

COMPREHENSIVE CHURCH BUDGET PROCESS

**Developed by
Terry Austin
The Austin Group**
www.generousstewardship.com

2008



COMPREHENSIVE CHURCH BUDGET PROCESS

Church Vision

Question 1: Who are we?

Church Commitment

Question 2: What are we called to do?

Ministry Cost

Question 3: What will it cost?

Ministry Funding

Question 4: How will we pay for it?

Stewardship Education

Question 5: How is it possible?

Appendix

“How to Develop a Vision Statement”

“Sample Line Item of Fixed Expenses”

Church Vision

Question 1: Who are we?

There is no need to develop a budget until the church knows who they are. The purpose of a budget is to fund what God is doing, not what they have always done.

Many people define vision as "the art of seeing things invisible" (Jonathan Swift, quoted in Leadership Journal published by Christianity Today, 1994). The visionary has an insight that is not possessed by others. Yet, vision is more than seeing the invisible; it is being able to see the possible. A visionary leader is one who sees what is possible.

The ability to see the possible has tremendous implications for the Christian. The secular leader sees the possibilities that man can accomplish. The Christian leader sees the possibilities of God. In other words, the Christian visionary understands what can be accomplished with God's help.

One of the great visionaries in the Old Testament was Nehemiah. At a time when he was a thousand miles from his homeland, Nehemiah had a vision of what God could do in Jerusalem.

In the month of Nisan in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was brought for him, I took the wine and gave it to the king. I had not been sad in his presence before; so the king asked me, "Why does your face look so sad when you are not ill? This can be nothing but sadness of heart." I was very much afraid, but I said to the king, "May the king live forever! Why should my face not look sad when the city where my fathers are buried lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?"

The king said to me, "What is it you want?"

Then I prayed to the God of heaven, and I answered the king, "If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my fathers are buried so that I can rebuild it." (Nehemiah 2:1-5)

When everyone else saw rubble and poverty, Nehemiah had a vision of a thriving city with secure walls and prosperous residents. This insight was not the result of human imagination. This kind of vision only comes from God.

I had not told anyone what my God had put in my heart to do for Jerusalem (Nehemiah 2:12).

It is important to distinguish between an idea and a vision. A vision is given to us but an idea is hatched by our own imagination. A vision has a grip on our life but an idea is something we grip. (See John R. Lincoln, "Visionary Leadership for Church Growth" Convention Press, p. 48). An idea may sound exciting but it will never cause an individual to pay the price necessary for leadership. A vision is a passion that possesses an individual.

An idea might come after attending a conference or hearing a testimony from a neighboring church. A vision comes from spending time with God, seeking His will for the church. An idea is narrower in scope. An idea is not bad but it is not worthy of the investment required by a vision. We can be sure that rebuilding the city of Jerusalem was not an idea that popped into Nehemiah's head when he heard the reports of destruction; it was a great vision direct from God.

The leader must be focused on a vision. When the pastor and church leadership have a clear picture of what God can and wants to do in their particular church, they will possess a vision that provides leadership for the church.

There are numerous definitions of the concept of "vision." For the purpose of discussing church leadership, it is most clearly understood as seeing the church and community through God's eyes. It is evident that this kind of insight comes only from the Holy Spirit. It is the consequence of understanding the work of the Holy Spirit and how that translates to the local church setting.

The best way to comprehend the work of the Holy Spirit in the church and community is to study God's Word. There are two important questions that will lead us to see what God wants to do through the church: How does God see the church; and how does God see the community?

How does God see the church?

Several general statements can be made about every church. God sees the church as His people (see Ephesians 2:19), His body in the world (see I Corinthians 12:27), people with unique gifts (see Romans 12:4-5), and the instrument for evangelism and ministry (see Ephesians 4:11-13). This is a much different viewpoint than a pastor or church leader is often tempted to adopt.

It is easy to find ourselves so deep into the woods that we cannot see the forest for the trees. When a pastor is struggling to love an unlovable member or move an unmovable congregation, it is tempting to forget God's perspective of His church. When this happens, whatever vision we might possess is very narrow --- i.e. get Mrs. Smith to stop complaining about everything that happens, or convince Mr. Jones not to veto every new ministry that is suggested.

God has an incredible perspective of the church. It goes far beyond changing one cantankerous member. He sees the church as the most potent force in the world, capable of changing an entire world from the inside out. This is the vision of the church possessed by the Apostle Paul.

Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith. And you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ (Romans 1:5-6).

He knew that God was about the business of calling "*people from among all the Gentiles. . .*" As a church leader, Paul had to deal with disgruntled members (see Philippians 4:2), but it did not distract him from his vision.

This is an important truth because detractors will always be present to challenge the vision of the leader. "As long as the visionary leader takes a firm stance for or against any particular position, some people will not like that position. Most visionary leaders deal with diversity by being willing to listen to their critics and sometimes learning from them. But they do not believe criticism or opposition must be absent before they pursue a vision." (John R. Lincoln, "Visionary Leadership for Church Growth" Convention Press, p. 57)

The leader must continue to see the church from God's perspective in order to overcome the obstacles and objections. The true visionary will not allow the incidentals of any particular situation to change his/her perspective.

Although God cannot be limited, it would be unlikely that God would call a church to develop a great music program when there are no musicians or a church in the middle of a retirement community to establish a dynamic youth ministry. God has gifted and placed the members in a particular congregation because they are needed to fulfill the vision of that church.

How does God see the community?

In addition to an understanding of the church in order to get a vision, we must also examine the community. The community must be studied from two perspectives; a general view, and a more specific glimpse of a particular community.

In order to understand how God sees our community, every community, we turn to scripture. God's vision of our community is that it is filled with people in need of a savior.

When he (Jesus) saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.

Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." (Matthew 9:36-38)

The New Testament is filled with references of God's love for humankind. This love motivated the sending of His Son to be the Savior of the world (see John 3:16; Romans 5:8).

Since God's love for the world motivated Him to act sacrificially, it is also true that He expects His church to be motivated by love to live sacrificially. God's vision for the church will always involve reaching people with the message of salvation (see Matthew 28:19-20). "The effort foreign missionaries make to learn a new language and enter into a vastly different culture needs to be mirrored by a similar effort within our communities. We need to speak in the language of our neighbors, not just verbally, but musically, artistically, and with compassion and concern for where people live" (Daniel Buttry, "Bring Your Church Back to Life: Beyond Survival Mentality," p.75). Until we understand the community in this fashion, we will not be able to respond to its needs.

As the visionary leader narrows this broad concept down to a workable size vision for a particular church, there must be research into the local community. What are the specific and unique needs of this community? Once again, we recognize the futility of developing a church with a passion for ministering to senior citizens in a community filled with young families. God's vision for a church will be tailored to fit the needs of the neighborhood.

With a thorough understanding of the church and the community, the pastor or church leader is in a position to grasp the vision that God has for that congregation. Therefore, the first step in developing a church budget is to capture a vision for the church.

Task: If your church does not already have a stated vision, follow the format suggested in the article, "How to Develop a Church Vision Statement" found in the appendix and develop a vision for your church.

Church Commitment

Question 2: What are we called to do?

From the vision, your church must determine what God has called you to do specifically. Even if your vision is that God has called you to reach the world, it is not practical to do that. The church needs to know what little corner of the world you are called to impact. In other words, what does God want us to do for the budget year? This must be done fresh every year, rather than simply adjusting last year's budget.

The stage in the process is often called strategic planning. The church must determine specific actions to take in order to accomplish the vision revealed by God. Return to the story of Nehemiah to see an example of this step. After Nehemiah explained his vision to the king, he was then asked to give the specific steps necessary to make it happen.

Then the king said to me, "What would you request?" So I prayed to the God of heaven. I said to the king, "If it please the king, and if your servant has found favor before you, send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' tombs, that I may rebuild it." Then the king said to me, the queen sitting beside him, "How long will your journey be, and when will you return?" So it pleased the king to send me, and I gave him a definite time. (Nehemiah 2:4-6)

Notice his answer was very precise. He knew where he wanted to go (Judah), what he would do (rebuild it), how long it would take (when will you return?).

It is not enough to have a good vision. The church must determine what must be done to make that vision a reality. It would have been foolish for Nehemiah to simply talk about rebuilding the city without making any concrete plans to make it happen.

It is also imperative that the plans of the church are in line with the vision of the church. In some churches, it is impossible to determine the vision by examining the activity. It seems that vision and plans are unrelated. In order for the church to realize its dream, plans must be made that will make it possible.

Therefore, the church approaches this step by saying, "This is what God has called us to be." The next question is, "What do we need to do to make it happen?" It is time to make some plans.

Task: Guided by the church's vision statement, what are the specific actions that we can take to accomplish this vision? It is time to get out the calendar and make plans for the coming year.

Example: If the vision statement says, "reach the children in our community," then what actions will be taken to make this happen? The list might include – Bible School, Children's Choir, Awana program, After-School Program, Parenting Classes, etc. Those responsible for the children's program need to be as specific as possible (without being restrictive). The goal is to be able to

communicate to the church membership that when they give to the church they are financially supporting ministries that help reach the vision of the church.

Ministry Cost

Question 3: What will it cost?

Once the church knows what God has called it to do, the cost must be determined. Again, we turn to the example of Nehemiah.

And I said to the king, "If it please the king, let letters be given me for the governors of the provinces beyond the River, that they may allow me to pass through until I come to Judah, and a letter to Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the fortress which is by the temple, for the wall of the city and for the house to which I will go." And the king granted them to me because the good hand of my God was on me. (Nehemiah 2:7-8)

He requested a letter of introduction from the king that would give him the necessary permission to fulfill his plan. He also asked the king to provide the timber from his forest. He had more than an idea and a plan; he knew the details that would make his vision come true. The result was that the king granted his requests.

Nehemiah knew exactly what was needed to complete the task. His plan was effective because he calculated the cost. Consequently, he was able to make the proper request. He could easily have asked the king just to give him a bag of gold, hoping it would be big enough. Instead, he was able to ask for specifics because he knew the cost.

The task of the church is not complete once the plans are made. The next step is to determine the cost of each planned ministry. This will take some time and effort because the numbers must be thorough and accurate.

The hard part is make sure and calculate the total cost of ministries, including staff salaries, building use charges, etc. However, this is a very important step. It must be determined what percentage of these fixed expenses should be charged to each ministry. For example, a category for "Worship" probably will need to include the total cost of the sanctuary, especially if that is the only use of the sanctuary. However, the cost of the fellowship hall or family life center might be divided among several different ministries, depending on how the building is used. (See Appendix item, "Sample Line Items of Fixed Expenses")

Ministry Funding

Question 4: How will we pay for it?

Once we know who we are, what we have been called to do, and what it will cost, we are finally ready to put together a budget. This budget will focus on ministries, rather than line items. Most churches will probably have only 3-5 if they want to do them well. We cannot be all things to all people. The budget should be developed following these steps:

Step One: Develop a line item budget for fixed expenses like salaries/benefits, buildings/utilities/upkeep, and other items that remain constant. It is important that these numbers are accurate because they will be used to determine the costs of specific ministries.

Step Two: Divide all of the plans for the coming year into three or four categories that reflect the vision statement of the church, for example, "Worship," "Discipleship," and "Outreach." The plans made under question #2 need to be grouped together to create 3-5 ministry categories.

Step Three: Determine what percentage of the fixed expenses belongs to each of the categories listed in Step Two. For example, 50% salary/benefits of the Youth Pastor might be included under "Outreach," but only 15% of the "Building" expenses. The amount of time required for each staff member to fulfill that ministry should be estimated and charged against that item. Perhaps 30% of the Pastor's salary/benefits will be included under "Outreach" if it requires his time.

It is important that 100% of the line item costs be covered by the various ministries. The completed budget should consist of only four or five items. However, these items will include all of the expenses of the church. The result is a budget that reflects and explains how all of the church expenses contribute to the work and ministry of the church.

Sample:

Strategy #1: Worship

Music

- Adult Worship Team

- Children's Music Program

- Youth Choir/Trip

Worship Services/Events

- Worship Resources

- Special Projects (Easter, Christmas, etc.)

Staff Costs

- Music Minister (80%)

- Pastor (33%)

- Youth Minister (10%)

Facility Costs (20%)

Strategy #2: Discipleship

- Bible Study
- Children's Ministry
- Youth Ministry
- Senior Adult Ministry
- Fellowship Activities
- Staff Costs
 - Pastor (33%)
 - Youth Pastor (70%)
- Facility Cost (60%)
- Strategy #3: Outreach
 - Mission Giving
 - Cooperative Program
 - Association Missions
 - Other Ministries
 - Local Mission Projects
 - Ministry Support
 - Mission Involvement
 - Outreach Events
- Staff Costs
 - Pastor (33%)
 - Youth Pastor (20%)
 - Worship Pastor (20%)
- Facility Cost (20%)

Stewardship Education

Question 5: How is it possible?

How do we communicate this to the congregation and teach them how to provide support. This is essentially the work of stewardship education that we have always done, however, it is much easier because they are actually supporting ministry rather than paying bills.

Stewardship education must address three issues specifically:

Lifestyle Choices

One of the most serious problems among Christians is our choice of lifestyle. There is a great temptation to make choices based upon our desires rather than what we can afford. The result is that we live in houses we cannot afford, drive cars that are beyond our budget, and fill our lives with gadgets that are too expensive for our means. We should not be surprised with these decisions because we are bombarded with this thinking every day.

Many Christian leaders have contributed to this problem by the models they present. Television preachers living in luxury do not provide a very healthy example to follow. We need to help Christians understand the importance of making good lifestyle choices. This can be accomplished through teaching the proper attitude toward the material world. Many Christians are not aware of the biblical teaching toward the material world. About all they know is that the “. . . *love of money is the root of all evil.*” The church needs to expound the riches of the biblical truth about finances and possessions. We need to emphasize that money is not evil in itself.

Christian leaders can also have a tremendous impact on lifestyle choices by setting a good example in their own choices. Richard was a young deacon who had significant financial resources. He built a new house for his rapidly growing family but they did not immediately purchase new furniture for their home. For several years they continued to use a couch that was faded and worn. When asked about replacing the couch, he replied that they were still praying about the matter. His family had consciously chosen to allow God to determine their standard of living, not their income.

Financial Decisions

The church is in a great position to help Christians make good financial decisions. People are looking for guidance but it is difficult to find the proper help. When we go to the store to make a purchase, we are not asked to consider the financial implications of a decision. If our credit is good they will encourage us to buy the product, even if the payments would be difficult to manage. When you purchase a new house, it is amazing the amount of money they will allow you to borrow.

When making financial decisions, we need to consider several factors: Why am I making this purchase? Is it an example of covetousness or does it contribute to the goals of my life? Have I considered God in the decision? Should I wait and allow God to provide this in another manner? In order to help

Christians wrestle with these decisions, the church needs to teach, not only basic attitudes about money, but also what the Bible teaches about spending and using money.

Giving Practices

There is also room for the church to instruct people about giving. There are two reasons people do not give to the church as they should and we can help in both cases. First, many Christians are ignorant about biblical giving. For many years, churches have done very little to educate believers. Often, the only teaching they have received is an “annual sermon” on tithing. Sometimes even that has been done apologetically. Consequently, there is a great deal of ignorance about giving.

A second problem that prevents church members from being faithful givers is their financial inability. Many families have made very poor choices with their finances that they have nothing left to give after meeting all of their other obligations. Certainly, this does not excuse them from being obedient givers, but it does create an obstacle. The church has a responsibility to teach God’s Word, and to equip people to be able to obey God’s Word. This requires instruction in basic money management practices like budgeting, getting out of debt, saving, etc.

The church can be a primary resource for helping members establish a financial plan, develop a budget, and make wiser choices so they will be in a position to give appropriately. We should not expect significant improvement in giving practices until we help believers practice good stewardship.

Resources:

”Financial Truth”

“Successful Christian Financial Management”

“Managing the Master’s Money”

“Good Sense”

APPENDIX

Helping A Church Develop a Vision Statement (Based on the Great Commission)

Six steps to writing a Vision Statement:

1. Explain Your Role as “Vision Caster”.
2. Discuss “God’s Expectations for a Believer Based on the Great Commission”.
3. Analyze Responses.
4. Compose a Single Sentence Vision Statement.
5. Test the Statement.
6. Adopt, Communicate, and Celebrate the Church’s Mission statement.

Preparation for the meeting:

- You will need to assemble a Vision Team (with a chairman) to help you work through the process of recommending a Vision Statement to the church. Make sure that you have influential members on the team. It is suggested that the church minister(s) be included along with 3 to 7 other members (larger churches may want to involve 6 to 10 max).
- You will need a large whiteboard (as large as possible), markers and an eraser.
- It would be best to allow your team to sit at tables in a “horse-shoe” style.
- You will need a large sheet of poster paper and a marker for every 2-3 participants.
- You will need a roll of masking tape for hanging the poster paper on the wall.
- Bring a tablet and appoint someone to take notes throughout the meeting, and make sure they write everything down before you erase the whiteboard between assignments.
- Pray for God’s wisdom and guidance throughout the process.

Philosophical Guidelines:

1. Don’t give the Vision Team any copies of other church Mission or Vision Statements.

They will have the tendency to shortcut the process and simply copy another church’s statement. It is best for them to struggle through the process and design their own – not use someone else’s. If the church does not understand it’s own vision – how will it carry out the Great Commission? It would then be manipulated by someone else’s vision.

- A Vision Statement is not about the church. It is about Him – Jesus Christ, and a relationship He chooses to develop with His people. As with all relationships, it is dynamic and functions in “real time”.
- A Vision Statement is about love and obedience. Jesus said, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.” In other words, we prove our love to Him by being obedient to the vision He sets before us. It is our

responsibility to enter into a dynamic relationship with Him and discover (moment by moment) exactly what He wants us to do and be.

2. Talk about the different kinds of churches throughout Texas and how they are all different in carrying out the Great Commission.

We have a “Church on the Yacht” in Galveston, a “Cowboy Church” in Waxahachie, Resort Ministry Churches, etc. – and they all do church differently! They each have a different “vision” of how to reach people for Christ and disciple them, because they each have a different situation. Yours is unique also, because there is not another church anywhere just like yours.

3. Share the difference between a Mission Statement and a Vision Statement.

A **Mission Statement** is the same in every church – the Great Commission (Matt. 28: 19 & 20). (Reach people for Christ and Disciple them!) Make sure they know that reaching people for Christ is leading them to Salvation, and that Discipleship is training them “to become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ”.

A **Vision Statement** is a specific “vision” or “way” in which each individual church is to accomplish the Mission Statement. It tells “how” we will carry out the Great Commission in and through our church. Each church does it differently!

A Vision Statement should drive everything in your church, and this statement should evaluate everything you do. Therefore, it should be a church’s vision, not just a pastor’s vision, or a committee’s vision.

Vision has the power to transform a church. (When Federal Express got the vision to “deliver by 10:30 am the next day”, it changed the postal delivery business forever.)

Step 1 - Explain Your Role as “Vision Caster”.

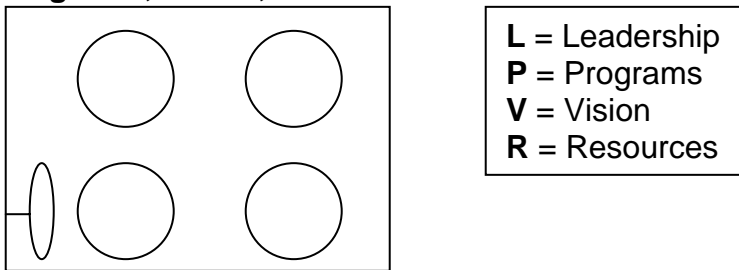
There are three forces that come to bear upon this process - legacy, the committed congregation and leadership.

- By “**legacy**” we do not mean some kind of attitude that is outdated, or boring traditions that have been handed down through the years with no relevancy for today. We do mean the life-giving passion that motivates the church family – the spiritual legacy given by our Lord and passed on from generation to generation of true believers who want to “reach people for Christ and disciple them”.
- By “**the committed congregation**” we mean those who use their God-given gifts, abilities and talents to minister to the body of Christ and are considered by the church to be truly devoted followers of Jesus Christ.
- It is the role of “**leadership**” that brings all the forces together. Effective “Vision Casters” always earn the right by virtue of character, personality, and

most importantly spiritual passion. A key vision caster works with people and strives to build consensus. A key vision caster will have more than a fair share of the ideas that make up the Vision but will by no means be its sole architect. A vision caster will prayerfully point the general direction but will also include the richness of ideas, gifts, legacy and personalities that others bring to the mix.

Step 2 – Discuss “God’s Expectations for a Believer Based on the Great Commission”.

- Use the illustration of a car with four passengers: Leadership, Programs, Vision, & Resources.



Draw a car (box) with the four passenger places represented by circles. Ask the Vision Team to place the first letter of each passenger in the circle that represents how his or her church operates. In other words, which of the four is the driver in their church? Which one is riding “shot-gun”? Which one is riding in the back seat behind the driver? Which one is riding in the back seat behind the front passenger?

Explain to them that every church struggles between what they believe and what they actually practice. After the team has completed the assignment, begin a discussion about how they would like to change the order of “passengers”, if any. (This will tell you a lot about how receptive they are to change and what they would like to change.)

Have someone quote the Great Commission.

- **Ask, “To whom was the Great Commission given?”** (The disciples.)
Some believe it was give to the “church”, as an institution. (The church was not initiated until later at Pentecost.)
If you get the response “the church”, ask for a definition of “church”. (A group of baptized believers.)
This should further support that the Great Commission was given to disciples.

Churches are filled with members who do not personally feel responsible for reaching people for Christ and discipling them because they think it is the church’s responsibility or at least the responsibility of the staff or church leaders. These members see the church as an institution, not a body of

believers. If members truly accepted this responsibility, they would urgently find ways to be equipped to reach people for Christ and disciple them.

Read Matthew 28: 16-20.

- **Ask the Vision Team (in groups of three) to rewrite the Great Commission** in words that would communicate to the members of your church.
(Rewriting it will reinforce the believer’s accountability to it, give them practice in restating a concept in contemporary language and begin the process of building consensus in a group. Give the groups 5 - 7 minutes to complete the assignment and allow a 30 second report from each group.)

Reaching People for Christ:

Describe what it means to “Reach People for Christ” (Leading someone to Jesus by scripturally explaining to them how to accept Christ as their Savior.)

- **Divide the white board into 4 equal quadrants using a vertical and horizontal line.** Use the following chart for the next exercise, but title each quadrant as you go.

<u>Lost People in our Community</u>	<u>How We Reached them for Christ</u>
→	
<u>Saved in the Last 6 Months</u>	<u>Who / What God Used to Reach Them</u>
→	

- In the upper left quadrant, write: “Lost people in our community”.
Ask the Vision Team to list typical lost people in their community. (Neighbors, co-workers, college professors, family members, man on the corner, etc.) Make sure that they include lost people who know nothing about God or the church.
- In the upper right quadrant, write: “How we Reach them for Christ”.
Ask the Vision Team to list (on the right side of the board) how this church is reaching people for Christ who are listed on the left side of the board. As you list ways they are actually reaching people, cross off the ones they are reaching. (Personal witnessing, VBS, Revival, Outreach night,

Parents reach their children, Bible study teachers reaching students, etc.) Make sure that they honestly report tangible ways that they are actually leading these people to Christ.

- In the lower left quadrant, write: “Saved in the last 6 months”.
Ask the Vision Team to, “List the types of people who have made a public profession of faith in your church over the last 6 months. (Children, family members, newcomers, co-workers, etc.) Make sure that they include children & youth. (If none were saved within the last 6 months, ask why not? Go back 12 months if necessary.)
- In the lower right quadrant, write: “Who/What God Used to Reach Them”.
Ask the Vision Team to list (on the right side of the board) how this church reached people for Christ who was saved over the last 6 – 12 months. (Personal witnessing, VBS, Revival, Outreach night, Parents reach their children, Bible study teachers reaching students, etc.) Make sure that they honestly report tangible ways that they are actually leading these people to Christ.

This exercise will surface the strengths of the church in reaching people for Christ (where God has been at work in the past). You will need to consider these strengths when writing your vision statement.

Discipling People:

Discuss what it means to be a “disciple” (a fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ).

Present an overview of the following:

A fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ would be someone who is disciplined in the basics of the Christian Life. The root word of disciple is discipline.

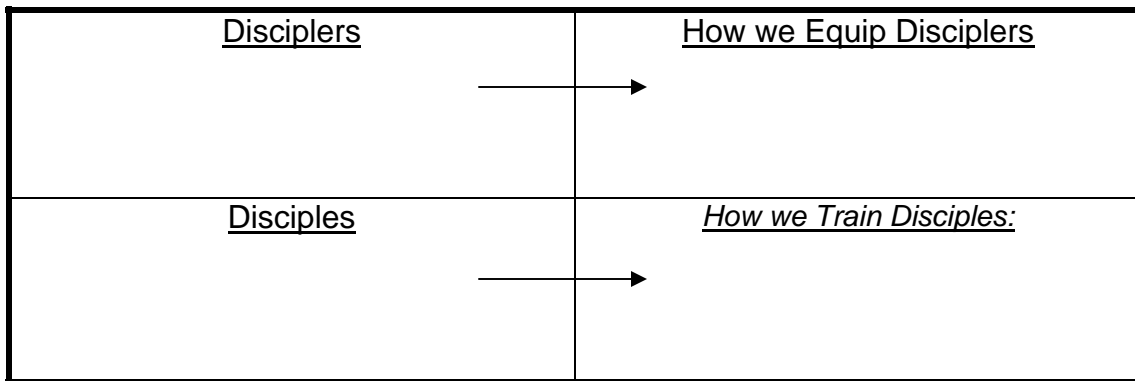
Here are the minimum requirements of a disciple (there are other requirements):

1. Bible study – *A disciple should be able to personally study the Bible and understand it, without being dependant upon the pastor or bible study teacher.*
2. Prayer - *A disciple should be able to effectively communicate with God until instruction is received from Him.*
3. Witnessing - *A disciple should be able to effectively share the Gospel and lead others to accept Christ as Savior and Lord.*
4. Tithe - *A disciple should be able to consistently give back to God at least a tenth of their income (resources).*
5. Fellowship - *A disciple should be able to participate with other believers where encouragement and accountability to the Lord and each other are the basis of their relationship.*

Someone with these disciplines would most often be considered a mature believer and qualified to be a discipler of disciples (teach others these disciplines).

Explain that this process of making disciples cannot be accomplished in Sunday School alone. It takes intense training and practice to become a true disciple of Christ. In Sunday School, one usually learns about studying the Bible, about praying, about witnessing, about tithing, about genuine fellowship with others, etc.; but it is not the best time nor the best environment to teach them or show (model for them) **how to do** these things. Specialized training should be established to help members to become “spiritually healthy”.

Divide the white board into 4 equal quadrants using a vertical and horizontal line. Use the following chart for the next exercise, but title each quadrant as you go.



- In the upper left quadrant, write: “Disciplers”.
Ask the Vision Team to list those in your church who are disciples of Christ and are qualified to disciple others.
- In the upper right quadrant, write: “How we Equip Disciplers”.
Ask the Vision Team to list ways that your church equips disciplers in learning how to disciple others.
- In the lower left quadrant, write: “Disciples”.
Ask the Vision Team to list those in your church who need to be disciplined (in at least the 5 minimum requirements of a disciple).
- In the lower right quadrant, write: “How we Train Disciples”.
Ask the Vision Team to list ways that your church trains disciples (in at least the 5 minimum requirements of a disciple).

Step 3 – Analyze Responses

- **You and the Vision Team should be getting a “flavor” for how well this church is carrying out the Great Commission through their church.** If they are not doing a good job of reaching people and/or discipling them, ask the Vision Team what things they should be doing to be obedient to the Lord in these areas. This is a very important discussion. You will use this information to begin formulating a possible vision of how God desires to work

through this congregation to lead people to Christ and discipleship them. Lead them to work from their strengths (ways that God is already at work among them) in developing a well-rounded statement.

Step 4 – Compose a Single Sentence Vision Statement

- **Now you will want to start formulating a one-sentence summary of how this church tends to carry out the Great Commission (evangelism and discipleship).**

Go to the whiteboard and ask them to complete this sentence: “Right now, our church exists to” Use all of the input given to discern how God is at work in this church. Write down everything they say and ask for a consensus as you go – erasing from time to time expressions that they feel no longer fit. Do not put words in their mouth. Make the Vision Team struggle through expressing a statement from their perspective. Keep reminding them of their strengths and challenging them to use it in their statement. Do not merely repeat the Mission Statement of the Great Commission, but rather be specific about “how they intend to carry it out through their church”.

It needs to be a brief summary statement that can be easily remembered and repeated. Try to eliminate unnecessary adjectives and duplications in description. If you can say it in two words, don't use five. Try to replace the description of two verbs or tasks with one task that would include the two. Take out all redundant words and keep it simple in the language of the people (no churchy terminology). Keep refining the statement until it is an accurate description of their vision for carrying out the Great Commission. Do not let it get too lengthy – no one will be able to remember it when trying to share it with others.

Step 5 – Test the Statement

- **Ask the Vision Team if the statement can be used as a “plumb line” or “measuring stick” to evaluate everything the Lord would ask the church to do and be.**

How far into the future will this statement guide the church? It may or may not extend the church into the distant future. It depends on how specific they write the statement. The more specific, the more likely it will need to be revisited in a few years. However, revisiting the statement will keep it fresh and contemporary.

- **Ask the Vision Team to recall scripture other than the Great Commission that speaks to their Vision Statement.**

Additional scripture should be used to further support the statement and provide a frame of reference to explain to the church why they chose this particular statement. (See the sample: “Our Vision Statement”.)

Step 6 – Adopt, Communicate, and Celebrate the new Vision Statement

- **Share with the Vision Team that this statement will need to be presented to other influential groups in the church body (deacons, church council, Sunday School workers, etc.) to get their feedback prior to taking it to the church for an official vote.**

The statement and a complete explanation of how the Vision Team arrived at the statement will need to be presented by you and the chairman of the Vision Team to as many groups in the church as possible. Each group should have the opportunity to evaluate the Vision Statement. You should communicate from the Vision Team the attitude that “this is where we are thus far in the process,” and that each group should feel free to suggest additions or deletions to the statement. Record their suggestions.

If there are major suggested changes, take them back to the Vision Team for re-evaluation after you get input from all groups. However, if it seems to be accepted by the vast majority and no real good changes are suggested, meet with the Vision Team to make plans to take it to the church for an official vote of the people. If not, reassemble the Vision Team and carefully consider all suggestions for change and then through consensus of the Team, decide on a final Vision Statement to take to the church. You are looking for a consensus of the Team. If you do not get a consensus of the Vision Team, you will not get a consensus of the church! Never go to the church without a consensus.

- **Allow the entire Vision Team to make the presentation to the church with a brief explanation of the process and why they are recommending it to the church for adoption.**

You may want to allow one or two of the Vision Team to give a testimony of their experience working through this process. You should seriously consider preaching a message on the importance of “visioning” prior to a presentation to the church.

- **The church should believe in this statement so strongly that it becomes a “plumb line” for all they do until the vision changes.**

A Vision Statement should drive everything in your church, and this statement should evaluate everything you do. You will be tempted to do a lot of good things, but always evaluate it by your Vision Statement to discern whether or not it is God’s will at this time. If there is ever a question about its inclusiveness, go back and review it to make sure your Vision Statement is inclusive of all that God wants at this time. It should help you stay on track and focus your church.

- **Lead the church to consider revisiting the Vision statement every two to three years.**

A vision from the Lord is often “time sensitive”. According to Peter Drucker, “Every three to five years you should look at the mission again to decide if it needs to be refocused.” (Peter Drucker, The Five Most Important Questions You Will Ever Ask About Your Non Profit Organization. San Francisco: Josey Bass Publishers, 1993, p. 13.)

It is likely that God will lead a church in one direction for a while, and then in a quite different way in a few years. (Examples: changing a focus from reaching and disciplining median adults to young adults, changing from a focus on young adults to reaching youth among gangs, or changing from a youth emphasis to a focused effort to reach senior adults.) A church’s Vision Statement should not attempt to, nor does it bind the Lord. Remember, vision comes from Him! So He can change it as your community (mission field) changes. Remember not to worship your vision statement – worship the God that gave you the Vision.

OUR VISION STATEMENT

Why We Exist

The purpose of our church is summarized in a single statement based on two key scriptures.

"Our purpose is to offer what we have to meet the needs of others."

"We offer what we have..."

"Whether we have much or whether we have little, we offer it to the Lord and to others." Acts 3:6

"To meet the needs of others..."

"We want everyone to have a personal relationship with God and to have their basic needs met." Philippians 4:19

Scriptural References:

"I have no silver and gold, but I give you what I have..." Acts 3:6 (RSV)

And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4: 19 (RSV)

adopted in 2004
FBC Anywhere
Anywhere, Texas

Sample Line Items of Fixed Expenses

These line items serve as the foundation for the ministry items in the budget. The numbers for the following items should be divided appropriately into the various ministries of the church. For example, if the pastor is expected to give 25% of his time to a specific ministry, the cost charged to that ministry would be \$13,575, or if an specific ministry plans to utilize 15% of the facilities, \$9,945 would be charted to that ministry item.

Salaries				
	Pastor			\$54,300
		Salary	\$35,000	
		Insurance	\$6,000	
		Retirement	\$3,500	
		Social Security	\$1,800	
		Housing	\$8,000	
	Youth Pastor			\$44,000
		Salary	\$28,000	
		Insurance	\$4,000	
		Retirement	\$2,800	
		Social Security	\$1,200	
		Housing	\$8,000	
	Worship Pastor			\$44,000
		Salary	\$28,000	
		Insurance	\$4,000	
		Retirement	\$2,800	
		Social Security	\$1,200	
		Housing	\$8,000	
	Secretary			\$27,300
		Salary	\$22,000	
		Insurance	\$800	
		Retirement	\$2,000	
		Social Security	\$2,500	
Facilities				\$66,300
	Debt Retirement		\$12,000	
	Utilities		\$18,000	
	Insurance		\$4,300	
	Repairs/Upkeep		\$10,000	
	Custodial		\$12,000	
	Office Supplies		\$10,000	