



***a description of
an innovative faith community in Madrid***

Our identity
Our beliefs
Our values
Our convictions
Our strategies

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I. Overview

This document aims to give the reader a comprehensive understanding of Oasis Madrid, an innovative faith community in Madrid, Spain. Since “doing” flows from “being”, we always begin by reminding ourselves “who we are”. This is our **identity**. Our **beliefs** address those things that we regard as essential to Christian faith, those beliefs that unite all Christians across time and space. Our **values** are those somewhat intangible qualities that drive and characterize our ministry. They are, in a sense, the unique personality of our community. Our **convictions** delineate stances on and clarifications of certain select theological concepts that serve as foundations for very practical outcomes. In addition, we state convictions about how the Body of Christ is to relate to the postmodern context in which we minister and (in light of our biblical foundation and the context in which we live) we state convictions as to a proposed process for making disciples. This leads us to the final component of this document: an explanation of our **strategies**. This section will explain in further detail what Oasis Madrid looks like on an organizational/programmatic level.

II. Our identity (who we are)

“Oasis Madrid is a Christ-centered community that helps people follow Jesus.”

This identity statement has three major components to it.

1. *We are Christ-centered (upreach)*

This reminds us that...

...we exist for **God**.

...we exist to **worship** God.

...we are to return to Christ’s story over and over again, telling his story in varied ways, including (even) ordering our time in such a way as to tell his story year-in and year-out by the very structure of our life.

... we are unashamedly and distinctly Christian in our orientation. Rather than downplaying the uniqueness of Christ, we choose to highlight the **difference** Jesus makes, not hiding the scandal of the cross.

2. *We are community (inreach)*

This reminds us that...

...we exist for **each other**.

...we exist to share **fellowship** with one another.

...the church is family. Since a big part of Jesus’ ministry was the creation of family, this is essential to our identity and worthy of intentional pursuit.

...the church is “the people of God gathered anywhere to accomplish God’s purposes.”

This is important to keep in mind as it reminds us that church is about people, not a place. Further, **anywhere** “two or more” are gathered “in Jesus’ name”, church happens. Church, in this sense, can take place in a pub, a park, a home or (of course) a sanctuary.

3. *We want to help people follow Jesus (outreach)*

This reminds us that...

...we exist for **others**.

...we exist to **evangelize** and **disciple**.

...evangelism and discipleship should never be separated. Indeed, they are “two sides of the same coin” since the goal of each is to “help people follow Jesus.”

...being a Christian is all about following Jesus, not merely saying a sinner’s prayer.

...our job as a church is to **help**; more accurately, to **serve**. If what we are doing is not helping, then we must stop doing it and do something else.

III. Our beliefs

First of all, **how** we believe matters just as much as the content of our faith. As such, we strive for unity in the essentials, we leave room for diversity in the non-essentials, and we aim for charity in all things.

When asked “What are those things which we regard as essential?” we feel no need to go further than that which has already been set forth in the ancient church through the rule of faith expressed in the Apostle’s Creed, which reads as follows:

“I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

“And I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived of the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.

“I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. AMEN.”

IV. Our values

1. We value a vital relationship with God: seeking the love of the Father, the grace of the Son, and the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

We believe that the primary purpose of the church is to bring people into a lifelong, loving relationship with God. The foundation of our lives, individually and corporately, is the pursuit of intimacy with God. We cultivate vitality with God through prayer, His word, participation in the church, yielding to the Holy Spirit, and experiencing God's grace through the sacraments and other spiritual disciplines. (Matthew 22:37,38; Ephesians 1:3-14)

2. We value unchurched people: making lost people our first priority because Jesus came to seek and save the lost.

We believe that the journey to faith is often long. We intentionally create a safe, inclusive environment where people can belong before they believe. We interact with unchurched people in highly relational, non-confrontational ways. We engage unchurched people through relevant subjects and relate to them using understandable words. Reaching lost people is not a program of the church: it is our life-blood. (Luke 15; Luke 19:10; 1 Timothy 1:15; 2 Peter 3:9)

3. We value compelling communication: drawing people into a life-transforming interaction with biblical truth.

We believe in the transforming authority of the Bible. We seek to communicate its timeless message in a timely way, prioritizing transformation over information. We want to engage and motivate people emotionally and intellectually, through creative and clear communication that employs a wide variety of modes including the arts. (Romans 1:16, Hebrews 4:12; 1 Corinthians 9:20-22)

4. We value authentic community: fostering open and honest friendships that enable people to be themselves.

We believe that the church is a deeply caring community of people who follow Christ, not a place that we go to. We are informal and lively in style. We are real with each other, not afraid to talk about our shortcomings. We encourage spontaneous, ongoing interaction throughout the week. We believe that small group settings are the best place to be cared for, and to care for others. We are inclusive, welcoming people from diverse backgrounds. We love to laugh and "hang out", fostering a light-hearted atmosphere in our gatherings. (Philippians 2:1-5; Colossians 3:9-14; 1 John 4:7-21)

5. We value participative teamwork: releasing people to discover a meaningful place of service and empowering them to play their part

We believe that God has shaped every believer to play a unique and satisfying part in the church. We place a high priority on leadership development and team ministry. To that end, this church is a place where everybody can discover and develop their God-given abilities, empowering each person to realize their full potential. We believe that we are called to sacrificially and joyfully serve God and others. (Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Corinthians 12)

6. We value an environment of grace: nurturing an atmosphere of acceptance and love that frees us to grow.

We believe that God wants us to view people from His perspective: looking beyond the way things are to how things could be. When people fail we lovingly extend forgiveness, patience, and hope. In a gracious environment people serve and love God out of an attitude of thankfulness. We resist motivating people through guilt or condemnation. (Ephesians 2: 8,9)

7. We value excellence: doing the best we can with the resources we have.

We believe excellence honors God and inspires people. Therefore, sufficient planning, preparation, practice and prayer permeate all we do. We discourage perfectionism and encourage risk-taking, while giving and accepting feedback graciously (Colossians 3:23; 2 Corinthians 13:11)

V. Our Convictions

We have designed more comprehensive packets of material for each of the convictions stated below, if you'd like to explore these statements in further detail or discuss these concepts with others (either one-on-one or in a small group setting). What follows are some of the chief points to consider from those packets.

1. Convictions regarding the Gospel:

The Good News is this: "The kingdom of God is at hand."

The Gospel is not simply to be understood in terms of a prayer spoken for the forgiveness of sin so that, when one dies, one will go to heaven.

Eternal life is a quality of life, not merely a quantity of life that begins when you die. Jesus invites us to live the eternal kind of life now.

Forgiveness through the cross of Christ is an essential component of the Gospel in that forgiveness is what enables us to begin following Christ and to continue following Christ.

In that light, forgiveness is a big part of the good news Jesus came to announce, but it does not contain the entire content of the Gospel message. The “rest” of the gospel is that we can live in the kingdom of God now (that is, under the rule and authority of Jesus).

Our response to the good news of Jesus, then, boils down not merely to a “sinner’s prayer” but to a life lived trusting Jesus. In that sense, the most fitting response to the Gospel comes down to two words: “Trust Jesus.”

2. Convictions regarding the Incarnation:

We believe that the Church is the Body of Christ. As such, we are to embody Jesus to the world. The incarnation of Christ has at least four implications for our ministry:

A. The Incarnation involves sending

Just as Jesus was sent, He sends us: *Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” John 20:21*

Our commission is patterned after Christ’s commission. Just as Christ was sent into the world by the Father, so we are sent into the world by Jesus. God knew we could not come to Him, so He came to us.

This means we should not wait and expect that the world will come to us, we must go to them. If we spend all our time as a Body inside the walls of a church building, we miss a piece of Christ’s commission to go. Our ministry is not merely an individual affair. The early Christians understood that we are sent out together, as a group. We are not in it alone. Therefore, if we are to be truly incarnational, we need to spend regular time together in the world, so the world can truly see (visibly) the whole Body of Christ active and alive. Because of this, Oasis Madrid holds “incarnational” and “missional” group activities each month in hopes of being a joyful, hopeful, redemptive presence in the world. (More on that later in the “Strategies” section).

B. The Incarnation involves solidifying

We are to express intangible realities by giving them tangible form in various ways. Two big ways we do this are through the arts and through sacrament.

1. The arts are an essential component of our identity as the Body of Christ, not just an extra thing tacked on to our ministry to make us look cool. Artistic expression is, in this sense, our mandate. To the extent that we are expressing ourselves artistically, we are incarnating Christ.

2. Sacraments give physical shape to spiritual realities. Art is, in that sense, sacramental. Sacraments also are the means by which we receive God’s grace. They are conduits, carriers of God’s grace. They

deliver God's grace to us in tangible form so we can touch it, taste it, see it, smell it, hear it. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are two sacraments, but we believe that all of life may be regarded as sacrament.

C. The Incarnation involves space

Jesus moved into the space of this world.: *"The Word became flesh and blood and moved into the neighborhood..." John 1:14 (The Message)*
Through us, as bearers of the name of Christ, He is still moving into the spaces of this world.

Since "the sacred" is defined as "that which is set apart for God's use", we can't really say "all of life is sacred" since there are whole areas of this world that have not been set apart for God's use. We can, however, say that all of life is spiritual, since God is indeed active and present everywhere (but, to be precise, all of life has yet to become sacred).

Our Christian vocation, then, is to "sacralize" space; that is, to set apart areas that touch our lives for the use of God.

Madrid needs more sacred space, places to which people can go and say "This place is set apart for God." BUT...That does not mean we create "spiritual clubs of exclusivity" where the hurting, broken and wounded feel out of place and are unwelcome! No, that misses the point of creating sacred space! Sacred spaces are, by their very nature, healing spaces where the ugly, dirty, and hungry are invited in and where they sense God's grace, restoration, healing, love and acceptance. Since there are many who are in need of this kind of space, you can no doubt see that Madrid needs much more than one oasis to meet demand!

Since God is active everywhere, any place can be set apart for Him (offices, homes, restaurants, book stores, etc). (Just look at what Jesus did when he entered Levi's house!) But, when a "place" is truly set apart for Him, look out: that "place" is no longer the same! It becomes a place set aside to encounter the living Christ.

D. The Incarnation involves service

The reason Jesus came was to serve. Jesus said so himself: *"...the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve..." Matthew 20:28*

And, Jesus calls us to follow in his footsteps: *"Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you." John 13:14-15*

1. A big part of incarnating Christ involves meeting the physical needs of others. As such, we strive to do this on a regular basis (see our strategy section).

2. Serving also expresses itself through exercising your gift within the church. See, in particular, the section on “Christian Vocation” in the strategy section of this document for more about this.

3. Convictions regarding Grace:

Grace, generally speaking, is any kind of gift from God (or, even, from another person). As such, the spiritual gifts with which believers are endowed are to be rightly regarded as grace.

In this light, though forgiveness is grace, grace is more than forgiveness.

Grace is unearned, undeserved and unconditional.

Grace means “there is nothing you can do to make God love you any more; and there is nothing you can do to make God love you any less.”

This tells us, however, that, though “grace is opposed to earning”, it is not opposed to effort (D. Bonhoeffer). The spiritual disciplines do not run counter to the way of grace. Indeed, they are to be regarded as receptacles of God’s grace, the way in which we receive God’s grace. To walk in God’s ways is to walk in a state of blessedness. To obey God is to walk in the light of God’s grace (and vice versa).

To walk in a state of blessedness does not mean we are exempt from suffering. Suffering may be a grace as well.

4. Convictions regarding the Bible:

We believe that one purpose of the Bible is to “convene a community.” That is, the Bible should bring people together to encounter the risen Christ, to wrestle with God’s claims on our lives and to spur us on to love and good deeds.

In light of this, regarding the interpretation of the Bible, we believe that the Bible should primarily be interpreted in the context of community. This community is not simply a **current** and **present** community, but includes the community of faith through the centuries in different places and contexts. Though we may bring insights into the Scriptures in an individualistic way, our thoughts on the Scriptures should be placed under the authority of the larger community of faith.

Further, the Scriptures possess a depth characterized by God’s infinite nature. Therefore, we need not say that each text of Scripture carries one meaning and only one meaning. We believe much can be gained through the application of different interpretive techniques, wrestling with the different “senses” of Scripture (its historical, literal, typological, allegorical, spiritual and moral/ethical sense). We believe each of these are valid, but should be used in humility, knowing that, though Scripture may carry many meanings, some interpretive viewpoints clearly lie outside the domain of orthodox belief. Once again, the community of Christian

believers (both present and past) can guide us in ascertaining those interpretations which build true faith and those which contribute to the destruction of faith.

5. Convictions regarding postmodernism:

We believe that the postmodern context presents both challenge and opportunity.

On the one hand, we acknowledge that a postmodern metaphysic (that is, a postmodern construction of truth) does present various challenges to the Christian faith. But...

As Christians, we can embrace what could be called “a limited relativism”. That is, there are some things we don’t know and some things we can not know for certain.

This “limited relativism” can, indeed, feed our theology and can serve as an impetus to vibrant Christian faith. Further, it can serve as a catalyst for fresh humility in, among many other things, our evangelism. Because “we don’t know it all”, we can approach evangelism from the standpoint of mutual seeking and learning.

We believe that the anti-institutional nature of cultural postmodernity should be taken into account in our ministry strategy. Having said that, many postmodern people have a deep appreciation for and affinity with pre-modern spirituality. Because of that, many postmodern people find ancient spiritual practices helpful to their faith, even though they may be opposed to the church as an institution.

We believe that, culturally speaking, postmodern people apprehend truth through encounters with beauty. Beauty takes the form of visual art, film, dance, friendship, creation, story, music, poetry, etc.

We are grateful that postmodernism tells us “there’s more to life than what you can touch, see or prove in a laboratory.” In that light, we need not, indeed, adopt a stance of hostile regard towards postmodernity.

6. Convictions regarding discipleship and disciple-making:

We believe that churches can grow numerically and programmatically, but that does not mean they are actually making disciples. We believe we constantly need to come back to the question: “Are we making disciples?” That, after all, is our commission.

We believe that evangelism and discipleship should never be separated. They are two sides of the same coin.

Because of that, it is important that we define what we mean by evangelism. Evangelism, in our way of thinking is: “communicating to others a message of

forgiveness and hope provided by Christ, so that they will be enabled to turn (repentance) and move towards Jesus (discipleship).”

For further clarification, it may be helpful to note that we do not regard repentance as something that **opposes** faith or grace (since we are saved “by grace, through faith”). Rather, we view it as **the practical expression** of our faith.

To be a disciple, then, is to be a learner, a pupil, a student, an apprentice. A disciple is one who seeks to learn a discipline or a trade from a master or a teacher. A disciple develops discipline that develops character. Disciples of Jesus learn to be like the Master through following him. Just as in any discipline or trade that one seeks to learn, there are tools, techniques, disciplines we employ to get better at the thing in question. An artist learns to use different brushes, techniques, paints, surfaces, etc to master their craft. In the same way, the spiritual disciplines are the tools we use to become more like the Master. Notice: they are not the end in and of themselves. If using a particular tool makes you less like the Master, then, by all means, stop using it! But, by all means, find the tool you need and use it.

We believe the process of disciple-making can be intentional *and* organic, formal *and* informal, structured *and* relational. We also believe it is a combination of process and event. (You may read more about this in our “Strategy” section).

We define discipleship as: “the process whereby we wrap our lives more and more around the person, work and story of Jesus through the family he established on earth.”

This definition has several components to it:

- a. Discipleship is a process. It lasts us our whole life.
- b. “Wrapping our life around the person of Christ” pertains to Christian formation. Specifically, discipleship involves being formed more completely to resemble Jesus. This has to do with the development of Christ-like virtue. Are we becoming more like Jesus? Are we becoming more gentle, humble, loving, patient, courageous?
- c. “Wrapping our life around the work of Christ pertains to Christian vocation. Specifically, God gives us work to do in the church and in the world. Often, Christians think of discipleship merely in terms of Christian formation. We believe this is a mistake. Jesus asks us to carry on his work in the world. If we refuse to do so, we are not his disciples. Being a follower of Jesus means doing the work Jesus asks us to do.
- d. The story of Jesus continues in the family of Jesus. If we are to continue to live in the light of the person and work of Jesus, we cannot do so apart from living in the context of the family of Jesus. The Church is the continuation of the story. That is why we say that discipleship is “through the family he established on earth.”

One way to “wrap our lives” around the story of Jesus is to join with the ancient Christians in how they did this: through orienting the very weeks of the year to correspond to the Christ-event itself: birth (Advent), ministry (Epiphany), death (Lent), resurrection (Easter), commissioning and empowering (Pentecost). Further, the ancient Christians used this not only as the pattern for their annual life, but also as the pattern for making disciples. Below is a description of that.

VI. Our Strategies

The following strategies help us to accomplish God’s purposes for us, to pursue our mission. They grow out of our values and the above-stated convictions.

Strategy 1: Intentional Discipleship

We seek to be both intentional and organic in our approach to making disciples. Further, we believe discipleship can be both formal and informal, structured and relational. Intentional discipleship nurtures people through significant spiritual mile-markers such as conversion, beginning discipleship, Christian formation and Christian vocation. This is our way of taking seriously Christ's command to "make disciples of all nations."

More specifically, the discipleship pathway described below is an ancient method of making disciples that involves a combination of process and event. Typically, the “process” portions of the pathway would take place one-on-one, but, in some instances, it could happen in a small group setting. Further, it should be noted that the process should be personalized. Though there is a specific curriculum prepared to guide the disciple through the various phases of the process, the spiritual mentor should feel free to deviate from the set curriculum to address needs that are more appropriate to the growing disciple. The following description is intended to be flexible, but it should be noted that, should some of the components listed below fall by the wayside, something crucial would be missing. With that, here is a description of the various processes and events that mark the maturation process of individuals.

Process- The period of inquiry or seeking

First, persons engage in a process of inquiry whereby the seeker considers the person and work of Christ. We may refer to the “end” or “purpose” of this process as “conversion”, the point at which the seeker becomes a believer and decides to become a follower of Jesus.

Following conversion, the new believer is encouraged to mark that decision through a public celebration called “The Rite of Conversion”.

Event- The Rite of Conversion

Essentially, this is a corporate celebration and a declaration of the individual's intent to grow in their faith. Public affirmations are made by the individual concerning their need Jesus, his forgiveness and the new life he offers. Now that they have asked Jesus to come into their life, they make declarations of intent to be his disciple.

Process- Foundations for Discipleship

During this phase the individual becomes a "hearer" where they learn what it means to be part of the church (the family of Jesus), what it means to be an active worshipper of Jesus and how to meditate upon the Scriptures. At the end of this process, the individual once again marks their progress through celebrating the corresponding rite of passage.

Event- The Rite of Covenant

This marks the renewed commitment of the church to support the maturing Christian. Further, the new disciple determines to learn to walk in the Spirit.

Process- Basic Christian formation

The maturing believer learns about the battle we wage with the forces of evil. They engage in a process of intentional and focused Christian formation whereby they learn to incorporate the virtues of Christ into their life. They learn the Lord's Prayer and the Apostle's Creed as tools to wage battle in the domain of the spirit and the mind. Having "put off" the old nature and "put on" the new nature, they will then celebrate the rite of baptism.

Event- The Rite of Baptism

This rite provides us with a full picture of what the maturing Christian has learned thus far: identification with Christ involves nothing less than putting sin to death and rising to new life in Jesus.

Process- Basic Christian vocation

The baptized believer now learns about his or her Christian vocation, the work God gives every believer. They learn what their gift is in order to serve in the church, and they learn to view their "secular" work as God's work. They also learn that it is the vocation of every Christian to care for the poor, sick, homeless, orphans and widows. Finally, they learn to be a verbal witness for Christ, encouraging others to consider Christ's call to "Follow me!"

As a general rule, mentors and mentorees should keep in mind the concrete objectives during each period of maturation. They should seek to be flexible and fluid in the employment of various approaches to discipleship, while at the same time remaining mindful of specific learning objectives. To aid in the intentionality of the suggested "curriculum for Christlikeness", Oasis Madrid has Bible study materials available that you may use. Simply ask for these materials (called "Journey to Jesus") from any staff member.

It should also be noted that this pattern of disciple-making can correspond to the pattern of the Christ-event itself. For example, the ancient Christians would, during the summer and autumn months, intentionally engage seekers (or "inquirers", as they called them) in a process of considering Christ's claims on their lives. This period was called "the period of inquiry". Should the spiritual seeker desire to become a follower of Jesus, they would mark that decision *on the first Sunday of Advent* with a rite of passage, celebrated before the assembly

of believers. It is appropriate that, in accord with marking the *birth* of Jesus, the seeker celebrates the new *birth* in their heart.

Then, during the season of Advent and Epiphany, the new convert would *grow*, in the same way that Christ grew up. Specifically, during this period the new disciple learns what it means to be part of the family of God, and how to actively worship Jesus, and how to pray the Scriptures. Essentially, they are given tools they will need to engage in the coming process of Christian formation during Lent.

At the end of the Advent/Epiphany season of growth, they would then celebrate with the assembly of believers once again through observing the rite of covenant *on the first Sunday in Lent*. This was an appropriate time to observe that rite, since Lent, of course, is the time during the Christian year that we contemplate the meaning of the cross of Christ, and, more specifically, our call to die to sin and repent of sin. So, through the rite of covenant, the growing disciple would express a commitment to grow in Christ-likeness during the weeks of Lent, to repent of sin, to wage war on evil in their life.

Then, at the end of Lent, something significant happens: Jesus rises again to new life. As such, it is appropriate to mark the “end” of the period of Christian formation and to celebrate the growth made as the growing disciple has been “crucified with Christ”. This celebration, of course, would be baptism, which mirrors the death and resurrection of Christ. In the ancient church, baptism took place *on Easter Sunday morning*. So, this is most often how we observe the rite of baptism in our community (following, even, much of the ancient liturgy used by the Bishop Hippolytus around 200 AD).

After the resurrection, of course, the story is not complete yet. We know that Jesus commissioned his disciples, giving them work to do in the world, sending them out. They waited in Jerusalem for the gift of the Holy Spirit that would empower them for ministry in the church and to the world. So, it is appropriate that, after the rite of baptism, the baptized believer learns about their vocation in the church and in the world. Taking up our vocation, then, corresponds to the *Great Commission and Pentecost*.

With that, we come full circle, so to speak. Now the mature disciple takes up the call to Christian vocation and prays, seeking to engage spiritual seekers in the same process they themselves experienced, which is, of course, the same process Jesus and his disciples experienced.

In this way, the ancient church truly enabled early Christians to “wrap their lives around Jesus”. While Oasis Madrid does not necessarily follow the same strict timeline for making disciples, we use this pattern as a guide for our community life and, when possible, as a guide and pattern for the growing believer. Indeed, many have found the experience enriching.

With that, we turn to our second strategy.

Strategy 2: A reproductive ethos:

A healthy church is like a healthy plant: it bears fruit. We believe that if we provide individuals (and groups of individuals) with the nutrients they need to thrive, they will reproduce naturally. While the idea of a reproductive ethos is not a strategy in and of itself, the following will help flesh out how this idea becomes a strategy.

A. We seek to develop reproducing leaders:

We seek to raise up leaders who will raise up more leaders- who will raise up more leaders. This is reproduction in its simplest form. Because of this, we provide materials and monthly events designed to intentionally support and equip leaders.

Here are specific ways we seek to nurture leaders:

- Monthly Leadership Community events, including one-day seminars and an annual weekend retreat.
- Group Leader Training through our comprehensive Leader's Scrapbook. The Leader's Scrapbook explains the philosophy behind our community groups and their identity. Further, the Leader's Scrapbook gives practical help to our leaders as to how to lead a small group both in the weekly group meeting and outside the meeting.
- In addition to that, each leader is paired with a personal mentor/coach.
- Internships and Lifelong Leadership Development: this includes things like discovering personal values for ministry, gaining lifelong perspective through the use of a timeline and other useful tools to help Christian leaders reproduce themselves in others.

B. We seek to develop reproducing community groups:

Community groups are the heart of our church. They represent an essential component in fulfilling our identity and values. That is to say, through our small groups we seek to fulfill our purpose to worship, fellowship, evangelize and disciple. To express how crucial community groups are, we say that we are a church of small groups, not just a church with small groups. Because of this, we believe the more community groups there are, the more quality ministry can take place. So, we seek to multiply groups on a regular basis.

Most community groups consist of 6-12 people. This is a good size for facilitating quality friendships and discussion during the weekly group

meeting. But, as each group is encouraged to reach out to others, these groups grow in number. When a group becomes too large, we multiply (so where there was one group, there are now two). To facilitate this multiplication, most groups have an apprentice leader. This is a person who is intentionally practicing group leadership so they are prepared to lead a new group when it is formed. Our goal is to see 2 groups become 4, 4 groups become 8, 8 groups become 16 and so on. In this way, more people can be aided in their spiritual sojourn.

C. We seek to develop reproducing congregations:

Congregations are really just clusters of community groups. We imagine a day (sooner rather than later) when there will be more than one "Oasis Madrid". Perhaps there will be an "Oasis Toledo" or an "Oasis Alcala" (or maybe these other congregations will have more unique names like "Church of the Really Weird People."). Either way, Spain needs more churches, so we want to have babies.

Our current congregation is made up of a cluster of community groups. We hope that, just as community groups multiply, our congregation will multiply. New congregations will be composed of newly formed community group clusters that are determined by geographic proximity. The city of Madrid has at least 10 distinct barrios. What if each of these areas had its own congregation? We believe Madrid needs precisely this. And it will be made possible as we reproduce leaders, which reproduce community groups, which form new congregations...

Strategy 3: Balanced gatherings

There are two kinds of balance we seek:

1. A balance between "centralized" ministry and "decentralized" ministry.
2. A balance between corporate worship and corporate outreach.

A. Balance in "centralized" and "decentralized" ministry

On the one hand, it is important for Christians to gather in various corporate, more "centralized" kinds of expressions (such as church services), but healthy churches also make a habit of "decentralizing" their leadership and forms of ministry. "Decentralized" ministry is intended to encourage "every-member" ministry, a church in which its members are provided space to make a contribution and have a voice. One way we emphasize decentralized ministry is through community groups. We see that in community groups all kinds of people with all kinds of gifts have opportunity to exercise their gifts in regular, ongoing ways.

B. Balance in corporate worship and corporate outreach

The church is "the people of God gathered." As God's people come together to worship Jesus and love others, Christ's healing presence takes tangible shape in the world.

But, too often the church finds it hard to balance our need to grow as Christians (to worship together corporately) and our call to minister to the lost and hurting. Too often, Christians get stuck into the "Sunday morning rut", forever gathering for "great services", but forgetting about the work Jesus wants us to do in the world—together.

This strategy specifies our most recent attempt to balance corporate worship with corporate outreach. It is an experiment, however, and we may (and probably will) make changes as we see the need or as we learn more about "what works" and "what does not".

To try to strike a balance however, here's what we do:

Mainly, we have two types of "large-group" gatherings: services twice a month, and incarnational/missional gatherings once a month where the church gets out into the world to embody (or "incarnate") the joy, love, and hope that Christ offers. These incarnational events range from large group friendship building events to serving in the community together. In addition to those two types of gatherings, we also host a monthly Seminar Saturday, designed to equip people for life and ministry.

Below is further description of the three types:

- **Worship Services**

We meet the first and third Saturday of every month at 6 pm to worship God together. In addition to varied forms of corporate worship and a teaching element, many times our services include interactive elements designed to engage people and encourage participation. Our services also tend to be artistically expressive through utilizing things like visual art, dance, multimedia and video.

- **Incarnational Events**

We do these events (called The Gathering) once per month (usually on the fourth Saturday of the month) as a corporate expression, in an attempt to remind ourselves that we exist for those who would be unlikely to consider coming to a church service. Here's what we do:

* **Friendship Building Events:** These are fun types of things we do together where people who do not consider themselves Christians would feel comfortable. Some examples of friendship building events include picnics in the park, hiking, game days, an ice-skating party, a dance party, or a citywide scavenger hunt.

Basically, anything that promotes laughter and building relationships.

* Service projects: we currently have a ministry that serves sandwiches and other food every Friday to homeless people that live in Madrid. In the past, we have also been involved with a refugee home for boys in Santander, and we have ministered in Morocco through sending small teams. In addition to these ministries, we also encourage our community groups to consider what they can do to serve those less fortunate.

- Seminar Saturday

On the second Saturday of every month, Oasis Madrid also holds seminars designed to dig in deeper to varied specialized topics. This is something we're trying out in hopes that we will be able to more effectively equip the body of Christ for successful living in the world. Some of the topics we have considered include:

- Bible study methods
- Theology of culture
- Sexuality
- Finances
- Overview of Christian history
- Overview of the Bible
- Becoming a Contagious Christian
- Prayer
- Comparative religions
- The kingdom of God

VII. Conclusion

Well, this packet has given you an "earful"! If you'd like to catch a more "personal" glimpse of Oasis Madrid, you can do so by watching our short 3 minute video at this link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=49Zd7GVb6Ks>