

**MidAmerica District**

***REFOCUS***

***Part 2: Values/Vision/Mission***

**PART 2. Core Values, Cultural Context, Vision and Mission.**

Helping church leaders determine why their church exists and the role their church has in advancing the Kingdom of God.

 

As you go through this exercise, I use the image of an arrow to represent a church that is used of God to impact His Kingdom. I like to think of the church as the arrow in God’s quiver to be used according to His will. He is the archer, your church is simply a willing arrow that God will direct and aim and use in your community and the ends of the earth for His Kingdom advance.

***Before you begin: PRAY. Read and pray through Philippians 1:3-11.***

As we begin this dive into what motivates your church, we make the assumption that we agree on the following Biblical World Views?

* The Bible is God’s Word that informs all
* There are both natural and supernatural elements in our world
* All mankind belongs to one of two kingdoms
* God is on mission to redeem
* Jesus is the only way
* The Church is God’s primary partner in completing His mission
* The destiny of God’s people is to be conformed to the image of Christ

Anything to add? Thoughts?

**MISSION:**

 

For our purposes, the **mission statement for your church is the arrow’s shaft.** The church mission connects the fletching or feathers (Core Values and Cultural Context) that direct the arrow and the arrow head (Vision) that makes the impact. Your mission gives your church the backbone for your Kingdom work.

**For what purpose did God establish our church?** Jesus declares his mission on earth early in the gosple of Luke. See Luke 4:17-21,

***He opened the book and found the place where it was written,***

***“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.***

***He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind,***

***to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.”***

***And he closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”***

Put a bit more succinctly Jesus states in Luke 19:10, ***“For the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost.”***

Your mission must be:

* Bible-centered
* Kingdom impacting
* Identify how you are co-laboring with the King
* Your mission could be adopted by most other evangelical churches

**1. What is the current mission statement for your church?**

You can go online and check out some other church’s mission statements. Here are a few I found:

*Helping people find their way back to God.* Community Christian Church (Naperville, IL)

*We exist to help people become fully devoted followers of Christ.* Seacoast Church (Mt Pleasant, SC)

*We are a community of believers located in the urban core of Cincinnati, joining Jesus in His mission to redeem the people in our city.* Missio Dei Church (Cincinnati, OH)

*Loving God, loving people, and making disciples of Jesus everywhere we go.* Spanish River Church (Boca Raton, FL)

*“Helping people know, love and follow Jesus.” This was the mission statement for the church I attended for four years. I was reminded of our mission every week during our Sunday service in the welcome, in the message, and in the announcemnets. I do not have to go to our website to look it up. I know it and my pastor asks us to live it.* (New City Church, Bellevue, NE)

*C&MA mission statement: “We desire to know Jesus Christ as Savior, Sanctifier, Healer, and Coming King and to complete His Great Commission.”*

**3. What observations do you make as you study these samples?**

**4. Take a look at your current mission statement. Does it** **communicate the mission of your church to your community and world?**

* **Our mission statement still serves our church.**
* **We need to make some small changes to our mission statement.**
* **We need to rewrite our mission statement. Check out Matthew 28:18-20 and 2 Cor 5:18-20 if you are looking at a complete rewrite.**
	+ **Each elder/leader will write down his or her thoughts on the mission statement.**
		- **It must be short and concise**
		- **It must include a verb…what we do; a tartget…who we are on mission for; an outcome…the end goal. For example: “We exist as LCF to advance the gospel in our Acts 1:8 geographies.”**
* **Engage in a group discussion over what each person has written. What chaptures your heart? What seems to fit your church and your community.**

**Leave this mission statement for a few days**. While you wait to get back together, give the mission statement some thought. Does it describe a measurable and accurate purpose for your church? Does the fulfillment of your mission statement bring glory to God?Is it simple enough for the un-churched to understand?

After a few days, revisit the mission statement as an elder/leadership team. Does it still work? Does it need some tweeking?

**WRITE DOWN THE CHURCH’S MISSION STATEMENT:**

**Core Values and Cultural Context:**



The core values and your cultural context are like **the fletching on the shaft of an archery arrow**. *We have already discussed* ***the mission*** *(the arrow shaft that provides strength) and will get to* ***the vision*** *(arrowhead) later.*  These feathers guide the arrow to its target and prevent the mission and vision of the church from drifting off course. Without shared core values and without an understaning of your cultural context, a church will tend to drift back in on itself and become inward focused rather than mission focused.

Read Philippians 2:1-4.

Tod Bolsinger in his book, *Canoeing the Mountains* writes, “what we are calling ‘shared values,’ Paul terms as the ‘same mind.’ And the same mind is more than thinking the same way; it is about common cause, common care and shared commitment to look out for the others.” As the leadership team, you aim for like-mindeness, being one in spirit and purpose as you consider what God desires for your church. Your ministry effectiveness hinges on **shared core values** and a **clear understanding of the people God has given you (cultural context)** to effectively serve and introduce your people to the good news.

**First: Your Core Values.** These are simply what your church believes to be vital to complete the mission God has given your church.

Core Values:

* Make your church unique in your Kingdom work
* Communicate to your people and to the community what is important to you and your work in His harvest field
* Help church leaders determine what minsitries to pursue and what ministries to say no to.
* Motive your people to live out the Kingdom mission in the context of your church’s minsitry. Core values drive behavior that ultimately determines the outcomes of your minsitry pursuits.

*Before you begin answering the following questions in a group setting, think for a moment what are personal core values. What characterized your life? What would others say that you value?*

* *How have these personal values determined your life choices? How do these values drive the decisions you will make this week?*
* *Your personal values…write down three or four.*

*What would you think of a person with no stated core values?*

*What do you think is the result of a church without stated core values?*

Let’s take some time on your church’s core values.

Take some time to read Acts 2:40-47. Here we see the end of Peter’s message to the crowd at Pentecost. Three thousand were baptized that day…the birth of the Christian church. I think one set of the core values of the early church could be taken from this passage. These are not intended to be your values, but only an example of the values that guided this specific church at this specific time. **From these verses, what did this early church value? Please write your observations below.**

**Value Observed behavior**

As individuals, work through the first question:

**1. Off the top of your head, what would you say your church highly values today? Begin by asking what observable minsitries are vibrant in yoru church. What value does this ministry support?**

 **a. Write down four core values you believe your church lives out and the behaviors that support these values.**

As a group:

**2. On one side of a white board write down the top six core values that are identified most often by your leadership team. Under each value write down the supporting behaviors/outcomes you observe.**

**a. Now read your current church core values, if they exist. Go ahead and write them on the other side of the white board.**

**b. Spend some time reflecting on the two lists. Do these values still represent your church?**

**c. What values are missing? Any?**

**3. From the list, can the leadership team agree on five core values that define your church?**

**Second: your cultural context.** You must know the geography and people who you are called to serve and reach.

Cultural Context:

**4. What do you know of your cultural context in your community? Can you define the people and place you are called to impact?**

* + Take a walk. Pray through your neighborhoods.
	+ Who are key community leaders you have connection with? How might they help you understand the culture of your community?

*The District can provide demographics for your immediate ministry area.*

**5. What are some barriers that are hindering your Kingdom advance?**

**(Tight family groups; mistrust of religion; church is too conserative; false gospel has been presented in the past; no real view of sin in the world; fear of believers of rejection….)**

**6. What are some current needs that you are aware of in your target area?**

**(Single parents; isolated people; community events; neighborhood service; school backpack program; hosting club meetings; serving a local school…)**

**7. What opportunites to serve and engage people are available to you and your church community?**

**(For example your church might be close to a school you could serve; maybe a retirement home needs someone to come and do church services…..)**

* Where do you sense relational and spiritual openness in your community?

**8. List the top five cultural observations you have made during this discussion?**

Let’s try to nail down a new draft of our core values with our cultural context in mind. Consider your answers to questions #3 and #8 above and spend time on the following question.

**9. Review your core values in light of the discussion of yoru cultural context. For each stated value, if they are lived out in your church, what would you expect the outcome of each value to be? (For example, if you value evangelism, the observable outcome should be conversions/baptisms and the expected behavior would be a witnessing church.) What in the Bible supports this value as a priority?**

**Core Value #1: We highly value \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**VALUE EXPECTED OUTCOME SCRIPTURE**

**Core Value #2: We highly value\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**VALUE EXPECTED OUTCOME SCRIPTURE**

**Core Value #3: We highly value\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**VALUE EXPECTED OUTCOME SCRIPTURE**

**Core Value #4: We highly value\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**VALUE EXPECTED OUTCOME SCRIPTURE**

**Core Value #5: We highly value\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**VALUE EXPECTED OUTCOME SCRIPTURE**

**10. Take time to pray over all you have written and discussed. Pray Ephesians 3:14-21. Pray that the values of your church will always bring God glory through the ministry of the church.**

*We encourage you to look at the Christian and Missionary Alliance values. These can be found at* [*http://www.cmalliance.org/about/beliefs/values*](http://www.cmalliance.org/about/beliefs/values)*. Some of our churches use these same core values.*

*To see what other churches value, simply google “church values.”*

**CHURCH VISION:**

 

The mission statement above answers the question, “For what purpose did God establish our church?” The vision answers the question, **“Where are we going?”** The values and cultural context (arrow fletching) guide, the mission (shaft) connects and strenghtens, and the vision (arrowhead) is the business end of the weapon. The arrowhead is what impacts the target and changes things. It’s impact on the target is measurable. Where the mission could be applied to every evangelical church, the vision will be unique to your vision will be built using your core values and understaning your cultural context.

Here are some sample vision statements:

*To multiply followers of Jesus by planting three churches in the metro area by 2022.*

*To provide a safe place for the broken. A place where the broken will expereince the restoration and power of the Holy Spirit.*

*Impacting 100,000 Phoenix area residents by the year 2020.* Christ Church of the Valley (Peoria, AZ)

*Excellerate Church Software* website helps us understand the difference between the mission statement and our vision statement. “The difference is that a vision statement describes how you and God see your church. It focuses on the personality of the church."

Excellerate goes onto encourage the church to “dream big.” What are you, the elder/leadership team, and your congregation dreaming about. Be bold with this vision. Your vision must be concise. It should not be longer than one sentence and it is, like the mission statement, something your people can remember and point to when someone asks them how does your church want to impact our community? This vision statement will be different than the other churches in your area. Your missions may appear similar, but your vision is yours and yours alone.

Take some time to read the attached article by Steven Irvin titled “The Vision Thing.” What do you learn from this article?

Often churches and people have values and a life mission, but no vision. Without vision the church’s values and the church’s mission have no way to impact the nations.

**1. Begin by writing down aspects of your community that makes the place you live and worship unique.**

* Cultural Context Review

**2. What are the barriers in your community to the advancement of the gospel message through the church?**

**3. What are the needs in the community that your church might address?**

**4. What opportunities might the church have to impact your community for good?**

5**. From the above answers and further dialogue write down five things about your cultural context that you believe should impact the way you “do church?”** These may be observations you make…both good and bad.

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Spend some time thinking about the question, “What is God’s specific call for our congregation in the context of our community and culture?” Write down ideas of how your church can specifically impact your community. How can your church make a Kingdom difference in the community God has put you in?

**YOUR CHURCH’S VISION STATEMENT:**

*As you begin to craft a vision statement, here are some things to consder:*

* *Again, the vision answers the question “where are you going.” It must be future focused.*
* *Your vision will drive strategy and decision making so it must be clear.*
* *Is it relevant to your people and your community you are impacting?*
* *Is it based on you core values? As we considered earlier, the values guide the arrow to the target while the vision is the impact on that target.*
* *Is it inspiring and compelling? Will your people respond with an excitement and understanding of how God wants to use them and the church body to work His harvest field?*
* *Is your vision unique to your church?*

Step 1: Dream of what your community would look like if God what he wanted from your church on His mission? (This can be extended to your impact in your Judea/Samaria/Ends of Earth)

Step 2: Revisit your core values.

Step 3: Has God given you a burden for your local community, for your Samaria/Judea, for the ends of the earth? Do your hearts have a divine responsibility that your church could fulfill?

Step 4: Spend some time asking the LORD what his desire is for your church. Keep this simple and compelling.

Step 5: Determine how you will measure the advancement of your vistion?

**5. Write down your best shot at the God’s vision for your church.**

**NEXT STEPS:**

You have the start of communicating and living out shared Biblical world views, shared core values and a shared vision for your church.

How do you now live out your vision and values through ministry? What practices and minsitry strategies will best support your values in reaching your vision? This is what we begin to work on as we live out the vision God has given you.

THE VISION THING

Christian leaders must see through the eyes of Christ

By Steve Irvin

A study published in 2006 of more than 1,100 churches examined the elements that most influence church growth. Researchers concluded that two key factors distinguish growing churches from declining churches: effective leadership and vision. These findings, reported in Lausanne World Pulse (http://www.lausanneworldpulse.com/trendsandstatistics/03-2006), reveal what many of us know intuitively: God uses leaders to build His Church. What church is not looking for more trained and effective leaders? And how many churches and organizations are mired without a clear vision?

What Are You About?

The first President Bush, running for office in 1987, complained that he just could not understand the big deal about “the vision thing.” Unfortunately, a lot of leaders dismiss the idea of vision and replace it with policies, procedures and management. It’s kind of like getting your car tuned up and ready to hit the road, but you don’t have anywhere to go. What good is a slick Cadillac just idling in the garage?

Leadership and vision go together. Leaders motivate and inspire followers by articulating a compelling vision, a mental image of a desired future. A widely shared vision can impel organizations, including churches, toward fulfillment of their goals and purposes.

Some leaders attempt to conjure up catchy phrases and promote them as vision statements. But a good vision statement goes beyond clever slogans. It must reflect the passion that drives the organization. From a Christian perspective, it must flow from the passions and purposes of God and express concisely—but compellingly and clearly—what the organization is ultimately about. The vision statement motivates people to action so that they embrace what they are doing as truly meaningful for both the organization and for the Kingdom of God.

However, simply writing a vision statement is not enough. There are software programs with templates to help you piece together vision statements. Vision is not fabricated on a computer screen. It is discerned.

Discerning Vision

Scripture reminds us that where there is no vision, “people stumble all over themselves” (Proverbs 29:18, The Message). “Vision,” in this context, points to a prophetic revelation where people hear from God and obey Him. Similarly, Christian leaders need to hear from the Lord concerning their lives and their organizations in order to articulate the vision God desires for them. Jesus said, “The Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does” (John 5:19, NASB). The leader seeking to discern vision must listen to God in the Word and in prayer, receive a fresh understanding of God and His purposes and then follow His leading.

This process may be somewhat slow as the leader wrestles with interpreting God’s direction in the midst of challenges, setbacks and opportunities. Leaders open their hearts to the Lord as they seek Him. It can be like peeling an onion as God deals with the leader at different levels. It can be a time of brokenness for the leader as he or she seeks the face of the Lord. Once discerned, vision sparks a passion in the leader and doesn’t let him or her go. The apostle Paul testified before King Agrippa, “I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision” (Acts 26:19, NKJV). The Christian leader is called to embody the vision discerned from the Lord and to articulate it passionately in word and deed, in humility and conviction.

Leading by Example

Early in my ministry, while I was still in Spanish language school, Gene Kelly, a veteran missionary based in Peru, came into my life. Here was a man filled with vision and passion for reaching the urban centers of Latin America through evangelism and church planting. This vision was summed up in the phrase, “Toward an Encounter with God.” He talked about Encounter, but more than that, he bled Encounter. His contagious spirit infected not only a few young missionaries in language school but also took hold in a whole continent. I have rarely met such an inspiring leader.

Why are leaders like this so rare? For one, many in leadership positions are bogged down by administrative tasks. Making plans, projects and budgets are important; without good management, organizations will go down the tubes. But confusing administrative functions with leadership muddies the waters. It has been said that most U.S.-based organizations are over-managed and under-led. The same can be said for many churches. Leaders can get snowed under with administrative tasks and not even have time to reflect on God’s vision for their organizations.

If this weren’t enough, some organizations’ members are invariably wary of visionary leaders. They would much prefer to control things with someone who is management-oriented than to accept the risks a visionary leader brings. These types of organizations—be they churches, denominations or mom-and-pop stores—will stagnate striving to maintain the status quo. To quote Winston Churchill, “They are decided only to be undecided, resolved to be irresolute.” Although they may not want them, such organizations desperately need leaders with vision and members with the courage to follow.

Just recently I had the privilege to be involved in a missions conference in Buenos Aires, Argentina, where a good friend, Eladio Medina, was also ministering. Medina is from Chile and serves as the coordinator for the Latin America region of The Alliance World Fellowship. Medina is well-respected throughout the continent, but his vision crosses oceans. Many people think of Latin America as receiving missionaries. But there is a growing missionary sending movement that has resulted in Latin American missionaries ministering around the world.

Although soft spoken, Medina’s message during the missions conference was a compelling call for the Argentine Alliance church to take up the banner of world evangelization to hasten the return of Jesus Christ. Medina’s visionary leadership is influencing national churches throughout this region of the world and is inspiring a missionary vision that is bearing fruit in the Kingdom of God.

Vision Check

There are some words of caution for visionary leaders. First, there is the danger that the “vision” becomes more important than God and His people. The wise leader must remember that he or she is also called to love as Jesus loved. Too many Christian leaders have pounded home their ideas of vision with such force that their followers are battered and bruised. Vision sent from God unites His people and blesses them. Vision, yes! Abusive leadership, no!

A second danger is assuming that a finely crafted vision statement is all that is needed to inspire and unite followers. But that puts the cart before the horse. A vision statement should flow from the vision already born in the heart of the leader. Just having a “Vision Statement” framed on the wall doesn’t mean the vision is either clear or compelling.

A third danger is that of forfeiting authenticity. Sometimes leaders attempt to imitate role models who have inspired them. They may even repeat the same phrases or assume the same personality traits of their exemplary models. But vision communicated without authenticity will simply come across as a marketing scheme or, worse, as an insincere manipulation. Effective leaders must be true to themselves, even as they are true to the Lord and to the vision God has given them.

When the leader’s passions and values touch the vision that God has for the organization, the leader is filled with joy and infectious hope that are communicated through his or her personality and spirit. The God-given vision will inspire and motivate followers and will honor and glorify the Lord Jesus. The bottom line is that it’s all about Him. An eighth century Irish hymn sums up the heart of the Christ-honoring visionary leader:

Be Thou my Vision, O Lord of my heart;

Naught be all else to me, save that Thou art.

Thou my best Thought, by day or by night,

Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.