

## How to run a church vision day

Handout 1/7 from Article A52 <https://www.john-truscott.co.uk/Resources/Articles-index>

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### Purpose for the future

#### Idea one: discipleship

Four stages of development:

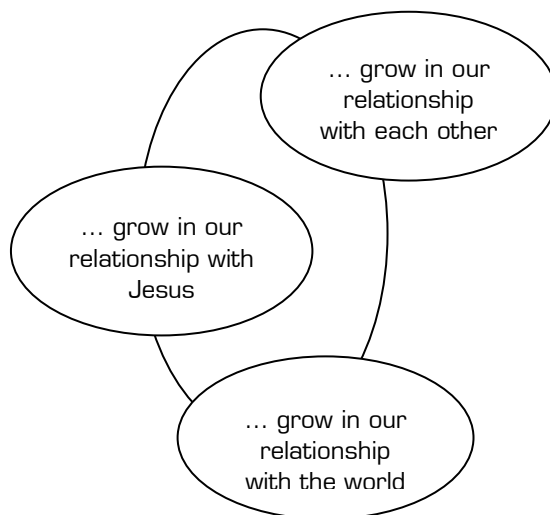
- 1 Viewers – of a building: Ministers are curators of a shrine
- 2 Attenders – of services: Ministers are worship leaders
- 3 Members – of a body: Ministers are leaders of a society
- 4 Disciples – of Jesus Christ: Ministers are under-shepherds of God's people

#### Idea 2: growing in relationship

As a church we should be seeing, together:

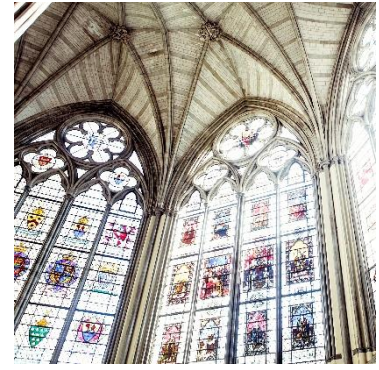
- 1 a God-ward development – growing in our relationship with Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- 2 an 'us-ward' development – growing in our relationship with each other
- 3 an out-ward development – growing in our relationship with the world

Or, each of us should ... (see diagram)



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### Principles for the future

#### Non-negotiable ideas

- something about the Lordship of Jesus Christ;
- an explanation of denomination and what that means;
- a statement about the value of people or of justice in the world;
- an understanding of the place of Scripture or tradition;
- the relevance of the work of the Holy Spirit today;
- the need to care for God's creation;
- the place of discipleship or worship or prayer for the people of God.

#### Community principles ideas:

- formal or informal;
- hierarchical or equal;
- open or closed;
- risky or safe;
- free or structured;
- traditional or innovative;
- changing or stable;
- qualitative or quantitative;
- proactive or reactive.

The third category is:

#### Internal guidelines

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### Prayer for the future

#### Clarifying vision

- 1 Vision is about destination
- 2 This includes changed lives
- 3 Visions are about ends not means
- 4 Vision is not the same as visionary
- 5 Visions are about what God might do
- 6 Vision goes with leadership

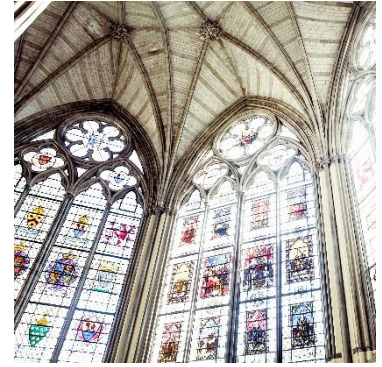
#### Ideas to help you get there

- External encourager
- Brainstorming
- 'I have a dream' input
- Reverse visioning
- Emigrate to Australia

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## The Emigrate to Australia exercise

Exercise 10

"I have left (name of town you are in). I now live in Australia. I have been there for four years and during this time have heard nothing about my former UK church (they must be rotten correspondents!).

But I have prayed to God with passion every day for these four years, asking him to glorify his name through (name of church) in specific ways provided the church remains true to its purpose and its stated values.

I now come back to the UK for a visit and return to (name of church). To my utter delight I find all my prayers have been answered! What I was praying for has all been realised!

This is what I SEE and HEAR when I return in four years' time. (Note: what you write below must be visible by eye or audible by ear when you return – evidence that would stand up in a court of law, say.)"

Carry on over the page if you need more space



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### Plan for the future

Once you have your vision you need a plan.

#### The plan must be true to your purpose

#### The plan might list annual 'aims'

#### The plan should list measurable 'steps' for each aim

#### There has to be an understanding of the cost of change

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### Exercises (1 of 2)

#### Exercise 1

What stories do you enjoy? These could be fiction or real life. They could be books, films, TV soaps.

What is it about stories that make them so powerful? What about storylines that cover many years and several generations rather than just one incident?

What are the elements of a good story? Why did Jesus use the medium of stories to teach the crowds?

How do each of the four Gospels begin? They start in completely different ways but each is on a massive scale.

So how are the Gospel writers setting the story of Jesus in its context? What is the context for your church's story?

#### Exercise 2

Tell your church's story over the past 25 or more years. You might do this with a time-line on long sheets of plain wallpaper on a row of tables marked out in years.

Fill in the key events in the life of the church and of the community at about the correct year.

You might use different colours for different types of event (people, happenings, local community issues, national events such as Covid, shifting cultures, etc.).

What do you learn from undertaking this exercise?

#### Exercise 3

What have been some of the biggest changes you have had to face in life?

Examples might include leaving school, forming a new relationship, a change of job or church, childbirth, empty nesting, the death of someone close, moving abroad.

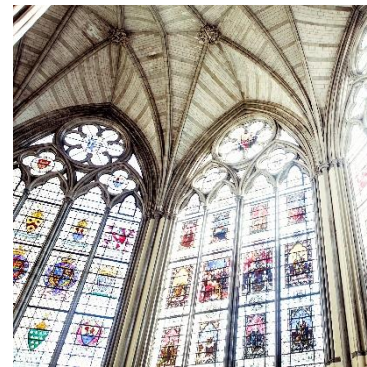
How well did you cope and what or who helped you through the process?

#### Exercise 4

This will be a visible reminder that disciples are learners – we can never take the L plates off. Learners develop – they do not stand still.

#### Exercise 5

If your church has a purpose statement (you may call it a 'mission statement', a 'strap-line' or, although this is something different, a 'vision statement'), make a simple drawing or diagram to show its meaning without using any written words.



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### Exercises (2 of 2)

#### Exercise 6

Test your church's purpose statement on each of the following, giving each a score out of 5.

- 1 **Reality** Score .....
- 2 **Challenge** Score .....
- 3 **Ownership** Score .....
- 4 **Validity** Score .....
- 5 **Meaning** Score .....
- 6 **Application** Score .....

Which ones are weak and what action do you need to take?

#### Exercise 7

Groups are given either non-negotiables or church culture and asked to list what is and what might be for your church. See handout No. 2/7.

#### Exercise 8

Read Training Notes TN25, *The radical values that Jesus taught*.

- 1 How closely do these Kingdom principles match your church?
- 2 Which one might you work on to seek to match it to the biblical pattern, and how?

#### Exercise 9

Read Mark 8:31-34. For the future we need to have the concerns of God, not just human concerns. What are the dangers of focusing on human concerns? How can we together overcome falling into this danger?

#### Exercise 10

This has its own handout.

#### Exercise 11

What will be the likely blockers to the changes you will need to achieve this vision and what can you do to minimise the dangers?