



Course Name: Developing Vision #1

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Course description:

This course is designed to begin the process of developing a vision for the church. Specific components will be discussed over the next few weeks that all contribute to the development of a vision for the future of the church.

Course Objectives: By the end of the class students will have:

- A. Written a one-page description of where the church is NOW!
- B. Discussed the “raw factors” connected to the current situation of the church.
- C. Listed five “critical factors” that the church must address in order to develop a vision for the future of the church.

Outline of the class:

- A. Give each person in class a piece of paper and pencil/pen. Ask each to write a one-page description of the church (where you are located) as they see it now. Give about 15-20 minutes to write this out. If additional pages of paper are needed, please provide whatever is required to write the description. If more time is needed, allow that also.
 1. Encourage students to write out both good and bad. It is best if they can write this out in paragraph style, using narrative to describe the various areas associated with the church.
 2. Ensure that everyone knows that the purpose of this task is to have an accurate picture of the church as it is NOW.
 3. Ask them to describe the current programs of the church, outreach of the church, leadership development in the church, worship of the church, youth program of the church, benevolence, mission work, communication of leaders, transparency of the members, cliques (What kind of cliques exist? What are they like?), etc.
- B. After everyone has written their page(s), ask students to share key words or phrases associated with the church from their report.
 1. Make a list on the whiteboard of their responses. Dr. Bobby Clinton describes these elements as “raw factors.”
 2. As you discuss these raw factors, make a list or highlight what Clinton refers to as the “critical factors,” areas that *must* be considered and addressed as you move ahead to develop a vision for the future.

- C. Once these are all written out, engage everyone in a discussion that focuses on prioritizing the information gathered and written on the whiteboard.
1. What areas are lacking most within the church? Some suggestions include:
 - a. Leadership development
 - b. Mission work
 - c. Developing members for growth
 - d. Worship
 2. Also, what reasons would we suggest that have influenced where we are NOW? Some suggestions include:
 - a. Historical factors
 - b. Racial factors
 - c. Traditional factors
 - d. Cultural factors
 - e. Gender factors
 - f. Leadership factors
 3. At this point, do NOT get involved with discussions that deal with how to address these areas and what needs to be done to correct them for the future. This will come during another class in the weeks ahead.
 4. Encourage everyone to spend the week ahead to think about these responses as they describe the church.

Conclusion:

- A. Before developing a vision for the future of the church, an initial step that honestly evaluates where the church is NOW must be taken. A clear picture of the present situation of the church allows leaders to take the next step, which we will discuss next week.
- B. The church will always have both positive and negative factors associated with where it is presently. Often times it is easy to focus on only the negative, which is not an accurate approach. Also, we can overemphasize the positive without recognizing that no matter how good things may or may not be, there is always room to improve.
- C. This exercise is intended to help us think transparently and accurately about the current description of the church in order to design a strategy that will help the church grow.
- D. Next week, we will examine several additional factors that relate to the vision we need to develop for the church.

Recommended Readings:

Clinton, Robert *Bridging Strategies* (electronic version only – see the following link to purchase: <http://bobbyclinton.com/store/books-manuals/bridging-strategies/>)