

Vision Sunday

To Christ Central Presbyterian Church

The story of Christ Central is a good one. I'm certainly thankful. For the last 10 years, God has been doing His work to be growing followers of Jesus. We've grown in number and we've seen lives transformed. But when I reflect on Jesus' great commission, "Therefore go and make disciples..." (Matthew 28:18-20), I have a keen awareness that our story is still very much unfinished. What will it mean for us to push ahead and be about God's great endeavour to see more and more of the lost won to Jesus and then walking daily as His disciples?

As a starting point I believe we need clarity around what is our mission field and what is our great vision for that mission field, and then take some key strategic steps. Our mission statement has been 'growing followers of Jesus', but for the next 10 years I believe we should have an additional vision and prayer that's more specific and bolder too.

The harvest field for people to be won to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is all the world – every culture, nation and people group. And at Christ Central we want to send and support workers into that global harvest field, but firstly we want to be sold-out to Jesus and his mission in the place where God has us now.

Our direct mission field is what we're calling the 'north edge' of Brisbane. Over these past few years we've been using the phrase 'Because of Jesus We're Free to Serve the Northside of Brisbane', but we believe greater focus is helpful. By referring to the 'north edge' we mean the vast and growing region in this more northerly part of Brisbane which is taken up mostly by Moreton Bay Regional Council. It's the region that stretches from the Hills District (incl. Arana Hill/ Eatons Hill) in the south to the burgeoning suburbs of Northlakes and Mango Hill to the north. It's the region rimmed by rural living to the west, and the Bruce Highway to the east. Moreton Bay Regional Council predicts that by 2021 there will be about 200 000 people living in this area. In this region there will be those relatively few who are saved and know peace with God in Jesus, but so many need to know the hope and life that only Jesus can bring. We do not offer this message of hope from a position of pride – we're sinners saved by grace. We're like beggars who can gratefully tell other beggars where the bread is to be found. But we cannot ignore that on our doorstep are our friends, and family, our neighbours, our schoolmates and workmates, the people we mingle with, shop with, and enjoy this beautiful northern edge of Brisbane with.

We are currently a church that has about 200 people meeting on a Sunday, and lives have been transformed over our 10 year journey. But a mission is still before us. God is in the business of using his people, weak and fragile as we are, to accomplish his work to see his kingdom grow.

If we were to become a church of 1000 people that would still be only 0.5% of people in this north edge of Brisbane. But we want to be a church that's used by God to see many more saved and transformed by the grace of God.

Over these past couple of months, the elders and staff have had a growing conviction that as we focus on the mission of 'getting', 'growing' and 'keeping' disciples of Jesus, we should pray for the outcome that only God can achieve. This is the prayer we would like to offer so that it would be on all of our hearts -

Our Prayer - to see a flood of lifelong disciples across the north edge of Brisbane and beyond.

If this is going to be our prayer, then we also have to act. We will need to take steps so that we might be used by God to his glory. As an important step, I believe we also need clarity around what it actually looks like to be making, growing and keeping disciples. We have just begun introducing the concept of the 5 M's. There is nothing particularly new here. These have always been our passions. But it's about bringing some definition to the things we are passionate about.

The 5 M's are:

Magnification. Loving Jesus and having all our affections captured for Him - Worshipping

Mission. Communicating the gospel of Jesus - Witnessing

Membership. Being part of a connected, caring community - Loving

Maturity. Deep in word and prayer - Learning

Ministry. Joyfully serving with our time, gifts and money - Serving

Presenting these 5 M's is not about new slogans. This is not about giving new labels and then continuing with what we've always done. This is about giving new shape to our church – at the level of staffing, budget, but also with each of our own involvement. I recognise that in the past we've too easily had a 'menu approach' to church life where we offer events and rosters and then we invite people to take part. But as a result, we don't provide training, support and help you to own a ministry area where you can develop it with others. So rather than a 'menu approach', the 5 M's represent a 'team approach' where we invite you to be part of teams so that Christ Central might be more effective, under God, in making disciples of Jesus.

With the M's, it's about providing the best leadership we can. It will be God who brings the growth in each of these areas, but we also want a specific staff member focussed on the leadership of each of these areas. 2018 will be a year of transition, and to start things off, we're looking to make this shift in our current staff team:

- **James Jensen** will work in the area of *Magnification*, while also continuing as our youth pastor, all while he aims to finish QTC by mid 2018! To provide some assistance to James, we are looking to appoint **Nat Carse** as a part time youth pastor which will be an additional ministry for Nat as he continues with KrossWerdz.
- Our QTC student, **Chris Gargan** is going to become more focussed in the area of *Membership*, particularly with our Connect Team which is about newcomers welcoming, follow-up and integration into church life.
- **Matt Fong** will take on *Maturity* which involves our teaching program and growth groups.
- For myself, **Garnet**, I will work on *Ministry*, and also take a support role in the areas of Maturity and Membership.
- In all of this, it is critical that we pay more attention to *Mission*. Next year we're looking to take on an additional QTC student, **Mike Wziontek** who will be coming up from NSW. Mike has a passion for *Mission* and we're really looking forward to having Mike and his wife Sarah join us.
- We have so many people who serve in various behind-the-scenes ways. One such person is **Matthew Allan** who works one day a week in the area of design and office admin. To help support the various focus areas of the 5 M areas, our desire is to move Matthew to a 2 day a week position for 2018.

This 5 M's model is not our invention. Perhaps the biggest evangelical church in Australia who is taking this approach is EV Church on the Central Coast of NSW, www.evchurch.info. More locally, there is Southside Presbyterian Church that meets in Eight Miles Plains. www.southsidepc.org. Like us, these are churches that want to be Christ-Centred bible teaching churches and believe that to be more effective in making disciples we need some level of 'granularity' around what a disciple looks like and form teams to work hard in those areas.

In 2018 our intention is to start restructuring our church around these 5 passions, and in February we will have specific preaching/growth group series on the 5 M's which we hope will give you more detail about the teams and how you can be part of them. It will be a time of helping you to identify how you can use your gifts in the great disciple making cause. What we are proposing is deep change for our church and we want you to be part of it. We want to move away from you being involved in ministry by way of a roster and call-outs for help with a program of events. This is about you being a member of teams where there's vision, training and support which helps to set the agenda for growing followers of Jesus in that focus area.

As a first step, on 26 November we plan on having a congregational meeting where we will present a budget for 2018 and put forward the new staff appointments for the church's consideration.

Additional Steps

As well as the deep change we're proposing so that we might all push ahead together to be more effective in getting, making disciples of Jesus, there is also a range of tactical decisions the leadership of the church believes we need to take:

- 1.** Continue to work towards identifying a suitable site for a new auditorium between the two Pine Rivers (the southern end of our mission field) – to give us the space to double our current size.
- 2.** In the meantime continue to lease/use property that will allow for an expanded staff team and mid-week ministries. Our current lease at 32/302 Southpine Road is soon to expire. We are currently looking to see if there are any suitable new venues out there.
- 3.** Look to move Christ Central Youth to Bray Park High to increase mission connection in a local high school.
- 4.** Develop a second congregation based at Eatons Hill Community Hall in 2018.
- 5.** Work with PCQ to allow us to start a new work north of us, post 2018.

Thanks for being part of our Vision Sunday

As we look to make these changes, undoubtedly it will be challenging for all of us. It will require patience, grace and prayer. But as we look to the future, it is about being clear that as a church we're called to that great commission, to make disciples of Jesus. Isn't it easy to get comfortable? For those who were part of our church in the initial days when it all began, we can probably admit that so much hard work was done in those early years and now it's easier to just 'cruise'. But as a church, we're not a cruise-boat but a life-raft where we want as many people as possible on the north edge of Brisbane - to be saved and then are growing with us as followers of Jesus.

By all means, ask any questions you may have or make comments. It is always God who brings the growth, and yet He uses the means of his people - our boldness, our mission heart, our generosity, our labour in the Lord, to see his kingdom grow. As we look to next year and the next 10 years ahead, let's be that church at Christ Central.

Yours in Christ



Garnet Swann
Lead Pastor
Christ Central Presbyterian Church

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