

### **Overview**

What is God's vision for the church? Gallons of ink have been spilled through the years helping churches answer this one question. In fact, you may have spent hours laboring over this question of vision yourself, hoping to discern a new, compelling, fresh vision for the church. The good news is that we don't have to create a vision for the church! In fact, it has already been given to us in God's Word! The reality is that no church belonging to Jesus Christ has a new vision; they all have the same exact one. What is unique to your congregation is the way you are to execute that vision with the resources and people entrusted to you. In contextualizing God's vision for the church, you will be introduced to some helpful questions as we think together about advancing God's mission and actualizing God's vision for His church.

### **Learning Path**

*Objective #1: Deepen your biblical understanding of how God leads his Church through vision.*

*Objective #2: Exegete your current context to discover needs and opportunities in preparation for Kingdom advance.*

*Objective #3: Develop a rough draft of a Vision Frame to help guide the local congregation through development of key ministry objectives.*

### **Revitalization Outcomes**

1. Pastor will seek to be a visionary leader for God's people.
2. Pastor will help leaders and members understand their current contextual needs and opportunities for Kingdom advance.
3. Pastor will develop a rough draft of a Vision Frame to communicate mission, values, strategy and measures for the next 3-5 years.

### **What are the primary resources you will utilize during this lesson?**

- [Seeing Your Context in Preparation for Kingdom Advance \(article\)](#)
- Demographic survey for your context (contact your local association, state convention or NAMB)

### **Additional Resources related to objectives:**

1. Church Unique: How Missional Leaders Cast Vision, Capture Culture, and Create Movement by Will Mancini.
2. [Bellevue Baptist Church Vision Frame](#) (Link to Video)
3. Example Vision Frame (recohort.org)
4. Re:Vision: The Key to Transforming Your Church by Aubrey Malphurs and Gordon E. Penfold.

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5. Visioneering: Your Guide for Discovering and Maintaining Personal Vision by Andy Stanley

***Objective #1: Deepen your biblical understanding of how God leads his Church through vision.***

God is a visionary

God has continually cast vision for his people. From Genesis to Revelation, Scripture is filled with repeated drips of God's vision for the future. He created all things with a plan and is renewing all things according this same plan.

- Read Genesis 1-2 and Revelation 21-22
- Questions for reflection:
  - Based on your reading, how do you see God as a visionary?
  - How would you describe God's vision according to these verses? What other Biblical authors and verses would you reference to provide supporting evidence to your description?
  - If God is truly a visionary, what does this truth require of you?

God gives vision to his leaders

If God is a visionary, doesn't it make sense that his Church should also have a vision to advance God's greater vision on earth? As you reflect on how God guided his people to advance his Kingdom, he consistently gave vision to leaders and entrusted a group of people into their care.

- Read Genesis 12:1-9; 15:1-20 and Acts 1:1-11
- Questions for reflection:
  - Based on your reading, how did God provide vision for his leaders? How does he provide vision for his leaders today?
  - What stands out to you the most when you read the vision given by God in Genesis 12 & 15?
  - If you were to utilize Jesus' words in Acts 1 as a model for casting vision, what elements do you see that could be considered essential for casting vision to God's people today?

God's gives vision to His Church

Scott Catoe, Pastor of Slater Baptist Church writes, "The Great Commission is the cornerstone of evangelical Christian mission. It is the marching orders for God's people, who serve as soldiers and servants in the Kingdom of God." The words preserved for us in Matthew 28 are our marching order from God to join Him on mission making disciples both in our context and everywhere else God is at work. God's mission is our mission beginning in the community we gather to worship God. The only question we must answer, is how are we best positioned to be on mission with God today and for the next 5 years?

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- Read Matthew 28:16-20
- Questions for reflection:
  - How does God give His vision for making disciples to the gathered believers? Specifically, who did He utilize? What circumstances framed the moment?
  - Historically, how has this vision been applied to your context?
  - What 3 things must change for the members in your congregation to devote their lives to fulfilling God's mission in your immediate context?
  - What is required of you as God's leader mobilizing a congregation of worshippers to be on mission fulfilling the Great Commission?

### Personal Reflection for Your Leadership

These examples of vision and visionary leadership are preserved by God for our benefit as we seek to lead others to accomplish God's mission today in communities that need the hope of the gospel. Take a few minutes to reflect on what you read as you answer the following questions about your opportunities to lead today.

- What 1 or 2 things have you learned about casting vision and being a visionary leader for God's people as you reflect on these passages?
- How have these passages challenged or encouraged you as a leader of God's people?
- What next steps have you identified during your reflection time?

### ***Objective #2: Exegete your current context to discover needs and opportunities in preparation for Kingdom advance.***

For many of our churches, the only windows to our community are stained glass windows. While they hold a beauty of their own for those inside the building to enjoy, they can also prevent us from seeing through the windows and noticing the potential to advance God's Kingdom in our context. Just beyond the decorated glass is a community in need of hope and a people longing to be known and loved. Our Savior saw them.

***When He saw the crowds, He felt compassion for them, because they were weary and worn out, like sheep without a shepherd."***  
***Matthew 9:36***

This exercise will help you see your context more clearly and begin to discover a fresh vision for making disciples with the resources and opportunities God has provided to your congregation.

- Read the article, *Seeing Your Context in Preparation for Kingdom Advance*

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- Create a rough draft of the Fourfold Panoramic Assessment for your Church and Context by answering the following questions for each of the 4 sections:

<b>CHURCH INSIDER</b> <i>Who are we?</i>	<b>COMMUNITY INSIDER</b> <i>Who are our neighbors?</i>
<b>CHURCH OUTSIDER</b> <i>What are our partnership opportunities?</i>	<b>COMMUNITY OUTSIDER</b> <i>What are the trends &amp; needs in the community?</i>

### o **Church Insider:** *Who are we?*

- What are 3 or 4 unique characteristics for our congregation?
- What are the top 3 or 4 things we value as a congregation?
- What resources are currently available to accomplish God's mission (people, finances, facilities, etc.)?
- When it comes to accomplishing God's mission or making a difference in our community, what are we most passionate about? (Think about recent conversations or prayer requests and list 3-4 things)
- What 3-4 areas of brokenness in our community concern us most?

### o **Community Insider:** *Who are our Neighbors?*

Here's a simple exercise to help rediscover your neighbors. Pick an afternoon or early evening to visit the neighborhoods or gathering places in your community and talk to people you meet. Ask the Lord to give you opportunities to have a neighborly conversation with 4 or 5 people and get to know more about their story. (If your context is more rural or if your mobility is limited, consider starting conversations at a local shopping center, park, ballfield, or anywhere people might gather.)

- Make a list of the people you met and make note of the things you learned during your conversations and their answers to the suggested questions found in the article you read.

### o **Church Outsider:** *What opportunities exist for ministry & partnership?*

Consider your opportunities for ministry by answering the following questions:

- What other religious entities/non-profits in the area are actively seeking to reach the community with the gospel? (May not all be SBC)
- What like-minded gospel partnership opportunities exist?
- What other organizations are seeking to meet the needs of the community (i.e. schools, community groups & associations)?
- What opportunities might our membership have to serve in any of the above-mentioned entities?

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### o **Community Outsider: What are the trends & needs in the community?**

This last window utilizes demographic data and interviews to better understand your context for ministry. Based on the report(s) you reviewed, answer the following 3 questions:

- What did you learn about your community that surprised you?
- What captured your attention or concern most in the data?
- Based on the data, how could the church build bridges to any of the segments of your community and increase your opportunities to make disciples?

#### **List 3 options.**

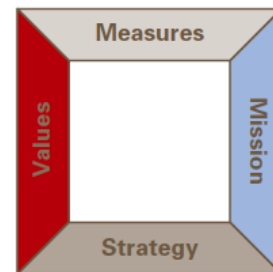
*(Example: with 1/3 of families with children being single-parent households, the church could provide monthly mother's day out evenings for single moms to drop off their children for a few hours of structured play while they went shopping or ran errands.)*

### **Objective #3: Develop a Vision Frame for the local congregation.**

With the Fourfold Panoramic Assessment complete, let's frame your current reality and start to cast vision for making disciples in our context. We will reference a tool, the Vision Frame, introduced in the book *Church Unique* as a visual tool for communicating the key elements to a church's vision. The remainder of this lesson will walk you through how to create a rough draft of your vision frame in preparation for your next cohort session.

"The Vision Frame contains five components that define your church's DNA and creates a platform for all vision casting" (Unique, 113). These components will help you answer five critical questions: (see p. 113)

1. What are we doing? (**Mission**)
2. Why are we doing it? (**Values**)
3. How are we doing it? (**Strategy**)
4. When are we successful? (**Measures**)



#### **Developing a Vision Frame for the local church**

1. Let's start with your *Mission* to answer the question, "What are we doing?"

God has already provided a mission to make disciples, but perhaps you'd like to phrase this eternal mission in a unique way for your context. Again, you are creating a rough draft, so don't overthink the exact wording. You can go back and refine it later.

□ Our **Mission** is...

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2. Now let's develop your **values** to answer the question, "*Why are we doing it?*"

**"Values are constant, passionate, sacred core principles that drive your ministry."**

**~Aubrey Malphurs**

- Values are a key part of the unique fingerprint of your church defining the character of your ministry and presence. What are 3-5 words that distinguish your church and ministries as an expression of your passion and principles?

*Examples might include (Worshiping families, Authentic community, Simple stewardship, Transformational discipleship, etc.)*

- Our **Values** are...

3. Let's consider your **strategies**. What 4 strategies will you need to accomplish your mission. This is where you seek to answer the question, "*How will we do it?*"

Remember there are often multiple ways to implement strategy, so don't get lost in the details of a certain ministry or program. Think about categories or priorities instead of events on a calendar (discipleship, worship, missions, fellowship, prayer etc.).

*Note: Since you are casting vision for the future, these strategies may not exist yet, so prayerfully consider what you need to do to accomplish the mission God has given you as a congregation.*

**"Clear strategy helps you do fewer things with better quality so your people can do less church activity and live more for Jesus." ~ Will Mancini**

- Our **Strategies** for accomplishing our mission are:

4. Lastly, let's consider your **measures** or those tangible outcomes that will help you determine how well you are accomplishing your mission. This is the fruit of your strategies that answers the question, "*When are we successful?*"

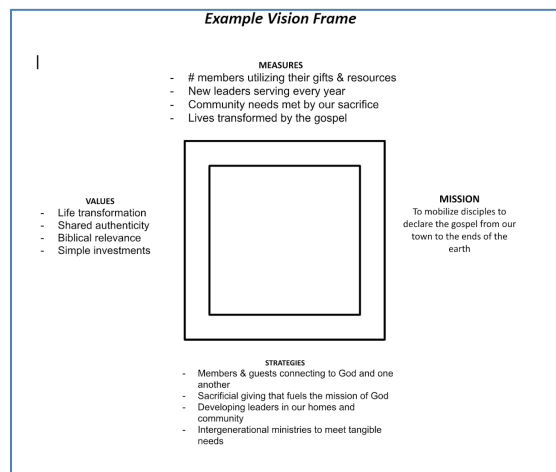
For years churches have tracked budgets, baptisms and attendance. These are good measures, but there are probably better measures for church health that are unique to your congregation that will help you gauge success.

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What are 4-5 measures that you'll want to track to determine your mission progress as a congregation in your context? (*Examples: # people in small groups, # people volunteering in the community, % worshippers giving to mission partners, etc.*)

□ Our **Measures** are:

Let's put all the pieces together in preparation for your cohort session. Use the blank Vision Frame worksheet at the end of this lesson to combine all the elements into a single visual.



*Example Vision Frame*

In preparation for your cohort, be prepared to share your Vision Frame in a way that is clear, concise, compelling, and contextual. Pretend you have less than 5 minutes to share your vision with a guest attending worship over Sunday lunch. How will you encourage them to join the vision at your church? Quick. Pointed. Inviting. Specific.

Great work on a lengthy lesson! We'll see you at the next cohort session.

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