

Oct  
2003



*First Word* First Free's monthly publication

### Got Purpose?

Everyone looks for a purpose. Most people, when asked if they know what their purpose in life is usually will respond by telling you about their goals: ..to retire early . . . to be happy . . . to help this world be a better place. . .

But once you have retired what is your purpose? Once you have all you need, what is your purpose? Imagine this world as a better place, and then ask what is your purpose? Purpose goes beyond goals.

In October and November we will once again be revisiting the issue of God's purposes for each of us. Our campaign this year is called, "Got Purpose?"

We will ask the three most common questions people have about life.

- A. The Question of Existence: WHY AM I ALIVE?
- B. The Question of Significance: DOES MY LIFE MATTER?
- C. The Question of Intention: WHAT IS MY PURPOSE?

There is not a thinking person on this planet that does not wonder about these three fundamental issues of life!

We will not only revisit God's purposes for us as the church, but we will be looking at God's purposes for you and your neighbor. This year's campaign from Oct. 19<sup>th</sup> – Nov. 23<sup>rd</sup> will be focused on outreach.

Whom do you know that needs to hear about God's purposes?

Each guest who comes will be given a copy of the best-seller book "The Purpose Driven Life" written by Rick Warren. Those who were with us last year will be encouraged to read the book again. (I will be personally re-reading it.) Our sermon series will deal with the five purposes. And our ABF's will again teach and discuss and apply each of the purposes.

This campaign is all about the Kingdom of God, fulfilling His agenda in His world. Nothing brings more glory to God than having His churches and His people fulfilling His Purposes. We must work together "to serve God's purpose in our generation." (Acts. 13:36)

Begin thinking and praying for your neighbors and your friends. This can be the BEST opportunity you've had all year to invite someone to attend as you begin by asking, "Got Purpose?"

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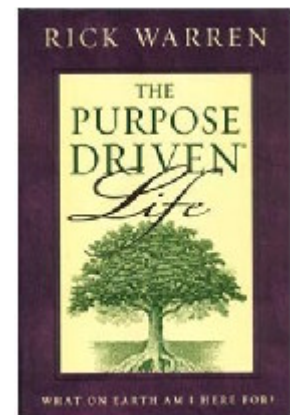
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### FIRST EVANGELICAL FREE PURPOSE STATEMENT



WE EXIST TO:

BRING PEOPLE INTO A RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS  
CONNECT THEM TO GOD'S FAMILY,  
MATURE THEM IN THEIR FAITH ,  
EQUIP THEM FOR MINISTRY SO THAT GOD'S NAME  
WILL BE EXALTED.

### SERMON SERIES *pastor Joel Sutton*

- Oct. 5 - Matt. 25:31-46 - Don't Be Surprised
- Oct. 12 - Luke 16:1-8 - How to Be Shrewd
- Oct. 19 - Got Purpose? To Exalt
- Oct. 26 - Got Purpose? To Connect

# THOMPSON IVORY

## God's direction on boundless love



By Stacy Olson

A few weeks ago, I was welcomed with open arms into the home of Thompson Ivory. Without prior notice, Thompson eagerly invited me in as if our visit had been planned many weeks ago. This is one part of him that I had the privilege of experiencing. Thompson's culture influences the way he welcomes people at any time of the day. Often times his guests end up staying over night. The expression of fellowship is boundless, and this open hospitality comes from his culture where making friends outside of his circle is common. However, it goes further than that.

"In Nigeria, we have this communal style of living and we have full access to each other. Without prior notice, we can go over to someone's place and interact. It is a way of life with a chance to know people spanning different social strata. I can commune with the very rich and the very poor. I was a very shy boy to begin with and I don't know if it was just my personality, but once I came to know Jesus, I became more outgoing. I really made a commitment of my life in university. You relate to the rich and poor and that's the same in Christian fellowship or in school. God does not exclude anybody."

Realistically, standards like this do not come easy, even if you are used to connecting with diverse people. Thompson can testify to that.

"One challenge that I face is time. People here are so structured. They may spare you a moment, but end up rushing to the next thing-time is one of the first constraints. There are also barriers in the American institutions. I remember after I spoke about Christ at a national education week event in front of deans, professors and others, I felt great animosity toward me. I was no longer allowed to speak to my fellows or in public places. However, Muslim beliefs were encouraged."

Sharing Christ is an intimate experience, and the rejection of Christ becomes a barrier in how people open up to each other. In Nigeria, Thompson could go from village to village sharing about Christ. Here in a country founded on God, there exist restrictions in sharing the gospel that shock him.

Among all these challenges, the question of comfort zone surfaced. "What would you say to someone who is uncomfortable mingling with those who are socially and culturally different from them?" Thompson's first response caught me off guard. I was then reminded about the aspects of genuine love.

"I don't say anything at first. I believe love breaks barriers. I also believe that actions must match your words. I love people, not just with my hospitality. I may invite them over to my house and see if they accept. Otherwise, I try to use the time to get to know WHO they are, not what I can get out of them. I remember one pastor saying that you cannot influence someone whom you do not know. I sympathize and rejoice with people. My 'hello, how are you?' is not just a formality. I really want to know how people are feeling."

We are given direction from our Lord and His words. Thompson clings to Phil 2:5-11 and uses this verse as a compass for his life and how he treats others. As you read this passage, may this be your prayer that you may share in what God has humbly done, so that you may know the fullness of his love and give that to those who desperately need it as well: Phil 2:5-11

"Have the attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus who, although he existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 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."



### **Heads Up!**

**Enjoy making things? Well this is a night for you! On Oct 16th, first free will be holding a banner assembling night. Five vibrant banners will be displayed year round in the sanctuary. Each one will express a component of our vision statement as a church. If you like to sew or even help assemble, we would love to have you come. Sewing machines, supper & laughter will all be provided. All banners are predesigned and all materials will be provided! See ya at 6:00 pm.**

**Have any questions?  
Contact Stacy @ 612-729-2867**



A belated open house will be held for Laura Snyder who graduated this last spring. Come join the celebration on Sun Oct 5th from 4-8 pm at her house:

9920 Old Wagon Trail  
Eden Prairie 55347

Any questions ?  
contact Laura @  
god\_rules03@hotmail.com



### **Firescape Café Events**

Here is your opportunity to invite friends outside of the church. Fire escape café is designed for youth and adults to mingle, chat and hear some cool music...even participate in some fun games. Take a chance and do something memorable for a friend outside of the church. It will not only be refreshing to them physically, but spiritually! Check your calendars!

## ***Continental Breakfast* ——— Saturday, October 11, 2003 8:30-10 am**

A presentation by missionary panel will be held on this day. There will also be opportunities to ask questions, as well as a time reserved for prayer for specific mission concerns.

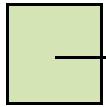
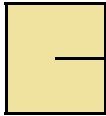
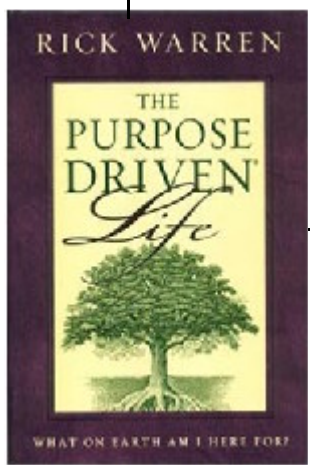
### **Missionaries Speak out!**

**Sunday, October 12 missionaries speak in Sunday School classes, from 11 am - 12 noon.**

**There will be displays, pictures, and opportunities for personal communication with the speakers during fellowship time from 10:30 - 11 am. Come join us!**

**“Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity.”  
Colossians 4:5**

# God Purpose Campaign Oct 19-Nov 23



*W*ithout a clear purpose you have no foundation on which you base decisions, allocate your time, and use your resources.

It is impossible to do every thing people want you to do. You have just enough time to do God's will.