

LONG-RANGE PLANNING

Introduction: Let's talk about tomorrow and the tomorrows after that. God goes before us to make all things new; inviting us to a future that He has both promised and prepared. Prayer and planning are the means to a future that awaits us with His best.

What is Planning and Why is it important?

1. A simple definition of planning is "People Led to Attempt the Necessary."
2. Leaders are responsible for planning in churches, organizations, groups, clubs, etc.
3. Definition of leadership:
 - a. **The personal side:** "*Leadership is influence.*" (John Maxwell, Leadership 101, 4)
*Influence through Love, Example, Attitude, Direction, Equipping, Relationships.
In this way Jesus practiced servant leadership during his ministry on earth. He took the towel and washed the feet of his disciples. He influenced others by his person and service. He led others by serving them (Matt. 20:26, Mk. 10:45, Luke 22:25-27).
 - b. **The process side:** "*Leadership is knowing what to do next, knowing why that's important, and knowing how to bring the appropriate resources to bear on the need at hand.*" (Bobb Biehl, Masterplanning, 61)
4. Planning enables churches to decide priorities clearly, take actions confidently, use resources wisely, develop teamwork effectively, experience growth spiritually, evaluate carefully and celebrate joyfully. If we fail to plan, we plan to fail. Planning translates "preferable future" into vision and action. God provides the needed divine leadership.
5. Churches should do three (3) types of planning:
 - a. Project or event planning (hour, day, weekend, or week)
 - b. Annual planning (one year)
 - c. Long-range or strategic planning (2-5 years)
6. Planning enables a church to understand and determine what level they desire:
 - a. Survival (making it)
 - b. Success (making money)
 - c. Significance (making a difference)

What is Visionary Long-Range Planning?

1. Deciding how a congregation will achieve its God-given purpose in the future.
2. Looking into the future and deciding how to choose the desired results of reaching and discipling people, ministering unselfishly to persons in the congregation and the community, and extending Christ's mission through missions and evangelism.
3. Writing the history of your church before it happens.
4. Declaring the congregation's focus and thrust for a period of three to seven years in advance.
-Truman Brown, Long-Range Planning in a Southern Baptist Church, 4-5
5. Long-range planning is deciding what your "preferable future" will be. This planning determines whether the local church will be a "scrapbook church or blueprint church."
6. Long-range planning is difficult because it is "digging into a future" that has not been written.

STEPS IN LONG-RANGE PLANNING

I. Envisioning Stage

Phase 1: Pastor leads the congregation to discover the need for a new dream.

Phase 2: Key leaders must make a commitment to visionary growth.

II. Planning Stage

Phase 1: Get Started

Step 1: Lead the congregation to elect the long-range planning committee.

Step 2: Train the long-range planning committee.

Step 3: Prepare the church for long-range planning.

Step 4: Present mission, vision, and core values statements to church for vote.

Step 5: Find ways for the church to embrace and embody the statements.

Phase 2: Launch a Study of Church and Community

Step 1: Divide the committee into church and community study groups.

Step 2: Church study group analyzes present and future church needs.

- a. Conduct *Dream Night* to gather input from the members.
- b. Survey the church family using questionnaires/forms.
- c. Gather input through small group or personal means.
- d. Ask key leaders “fog-cutting questions” on purpose and opportunity.

Step 3: Community study group analyzes present and future community needs.

- a. Gather data from the community leaders, businesses, sources, etc.
- b. Conduct windshield survey of community.
- c. Discuss community with other denominations’ church leaders.
- d. Secure demographics information from MCB or other source.

Step 4: Consolidate church and community analyses.

- a. Analyze the findings of the study groups.
- b. Prioritize the needs as to immediate, intermediate and long-range.
- c. Pray for wisdom and guidance before taking the next steps.

Phase 3: Set Goals for the Growing Church

Step 1: Discuss needs, priorities, and problems to be solved for next 2-5 years.

Step 2: Set long-range visionary goals based on priorities and problem-solving.

Step 3: Correlate goals into one set of long-range visionary goals.

Phase 4: Select Visionary Long-Range Action Plans

Step 1: Discuss actions to be taken to reach goals.

Step 2: Develop action plans for each goal.

Step 3: Consolidate action plans into a comprehensive visionary plan.

Phase 5: Complete and Communicate Long-Range Plans to the Church

Step 1: Prepare report of church and community concerns, goals, and plans.

Step 2: Present the long-range plan for congregational discussion.

Step 3: Present the long-range plan for congregational approval.

III. Implementing Stage**Phase 1: Initial Implementation**

Step 1: Clarify roles of long-range planning committee and Leadership Team.

Step 2: Train Leadership Team (key leaders) to function effectively.

Step 3: Meet with the Leadership Team to evaluate assignments.

Step 4: Prepare annual report for church-wide study indicating progress.

Step 5: Establish process for annual or short-range planning.

Phase 2: Later Implementation

Step 1: Revise the long-range plans as needed.

Step 2: Keep the key leaders and stewardship committee informed.

Step 3: Recommend development of a new long-range plan.

FIVE THINGS A CHURCH MUST DO

(Five Functions of the Church)

1. Evangelism/Witnessing
2. Discipleship
3. Fellowship
4. Ministry/Missions
5. Worship

*Remember: “*Every Dead Frog Must Wiggle*”

*Commitment to these five functions will result in church health and balanced growth.
Numerical, Spiritual, Fellowship, and Outreach

BENEFITS OF PLANNING

1. A SENSE OF PURPOSE

The persons leading the church will know where it is going and what it must do.

2. A RELEVENCY TO LIFE

Efforts will be made to understand the needs of the church family and community. Specific needs can be targeted to reach and minister in the name of Christ.

3. A UNITY OF CONCERN

A team of staff, deacons, Leadership Team (Church Council) and key leaders can work as one to accomplish important goals.

4. AN INCREASE OF MOTIVATION

Key leaders and members will see the rewards of their work. They will become more involved in the ministry because they helped set the goals and accomplish the work.

5. A STEWARDSHIP OF RESOURCES

The church will be able to use all resources to the fullest extent, toward what is considered of greatest importance.

6. A MEANS OF CONTINUED GROWTH

The church will experience balanced Biblical growth (numerical, spiritual, fellowship and outreach) as it moves toward the future.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A MISSION STATEMENT

1. It is simple, easy to say, easy to remember.
2. It is fifteen words or less.
3. It is enduring.
6. It is a trumpet call to excellence.
7. It acts as a measuring rod for utilization of resources.
8. It challenges the mind and inspires the heart.

WHAT IS VISION and DREAM?

Proverbs 29:18, 2 Corinthians 5:7, Ephesians 1:16-23

- Vision is seeing what is not here now, but that which God can make a reality.
- Vision is seeing our opportunities in our circumstances (Warren).
- Vision is foresight with insight based on hindsight (Barna).
- Vision is seeing the invisible become the visible.
- Vision is a clear mental image of a preferable future imparted by God to His chosen servants and is based upon an accurate understanding of God, self, and circumstances. Vision is a mental portrait by faith of something that does not currently exist, but believe God can lead you to accomplish.

-Barna

GOD WANTS TO MAKE YOUR DREAM COME TRUE!

- God wants to impart His vision (desire, dream) to you so that you can pursue it with energy, joy, and love. Envisioning and dreaming are not options.
- God starts every church and ministry from someone's dream.
- Dreams (or the lack of) always shape our lives and our ministry.
- A church never achieves more than it "sees" or dreams. Churches without dreams shrivel, split, sputter & splatter. These results should not surprise us.
- Faith, hope, and curiosity are the raw materials for dreams to be realized.
- Visions or dreams are never achieved without someone's sacrifice.
- Tough times and big challenges require new dreams.
- "The more we dream, the clearer our vision becomes." –Danny Cox
- We must resist dream destroyers:
 1. Secular dream destroyers – sin, secularism, sophistication, success.
 2. Church dream destroyers – traditionalism, fear, emotion, apathy, control.
 3. Personal dream destroyers – selfishness, discouragement, laziness, disobedience.
- How to begin dreaming:
 1. Dream based on God's purposes in Jesus Christ for you and your church
 2. Dream past your fears and pain.
 3. Dream past the enemy's lies (Satan).
 4. Dream past the church's strengths, weaknesses, successes, and failures.
 5. Dream asking the question – "What must occur for us to be healthier?"

Remember > purpose + dream + passion + priority = accomplished purpose.

Remember > Never desert your vision or dreams. God specializes in things thought impossible. He can do what no other power can do. Jesus is His proof.

Remember > We become, what we see!

Remember > Where there is no Dream, there is no Team!

God is asking my church and me to _____

Principles of Church Growth

Church Administration Department of LifeWay Christian Resources did a research project (1992) to determine the basic church growth principles. The following were found in almost every growing church.

1. **Vision for Growth**

Every growing church has a clear sense of direction. The pastor, staff, leadership and people have a common vision of where the church is going. They know what their mission or purpose is. In most cases they have a written mission statement.

2. **Pastoral Leadership**

Pastoral leadership is perhaps the most critical factors in church growth. The pastor must possess certain specific character qualities and exert certain qualities of leadership. The pastor must truly want his church to grow and must be willing to work hard, to make growth a possibility. He must lead the people to set goals, develop plans, and mobilize the people toward growth. He must have a growth mentality rather than a maintenance mentality. He must be free to be creative, innovative in his leadership and refuse to accept the status quo.

3. **Laity**

The people of the church must become an active force of lay ministry if growth is to occur. The people of the church must:

- (1) Be committed to church growth.
- (2) Be equipped to discover and use their spiritual gifts.
- (3) Be willing to make the necessary changes for growth.
- (4) Be willing to work hard along with the pastor.
- (5) Be willing to assume leadership responsibility.
- (6) Be willing to evaluate what they are doing.

4. **Research, Analysis, and Diagnosis**

You must study your church and community to determine what factors are contributing to or detracting from growth. Many church leaders had rather put off going to the "doctor" when there is a sign of problems.

5. **Strategic Planning**

This work develops a process to help the church accomplish its mission.

6. **Effective Evangelism**

These churches find effective ways to present the gospel to unsaved people.

- Visitation
- Census/Survey
- Soul-Winning
- WIN School/CWE
- Revivals, crusades, etc.
- F. A. I. T. H. and G.R.O.W.
- Media and Publicity
- Special Events - sports camps, wild game suppers, concerts, dramas, festivals
- Ministries - Mother's Day Out, daycare, literacy work, family emphases, construction

7. Small Groups

There must be primary groups which relate to Sunday School classes, choirs, Discipleship Training, and support groups. New members must be assimilated into the church family. Without assimilation discipleship and balanced growth will not occur.

8. Prayer

Prayer is a vital part of every church. These growing churches have an effective prayer ministry. The conviction of prayer permeated these growing churches.

9. Spiritual Power

You can sense it when the people gather. They are energized by power beyond themselves. The presence of the Lord is experienced.

SHARE CHURCH'S MISSION/VISION

1. Address the mission and the challenges facing the congregation through sermon series.
2. Plan mission reinforcement meetings.
3. Conduct leadership retreats to dream, pray about and create strategies and plans regarding the mission.
4. Teach about mission, values, strategies, goals, gifts, abilities and experiences.
5. Expose the people to case studies of how other churches have handled their mission.
6. Call attention to the church's existing mission-related activity to celebrate successes.
7. Include articles on mission in the church's bulletin or newsletter.
8. Relate sermons or lessons to the church's mission.
9. Incorporate mission as a part of every training program the church provides for assimilation of members and development of leadership.
10. Hire staff or promote people to leadership positions only if they give evidence of enforcing the mission.
11. Demonstrate the mission in daily pursuits.
12. Post the mission statement on bulletin boards and internal documents.

13. Make the mission a core criterion in all decision-making efforts.
14. Review regularly the church's progress in relation to the mission.

Adapted – George Barna

LEADERSHIP QUALITIES NEEDED BY CHURCH LEADERS

1. SERVANTHOOD
2. COMMITMENT
3. FAITH
4. VISION
5. PERSEVERANCE
6. ENTHUSIASM
7. TEAMWORK
8. PRAYER

EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

Effective Meetings are Important...BUT they are not the bottom line! Meetings must be viewed as a means of ministering to and through people. Our attitude should be that the church committee structure and meetings process be judged on the impact that their work has had on the lives of people for Christ.

Effective meetings can be a vehicle whereby lay people can have their ministry concept strengthened, their vision expanded, their commitment infused with new enthusiasm and their understanding of the mission of the church enriched.

As we seek to be facilitators of an effective meeting ministry process, we always need to keep focused on the following statements:

1. In everything we must be ministers for Christ. We are not building a meetings process. We need to be about building the kingdom of God through the lives of people to whom we minister.
2. People are far more important than any meeting process.
3. Service than served must be the heartbeat of our committee process.

4. We must continually strive to build a shared ministry concept.
5. We must have a dream and a vision.

HOW TO BUILD LONG-RANGE PLANS INTO ANNUAL PLANS

1. Identify long-range strategies to be begun or completed during the year.
2. Determine how strategies can be accomplished.
3. Set annual goals.
4. Select action plans needed to carry out goals.
5. Assign action plans for detailed planning.
6. Build Annual Calendar.
 - a. Actions that must be completed during the year.
 - b. Regular church activities.
 - c. Associational, State and S.B.C. activities.
7. Request congregational discussion and approval.
8. Communicate and delegate church-approved assignments.
9. Secure budget and financial support for these assignments.

>>>DIN = Do it now!

RESOURCES

Choices for Churches, Lyle Schaller. Abingdon Press
Church Design Handbook (annual resource), Mississippi Baptist Convention Board
Church and Community Diagnosis Workbook. LifeWay Christian Resources of the SBC
Church Officer and Committee Series Guidebook (Revised), LifeWay
Create Your Own Future, Lyle Schaller. Abingdon Press.
Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God, Henry Blackaby. LifeWay
Kingdom Principles for Church Growth, Gene Mims. LifeWay Christian Resources of SBC
Kingdom Leadership, Michael Miller. LifeWay Christian Resources of SBC
Natural Church Development, Christian Schwarz. ChurchSmart Resources - (800) 253-4276
Masterplanning, Bobb Biehl. Broadman and Holman
The Power of Vision, George Barna. Regal Books.
The Purpose Driven Church, Rick Warren. Zondervan Publishing

To Dream Again, Robert Dale. LifeWay Christian Resources of the SBC

Demographic Resources from the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (Wes Pegues)