



We all have a purpose of being here on earth. As soon as we come to the Lord and often even before, we can have a sense of destiny and anointing for certain activities, tasks or callings. In order to fulfil these callings there is a preparation phase in our life where we develop our gifts and character. So if you are still breathing God has a mission for you to fulfill.

The first 'Star Wars' film came out in the 70's and became a worldwide pop culture phenomenon. Two music themes played in the film depending on which characters were in the script - the rebel alliance and the empire or dark side. The dark side theme, DA, DA, DA, da-da-da, da-da-da is a classic piece that everyone recognises immediately and one that now you will probably be humming for the rest of this letter! Anikin Skywalker had a destiny as a Jedi but chose to follow his shadow mission and became a disciple of the dark side emperor. Only at the end of his life did he choose to return to his true purpose as a Jedi master. Our lives also have these two themes and so with every clear sense of mission comes also our shadow mission.

The enemy seeks to undermine our calling and purpose by taking us slightly off course from our original purpose. His tactics are usually to zero in on our character flaws and push a calling from God into a more self orientated one. As people look at the outcome of the ministry, it can look and feel great, but the attitude, the motivation, and who its all about has subtly changed and with it, the anointing. People can be blessed but instead of God receiving all the glory, it gets a little mixed and we receive some too. We can start out with such integrity and pure motives but as the ministry gets established, the goals can change slightly to get us to a more comfortable place, to develop a bigger platform personally, to gain approval or a pat on the back. Somehow in the midst of serving God, self gets involved and the purpose moves away from its altruistic beginning.

The shift towards our shadow mission often comes by putting an emphasis on personality and gifting. The world and sadly sometimes the church tells us that if you have the right charisma and abilities you will make it. In missions we look for activators, people with vision and 'get up and go'. One of our values in YWAM is to "do new things in new ways", to pioneer, to be apostolic. That's OK, but it can go too far when we only look at the gift and not at the character. 1 Samuel 16:7 tells us, "man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart." Then in 2 Chronicles 16:9 God says, "He looks to and fro across the whole world to see who's heart is wholly toward him."

So the battle we face between fulfilling our mission or our shadow mission pivots on two aspects of our make up - gifting and character. Our shadow mission focuses on our gifting, our talent, our abilities, our skills, our charisma, etc. Our real mission from God however, centers on our character - the way we think, feel, choose, our capacity to be with God, experience God and know God, to love and relate to others.

So Satan promotes our gifting and skills above character and focuses us on the negative side of self and ego and encourages us to put ourselves ahead of others and God.

Shadow mission is all about self getting in the way, so think about these words and how they may apply in your life or ministry:

- self confidence - self assurance - self promotion
- self sufficiency - self reliance - self help
- self righteousness - self important - self interest
- self pity - self absorption - self preservation
- self centredness - self protection - self indulgent
- self deprecation - self doubt - self gratification
- selfishness - selfish ambition

Biblical characters' mission and shadow mission:

Adam & Eve - their mission was to be fruitful, multiply and take dominion. However, they failed in their mission because their shadow mission took over. They were tempted towards the dark side by Satan who encouraged them to think about being like God and take the forbidden fruit. This was Satan's downfall too when he thought he was more important than God.

Jacob - his mission was to father the twelve tribes with integrity. Instead of looking to God to bring this about in His way, the first thing we see of him is his deceitfulness in stealing the blessing from Esau. His energy goes to self interest, led on by his mother who wanted her son to be the head and not the tail. The story continues with Jacob being cheated in receiving his wife from Laban and Jacob's self interest enables him to deceive and exploit Laban out of his wealth of sheep. Even at the end of his life he lives in fear of his brother who he had deceived.

Moses - His mission was to set his people free from slavery and bring them to the promised land. His shadow mission undermined his real mission and caused him to depend on his own abilities to bring about the purposes of God. His self reliance led him to kill an Egyptian slave master resulting in him having to flee into the wilderness which lost him 40 years. God used his detour to prepare Moses for the long journey the Israelites would take through the desert. His shadow mission shows up as he has a whole line of people waiting to receive his counsel. It takes Jethro's input to help him see its not all about him! As the people complain (yet again) about the lack of water, Moses shifts again to his shadow mission and he hits the rock to cause water to flow. God was wanting Moses to trust him and simply speak to the rock but his disobedience keeps him from entering the promised land.

David - His mission was to set up the kingdom of Israel, involving the establishing of worship and devotion to God, building the capital city of Jerusalem and unifying the Israelites into one nation. It seems his faith and victories over the enemy didn't go to his head, he acted wisely in leadership but it was self gratification, the focus on meeting his own lustful desires that became his shadow mission and almost caused a total fall out.

Solomon - His mission was to establish the temple and the nation of Israel to be a model and example to the nations. Unfortunately his shadow mission, having been disciplined by his

father, led him into the self absorption, self gratification, self importance of building his own palace, wealth and harem and losing sight of his God.

My mission or purpose: *'To develop leaders worldwide to live and lead like Jesus.'* These statements do help define what we are about, what our driving passion is and what we want to see as an outcome. I have had this passion for over 20 years and it continues to sum up what I do. I seek to do this in three main ways:

- establishing leadership development courses from hubs around the world that are accessible to every region;
- inviting leaders to our leadership retreat centre that we are praying will multiply in other locations;
- make resources available to continually encourage and stimulate leaders in their development.

I invest most of my time working on these three elements of my mission. It is my passion and joy to give my time and energy to God and leaders in this way. So what could my shadow mission be and how do I slip into it?

Developing our shadow mission: I had one of those aha moments a few months ago. I was reading a book on the enneagram – a personality indicator that I was interested in. There was a simple little test and so I went ahead and filled it out. The print out mentioned that 'my type' has a temptation to be self righteous. Rite, my wife, was just sitting there and so I asked, "Do you think self righteousness could be a major flaw in my character?" She gave me one of those looks that says, "Oh yeah!" My response was "Oh dear, really!" It is amazing how we don't like to think of ourselves with these kind of traits but if they fit, then we have to do something about it.

My next question was, "OK how has self righteousness manifested in my life?" It didn't take me long to recognize (and this is hard to put in writing as it makes it all the more clear) the fact that I generally think I am right, even if I don't push my opinions strongly on to others. I can often get frustrated that others are not seeing things the way I see them. I find my mind working quickly as I relate with people, summing up their positive and negative traits. This can then often lead to a judgment or putting that person in a certain labelled box. How ugly self righteousness is and what devastation it can do to a mission focus. This sinful focus then has the result of producing a shadow mission that can undermine all that I want to see take place in the ministries I am involved in. A foundation that is based on self righteousness does it my way and not God's way. It becomes too rigid, too perfect, too rules oriented. It becomes pharisaical. *I am horrified at the thought!* But it helps to talk about it and to realise how easily we can slip off in the wrong direction, especially when as leaders we begin to feel a little more secure and established in our roles. I think I have mentioned before Lynn Green's prayer – keep me holy, humble and hidden. I think I need to add another h to the list – keep me honest. Oh how important it is for me to be brutally honest with my faults and failings and pray them through on a regular basis. By being honest we allow the fear of God to rule in our lives and keep us on track with our true mission.

I wish it stopped there but there are other flaws I can fall into. They include the following:

Self reliance - I can depend on my own strength and rely on my own understanding to fulfil a task or ministry. This leads to a shadow mission of taking credit for the growth of ministry

that takes place rather than give the glory to God.

Perfectionistic - If I am going to do a job, I like to do it with excellence and feel very frustrated if something isn't done to the best of my ability. This can lead to a shadow mission of wanting to keep the way things are done to a prescribed method or using specific activities or following a too defined process.

Over responsibility (self importance) - I feel responsible to follow through on tasks and with people, to make sure everything is done well and completed, and to carry problems until solved. This can lead to a shadow mission of leaders of LDC's needing to be almost super human to keep up with every element and not let anything fall between the cracks.

This all sums up into a simple sentence: *Let me handle this!* Perhaps you can summarise your shadow mission with a little catch phrase like this.

Shadow mission in organisations:

Just as a person has a personality, gifts and character, so do organisations. Last year I wrote an article on mission drift but this concept of shadow mission zeroes in on the fact that right from the outset there are specific ways of drifting that we can be aware of and watch out for. First of all, it is vitally important to know what our clear purpose, passion or mission is. YWAM has a motto or mission of "To know God and make him known." I have been involved in the mission for 38 years now, and I want to humbly submit a thought of what may perhaps be our shadow mission. It is easy for YWAMers to only see what "we" are doing around the world and somehow not see or be aware of the wider body of Christ. We can slip into self promotion and create a motto of "To know YWAM and make it known." Thinking back to the first ship, I am reminded of how the Holy Spirit convicted us of glorifying the ship while Jesus was in the shadows. Our response was to let the ship go, give away the money we had raised and lose our reputation. We have to be on guard as this shadow mission can raise its ugly head again and we need to be ready to combat it. Perhaps another shadow mission is to focus on making God known without taking enough time to 'know him first' and carry on knowing him. The longer we serve, the more task oriented we can become and in the end we experience a void of life in the centre.

What is the potential shadow mission of your organisation, your church, your ministry or team? It will be worthwhile to take some time as a ministry to ask the Lord what attitudes, behaviour and communication to beware or be aware of and establish some safe guards to keep you on track.

Thankfully we have a model in the life of Jesus, for us to follow in his steps. He entered the world with a mission and purpose that unfolded for him as he walked in obedience. Satan sought to move him into his shadow mission in the wilderness, tempting him to use his power for his own ends but Jesus refused. Peter received a rebuke as he suggested that he shouldn't think about going to the cross. The Pharisees tried to trick him and conform him to their dark side but he stayed true. His own disciple betrayed him perhaps in the hope he would become the political Saviour. Jesus understood his mission was to preach the Kingdom, disciple some men and women and go to the cross. He finished well and his Father was well pleased, sitting him at his right hand. Let's keep our eyes on Jesus in order to have the encouragement, strength and grace to finish our mission well too.

Until next month

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