

# Veritas Expressions

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*What is a Veritas Expression?* Dan Kimball sums it up like this: **“The church has left the building!”**

## Veritas Expressions Defined

*“An Expression is a small assembly of disciples who are founded on and defined by the Gospel, formed around the mission of Jesus and living in community together.”*

An *Expression* is marked by three characteristics:

**Gospel:** An *Expression* is a small group of Jesus followers who are *founded on* and *formed by* the Gospel. These disciples are growing in Gospel fluency together (understanding how the Gospel shapes and applies to all of life), while loving and serving one another in the Lord. This Gospel centrality is vitally important, because the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the foundation from which Christians relate to one another and the world.

**Mission:** *Expressions* are gathered together around Christ’s mission:

**And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age. (Matthew 28:18–20 ESV)**

Each *Expression* will have a clearly identified context among those they seek to make disciples. In other words, each *Expression* will take Christ’s mission to a particular neighborhood, work place, school, institution or a specific sub group within the wider community.

**Community:** people in each *Expression* believe and apply the Gospel, making disciples, within the context of day-to-day living, in the place God has placed them. Christian growth to maturity takes place in everyday life, so those who are not yet followers of Jesus will see loving Gospel community and service in action. This becomes an indispensable visual aid, when it accompanies the proclamation of the Good News.

These are the essential elements of *Veritas Expressions*. But, what do these groups look like? The exact form of each *Expression* will vary from place to place and will depend a lot upon the identified mission. Yet, these three elements: *Gospel, mission and community*, will be present and recognizable in/through the group.

### A *Veritas Expression* is not:

- Simply a small group. Small Groups are, by definition, small. And no matter what people say, they generally don't grow and multiply, because they tend to be purely inward- focused. They often do well in *building up the church*, but not so well in *building out the church*.
- Only a Bible study. Bible studies focus on gaining knowledge about the Bible and that's very important. But what is usually missing from a typical Bible study is the push for application or immediate response to be a doer of the Word.
- Only a fellowship meeting. People get together weekly all the time for friendship and fun. That's why there are softball leagues, bars, coffee shops, and the Elks Lodge. Again, the attitude is sometimes "the community for me" rather than "me for the community." *Expressions* are intentional Gospel communities, formed around Jesus Christ.
- A support group. Support groups exist for people to share their problems with others who have the same problems, so you know you're not alone. Support groups do encourage each other and keep each other accountable, but again, they can become inward-focused.
- A group formed around social activism. Activist groups are concerned with doing things for the betterment of people and society, which is fine. But working hard for reform or helping people without Gospel motivation doesn't reach down to the root of societal ills. The work of Jesus at the cross is the foundation for redemption, renewal and reform.

### Missional Communities Defined

Jeff Vandersteldt gives us this helpful definition of a missional community group:

- A Missional Community is a **Family of Missionary Servants** who make **Disciples**, who make Disciples.
- **Family:** First of all a missional community is a group of believers who live and experience life together like a family. They see God as their Father because of their faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ and the new regeneration brought about by the Holy Spirit. This means they have and know of a divine love that leads them to love one another as brothers and sisters. They treat one another as children of God deeply loved by the Father in everything – sharing their money, time, resources, needs, hurts, successes, etc... They know each other well. This knowledge includes knowing each other's stories and having familiarity with one another's strength and struggles in regards to belief in the Gospel and its application to all of life. They speak the Gospel truth to one another, regularly building each other up in love. They also love the people around them as if they were part of the family, showing them what the love of the Father looks like and in so doing inviting them to experience life in the family of God. (John 1:11-13; Rom. 12:10-16; Eph 5:1-2)
- **Missionaries:** God's family is also sent like the Son by the Spirit to proclaim the good news of the kingdom – the Gospel – and fulfill the commission of Jesus. A missional community is more than a bible study or a small group that cares for

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Terra Nova Church: <http://terranovachurch.org/>

other believers. A missional community is made up of Spirit-led and filled people who radically reorient their lives together for the mission of making disciples of a particular people and place where there is a Gospel gap (no consistent Gospel witness). This means people's schedule, resources and decisions are now collectively built around reaching people together. (Matt. 3:16-4:1; Jn. 20:21; Acts 1:8; Acts 13:2)

- **Servants:** Jesus is Lord and we are his Servants. A missional community serves those around them as though they are serving Jesus. In doing so, they give a foretaste of what life will be like under the rule and reign of Jesus Christ. Living as servants to the King who serve others as he served, presents a tangible witness to Jesus' kingdom and the power of the Gospel to change lives. A missional community serves in such a way that it demands a Gospel explanation – lives that cannot be explained in any other way than by the Gospel of the Kingdom of Jesus. (Matt. 20:25-28; Jn. 13:1-17; Phil. 2:5-11; 1 Pet. 2:16)
- **Disciples:** We are all learners of Jesus our rabbi who has given us his Spirit to teach us all that is true about Jesus and enable us to live it out his commands. Jesus commanded us to make disciples who believe the Gospel, are established in a new identity and are able to obey all of his commands (Matt. 28:19-20). The missional community is the best context in which this can happen. Disciples are made and developed: 1) through life on life, where there is visibility and accessibility 2) in community, where they can practice the *one anothers*, and 3) on mission where they learn how to proclaim the Gospel and make disciples.

### **Our Vision For *Veritas Expressions***

Our goal is to see *Veritas Expressions* emerge as the Gospel expression of *Veritas Church* during the week, throughout our community. We want to emphasize that *Expressions* are one expression, **but not the only expression**. We see the Sunday gathering as the hub, when the whole church comes together for mutual care and instruction, reconnecting and networking. It is the appropriate platform for public Gospel proclamation, praise and prayer within a traditional context. *Expressions* are not a substitute for the gathering on the Lord's Day, and our assembly on the first day of the week is not a substitute for the kind of close mutual support, care and accountability that is experienced through the *Expressions*.

In other words, over time *Veritas Expressions* will become:

- 1) An essential Gospel expression of *Veritas Church*
- 2) The primary point for the assimilation of new people into our fellowship and the context in which they grow as disciples
- 4) The launching pad for mission to our community
- 5) The place where leaders are identified, developed and scattered to plant other *Expressions* and churches
- 6) The atmosphere in which Body life and mutual care take place.

We are committed to *Expressions* with the goal of seeing these groups multiply and carpet Nevada County with the communities proclaiming the Gospel, on mission with Jesus, reaching out to people.

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## Resources and Reading

*Total Church* by Steve Timmis and Tim Chester

*The Prodigal God: Recovering the Heart of the Christian Faith* by Tim Keller

*The Master Plan of Evangelism* by Robert E. Coleman

**Veritas Expressions:** [http://myveritas.org/?page\\_id=11](http://myveritas.org/?page_id=11)

**GCM Collective:** <http://www.gcmcollective.com/>

**The Resurgence:** <http://theresurgence.com/>

**The Porterbrook Network:** <http://www.porterbrooknetwork.org/>

**The Verge Network:** <http://www.vergenetwork.org/>

**The Crowded House:** <http://www.thecrowdedhouse.org/>

See the URLs in the footer for churches, which have grown from from a foundation of missional communities

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