

Leadership Vision resources:

Larry Osborne, *Sticky Leaders: The Secret to Lasting Change and Innovation*. Zondervan, 2016 – In this book Larry has a small section on Vision, how it works, and the leader’s role in developing it. It is good basic stuff.

Larry Osborne, *Sticky Teams: Keeping your Leadership Team and Staff on the Same Page*. Zondervan, 2010 – While this book doesn’t talk directly about vision, it is a classic for church leadership. Many churches use it for onboarding new Board Members. He covers a lot of detail related to vision in this. Highly recommended.

Larry Osborne, *Sticky Church*. Zondervan, 2008. In this book Larry offers basic counsel on “doing church.” There is a chapter focusing on vision and mission, and it is pretty practical and worthwhile.

Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning: a New Model for Church and Ministry Leaders*. Baker Books, 1999. This is an older book, but Malphurs does good stuff. It is fairly exhaustive on discovering core values, developing a mission and vision. There is little I have seen that covers as much on this topic as well as Malphurs, even though it is a bit dated.

Andy Stanley, *Visioneering*, Multnomah, 1999. This is pretty extensive on the visioning process, from beginning to end. Stanley is always pretty practical, and it is true here. This book has more content than most of his books, but it is good stuff.

Andy Stanley, *Making Vision Stick*, Zondervan, 2007. This is a pocket book focusing on communicating vision more than shaping it. Good little add-on, but not enough detail to be the only recommendation regarding casting vision.

<https://www.cofc.com.au/CofCQ/media/publications/Defining-Church-Vision-Mission-and-Values-Statements.pdf>

How to Write a Church Vision Statement

When people think of church vision statements, there are usually two related but different things they picture. One is a vision statement, and one is a mission statement. These documents are related and most churches end up combining them, but for the purpose of discussion, we’ll treat them separately (You can read the mission statement tips here). **The difference is that a vision statement describes how you and God see your church. It focuses on the personality of the church.** A mission statement describes what actions will result from your vision. As you work on your vision statement, here are a few things to keep in mind:

DREAM BIG

Remember, this is your vision, it’s the way God sees you. If your vision is small, your church will be small. If you think God’s view of your purpose is small, you’ve been deceived. That’s why you need to dream big. Your vision statement needs to be bold enough that you never finish fulfilling it, while also being realistic enough to let you see progress and not become discouraged.

A good example of this principle is my home church’s vision statement: “We see the Life Church as a dynamic, spirit-filled, multi-cultural church, numbering in the thousands, impacting our city, our nation and our world through leadership development and church planting.” These are bold statements. In fact, their boldness is often a point of humor because these words were written when there were only 7 people in service, all of which were white. But, it gave the church something to shoot for. It told new members what to expect, and when the first non-white family showed up, everyone in the church welcomed them with open arms. They had been praying for diversity and the bold vision prepared them to succeed. Now, the church has grown into the

thousands and the racial make up in the church almost exactly matches the racial make up in the city around it. But, the vision is still large enough that no one can sit back and say, “We’re done, nothing left to do.” When you dream big, you will always have room to grow.

BE CONCISE

A good vision statement focuses your members on fulfilling it. That means your members have to be able to memorize it. **Ideally, you want to shoot for one sentence. It doesn’t have to be a short sentence, but it should be one sentence, because a sentence—no matter how long it is—must contain one thought and that thought must follow a logical progression. Even if your statement is a hundred words long, if you make it follow a logical progression,** your members can internalize the message.

I’ll also let you in on a little secret among writers: Brevity begins with long drafts. If you can make your first draft concise and to the point, great. But, don’t feel guilty if your first attempt is three pages long. It’s just a draft. If you try to do a perfect statement the first time around, you’ll be paralyzed by fear and never finish. But, if you give yourself permission to make the first draft long and horrible, you won’t have trouble doing it. Then, you can cut and mold at your leisure. **Just keep drafting until your vision statement is where it needs to be.**

BE PRECISE

Since your vision statement exists to inspire your members, you need to make it reward meditation. Choose your words carefully, so the more attention someone pays the more they get out of it. The way you do this is by pondering the meaning of the words you pick so every word carries its weight. Does God want you to equip missionaries, or to prepare them? Are you to be a light to the nations, or a beacon? There are differences in each of those options, and every one of them needs to be done by someone. The question is “which does God want you doing?” By making your words precise, you convey volumes of information in the smallest space possible, making your vision memorable.

A good example of this would be Mark 10:45, where Jesus says, “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” You could think of this as Jesus’ vision statement, and you can see the way it rewards meditation. The ideas it conveys are revealing in and of themselves. The wording is precise and directive. After all, no synonym of “serve” conveys that same level of self-sacrifice. It’s the only word that alludes to the deprivation of slavery while still allowing the servant the capacity to leave if they feel like it. The use of “ransom” is similarly precise. As a result, the reader feels the paradoxes at work and their attention is directed to what’s important. After all, with words that are this exact, there’s only one way that the meaning can unfold itself.

BE DIFFERENT

Christians need to be unified in their vision and united in their goals. But, they shouldn’t have the same vision statement. Your vision statement is about what God has called you to be and how he sees you. If there is nothing in your vision statement that couldn’t apply to the church down the road, you need to ask why your churches are separated. There should be some point of difference that makes you special. We should be united in our purpose, but we should be no more united in our functions than a heart and a lung are. They have the same purpose (giving oxygen to your cells), but that purpose won’t be fulfilled unless they do different functions.

TAKE YOUR TIME

Keep in mind that the purpose of your vision statement is to direct the course of your church. This is a big deal, so don’t feel you have to rush. Take your time, let the committee meet five or six times. Talk to pastor

friends. Take time to revise and rewrite until you have what you want. And, don't feel guilty about spending a lot of time. It's not easy, but it is worth the effort.

Church Vision Statements

Do you need to write a Vision Statement for your church? Not sure where to start? Then we hope that this page will provide help and useful guidelines for developing compelling Church Vision statements.

How to write a Church Vision statement? Church Vision Statements should be generally short, clear, vivid, inspiring and concise without using complicated words. The most successful Church Vision Statements are inspiring, powerful and compelling.

Church Mission Statements

What is the difference between Church Mission Statements and Church Vision Statements?

A good definition for a Mission Statement is a sentence or short paragraph which is written by a church which reflects its core purpose, identity, values and principle aims. **A good definition for Vision Statements is a sentence or short paragraph providing a broad, aspirational image of the future. A Vision is defined as 'An Image of the future we seek to create'**. A Mission is defined as 'Purpose, reason for being'. Defined simply "Who we are and what we do". Many organizations, such as a church, combine both their present accomplishments, which would typically be found in a Mission statement, together with their future aspirations in just one statement. A hybrid version of both a Mission and Vision statement. **There are no rules, the choice is down to the organisation who decide what they are trying to achieve and who will be reading the statement.**

Mission Statements contain important information about the church, but in a nutshell. This should include what the church does, its congregation and its services. Church Mission Statements focus on today.

Vision Statements contain details of the future of the church - its vision (the future plans with aims and objectives)These types of Statements focus on tomorrow. Non profit organizations, such as a church, write Vision statements to clarify and emphasize their future goals and the benefits which would be derived from donations. Read on to learn how to write Church Vision Statements.

Useful Hints and Tips on How to Write Church Vision Statements

Some hints and tips on How to write Church Vision Statements. Start off by making a list of what your church would like to do in the future. Examples for this might be to increase Bible Study classes, set up a Sunday School for different ages, to send missionaries and church workers all around the world, plans for events such as yearly church bazaars or family days or building a classroom for Bible study:

Start thinking about your dreams for the future of your church

Take your time when writing a Church Vision Statement. Its a hard but very important task, learning how to write a Church Vision Statement takes time! It needs to be positive and inspirational

Get the 'feel' of Vision Statements by checking out the samples and examples of Vision Statements of some big companies and small establishments

Make separate lists of the following:

- Services - What you do and how well you do it!
- Technology - Your use of Technology
- People involved in your church
- People who attend your church - the congregation
- People who are involved in your establishment
- Your Community
- How you help people
- Your Values and Philosophy
- Your Vision - future plans with aims and objectives
- Pick out the most important points
- Obtain input from other people

List some positive words - words of aspiration and inspiration are really important for Church Vision statements

Select your most important words and combine in one sentence or put your most important sentences together which must be combined in one short paragraph

You will now be in an excellent position and know how to write Vision statements!

You will then have learned How to write Church Vision Statements!

How long are typical Church Vision Statements?

A good Church Vision Statements is a sentence or short paragraph consisting of two to four sentences. The institutions who create these Church Vision Statements usually review them every three to five years, or when specific goals have been achieved.

Importance of Church Vision Statements

The importance of these Church Vision Statements should not be underestimated. One good paragraph will describe the values, services and vision for the future.

Is there a difference between the Vision and the Mission of a local church?

I suppose that in a very technical sense, both of these terms – ‘vision’ and ‘mission’ – are more contemporary than they are biblical. That is, neither of these terms is used biblically in the same sense it is used today in Christian literature.

I must first confess to you that I’m not one who reads a whole lot of books on “the church,” “church growth,” etc. that are not deeply rooted in the Bible (though they may say they are). In saying this I’m warning you that the way I might understand these terms may differ significantly from the way some contemporary authors may use them.

Having said this, I would be inclined to view the “mission” of the church in this way:

The mission of the church is that which our Lord has commanded it to do. It is that which we see the apostles teaching, and the New Testament churches practicing. The mission of “the church” is the mission of the universal church, and of every local church, without exception. Some primary biblical texts (in my opinion) would be Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:42; and 1 Corinthians 11-14. The church should be practicing holy living, carrying on the work which Christ began in His earthly ministry (we are His body), proclaiming the gospel and making disciples, and worshipping the risen Lord as a body (e.g. Acts 2:42; 1 Corinthians 11-13; Hebrews 10:25).

The “mission of the church” as I understand it is to do those things which our Lord and His apostles have commanded the church to do. No church has the option of setting any aspect of this mission aside.

I would suppose that the term “vision” has a different focus. It would be any one particular church’s sense of calling above and beyond its mission, or in terms of how it sees God has equipped it to carry out its mission.

Let me illustrate this on an individual basis. Every Christian has clearly defined duties and obligations as a Christian. We are to gather together with other Christians and encourage one another (Hebrews 10:25); we are to show compassion to those in need; we are to forsake sin, etc. In addition to this, every Christian has unique gifts, and a unique contribution to make to the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12). I would say that the individual’s duties are his “mission,” and that his particular ministry should be his or her “vision.” I am inclined to say the same for every local church.

Our church, for example, is located in Dallas, Texas. We have a number of gifted teachers who are a part of our church body. Over the years we had a “vision” to capture some of the teaching of our church, and to preserve it for the edification of others, free of charge. When the Internet came into existence, we then made these messages available. Not every church may be able to do this, but each and every church has a unique role to play in the body of Christ. I would call each church’s definition of that role its “vision.”

I’m not sure this helps to explain these terms as they are used in contemporary Christian literature, but by whatever terms, I think we should ponder, as a church, what we are commanded to do (our mission) and what God may have uniquely gifted us to do (our vision).

I fear that the term “vision” may be used in a more limited way – in terms of size, buildings, etc. This may not be bad, but I would tend not to limit the church’s vision to such things. These also happen to be the very things that spell “success” in this world.

Defining Mission, Vision and Values Statements for Your Church MISSION

The mission of a church is a broad statement that explains why we exist and it doesn’t change often. For churches this is established by Christ and we essentially just get to say the same thing in our own words.

Another way to express this is that a mission statement describes the purpose the church serves and the benefits it brings to its members and the community.

Questions to ask to help clarify your church’s mission statement include:

- What do we do?
 - o What ministries do we run?
 - o What talents, skills, resources and experience does our congregation offer?

- Whom do we serve?
 - o While we always seek to serve anyone we come into contact with in daily life, are there particular groups of people, or a particular location/area that our congregation is in contact with or passionate about serving?
- How do we serve them?
 - o What practices, theories of change, programs, ways of doing life with people do we have/bring?

VISION

A vision is what a group wants to achieve in a defined period of time to contribute to achieving its mission. A vision statement is aspirational – it points to 1) where the congregation believes God is calling them to be in the future (usually in 3-5 years' time, or sometimes as far out as 10 years) and 2) the transformation they desire to see in their community and the world as a result of people coming to know Jesus and seeing God's kingdom come. A vision statement articulates the kind of future the congregation desires to see and what they're aiming to do towards that in a specific timeframe. This will always be grounded in both its history and its local, regional and global context as well as the kingdom of God.

For example, if a church's mission is "making disciples and planting churches", its vision for 2020 – 2025 might be "to establish 3 new church communities by 2025".

A way to check that your vision statement is a true vision and not a mission statement is that it is possible to quantify targets and goals and to measure progress towards it.

It is helpful to ask and answer the following questions when seeking God's vision for your church:

- Who are we?
 - o What is our identity and history as God's people in this place? And how does/can that inform where we go in the future?
- What does God want to use us to do in our congregation, community and the world?
- What do we want this congregation and facility to look like in the future?
- Where do we want to be 1, 5, 10 years from now?
 - o Do we have a vision and heart for a new ministry/expression of the Kingdom? Do we want to reach a new agegroup/lifestage?
 - o What do we want people to see/think when they hear the name of our church, when they see our facility or when they meet people from our congregation?
- What are our hopes and dreams for our congregation, our community and the world?
 - o As you meditate on scripture and the characteristics of God's kingdom, what does He place on your hearts collectively?
 - What problem are we solving or what would look different in our community and world if we saw God's kingdom come and what part is God calling us to play in that?
 - o As you see, hear of or research needs in your local community, what do you think your congregation could do to bring transformation?

VALUES

Values are principles, standards, or qualities considered worthwhile or desirable. "Core values are defined as the passionate and consistent biblical core beliefs that drive your church's ministry. They are the primary principles upon which your church and ministry are built; they are the foundation."³

Defining your church's primary values helps your congregation and in particular the leadership understand who they are called to be and how they are called to act. Values also form the driving factor and guide for decision making with respect to church structure, staffing, ministry and even setting budgets. Values are often unspoken and many people don't realise they are what is driving their behaviour and decision making. This is

why it is helpful for a church to work through and document their values so that everyone can understand them and use them as a framework for making decisions.

3 <https://pd.church/what-does-your-church-value/>