrong answers when it comes to casting vision. Rather the goal is to understand how we - as residents of this city and believers in Christ - are called to engage with the city we're planted in and take ownership of bringing heaven down.

- Your city will be divided into smaller regions (we provide a county worksheet, but you can modify accordingly.) Teams of 3-5 members from your group will take ownership of specific regions and focus their attention and efforts in those designated areas.
- Each participant is to think through the questions, answering the best they can. For the sake of time, we gave 15 minutes to complete the worksheet to the best of their ability. Some will be easy to find numbers for, others will be hard, that's okay. The point is to start seeing what's going on in each region.
- After the 15 minutes is up, the groups will come back together. One member from each group will be nominated to summarize their group's thoughts and findings.
- After everyone has presented be prepared to discuss if anything was surprising or stood out to them. Feel free to add relevant stats and lead a discussion that is engaging to the group.





# CRAFT YOUR GROUP'S VISION STATEMENT

Looking at the needs in your city and the diverse makeup of individuals and skills within your group, what do you hope to accomplish together in your city? Make sure that your vision is broad enough that it can cover projects as well as 1-2 years of being "at-work" in your city. Here are a few examples of a possible vision statement:

- For example, a church might use: Our City Vision is \_\_ (to see our city transformed through an outward expression of the gospel) \_\_\_\_, and we hope to address this through \_\_ (quality service projects addressing x,y,z and seeing strong disciplined leaders released into every sphere of influence) \_\_\_\_ inside our region.
- A Company might use: Our City Vision is \_\_ (to see our city served with excellence as an outward expression of the transformation that comes through living out the gospel) \_\_\_\_, and we hope to address this through \_\_ (integrity, honesty and our commitment to giving back) \_\_\_\_ inside our region.
- A Nonprofit might use: Our City Vision is \_\_ (to see our larger vision as an organization overflow into our approach to reaching our city ) \_\_\_\_, and we hope to address this through \_\_ (high quality projects that impact x, y, z... ) \_\_\_\_ inside our region.

\*\*Please note that you will refer back to this vision statement in Sessions 3 & 4 so put the time into making it a good one. \*\*

# OUR CITY VISION

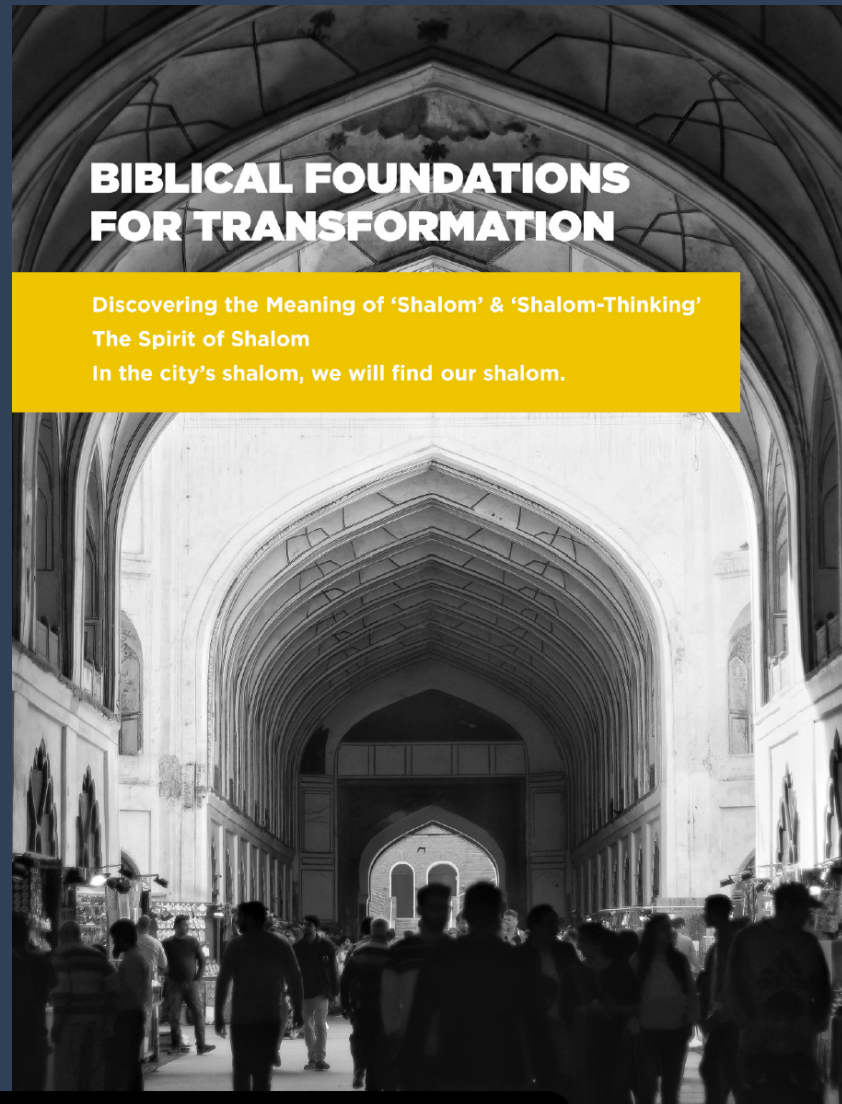
PLEASE USE THE BELOW SPACE TO CRAFT YOUR VISION:

Our City Vision is \_\_\_\_\_, and we hope to address this through \_\_\_\_\_ inside our region.

*For example: Our City Vision is \_\_ (to see our city transformed through an outward expression of the gospel) \_\_, and we hope to address this through \_\_ (quality service projects addressing x,y,z and seeing strong disciplined leaders released into every sphere of influence) \_\_ inside our region.*







## **BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR TRANSFORMATION**

Discovering the Meaning of 'Shalom' & 'Shalom-Thinking'  
The Spirit of Shalom  
In the city's shalom, we will find our shalom.



Please read through [Biblical Foundations for Transformation](#)  
(Clickable Link or use the QR code)  
before you embark on Session 2.

# CITY RENEWAL FRAMEWORK

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ENVISIONING AND STRATEGY  
TOOL 1.2





# BIG PICTURE

## The Five Chapter Gospel Contextualised:

CHAPTER 1 - CREATION: God, a God of shalom peace, creates Adam and Eve, giving them the task to fill the earth and subdue creation; cultivating what was created in Eden everywhere they went. The world was meant to be a place of peace and prosperity.

CHAPTER 2 - FALL: Through an act of disobedience, humankind brought corruption into the story. For centuries now, cycles of violence, sin, manipulation and corruption still reign rampant around the world.

CHAPTER 3 - REDEMPTION: The coming of Jesus as the "Prince of Peace" created the beginnings of a world in which there would be "no end to Shalom" (Isaiah 9:5-6). He comes as the redeemer of people's hearts, bringing hope, rest, salvation and joy. He is the only Way to being right with God; the road to redemptive life.

CHAPTER 4 - RENEWAL: Jesus's death on the cross reconciled all of creation to Himself. Regardless of who you are - your background, lifestyle, sins or shortcomings - nothing is able to separate you from the gift of life available through Jesus Christ. All things in heaven and on earth have the same opportunity available for them. Jesus's sacrifice made all things new through His death on the cross.

CHAPTER 5 - RESTORATION: The new city of peace shall be on this earth, complete and whole. There will be a full restoration of all things made perfect in God.

# BIG PICTURE

How does operating out the Five Chapter Gospel help our city and regions?

Creation, Fall and Redemption help us realise ..... and .....; while Renewal and Restoration points us to .....and .....

## Why is this Tool Valuable?

The Five Chapter Gospel presents us with a full picture of the gospel and therefore a deeper understanding of God's heart for His people. These five chapters provide a broader narrative to the gospel focusing not only on our salvation, but also how we should live on this side of eternity. If our gospel is only Creation, Fall and Redemption, then our message is narrowed down to salvation only. This means we miss the purpose behind being a new creation; our commission and purpose - how we play a piece in the global church - all come into play when Renewal becomes part of our gospel message. Without Renewal, there will always be a divide between the secular and

the saved. Restoration then completes the story by pointing to the absolute sovereignty of God and His eternal plan to bring shalom to all humankind; just like it was at Creation.

Note: Remember that the term "Five Chapter Gospel" is just a name we are using to talk about God's overarching redemptive purposes throughout the Bible.

*I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say, 'My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.'*

Isaiah 46:10





# CITY RENEWAL FRAMEWORK

This tool will help participants understand why they are called to care for their city and how being kingdom-minded is an invitation for us to be agents of change.

**If we can place ourselves in God's original design and plan, our mission and our actions will be a lot more clear and defined!**

There are two parts to this tool - a personal response and a group discussion.

- The personal response: Take some time to think through the questions provided on the following page, and respond to them while keeping your city and the Five Chapter Gospel in mind.
  - The group discussion: Gather in small groups and begin sharing your reflections and personal responses. This is a great time to practice vulnerability and help build trust inside your team.
  - Go deep with your answers and discussion. This will help reveal the importance behind your team's involvement in the city and cast vision for the bigger picture.
  - Nominate one person from each group to summarize your discussion with the full team.
- Discuss the questions laid out in the Leader's Notes portion about the Exercise.

**End your time together by  
praying for your city as a group.**

# EXERCISE

## PERSONAL RESPONSE

### 1 CREATION

- What was the original design?
- What was life meant to be like?

### 2 FALL

- Why can't I live the way I'm supposed to?
- What is fundamentally wrong with the world?

### 3 REDEMPTION

- How do I begin to live the way I'm supposed to?
- Where am I meant to begin?

### 4 RENEWAL

- Where are the means by which I grow?

### 5 RESTORATION

- What is the hope by which I can impact the world around me for the better?

## GROUP DISCUSSION

1. If we look at the gospel as only a three-fold message - Creation, The Fall and Redemption - what aspects of the gospel do we miss out on?
2. How does believing the full message of the gospel transform our faith?
3. How can we go from believing the full message to receiving and releasing it?
4. Once we start releasing the full gospel, what will change in and around us?





# CREATING A SHARED VISION

ENVISIONING AND STRATEGY  
TOOL 1.3





# BIG PICTURE

## Why is this Tool Valuable?

A vision is a futuristic mental image or statement that describes a potential believed achievable. It should hint at core values, purpose, mission, and/or strategy.

The Bible mentions several instances where people have detailed and prophetic visions that conveyed information about future events. The visions of Ezekiel, Daniel, Paul, and John were all important guides for the prophets of Biblical times. A vision statement creates focus on the mission ahead.

It streamlines effort towards the end goal and keeps participants on track despite any obstacles that may arise. As leaders, envisioning an achievable goal will help in leading with purpose, passion, and motivation.

Getting to the heart of a shared vision will require understanding the "Why" behind each individual's involvement. This tool is meant to highlight members' "Why" with the hope that similar interests, beliefs, and passions will come forth.

**What can our team do to ensure our city's vision is applied inside all our regions and projects?**



# CREATING A SHARED VISION

This tool is designed to help participants understand the value of vision and why it's necessary to have one.

**If we contextualize our city's vision to our assigned regions, it will help us stay connected to the goals we focus on our specific projects.**

- Having an understanding of your team's shared vision is crucial as it will direct efforts and projects inside each specific region.
- Keeping the vision alive is just as important as having a vision. Find creative ways to remind your team of your focus and keep your vision fresh in their hearts and minds.
- The team will be divided into groups of 3-5 members. Everyone will have 20 minutes to discuss and record their collective responses to these questions:
  - What is the group's vision?
  - Why is the vision important?
  - What does success look like inside that vision?
  - What commitments has the team made to go after the corporate vision (mindset/behaviors)?

Try to find ways to include and value everyone's suggestions while keeping the collective response brief.

One member from each group will be chosen to share their group's response. Your summary statement should be concise and no longer than

**2 minutes.**



# FROM VISION TO ACTION

1. Each small group will discuss the following questions and prepare to share their answers with the whole team:
  - What would a successful project look like in your region of the city?
  - Why would the project be important? (Choose a local problem.)
2. As a team, what would your mindset be as you prepare to launch this project? How will your mindset affect whether or not the project is successful?
3. What are team behaviors that would optimize efficiency and results in this process?
4. Come back together and share the project your team came up with with the group as a whole.









# WORKING A MISSION

ENVISIONING AND STRATEGY  
TOOL 1.4



# BIG PICTURE

We've been on a mission together, to help envision and build strategy for the last 3 sessions. During that time we've looked at:

- We are called to the city where we are planted.
- We are called to care for our cities.
- We are called to be part of bringing Shalom to our cities as we walk out the 5 Chapter Gospel Contextualization: Creation, Fall, Redemption, Renewal and Restoration.
- We are called to lead out in our city with purpose, passion and motivation as part of a shared vision for our communities.

## **How can we ensure that as a group, we're always connected to our singular mission for the city?**

If the vision is an inspirational driver towards a successful end, the mission is the pathway one takes to see the vision come to pass. A mission reflects something aspirational; it inspires and invites others to get involved, while practically showing how the transformation will take place. Missions break the vision down to bite-size pieces and instill a greater sense of purpose in every effort made.

As followers of Jesus, we are given one of the greatest missions in the world - to go and make disciples. That mission works towards the vision of seeing every human reconciled with God.

This tool is meant to bring out discussion around the "How" of city transformation and decisions regarding what practical steps would look like.





# WORKING A MISSION

Working on smaller missions that complement the city's overall mission will help participants recognize the shared purpose between them. This can create feelings of connection and unity despite the possibility of working on separate projects.

- Having a declared mission is what drives the efforts a group makes towards a shared goal. Even though a team might use the same language, it doesn't mean that their hearts or values are the same. Being able to articulate in our own words what the mission is will help ensure that all the members of the team are on the same page.
- As Individuals we wear many hats, personal, church, civic, professional....In our commitment to building and reaching our cities we must be intentional in all these areas. Our approach may change based on our role or season, and you won't push in all four areas in every season, but its important to take an assessment of where you are at in each season and the ways you are called to intentionally seek the Peace of your city in this season. As you go through this exercise on the following page take time to reflect on the season you are in and how you are planted in your community.



# WHITEBOARD EXERCISE

Questions to pose to the group and whiteboard/bullet point the responses given:

- What would you like your team to be known for?
- What do you hope your team accomplishes in the next 1-2 years?
- What are the most impactful and bold goals your team could have for your city in the next 1-2 years?
- How do you turn these things on the whiteboard into actual outcomes?
- Brainstorm on how we connect the dots between who we want to be in the city and our city vision and putting it into action.
  - Example: Serving opportunities, programs, projects, trainings, networking... what does this look like for your team and how can you connect dots between who you want to be in the city and how you are growing as a team?
- Create a few action steps for your team to move forward on.

For example, you could:

  - Create training resources at a certain frequency to help educate on an area of impact and couple it with a serving opportunity.
  - Periodically host an educate + serve event to mobilize people.
  - Pick a community event and work to rally cross-denomination, cross-organization participation with the goal of benefitting someone in the community.



*And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything  
in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the  
Father through him.*

Colossians 3:17

**SOS** INTERNATIONAL