

SOME ANSWERS TO YOUR [XYZ] QUESTIONS.

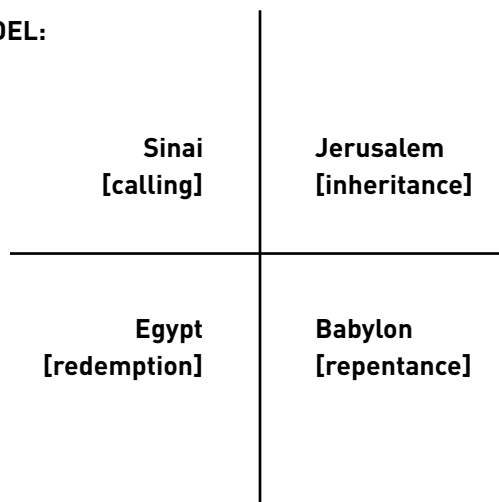
Q: How are the [XYZ]s connected to our vision and the New Exodus teachings?

A: Mars Hill's vision is of a world restored to its original design and intention through the life of Jesus working in his people. We want to see his power changing us as we commit ourselves to lives of justice and compassion for a suffering world.

In the New Exodus pattern of Scripture, God's response to the tyranny of EGYPT shows that he always hears the cry of the oppressed (Ex. 3:9). That God uses those he redeems as his agents and priests who will continue his service to a needy world becomes evident at SINAI (Ex. 19:4-6). In JERUSALEM, we see how great influence and wealth are given to empower God's people to uphold righteousness and justice for the weak (1 Kings 10). We also learn that indifference to suffering equals irrelevance to the purposes of God and eventually results in exile from the privileges of God (2 Chron. 36:20-21). In our day, we recognize that the movement toward BABYLON – toward an exile of irrelevance – threatens churches most where there is great economic and material prosperity (Mt. 19.23). In the life of Jesus, we see that God is undoubtedly with his people when we join him in responding to the cry of others.

For Mars Hill, responding to the cry of homeless kids and poor families in West Michigan and the vulnerable poor of Burundi unites us with the life of Jesus in the most tangible and compelling ways imaginable. Mars Hill has always served the world's needs, but through focusing together on missions like those outlined in [XYZ], it becomes possible for everyone to get involved. The [XYZ] missional focus areas are specific enough and big enough to be shared by the whole church. Through joining together in these shared missions, we hope it becomes clearly visible that we as a community are centered in Christ and in his great purposes for our world.

NEW EXODUS MODEL:



Q: Will we see a balance of all six [DIRECTIONS], or will we only prioritize the “outward”?

A: The [DIRECTIONS] (ROOTS, JOURNEY, WHOLENESS, COMMUNITY, SERVING and CELEBRATION) define the values we strive for as a church. SERVING is one crucial part of the [DIRECTIONS], but it is only one part. Mars Hill is equally committed to help everyone take the next step toward WHOLENESS, or spiritual formation, and to ensure that we are able to find a COMMUNITY of nurture and support. These three practices – spiritual formation, community and mission – together form the bigger picture of our life as a church and our commitments to one another through all six of the [DIRECTIONS].

Q: How does the message of Jesus fit with these initiatives?

Is it still a value to see people come to salvation through Jesus Christ?

A: The message of Jesus is the central focus of the [XYZ], as Christ has called the Church to be his instrument to restore the world. The problem is that the Church has often elevated its beliefs and its words about Jesus over its living demonstration of the Gospel. As a result, our world often sees us as hypocrites. Mars Hill is committed to a life and ministry that holds the words of Jesus and the works of Jesus in equal and dynamic tension. The Church's future joy will be found less in the words we speak and the truths we believe than in our service to the Jesus of the poor, the sick and the homeless.

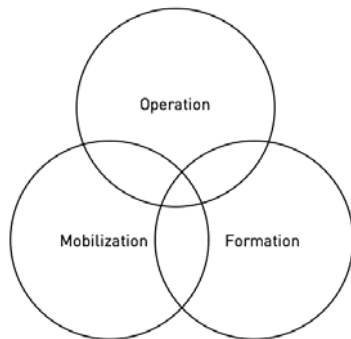
The driving passion behind this initiative is to see people come to the fullness of salvation through Jesus Christ. The gospel becomes Good News when our words about Jesus are put on display through loving actions of hope, justice and compassion for a broken world.

Q: Are we going to stop or limit the amount of care and discipleship that goes on in and for our own community?

Will those things still be important? If so, how will that be ensured?

A: The Church is God's instrument of healing for our broken world, but we can't fulfill this calling when we are broken ourselves. Mars Hill faces the challenge of empowering everyone we reach to first take the next step in their own spiritual journey, then to find their place in supportive community and finally to engage in the great causes of our day.

In order to be a whole church, we are building our strategic plan and leadership model around the priorities of Operations, Formation and Mobilization. We are currently recruiting senior leaders for each of these priorities. Our hope is that, not only will they bring excellence to their areas of expertise, but also that they will call us as a community to balance these three areas in the life of our Church and in our own lives.



[Executive Pastor of Operations]

Will enable excellence in systems, structures and communication processes

[Executive Pastor of Formation]

Will be responsible to ensure spiritual direction and community for all our Covenant members

[Executive Pastor of Mobilization]

Will ensure that we can all engage well in the great missional causes of our day

Q: How did we choose these specific [XYZ]s? Who was involved in the process?

A: For more than a year, the leadership worked through a framework for our vision, mission and strategy. The New Exodus teaching laid the foundation of that framework as we worked through the idea of “Joining the God of the oppressed ...” [XYZ] came to designate the yet-to-be-defined “cry of the oppressed” that Mars Hill would respond to, and staff, leaders, work-teams and elders explored what that might be.

Mars Hill remains committed to its historic focus on the “most forsaken people, places and issues in our world,” but because poverty is a theme that affects so many of the “forsaken” in our world, Don was eager to draw on his development background by introducing specific tools that can help Mars Hill serve the world’s forsaken, helping them overcome the conditions that lead to their distress.

Finally, working with a small team, Don presented a proposal that would build on Mars Hill’s past and at the same time give us goals that were focused and scalable enough to absorb the massive resource potential of the entire Mars Hill community. With the tool of poverty alleviation, we set out to use our wealth of human, financial, technical and spiritual resources to serve the poor in local and international contexts. Our hope is that we will become a powerful witness of what it looks like to love and serve Jesus as wealthy American Christians.

The concept was developed, tested with current and potential partners and presented in January to the elders, who then approved the proposal in February.

Q: How will our church’s financial resources be impacted? Example: Will 25% of the budget only go to Burundi?

A: We have no plans to change the 25% allocation of all income to local and global initiatives. It is our hope that this number will actually increase as we gain traction toward our goals.

Our plan is to create one [XYZ] fund to give us maximum flexibility to allocate money where it is needed most and, at least for the next budgeting cycle, adopt a “pay as you go” policy. That means we will limit the amount of budgeted funds directed to [XYZ] and instead use only new funds that are raised as people begin to get behind the effort.

We recognize that this could have a negative affect on our operating costs as people direct money away from general Joy Box giving into [XYZ] funds. We’ll have to learn to speak about this from the platform and help Mars Hill understand that, to accomplish our missions, we have to support operating costs.

Q: Will we be stopping or limiting the many outreach initiatives that we are already a part of?

What will happen to our local and global long-term partnerships and work such as HIV/AIDS, Rwanda, North Africa, Water, Guatemala, etc.?

A: Because of the passion with which Mars Hill has served “the most forsaken people, places and issues,” this question has caused significant anxiety. For that reason it is critical that we have a clear understanding of the following process:

- 1) [XYZ]s are specific missional objectives. They are not the total of our mission. We are and will continue to be involved in a wide range of great causes. These are big enough for all to join, but they are not everything.
- 2) Over the next 18 months, we will evaluate our current work against clear criteria and work with each ministry team to determine what commitments should be adjusted and how.
- 3) In September 2008, we will have determined if there are realignments or changes in funding priorities that we need to make to ensure the responsible use of our resources against the mission of Mars Hill.