**The Kirkland Church of Christ**

**“Dreaming the dream, seeing the Vision.”**

**VISION CASTING**

**By Brent Hunter, evangelist**

**Revised October 2013**

The shepherds of the Kirkland congregation request feedback from every member as it seeks to articulate and clarify the congregation’s **VISION** and plans for the future. Any ideas/concepts first and foremost of course, must be based upon the scriptures. “Except the Lord builds the house, they that build it do so in vain” (Ps 127.1).

However, every congregation has its own unique strengths and opportunities and its focus as an autonomous congregation should be a reflection of that uniqueness. The church at Kirkland already has its own “culture” that distinguishes it from other local churches. That “culture” from this point forward will be determined as God directs its leadership, its members, and the vision and goals for the future that are put into place. Please pray for God to give you, your shepherds, and all of the spiritual family here wisdom as we prayerfully “vision cast” into the future. Remember, all one has to do to receive wisdom, is to **ask God** (See James 1:5). Make sure you do so**! “Commit thy works unto Jehovah and thy purposes will be established” (Prov 16:3).**

The success of any local work is based upon many factors, but at least **five things** come to mind, after one is fully committed to Christ and to God’s word as the basis of your actions:

#1. Proper **Vision** or Goals “Without vision the people perish” (Prov 29:18).

#2. **Involvement** of its members in accomplishing the vision. “Be ye not just hearers of the word but *doers*” (James 1:22). By establishing goals and objectives which will bring the VISION into reality our actions can be focused and the congregation unified.

a. *Every member* must “Catch the Vision” and take ownership of it by having a meaningful role in helping to bring it about!

b. Be thinking about the unique role *you* can play in participating in and making the vision a reality.

c. It should be a reflection of your own *personal* Spiritual Vision and Goals for the future.

**Helpful tools**:

1). Use the 70 question “Discipleship questionnaire” to guide you as a way to ascertain your strengths. .

2). Give positive feedback to your fellow family members as to ways you see them fulfilling special roles in the kingdom.

#3**. Perseverance or Endurance** to not give up and continue moving forward in spite of the obstacles that will arise! “Run the race that is set before us with *perseverance*” (Heb 12:1).

#4. **Good Solid Leadership.** *No church body will ever rise above its leadership!* Which is why we are told to “appreciate those who diligently labor among you, to “esteem them very highly in love because of their work” (I Thess 5:12-13) and to “submit to them that have the rule over you” (Heb 13:17).

**#5. Unity.** It is critical that we maintain unity throughout the entire process of our working together (Eph 4:3). The devil’s first line of attack is always to divert our attention against fighting him, by getting us to “bite and devour one another” (Gal 5:15). We must be constantly on guard not to allow disharmony in our spiritual family.

THE SHEPHERDS NEED YOUR **FEEDBACK** AND HELP!

What we are asking the body of Christ here to provide feedback in three areas:

#1. What do you think should be included in a **future vision statement**? Would you like to use parts or all of the samples provided?

#2. Do you think that a **congregational motto** would be useful and good for Kirkland? What ideas do you have?

#3. Please assist the eldership with specific ideas that will help Kirkland in setting up **short-term and long-term goals** which will assist us in carrying out the vision! Please let the elders know the areas in which you are interested in assisting.

Let’s begin with a **FUTURE CONGREGATIONAL VISION STATEMENT**.

Below is a sample of two vision statements (what we see Kirkland *becoming*) that sister congregations have used and one I have recently came up with after studying the work of the church.

 **Our Congregation’s Vision:**

 **“That we become a close, loving congregation in which every member is growing spiritually; being fully committed to the first and greatest commandment, to the truth and spirit of New Testament Christianity, and to maturing in Christ Jesus; being active in serving and teaching others as we all seek to bring the lost to Christ; so that all is done to the glory of God Almighty.”**

**Our Congregational Vision:**

**“That we all work together to glorify God by proclaiming the gospel to the lost, caring for one another, and training individuals to maturity, so that His kingdom will fill the earth.”**

**My Congregational Vision:**

 **“That we love and Magnify God, by Loving and Serving Each other, and by Edifying and Equipping Ourselves for Discipleship and Evangelism, through Worship and Bible study, together.” (See the back page for a layout with the scriptures behind these elements included).**

I put this together based upon what the scriptures teach should be the broad work of *every faithful local church*. Interestingly, it has *seven parts* to it, which in the Bible connotes completeness. This is **GOD’S PURPOSE** which has already been decreed and should be helpful to us as we plan for the future, regardless of how the final version of our vision statement is worded.

Now let’s look at the concept of a **CONGREGATIONAL MOTTO:**

The “motto” is different from a vision statement in that it simply selects a few key words or phrases that the congregation chooses to associate with its name as a part of its *unique identity*. We already have planned to use our annual congregational picture prominently displayed instead of the church building as a part of the identity. It will be exciting to view each picture and to chronicle the changes and the Lord’s increase from year to year!

Usually the vision statement remains the same as something we are *always striving for* while the motto may change from time to time based upon a current *focus.* I have been giving sample mottos at the beginning of most of my lessons to give the congregation how it works and the wide range of possibilities available to us.

**CONGREGATIONAL MOTTOS:**

**The Oldham Woods church of Christ. “Growing up together in Him” (Eph 4:15)**

***Fervent Love, Heartfelt Worship, Love of Truth.***On occasion we would substitute the words: ***Independent, Undenominational, Christ-centered***. This is on the congregation’s web-site, power point, invitation cards, post cards, etc. I think an important part of our reaching out to others is to stress Christ first, and the fact that we are not part of a “Church of Christ” denomination. Sadly, this is what many outsiders think at first. It is very helpful to explain early on that we are *independent, and undenominational*; and something you should investigate and consider.

Other congregations have used: **“Seeking to Know Him…Seeking to Make Him known.”** or a favorite of mine, **“Where Families Build Eternal Homes.” Other possibilities are: “Inviting to Christ, Equipping for Service, Empowering for Greatness,” “Shining God’s light in darkness, ”** and “**Bringing to Christ those who don’t know Him and strengthening the faith of those that do!”** Give some thought as to what might be useful at Kirkland. In short, what sort of motto rings true with you?

And finally, the third area, **SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM PLANNING**. Where do you see us in the future? What plans or programs do you suggest or ideas do you have that we could implement in stages that would help the congregation carry out the vision? How do you see *your role* in all of this?

**NOW IT IS YOUR TURN TO PROVIDE YOUR INPUT:**

**#1: The KIRKLAND congregational Vision for the Future:**

After prayer and forethought I believe the following Biblical elements should be included in our congregational vision statement: (Use back of sheet if you need more room). Look over the samples above and let us know what you like or don’t like and what you think should be included. (We are **not** asking for a complete vision statement here just asking for input as to what elements you feel are most important.)

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 **#2. The KIRKLAND Congregational Motto.**

Of the samples provided, which do you like the most? Do you have any ideas or suggestions of your own? Please provide your thoughts below:

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**#3. The KIRKLAND Web-site.**

It would be helpful to consider having a web-site that reflects our *mission* instead of just our name. At Johnson Avenue we selected: “Where God’s Family Builds Eternal Homes” and in addition to using our name, we added [www.buildeternalhomes.com](http://www.buildeternalhomes.com) as an additional way to market the site. Some ideas of what other congregations have used include : **knowmyJesus.com, shininglightindarkness.com, wearesimplyChristians.com**, etc. What suggestions do you have for us to consider as we revamp our web-site? Ideally we could incorporate our motto into our web-site. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**#4. The KIRKLAND Congregational Ten-Year Plan**

Remember: **“Dream no small dreams, for they have not the courage to stir men’s souls.”**  Have faith as you “vision cast.” and plan for the future. “Things that are impossible with men are possible with God” (Matt 19:26). “All things are possible to him that believes” (Mk 9:23).

 It will help *your* thinking if you are provided with some concrete milestones and time markers as you try to “see” the future. Think this through carefully and when you are ready fill in the blanks: ***“I see the Kirkland Church as being at the following points in its development” . .*** . Think in terms of growth *spiritually* and *numerically,* and especially how you see the congregation reaching certain mile stones. Specifically, what improvements or enhancements to our work do you see as we look to the future? How might we work on areas that need improvement while at the same time having the courage to “go where we have not gone before?”

In one year: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

In three years: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_In five years: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

In ten years: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

This will be very helpful in making sure the ***VISION*** is far reaching. It will also help the congregation as it formulates goals/objectives for the future. Ideally, there will be annual reassessments as the leadership will plan a special time to pray and brainstorm and reevaluate so that Kirkland is always be looking out at least ten years into the future.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Please return one of these signed to the shepherds, even if you don’t feel you have much to say. Every member is important and the elders want to have input from every member! There will be a box in the foyer of the building for each baptized believer to return these vision casting forms. No unsigned forms please.**

We do not want this important process rushed. The forms should be completed and returned by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. This will give the shepherds time to go over the results and make sure **every member** is heard from before the full planning sessions begin after the first of year. It is expected that the initial results will be shared with the congregation in late January.

**On a Personal Note. “AS I SEE THINGS…”**

I look forward to hearing what the Lord has in store for our church family in the future. There are some “Sardis congregations” who live in the past and glory in what was done in the past. That is not the perspective of the leadership at Kirkland. In fact, we all believe the **best is yet to come**! Then there are “Ephesus congregations” who don’t really care about saving the lost except in an academic form of commitment. May our candlestick never be so threatened!

However, there is an image in the New Testament of a united congregation where each member seeks to love each other, tries to improve his or her moral life and example, and seeks to protect and aid each babe in Christ, and, over all this, is deeply concerned about doing something to seek and save lost souls. I see a congregation with a boiling desire for souls. I see a great many of our members who are constantly growing in their skills in reaching and teaching the lost. I see a congregation where one member sees another member teaching and says “I can do that too!” I see souls being converted to Jesus Christ and babes in Christ being strengthened as we all work together! Finally, I see Kirland as a congregation that will fully carry out the three metaphors that we see God using to describe His church throughout the Bible. Consider the following:

First of all, I see us as a living and active ***body of Christ;*** where “every joint” fulfills its part as each member uses their God given talents to the fullest. I see every member committed to honoring each other and to loving God with all of their heart, soul, mind, and strength.

Secondly, I see us as a humble, thankful, close, **spiritual family**; dedicated to loving and building each other up; seeking peace and unity through the word of God as we seek God’s will daily. I see us as committed to strengthening our relationships—especially those in our marriages and families.

Thirdly, I see us as **God’s army;** committed to “reproving the evil works of darkness” as we let Christ’s light shine through us and seek to save the lost and share the gospel. I see us as Christian *prayer warriors* devoted to overcoming Satan and attaining spiritual victories to the glory of God Almighty!

It is easy to focus on one of these and neglect the other two. For example, churches today often sing about being Christian soldiers but do not make this important metaphor a part of who they are on a daily basis. My prayer is that Kirkland will be a **balanced church** as we look to the future and truly **step into greatness**! I trust our current Sunday morning series on achieving spiritual greatness will help to truly plant our feet on higher ground. Please keep these things in mind as you “vision cast!”

To further enhance this process, I plan to do a lot of preaching soon on Sunday evenings from the book of Nehemiah with a series entitled: **“Building Today for a Better Tomorrow”** Please listen to these lessons with an eye toward you being challenged to “vision cast” with clarity, purpose, and great faith! If you miss any of these lessons from Nehemiah, please down load them off the internet or get a CD of the lesson. Each is important and each lesson builds on the next!

Feel free to email me or the shepherds if you have any questions/feedback. Beloved, we are off to a great start with many answered prayers in the affirmative, new members have come our way, new growth and enthusiasm is evident all around us. I feel the Lord’s hand upon us and working mightily in our midst.

My wife and I want to thank each of you for your support and for every kindness! Your support has been encouraging. I am at your service!

May God bless you richly.

Your brother and evangelist. Onward and Upward!

Brent Hunter

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**Our MISSON at the KIRKLAND church is:**

**TO LOVE AND MAGNIFY GOD**

Matt 22: 37-38, Ps 34:3, Phil 1:20, Eph 1:6

by

**LOVING AND SERVING EACH OTHER**

I Peter 1:22, Gal 5:13, I Cor 12:25-26, I Tim 5:4, 16

and by

**EDIFYING AND EQUIPPING OURSELVES**

I Cor 14:26, Eph 4:11-12

for

**DISCIPLESHIP**

(Matt 28:19-20)

and

**EVANGELISM**

(Mk 16:15-16)

through

**WORSHIP AND BIBLE STUDY**

(Jn 4:23, Acts 20:7, II Tim 2:15, Acts 20:20)

**Together**

(Eph 4:1-3)