



Christ Community Church

# ***A Vision For The Future of Christ Community Church***

**March 22, 2009**

At their retreat on January 16 & 17, your Elders and Deacons created and prioritized a list of the issues and challenges that they believed need attention. What rose to the top of that list was the need for a **VISION for the future of Christ Community Church**. That sounds simple enough – but indeed, as we shall see, it is not.

Tim Schmoyer, a youth pastor in Minnesota, posted the following on his blog.

I talked with almost 40 churches over the past several months before taking the youth ministry position in Minnesota. Several **recurring themes** seemed to keep popping up as I asked questions and learned more about each church and their ministry.

Here is what Tim had discovered ...

- Most churches do not have a strong sense of where God is leading them - in other words, no vision for their future.
- Some simply steal God's vision for Saddleback or Willow Creek, modify it a little, and say ... "This is our vision."
- Others create a generic mission statement like ... "Making fully devoted followers of Christ."

He concluded with this observations ...

- The more vision a church has, the fewer internal problems it has.

In those 40 interviews, Tim Schmoyer had discovered that most church problems are vision problems.



There's a wonderful scene in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* where we see Alice wandering around, trying to find a way out of Wonderland. She comes to a fork in the road and meets the Cheshire Cat.



Alice asks the cat, "Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?" "That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," replies the Cat. "I don't much care ..." says Alice.

"Then it doesn't matter which way you go," responds the cat.

What our Elders and Deacons had concluded back in January is that which way we go does matter. Having a *vision* for the future matters to all of us.

We don't want a vague statement, and we do not want to simply copy what other churches have written. This must be our unique vision of what we believe God wants us to *become*, and where we believe God wants us to *go*.

From that conviction came two important questions...

1. **What do we need** ... to point us in the right direction?
2. **How will we do it** ... so that every member of our church is included in the process?

## Question #1: What do we need?

Several ideas emerged from asking the *What do we need?* question. The conclusion was that we need a *vision* that accomplishes 3 things ...

- ✓ It focuses and inspires us.
- ✓ It disciplines us to think strategically.
- ✓ It establishes the criteria against which everything we think and do is measured.

And so, where do we start?

Since we had developed and published *Mission, Vision, and Core Values* statements back in 1998, the logical approach is to go back and start where we left off. That will require us to begin by restating and then rebuilding from the *Core Values* that were established in 1998.



Next, building from those Core Values, we will create a new, more clearly defined *Mission Statement*. And finally, we will create a new *Vision Statement* that reflects what we believe God wants our church to look like in the future.

This approach serves an important, practical purpose...

Driven by our *Values*, we carry out our *Mission*, in pursuit of our *Vision*.

Our **Values** will identify the Biblical principles that establish our priorities, influence our choices, and guide our actions.

Our *Core Values Statement* will define the Biblical principles that we believe are essential in defining our mission and our vision for the future.

The word **Mission** comes from the Latin word meaning *to send*. Mission explains why we exist and points our values in the direction we are convinced that God is sending us.

Our *Mission Statement* clarifies our identity and defines the *who, what, and where* of our ministry efforts.

Our **Vision** defines our desired future through inspiring and energizing our creative thinking toward answering the question: What do we believe God wants our church to look like when we “become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the Fullness of Christ.” (Ephesians 4:13)

Instead of using a specific time frame, our **Vision Statement** takes each Core Value and uses the phrase “We envision a time when...” to paint a word picture describing the church we believe God wants us to become.

Our *Values, Mission, and Vision* will define what we are always in the process of becoming. Together, they establish the context for determining the strategies, goals, ministries, programs, activities, and events that we believe will enable us to get there.

Our *Values, Mission, and Vision* explain the reasons why we do what we do.





Our *Vision* needs to be constantly pulling us towards becoming what God intends us to be. Here's an example of ***Putting our Vision Into Action***.

We said earlier that we need a vision that establishes the criteria against which everything we think and do is measured. For example, we will use our **Core Value on Prayer from 1998**. It states ...

“We believe that prayer is foundational in the life of the believer and therefore should be central to our ministry.”

Now imagine that as part of our **Vision Statement**, we said this ...

“We envision a time when every ministry, every worship service, every event, and every challenge facing anyone in our church is being supported by members gathered in prayer.”

Periodically over the months and years to come, we can translate this *Vision Statement* into a *Ministry Action Plan* - by asking 3 practical questions:

1. What is our **present pattern** of prayer activities? In other words, in what specific ways are members presently gathered in prayer in support of worship, activities and events, and the challenges facing other members?
2. What **changes** do we want to make in the next 90 days that we believe will move us closer to our *Vision*?
3. What **steps** do we need to take to implement our *Ministry Action Plan* so we can close the gap between where we are now and where we want to be 90 days from now?

But that's not all! Anyone in our church will be able to propose a new ministry, activity, program, or event at any time that will enable our church to move closer to a specific aspect of our Vision.

That summarizes what we need to do. Now comes the second question ...

## **Question #2: How Will We Do It?**

Throughout the New Testament, the church is referred to as the *Body of Christ*, emphasizing the importance of church unity. Included in Luke's description of the emerging New Testament Church in Acts, he observes, “All the believers were one in heart and mind.” (Acts 4:32).



In answering the *How will we do it?* question, our Elders made a commitment to this principle:

The process we use to create the *Core Values, Mission, and Vision* statements will honour the *one heart and mind* emphasis found throughout the New Testament.

As you read through the PROCESS we will be using, you will see how this principle will be put into action. Note this ...

- ✓ Drafting and finalizing our new *Values, Mission, and Vision* statements will not be done by a select few. Every member will be invited to provide input and feedback every step of the way.

There is only one requirement – you must be willing to participate. Here is how the process will work...

### Phase 1: Core Values & Mission \_\_\_\_\_

1. Introduce and initiate the Values/Mission/Vision process – beginning of **Week 1**
  - Hold a **special congregational meeting** following worship on Sunday to present the entire *process*.
  - Provide a written summary of the *process* to those attending
  - Post a video and written summary of the *process* on the CCCARP Visioning website.
  - Publish the CCCARP Visioning website address in the bulletin each week and in each edition of the *Connect* eNewsletter.
2. Draft a new list of *Core Values* and new *Mission Statement* – **Weeks 1 & 2**
  - Work done by a committee – and approved by the elders.
  - *Core Values* first, building from the 1998 list; *Mission Statement* second, building from the new list of *Core Values*.
3. Distribute the draft list of *Core Values* and the *Mission Statement* to the congregation for feedback – **Weeks 3 & 4** for the feedback.
  - Distribute at a **15-minute congregational meeting** following worship on Sunday -- and place on the CCCARP Visioning website.
  - For feedback, ask questions such as: What do you like most? What is not clear? What aspects of the statements do you question? What is missing?
  - Provide a variety feedback channels with a 2-week deadline.



Feedback channels ...

- A *Feedback Form* with the handout that they can be filled out and mailed - or returned to the church office.
- CCCARP Visioning website – a Response Form to be completed and submitted.
- Email – an email address where feedback can be sent.

4. Create a final draft of the list of *Core Values* and *Mission Statement* – **Weeks 5 & 6**

- Feedback is synthesized by a committee who then drafts the final list of *Core Values* and the *Mission Statement*. The draft is approved by the elders.
- A new, simplified feedback form is developed to allow minimal ongoing feedback for 2 more weeks on the *Core Values* and *Mission Statements*.

5. Distribute the final draft of the list of *Core Values* and *Mission Statement* – **end of Week 6**

- Distribute at a **15-minute congregational meeting** following worship on Sunday – and place on the CCCARP Visioning website.
- Invite the congregation to provide additional feedback over the next 2 weeks.
- Announce the **special congregational meeting** later that day – for the purpose of introducing and initiating the Visioning process (see below)

**Phase 2: Vision** \_\_\_\_\_

6. Introduce and initiate the *Vision Statement* process – **end of Week 6**

Introduce ...

- Explain the *Vision Statement input process* at the **special congregational meeting** held on Sunday afternoon at the end of Week 6 (see above).
- Provide a written summary of the *input process* to those attending
- Post the summary of the *input process* on the CCCARP Visioning website.

Initiate ...

- Invite the congregation to complete the phrase, “I envision a time when our church ...” for each *Core Value* – emphasizing that these are not goals to achieve, or ministries/programs/activities to have in place, but rather a picture of what we believe God wants our church to *look like* when we “become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the Fullness of Christ.” (Ephesians 4:13). Examples will be provided.
- Encourage input from individuals, from small groups, Bible fellowship classes, etc.
- Provide a variety of input channels with a 2-week deadline.



Input channels ...

- An *Input Form* on the handout that can be filled out and mailed - or returned to the church office.
- CCCARP Visioning website – a Response Form to be completed and submitted.
- Email – an email address where input can be sent.

7. Receive and begin synthesizing the congregation's *Vision Statement* input – **Weeks 7 & 8**

- Reviewing and synthesizing done by a committee.

Note: Final feedback on the Core Values and Mission Statement is due by the end of Week 8.

8. Draft a Vision Statement – **Weeks 9 & 10**

- Work done by a committee who completes the review and synthesis of congregational input – and then creates a draft *Vision Statement*. The draft is approved by the elders.

9. Submit the draft *Vision Statement* to the congregation for their final feedback – **end of Week 10**

- Distribute at a **15-minute congregational meeting** following worship on Sunday -- and place on the CCCARP Visioning website.
- Ask questions such as: What do you like most? What is not clear? What aspects of the statement do you question? What is missing?
- Provide a variety of feedback channels with a 2-week deadline.

Feedback channels ...

- A Feedback Form on the handout that they can fill out and mail - or return to the church office.
- CCCARP Visioning website – a Response Form they can complete and submit.
- Email – an email address where they can send their feedback.

10. Receive feedback on the *Vision Statement* from the congregation – **Weeks 11 & 12**

11. Finalize the *Core Values, Mission Statement, and Vision Statement* – **Weeks 13 & 14**

- Final version developed by a committee. Final version approved by the elders.
- Include a review of the feedback on the Core Values and Mission Statement received by the end of Week 8.



At the end of **Week 14** – everyone will receive the finalized *Core Values, Mission, and Vision Statements* as we gather together to celebrate how we have been able to see God inspiring us throughout this process - and guiding our church in new, fresh, and amazing ways!

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A wise individual once said that, “Dissatisfaction and discouragement are not caused by the absence of things - but by the absence of vision.” (Anonymous) Charles Swindoll reminds us that “With vision there is no room to be frightened. No reason for intimidation. It’s time to march forward! Let’s be confident and positive!”

The first step toward creating a better future is to *envision* it. And so brothers and sisters of Christ Community Church - our journey begins.

Pastor: Bill Marsh

Elders: Mickey McLean (Clerk of Session), Darryl Andrews, Sam Cain, Willis Drew, Kent French, Bill Harris, Barney Pannell, Bill Ratchford

Deacons: Ron Shelton (Chairman), Helen Albuero, Bruce Atkinson, Jeff Butler, Tommy Cook, Jeremy Frens, Frank Glenn, Tim Miller, Bill Osborne, Ron Spann, Kathy Thompson, Cheryl Workman

Vision Process Facilitator: Mike McGervey