

I believe in vision statements. In the last church I served, we had three vision statements in the years I was there. The first was "Celebrating God's Grace, Serving in His Spirit and Becoming Christ's Disciples." The last one, and the one still being used, is "Making Disciples of Jesus Christ Who Will Love God, Love Others and Serve the World."

They are both very nice and certainly fit the idea of church. But they don't make that much difference when it comes to changing the world. They only work when we add concrete pieces that extend from them — a more concrete extension of the vision people can connect with, partner with and celebrate.

The following are less ideas and more examples each church and pastor can set as their own concrete goals based on their theology of church growth and the specific ministry setting:

- We will gain 100 new members this year, and here is how we will do it.
- Our goal in this next year is for 50 people to profess their faith in Christ.
- We intend to have 150 people become a part of short-term small groups in this format.
- This year we will begin a new faith community, a new worship service.
- We hope to increase our market share or mission reach by this percentage by year . . .
- We are going to start this new mission and outreach, and this is how many we want to be directly involved.
- We are going to create this partnership with a school, with the city, with another church . . .
- We are creating a new mission in Africa, Mexico, Peru . . .
- Plan to build a building, renovate spaces, and communicate the ministries and people that will connect with the building or renovation.

- Build from the vision concrete activities or programs, shifts that are real, that can be measured and celebrated, and involve the church family in being and doing church — concrete pieces of what is often a nice vision but not always an effective mission statement.

Put it on the calendar, plan the meetings, create a timeline, focus a communication strategy, prepare a sermon series, invite a season of prayer, tie into small groups and use social media. Use whatever tools we can to ensure that what we are doing will be done, will have follow-through and will succeed.

Share the narrative as the church moves into and toward these goals. Communicate the steps as they happen. Celebrate what God is doing and has done. Keep the church family focused on these goals and how they are concrete pieces of the vision. Momentum is keeping people moving, focusing people on something bigger than they are and bigger than just having church; it is a key part of growing the life, numbers and mission of a church.