

Foundational Documents

What you will find in this file:

Suggestions for foundational documents.

How to write a doctrinal statement.

How to write a statement of purpose.

FOUNDATIONAL DOCUMENTS

When organizing your school, you should consider the following foundational documents:

1. If your school or church is governed by a board of directors, then a motion to start the school should be made during a meeting and written into the minutes of that meeting.
2. If your state or nation requires registration with the government in order to run a school, then secure the documents to do this.
3. In the United States--as well as some other nations--you may be able to organize your school as a non-profit incorporation so you will not have to pay taxes. Check to see if this applies in your nation. In the United States, Nolo Press publishes a book entitled *How To Form A Non-Profit Incorporation* which will guide you through the process.
4. Some schools elect to have a document called “by-laws” which establish how the school will be run. Some of the questions answered in this document might include:
 - Will the school have a board of directors? (Some schools will elect to be governed by an existing church board--whatever is decided it should be documented in organizational by-laws.)
 - How will officers and members of the board be selected?
 - How many board members will sit on the board?
 - What are the requirements to be a board member?
 - How often will the board meet?
 - What will be the name of the school?
 - Will the school have a logo? Theme song? Theme colors? Theme verse?

It is important to include everything possible that will assist in guiding your school and helping it remain true to its original purpose. For sure, your document should include a doctrinal statement and a statement of purpose.

DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

If your church or denomination has a statement of purpose, you may want to use it. If not, here is a basic doctrinal statement to use:

The purpose and objectives of IHN Bible College focus on the spiritual principles of harvest revealed in God's Word. The Doctrinal position of the organization is also centered on this great vision:

THE WORD OF GOD

The Seed

The seed Is the Word of God... (Luke 8:11)

The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the true Word of God, the foundation of Christian faith, understanding, life and ministry. The Scriptures are without error and are not to be added to, taken from, or changed by tradition or supposed revelation:

For ever, O Lord, Your Word is settled in Heaven. (Psalms 119:89)

THE TRIUNE GOD

The Lord of the Harvest

Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest. (Matthew 9:38)

The Godhead consists of God the Father, God the Son Jesus Christ, and God the Holy Spirit:

For there are three that testify: the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement. (I John 5:7)

GOD THE FATHER:

There is but one God, unlimited, eternal and perfect, Creator of Heaven and earth:

For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens (He is the God who formed the earth and made it, He established it and did not create it a waste place, but formed it to be inhabited), "I am the LORD, and there is none else." (Isaiah 45:18)

GOD THE SON, JESUS CHRIST:

Jesus Christ was supernaturally conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He was the perfect sacrifice for the sin of all mankind through His death and the shedding of His blood.

He arose from the dead in His own glorified body, appeared to many, ascended into Heaven, and will return to earth in power and glory. He is now the Head of His Body, the Church, victor over all the powers of darkness, and is at the right hand of God making intercession for believers:

For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:9-11)

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT:

The Holy Spirit inspired the Word of God, anointed Jesus Christ for His ministry, filled the Church with Pentecostal power, and will transform the mortal bodies of believers in the glory of resurrection.

The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, unites man to Jesus Christ in faith, brings about the new birth, and dwells within the believer.

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is available to all who believe in Jesus Christ and will be evidenced by the ability to be a powerful witness of our resurrected Lord as well as the confirming sign of Acts 2:4:

but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth. (Acts 1:8)

The gifts of the Spirit are available to the believer through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, who bestows them on every man as He will:

But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills. (I Corinthians 12:11)

The Holy Spirit also makes possible the fruit of the Spirit, enabling the believer to grow in sanctification:

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. (Galatians 5:22-23)

MAN

The Sower

Behold there went out a sower to sow. (Mark 4:3)

Man was created by God in the image and likeness of God. Through the original sin of Adam and Eve, all men became sinful in nature. Man is totally incapable of returning to God in himself, and is lost without hope apart from the salvation of Jesus Christ:

So also it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual. The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven. (I Corinthians 15:45-47)

SALVATION

The Harvest

And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty. (Matthew 13:23)

Salvation is the gift of God through grace and faith in Jesus Christ. There is no name except that of Jesus Christ by which mankind may be saved.

By turning from sin, bringing forth the fruit of repentance, and trusting in Christ and His death for the sins of all, man is born again to eternal life by the Holy Spirit.

Through this redemptive act comes forgiveness of sin, liberation from bondage of the world, and freedom in the Spirit of God.

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

THE CHURCH

The Laborers

Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest. (Matthew 9:38)

The Church is the Body and Bride of Christ. The primary mission of the Church is to teach all nations and to make disciples, taking the Gospel of the Kingdom to all men and nations with confirming signs:

And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned. These signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues; they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover." (Mark 16:15-18)

THE CONSUMMATION

The Final Harvest

And another angel came out of the temple, crying out with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, "Put in your sickle and reap, for the hour to reap has come, because the harvest of the earth is ripe." (Revelation 14:15)

The consummation [the end] of all things includes the visible and glorious return of Jesus Christ, the resurrection of the dead, and the translation of those alive in Christ unto the judgment of the just and the unjust. Satan with his hosts and all men outside Christ will be separated from the presence of God to endure eternal punishment while the redeemed will be in the presence of God for eternity:

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. (I Thessalonians 4:13-17)

And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. (Revelation 20:12)

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

God anoints and uses those who understand His purpose and are willing to be part of His plan. To become part of God's plan, your life and ministry must be in harmony with His purpose. You must live and minister with the same sense of purpose that directed the life and ministry of Jesus.

For a ministry, organization, church, or school a Statement of Purpose identifies why you exist as a corporate body. A Statement of Purpose is not a Doctrinal Statement. A Doctrinal Statement tells what your ministry believes doctrinally. It is important to have a Doctrinal Statement, but it is not the same as a Statement of Purpose.

Purpose is also different from objectives. Purpose is a statement of why a ministry exists. Objectives are statements of plans the ministry will implement in order to fulfill the purpose. Objectives are what you do. Purpose is why you are.

Purpose is not the same as programs of the church. Programs are outreaches organized to implement plans which relate to purpose. A Statement of Purpose identifies the specific reason why your ministry exists. It summarizes specifically what position of ministry you are filling in the Body of Christ.

The Bible is filled with examples of men and women of God who knew their specific purpose in God's plan. We will consider just one of these individuals, the Apostle Paul.

Paul had a definite sense of purpose which he knew and communicated to others. He wrote Timothy:

Now you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance, (II Timothy 3:10)

His life goal was to fulfill that purpose:

Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:12)

Paul's purpose was communicated to Him by God:

But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; (Acts 9:15)

Paul's purpose of ministry was in harmony with God's purpose and plans. If Paul had written out his "statement of purpose" it would have been as follows:

"My purpose of ministry is to bear the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to:

...The Gentiles (nations other than Israel)

...Kings (leaders)
...The nation of Israel (Jews)"

A Statement of Purpose is very important because purpose:

Provides direction: A vision is a clear mental image of what you are to achieve. The Bible states:

Where there is no vision, the people perish... (Proverbs 29:18)

God has given the general vision in His Word, but you must also have specific vision. You must have a clear knowledge of exactly what your ministry is called of God to accomplish. You must minister with a clearly defined vision.

When God establishes a vision, He does not change His mind as men do. When men and organizations stray from the vision God has given them, they experience confusion, problems, and failure.

Promotes a Biblical world view: Purpose promotes a Biblical world view because you analyze the environment in which you are ministering in order to determine your purpose. As you do this, you become aware of the spiritual needs of the community, nation, and world in which you minister.

For example, Paul analyzed the spiritual condition of the city of Athens. His heart was stirred, and because he knew and understood his purpose of ministry, he shared the Gospel with the residents of this Gentile city. (Acts 17:16-34).

Purpose is always related to need. Recognizing need fosters a Biblical world view. You begin to see the world as God sees it.

Permits planning: Purpose permits planning. When you know your purpose, you can make plans to accomplish that vision. Uncertain purpose results in uncertain plans.

You achieve a work for God not by just desiring it or even by just being busy working. Work can miss the goal if you do not have a specific vision.

There are many good works you can do. You can be busy constantly for God, but what is the specific ministry He has given you to accomplish? This is what He will hold you responsible for. It is more important that you do the one thing God has called you to do, and do it well, than to accomplish many things. Jesus emphasized this priority of purpose to Martha when He said...

**... Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things;
(Luke 10:41)**

Purpose is the basis for setting priorities. If your priorities are in harmony with the priorities of God's Kingdom, everything you need to accomplish the ministry will be provided:

But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. (Matthew 6:33)

Finances, people, material items--whatever you need for effective ministry--will be provided if God's Kingdom is your priority in purpose.

Every ministry has priorities. If you do not set priorities in harmony with God's Word, then they will develop either by drifting into them by habit or because of pressures of people, needs, or crises. You will let the world set your priorities instead of having them set by God.

Purpose permits planning for effective ministry. It is the basis for selecting and implementing plans and budgeting finances. It provides focus and keeps you from being distracted by ministry to which God has not called you nor equipped you to fulfill.

Because time is short before the Lord's return, because the need is great and the days are evil, you need to live purposefully:

Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. (Ephesians 5:15-16)

Paul's plans, all of his travels and ministry, related specifically to the purpose to which he had been called. He did not spend time doing good works. He devoted his life to the work to which he had been ordained by God.

Eliminates confusion: Where there is no clearly defined purpose, confusion exists. There is no unity in thought or action. Misunderstanding and conflict often result.

In the Old Testament, leaders of Israel used a trumpet to assemble people to battle. The trumpet must sound a loud and clear signal, or God's army would be in confusion (Numbers 10:9 and I Corinthians 14:8).

Clear purpose is like the sound of the battle trumpet. It calls God's people to action. But the leader who calls others to the front lines of spiritual battle must have clear purpose.

Permits evaluation: If you know the purpose of your ministry, you can evaluate to see if you are fulfilling God's plan. Because Paul knew and understood his purpose, he could evaluate his ministry and say:

...I was not disobedient to the Heavenly vision. (Acts 26:19)

Enables ministry with authority and anointing: Because you know your specific purpose and it is in harmony with God's purpose, He will anoint your ministry. You can minister with power and authority because you know exactly what God has called you to do.

FORMULATING A STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

You need a personal Statement of Purpose which answers this question: How does my personal ministry fit in with God's purpose and plans?

You also need a corporate Statement of Purpose which answers this question: "How does the organization, fellowship, church, or school of which I am a part fit into God's plan?"

You must write out the "statement of purpose":

Then the Lord answered me and said, "Record the vision And inscribe it on tablets, That the one who reads it may run. (Habakkuk 2:2)

The reason you must write it down is...

1. **To make it plain:** If you just have a vague idea of purpose in your head, it is not clear. Writing down a "statement of purpose" makes you clarify exactly what God has called you to do.
2. **So it can be communicated to others:** People can be motivated to "run" with the vision and accomplish it when they can read and understand it.

Here are steps for formulating a Statement of Purpose for ministry:

Pray: You must communicate with God in order to find your specific purpose in ministry. Ask Him to guide you as you analyze your environment and study His Word.

Analyze the environment: To be effective, your purpose must not only relate to God's purpose but it must relate to the environment in which you minister. Your purpose must relate to the needs of the people to whom God has called you to minister.

Briefly summarized, "environmental analysis" helps you understand the people to whom you are ministering, their spiritual condition, their needs, and the social, cultural, and geographic environment in which they live. With this knowledge, you are more effective in communicating the Gospel.

Purpose and plans must never be made on the basis of a good idea or program. They must relate to spiritual needs, just as God's stated purpose relates to the needs of a sinful world. Many ministries fail because although they offer a unique outreach, it is not related to the environment in which they are serving.

It is also important to analyze the environment because you live in a constantly changing world. If you are to meet the spiritual challenge of such change, then you must understand the environment. Most important, environmental analysis reveals the negative spiritual forces working against the people in a particular area. You can then pray, bind, and deal with these spiritual forces.

Environmental analysis also includes analysis of your own spiritual strengths and weaknesses. Each individual and each ministry has spiritual strengths and gifts which make them uniquely adapted to particular ministries. Each individual and ministry also have weaknesses, which in the natural may affect their ability to fulfill their ministries.

It is not negative thinking to consider your weaknesses. Self-evaluation prevents failure. If Israel had prayed and evaluated their situation at Ai, they would not have been defeated. God would have revealed the problem and they could have dealt with it before going into battle with the enemy. (See Joshua 7).

But you do not succeed by dwelling on your weaknesses. You succeed by emphasizing your strengths and using them for God's glory. At the same time, you must recognize that your weaknesses provide an opportunity for God's power to be demonstrated.

When evaluating your weaknesses, consider this:

And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. (II Corinthians 12:9)

When evaluating your strengths, consider this:

For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith. (Romans 12:3)

Study Scriptural examples of statements of purpose: Here are some verses to review to help you further understand Biblical purpose. As you study these passages, write down some key thoughts and words that will help you write your own Statement of Purpose:

- Isaiah 1:1-20
- Matthew 7:33; 9:37-38; 10:7-8,38-39; 16:24-25; 28:18-20
- Mark 1:17; 8:34-35; 11:25-26; 16:15-18
- Luke 4:16-19; 5:10; 9:2; 10:2-9; 12:29; 14:26-27; 22:29; 24:46-49
- John 2:21; 4:35; 6:27; 15:16; 20:21-22
- Acts 1:1-14; 2:42-47; 12:5,12; 14:27
- Romans 10:13-15
- I Corinthians 13
- II Corinthians 4:3-4
- Ephesians 1:21; 2:1-9,19-22; 4:14-16; 5:25
- Colossians 1:2,18; 4:5-6; 3:12-16
- I Thessalonians 2:12
- I Timothy 6:17-19
- Titus 2:14; 3:1,8,14
- Hebrews 9:12; 10:25

-James 1:17-27

-I Peter 2:1-12

Write The Statement Of Purpose: If you have followed these steps of prayer, environmental analysis, and study of God's purposes as revealed in His Word, you are ready to write your own Statement of Purpose.

Complete this sentence:

The purpose of this school is...

What specific Scriptures did you study that support your Statement of Purpose? List the references below:

Evaluate the statement: Evaluate the statement you have written:

1. Is it in harmony with God's general purpose as revealed in the Bible? Is it Biblical? Did you identify specific Scriptures to support your purpose?
2. Is the Statement of Purpose written clearly so that it is easily understood?
3. Does the Statement of Purpose relate to the environment in which you are ministering? Does it meet existing spiritual needs?
4. Does it state why the ministry exists rather than discussing specific programs, services, or outreaches?
5. Does it provide unlimited possibilities in future ministry? If not, it is too limited. Here is a statement that is too limited:

"The purpose of IHN Bible College Extension Campus is to train 100 laymen as Christian leaders."

When we have trained the 100 leaders, our purpose is fulfilled. We have no vision for future ministry. We have limited our purpose and it is too narrow.

6. Is it specific? If the statement is too general, you will not know if you are adequately fulfilling it.

Here is a Statement of Purpose that is too general:

"The purpose of IHN Bible College is to train Christian laymen."

This statement is not specific enough to permit evaluation to see if the ministry is achieving its purpose. Train them in what? For what purpose? Why? What does the training emphasize?

SAMPLE STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

Here is a sample statement of purpose. Feel free to adopt it for your own school:

It was upon the spiritual harvest fields of the world that Jesus Christ constantly focused the attention of His disciples:

Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest. (John 4:35)

The challenge given by our Lord is for laborers, men and women who know how to reap the spiritual harvest fields of the world for the Kingdom of God. It is to this purpose that IHN Bible College is dedicated, to recruit, train, motivate, and mobilize a network of international harvesters capable of:

1. *Intercession for international spiritual harvest:*

Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest." (Matthew 9:37-38)

2. *Articulation of the principles of spiritual harvest:*

The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. (II Timothy 2:2)

3. *Demonstration of the principles of spiritual harvest:*

and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God. (I Corinthians 2:4-5)

4. *Communication of the urgency of the mandate for worldwide spiritual harvest:*

The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved. (Jeremiah 8:20)

5. *Mobilization of members of the Body of Christ to reap their appointed fields in worldwide, end time harvest:*

... Who keeps for us the appointed weeks of the harvest. (Jeremiah 5:24)

