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Prequel/The Dream

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men..” John 1:1-4

The Renaissance is a collection of Jesus Followers that believe in church as a movement. This movement is centered around the core conviction that God has a redemptive dream for every person, family, neighborhood, city, school, etc. The realization of this Dream began in a Garden, where humanity lived in perfect harmony with one another, with creation, and with God Himself.

But through deception, the divine Dream became a nightmare, light became darkness, and the song turned to silence.

In the midst of what seemed like the death of the Dream, God promised a coming Renaissance. In this Renaissance, light would overcome darkness, the shackled would be set free, and the harmony would be heard once again.

Though the Renaissance would again resurrect the divine Dream, it would come at a great price. God Himself would give His life to buy humanity back from the prison they had sold themselves into. His sacrifice broke the power of darkness and death, and His resurrection brought the Dream back to life.

And the Dream still lives.....

Chapter One/Atrophy

“These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.” Matthew 15:8

Atrophy (n)1. A wasting away from the body of an organ or part, as from the defective nutrition or nerve damage; (2) degeneration or decline from disuse,3. A decrease in size, a wasting away, deterioration, or diminution; to waste away, wither or deteriorate.

Though the Dream was alive, as the years passed, generations of human beings forgot their reality. They still kept the outer appearance of life; the essence of Renaissance seemed to be dead. As time went on, though the Dream remained possible, humanity gradually forgot its power. What was once vibrant and alive now fell into a deep sleep.

These sleeping Dreamers still spoke and even celebrated the God that sacrificed so very much, but in too many cases their words, songs, and declarations rang hollow. Their vision shrunk, their impact minimized, and they lived with the faint hope to simply surviving.

And the darkness seemed to return.....

Chapter Two/Momentum

"See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you." Isaiah 60:2

In the darkness that rested on humanity, there was a stirring that began in the hearts of God's people. Dissatisfaction with the status quo now dominated their thinking, and new faith arose in their souls. The divine Dream that had been sleeping for so long was now awakened. Like before, they saw themselves through the eyes of God. They were now a Movement, becoming a refuge for a broken and unbelieving world. Their community became a place where seekers found the God they were searching for, getting the restoration they had cried out for, the Renaissance they were created for. The Dream that was in the heart of God was again awakened, and the world was never the same.

Epilogue: Generation Renaissance

"See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland." Isaiah 43:19

Ren-ais-sance [ren-uh-sahns, -zahns, -sahns, ren-uh-sahns, -zahns, -sahns; especially Brit. ri-ney-suhns] a renewal of life, vigor, awakening, interest, etc.; rebirth; revival:

The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking **new** landscapes, but in having **new eyes**."
-Marcel Proust

Our generation exists in a time period where the Dream again sleeps. God's church, the apple of His eye, lives largely to simply survive. The Message has been reduced to theology and memorized texts and lyrics, no longer the source of an energized life.

But just as in times past, there is a stirring of Renaissance in their souls. Dreamers are getting up from their sleep, and longing to become what they have been created to be. No longer satisfied with being a disciple of Jesus one hour a week, they are deciding to live their whole lives before God and for Him.

A hunger to break from religious boxes of limitation and smallness grips 'Generation Renaissance'. Like William Wallace in Mel Gibson's 'Braveheart', they cry out for freedom. Freedom to dream, dance, create, and run in the areas of God's gifting and inheritance. They are determined to awaken God's dream in their generation, using the arts, creativity, leadership, service, generosity, risk, authentic relationships, unchanging love, impassioned prayer, and much more to worship God and reveal Jesus to their dying world.

In the community of world changers called 'Renaissance Church', we understand that we are called to a Great Adventure. We understand that this journey we are on is not an easy one. There will be bumps, bruises, hairpin turns, and breathtaking drops. Dragons, villains, bad guys, and the Devil himself will try

their best to oppose us.

But the GOOD NEWS is we are not alone. We have one another as brothers and sisters in Christ, and we have King Jesus to lead us along to victory.

Take the adventure and **AWAKEN GOD'S DREAM IN YOUR GENERATION**

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.” Hebrews 12:1-3

SISOMO: Sight, Sound, and Motion

IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO DISCOVER THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SIGHT AND SOUND WE LIVE IN AS SIGHT SOUND GENERATION SO IN ORDER FOR US TO BEST TELL GOD'S STORY WE MUST UNDERSTAND THE LANGUAGE IN WHICH WE LIVE

One of the most significant communication developments of the past 1500 years was the adoption of spaces between words. And this all came about because a few priests challenged the rules. Prior to the 8th century AD, Latin and Greek were written ‘run-on’ fashion (without spaces between words). This type of writing slows down our reading. In ancient times, though, Latin and Greek texts were almost always read out loud (this was called ‘reading by ear’). Ancient readers, sufficiently familiar with their language, easily identified words by sound instead of sight, and had little difficulty. Thus, words separating spaces were considered unnecessary.

After the 8th Century this changed. Catholic Priests, living at the outskirts of the Roman Empire, had a weaker grasp of Latin, and couldn’t determine where one word ended and the next one began when reading Mass.

The priests solved this problem by inserting spaces between the words in the sacred text to serve as recognition aids. They challenged the rules by inserting empty spaces in the holiest documents.

Over time, the addition of these spaces created an unexpected benefit: faster reading. Because of the change, recognition improved, speed increased and by the 12th century, most of the literate world had adopted spaces and sight reading became widespread.

In this historical example, we see the transition from sound to sight. Where everything was sound based, there was a transition to sight based communication. And the reason for this came from familiarity with the

language, it is easier to go by ear, when you don't you need your eyes.

We are in a sight generation, but we as a church have sound methodology. And we do seem to have a biblical precedent when we read scriptures like:

“Faith comes by hearing, and hearing comes by the word of God.”

“Watch and be amazed....”

“Lift up your eyes....”

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT: The church for the most part has given the world something to hear, but nothing to see.”

Statement: We have been a Sound Church, in a Sight Generation.

We have seen society and culture transition from and to:

1. Radio Generation
 2. TV Generation
- Internet Generation

Q: What are the places that people are focused on? Where are they located? What has their attention?

We are making the switch from being a primarily ‘SOUND’ church, to a SISOMO church: Sight, Sound, and Motion. We must creatively tell God’s story in a manner that can be seen, heard, felt, and is in motion.

MINISTRY FOCUS:

Renaissance Church is a community that passionately believes that they are to be witnesses and ‘little versions of Jesus’ for the world to see. These ‘People of the Renaissance’ will move beyond the ‘Bubble of Comfort’ and boldly engage their society, community and culture through service, generosity, prayer, the arts, leadership, among other things (and whatever new idea God inspires them to step into!).

Renaissance Church will challenge the status quo, with its non-traditional methodology, perspectives and sincere desire to change the world. This is a community of Jesus followers that long to be authentic disciples of Jesus, no longer satisfied with having an appearance of spirituality that has no power to change their generation.

THE MISSION:

To develop a community of fellow Dreamers to establish a revolutionary community in the Greater Sacramento Area (Roseville, Rocklin, Citrus Heights, Antelope, Sacramento, and beyond) that lives the Renais-

sance of Jesus Christ in a manner that blesses the world with an eternal impact.

MINISTRY PHILOSOPHY:

(It is our desire to establish an environment that does the following)

1. Transcends Cultural/Racial Divide

We will have a global/transnational identity, recognizing that God has summoned us to His side, not to a particular flag or political perspective. We aim to develop a Jesus centered community that is a MOSAIC of different ethnicities, generations, perspectives, experience and class.

2. Organic in Our Composition

We want to encourage the 'called' in the environments that God has already placed them in. Our belief is that we are the present day 'incarnation' of Jesus and He has saved us not to flee from the emerging culture or the marketplace, but to set in motion dialogue, relationship and vocabulary that elicits redemptive, rather than divisional engagement.

3. Prophetic and cultural Linguistics

We want to have the ability to communicate the message of God in a way that people could understand. So with that principle in view, we desire to take full advantage of the tools this postmodern and technological age affords us to tell His story. Creativity, beauty, authenticity, story, the supernatural and many others are dialects of the 'native tongues' in which our culture speaks. In addition to speaking in the 'native' tongues, we also want to employ a new language of faith that is unique to our piece of God's Renaissance.

4. Actions that Speak

We are committed to speaking without opening our mouths. Condemnation, judgment, and angry words have been our signature far too often. In an attempt to demonstrate Jesus more effectively, Renaissance Church, will do more and speak less. That means we will be socially vigilant by feeding the poor, easing suffering, building and rebuilding homes, moving into struggling areas and investing our lives, serving schools their leaders and their families, volunteering in aid clinics/recovery centers and many, many other ways. We will fight for social justice and speak of Jesus, (by our actions) that He is not simply the God of the synagogue, but He is (and more truly) the God of the streets.

5. A Holistic ministry Design

We want to move beyond an era where there is a splintering of places where people historically have received their relational/personal/professional Moorings, (home, church, school, mentors, coaches, etc.) in such a way that we have an expanded view of discipleship. We don't simply teach people what to believe, but we show them how to apply kingdom principles into every aspect of their person. The development of practical life skills (educational, financial, vocational, relational, etc.) is not occurring in the same way as in generations past. And the erosion of these foundations undermine the discipleship process, minimizing the 'new software's' (the Jesus Way) effect, because there is no 'hardware' (practical life skills) for it to operate on.

6. Apostolic in Leadership and Foundation

We see in the original church model that can be found in the book of Acts, the function of all the offices in the Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor, Teacher model of foundational church leadership in operation. This is a challenge for us in the current era because of our reluctance to recognize any offices outside of

Pastor, Teacher of trans-local Evangelist. Despite its challenges, it is important for us to access all the leadership tools that God has provided for us. And accessing these offices is more than putting Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, etc in the front of someone's name on a Business Card.

It is our intention in the Renaissance Church community to function in the following manner:

Apostolically – we will plant churches locally and trans-locally, we will in an entrepreneurial/strategic manner extend the mission of 'Renaissance Church' as far as we are able.

Prophetically – we will communicate the word of God in supernaturally creative ways to engage the marketplace. We will pray for God to move supernaturally, divinely leading Renaissance Church in unprecedented directions. We will ask for God to reveal His unique insight so that we keep "tweaking" our methodology with an eye on the future and His redemptive mandate.

Evangelistically – we will share the transforming message of Jesus to un-churched people to expand the Kingdom of God and 'recruit' sons and daughters to be a part of the Kingdom family.

Pastorally – we will care for the needs of God's people and serve the immediate challenges of today. We will nurture those in our community to grow in their maturity as followers of Jesus. Proper care and love for individuals and their families is the organizational 'glue' that holds everything together.

Teaching/Spiritual Formation – we will communicate in a way that will help those in our community to become more knowledgeable of scripture and begin to grow spiritually. It is our goal to empower every person to not simply be a learner, but one who can also articulate what God is saying and doing.

Questions:

It is our intention to impact the Greater Sacramento Area (Roseville, Rocklin, Citrus Heights, Antelope, Sacramento, and beyond) in a significant way. In order to better accomplish this intention and the aforementioned core values we will regularly ask ourselves 4 questions:

Friendliness: Are we a community of friendly Christ Followers? Are we communicating the love of Jesus in the way we live and interact with those inside and outside our church community? Do we laugh together? Do we smile? Are we 'friends of sinners' like Jesus was? When those currently outside our church ask the question, 'friend or foe?' we want them to say with a smile, "friend".

Relevance: Are we answering the questions that people are asking? As people are on their life journey, are we positioning our church to be on their path? Are we building points of intersection with them? Do we understand what is going on in our neighborhood, our city, and culture at large? Are we endeavoring to be a 'Son of Issacar' (knowing the times and seasons of what God is doing in our generation) church? Or do we simply exist for ourselves?

Empathy: Does our church have the ability to not only observe the challenges and obstacles facing those in the Greater Sacramento Area (Roseville, Rocklin, Citrus Heights, Antelope, Sacramento, and beyond), but can we feel their pain? Are we able to cry with them? Do we desire to improve their present-tense as well as their eternal tense?

Realness: Are we an authentic church? Is our passion real or is it an act? Are we aware of our failures and our lives before we met Jesus? Are we the same on the inside and out? Are we willing to admit our mistakes? Are we humble?