

15 Church Growth Factors

Phase 1 Year 1	Phase 2 Year 2	Phase 3 Year 3
1. Vision	6. Leadership	11. Parking
2. Worship	7. Programs	12. Visibility
3. Assimilation	8. Nursery	13. Accessibility
4. Outreach	9. Youth and Children	14. Space
5. Missions	10. Finances	15. Church Planting

The Importance of Vision

Where there is no vision, the people perish.

Proverbs 29:18

NOTE: The first crisis most pastors face is to determine why God has brought him there. Once I've accepted that God has brought me to a place, what am I to do there?

Characteristics of True Vision

It focuses on the future

It recognizes a view must be from God's perspective

It recognizes that God's desire is to bless His people

It is founded in God's redemptive purposes

It seeks God's specific assignment

Focus

Great people...

Great people are those who do a few things very well.

Great people capitalize on their strengths.

Great churches...

Great churches are churches who do a few things very well.

Lack of focus yields "chronic randomness"

Doing multiple things, which as a whole are less than the sums of the parts.

A person who lacks focus will do anything, which comes down the pike.

Malls are good examples of how specialty gains most of the money. Generally, churches are like anchor stores. They become feeders to specialty churches.

When people will come to a new community, they will usually start out in the largest church of their faith.

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Qualities of an Effective Vision Statement

It is unique to a given body of believers.

If I can take *your* vision and use it in *my* church... it's no good. If it's too general, it's not specific enough.

It focuses on God-given strengths.

It is a consequence of sin to look at weaknesses! It's a dead-end street. You can never solve all of the weaknesses. Concentrate on that which is good. (E.g. Eden, Satan's focus on our weaknesses. Still God prompts us to consider these things, which are good!)

It is targeted to a particular population or group of people.

You have to do the demographics:

Who are you?

Who are you reaching?

Where are the people coming from?

It is subject to change over time.

It needs to be stated in one fairly short sentence.

Visions statements of two sentences don't sell. People usually summarize them back into one anyway.

Develop a catchy "one phrase" idea to promote the church.

Vision Example

A Charismatic Southern Baptist Church called
to meet the needs of the military in the Tidewater area.

How do we come up with a vision statement?

- I. Look at what "strengths" God has already put in the church. What is God already blessing? Which ministry in the church is bringing in the most visitors? (Royal Rangers, Sunday School, choir, worship/preaching, youth, etc.)
 - A. Through what ministries have people come to your church in the past two months? _____

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B. What age group are the visitors? (young teens, college age, single adults, young married, adult families, sr. adults, etc.)

C. Are these people coming from a certain section of the city?
What section? _____

D. Who is the main person/people inviting visitors to attend?

E. Why is this person inviting visitors? What is making this person excited? Is it their involvement? Do they like the praise and worship programs? Is it because of a spiritual change? Do they like what the church is emphasizing?

II. Knowing the visitors, where they come from, who is inviting and why helps you to see what God is already blessing.

In one sentence, state what you have found so far.

What if there is no definable strength in the church?

I. Sometimes the area of strength is not the numbers that are visiting but the programs the church is most excited about.

A. Ask the youth what programs they are most excited about.

B. What programs are the young adults most excited about?

C. What are the middle aged families excited about?

D. What are the senior citizens excited about?

Which of these answers align with what you feel is correct?

II. Sometimes what God is blessing is seen in the strengths in the leaders of the church.

A. Which people are the most recognized as gifted in an area that excites your church? (Adult Sunday School teacher, Women's Ministry Leader, Youth Pastor, Musician, Royal Ranger Leader, Quartet, etc.)

III. Sometimes the way to evaluate the strength of the church is by knowing the pastor's gifts, talents, and burdens.

A. What excites the pastor most about ministry? (preaching, seeing people at the altar, counseling, teaching, inner city ministry, T.V. ministry, bus ministry, etc.)

B. Looking at the pastor's spiritual gifts, would he be considered more as a teacher, counselor, encourager, evangelist, prayer warrior, or organizer/delegater? Which one? _____

IV. Sometimes it is the leadership God has put in the church other than the pastor.

A. Is there a strong layperson that really has a burden for ministry? He wants to see something happen in the church. Is he or she is anxious to be involved in making the church function? Who is this person?

B. Does this person (or several people) constantly push others and the pastors in the church to do a particular ministry or program, etc? What is the program he/she/they are trying to push? _____

C. Would the church and the pastor rally around this program for the next year or so to use it as a means to excite the church and motivate people to bring in visitors?

D. What would it take to make this program happen financially, people resources, facilities, etc?

Having studied these areas of strengths, which one or combination of two could be the main thrust for the church over the next year or so?

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I. State in one sentence what this thrust is all about.

A. Sharpen this one sentence so that it is easy too “sell” It should be simple enough to be easily remembered.

B. Maybe if it were rearranged and some catchy phrases, anagrams, or rhymes would make it easier to remember or make it easier to sell to your congregation. Write down such a statement from the above ideas you are working on.

C. Often it takes days or weeks to come up with the final vision statement.

D. Is there a Scripture verse that would support what you’re trying to do?

**The church must have ownership
of this Vision Statement.**

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- I. This process of finding the strengths and the vision statement for the church for the next year or so should include board members/key people who could help make the program fly—they need ownership as well. List who there might be.

- II. The pastor needs to start teaching sermons that will encourage the church to be involved in this new direction. It normally takes three months—twelve Sundays of preaching, hinting toward, or referring to, in every sermon, the direction the church is going to take with this new vision. Which three months will the church take to do this? _____

- III. The pastor will need to make flyers, banners, and include the vision statement in the church bulletin, and on church letterhead so the people can get excited about the direction of the church.

- IV. Although this is stated last it is the most important and needs to be mentioned to your church from the beginning.

Jesus spent forty days and forty nights in the desert praying, fasting, and seeking a vision from God before He began His ministry. At the end of these forty days Satan tempted him to short-circuit the process. When will the church start such a prayer emphasis? _____

The pastor and the people must seek God in prayer about which direction the church is to go and which vision the church is to have for the next year or so.

Remember a good vision statement never conflicts with the major thrust the church is currently enjoying nor does it violate the reason the church was established and most importantly of all, it must not contradict the theological premise of the church.

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Therefore it is necessary to evaluate the core values of the church before finalizing the vision statement of the church.

- I. The core values are those ideas of ministry, beliefs, functions in the church that the congregation believe are essential for the church to have. For example, most Southern Baptists believe that Sunday School is a core value. You normally cannot have a vision statement that will do away with Sunday School. In the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches, the movement of the Holy Spirit is often a core value and if a vision statement suggests a “seeker safe” service in which no gifts are allowed to flow in the service this would create warfare rather than excitement about the vision.

A. List some of the core values this vision statement might violate in your church. _____

B. How can the vision statement be changed to keep from violating these core values? _____

- II. What core values of this church will this vision statement encourage? _____

**How will the vision change
The way the church functions?**

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Just coming up with a vision statement is not enough. The vision statement must be the guiding force behind the ministry of the church for the next year or so.

For example, if the vision statement is to emphasize the youth programs as the main ministry the church will use to reach the lost, then no other program will interfere with this thrust.

What if the church already has a vision statement that has existed for a year or so and the leadership now wants to reevaluate whether this vision statement should be changed?

- I. The church must ask the questions if the new vision statement would encourage more of the church to be involved.
 - A. Have new visitors come in that need to be involved and a new vision statement will be more likely to involve them?
List some of these people. _____

 - B. Has the excitement for the existing vision statement dwindled? _____
 - C. Would a new vision statement encourage the congregation?

- II. The best vision statement needs to build on the previous vision statement yet be different enough to cause new excitement. For example, your previous vision statement may have emphasized starting cell groups. So it would be unwise for the new vision statement to do away with cell groups.
- III. To form a new vision statement you would basically follow the above process in coming up with a new vision statement.

IV. Some of the best signs that a church needs a new vision statement.

- A. There is no excitement in the church
- B. People are coming out of obligation rather than a sense of doing ministry to accomplish a goal.
- C. It is hard for most people to get involved.
- D. New people coming into the church are very different from the original congregation and the new vision statement needs to align with their felt needs.
- E. The community has changed. The church needs to change to reach it or move to where the congregation has moved and form a vision statement for the move.

V. It is always important for a pastor and leaders of the church to come up with a dozen or so reasons that are totally different from other churches as to why people should attend their church and not any other church in town. This a good test to give to your leadership. Write down how many reasons the leadership can come up with for attending your church.

Vision vs. Theological Purpose

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Theological Purpose

Theological reason the church was founded.

Probably should never be changed. Changing mid-stream will split the church.

Vision

Statement of where you're going and how you're going to get there.

Who is the church targeting?

What are they doing to reach them?

Probably should change over time with the environment.

Vision vs. Mission

Mission addresses the key ministry objectives of the body.

Mission is philosophical and general.

Vision specifies the methodology the body will utilize in implementing the ministry.

Vision is strategic and unique.

Mission examples:

To know Him and have Him known

To reach the lost at any cost

To worship, reach, build, and pray

To save the unsaved

Exalt, edify, equip

Typical American Family

Yesterday

Working Dad, Stay at home Mom, two children
1960 — 60% of all households
1990 — 7% of all households

Today

Working Dad, Working Mom, one child
At least one of the parents has been divorced
OR
Single working parent, one or more children
1990 — 25% of all households

Community Survey

Are you an active member of a nearby church?
What do you think is the greatest need in this community?
Why do think most people do not attend church?
If you were looking for a church in this area, what kinds of things
would you look for?

How to Discover One's Vision

“God can only lead you when you are on the way. He will only give you a vision of the pressing needs and of ministry when you are already studying the needs and doing ministry. He cannot lead those who are not traveling. He cannot direct those who are doing nothing.”

Lloyd Perry and Norman Shawchuck

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Symptoms of Lack of Vision

Programs that are not working

Financial debts/deficits

FINANCES: people will not give to a cause they do not understand or are unsure of.

Lack of needed workers

Poor attendance

ATTENDANCE: Studies have shown that “committed” Christians will only come out two times a week. That’s why you do as much as you can when you meet.

Difficulty making decisions

No sense of direction

DECISIONS: It’s hard to make decisions when you do not know where you are going.

Feeling of not doing anything important

Low morale

Effects of Vision

Vision provides:

Purpose

Direction

Reason for being

Life

Focus

Excitement

NOTE: People want to be involved with something meaningful.

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Result of Vision

“Success in ministry is a result of vision, not a prerequisite for vision.”

George Barna

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Vision to Results Requires a Strategy

“Good intentions don’t move mountains—bulldozers do. Strategies are bulldozers!”

Peter A. Drucker

Steps to a strategy:

- ☛ Define the target audience.
 - ⇒ Attitudes
 - ⇒ Interests