

Pastors Report AGM 2010

Wow! Another twelve months seem to have vanished with the snap of our fingers and what a twelve months it's been. I am very grateful and thankful to all who lead, serve and minister within the life of Devonport Baptist Church. I'm not going to try and make a list of what has happened or been done this year, as I know that much of this will be stated in the reports of others.

It has been a spiritually challenging year for myself and the Pastoral Leadership Team, as we've discerned, prayed and sought, what it is that God is calling us toward as His church within Devonport and beyond. According to God's word, "*by his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life.*" and so, "*the more you grow like this, the more productive and useful you will be in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ*". (1 Peter 1:3 & 8)

I believe that as God's church we are expected to grow and that God will give us what it is we need for this growth to occur, both as individuals and corporately. Growth is a two fold process, of spiritual development and numerical increase, for the kingdom of God. I don't believe that growing through transfer from other churches is what God had in mind either. Nor do I believe that growth is intended by biological means. The only truly viable means of church growth is conversion growth. As God's church our one call in life is to do as our Lord asks. *Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given complete authority in heaven and on earth. 19 Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. 20 Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.* (Matt. 28:18-20)

We are called to, "*love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.*" *31 The second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'* *No other commandment is greater than these.*" (Mark 12:30-31)

Evangelistic behaviour is the primary task of the church, not just Sunday worship services, yet we spend up to 60% of our resources and effort on being prepared for a one and a half hour portion of our week. God's word tells us, *14 Dear brothers and sisters, what's the use of saying you have faith if you don't prove it by your actions? That kind of faith can't save anyone.* (James 2:14) Like Jesus' commission to all disciples, James' statement clearly says that our faith is meant to be active, so that people are saved. Whether we are active in a ministry, our work, in retirement, or our daily lives, our actions are meant to bring about salvation, lives saved from sin.

"If lay people cannot find any spiritual meaning to their work, they are condemned to living a certain dual life; not connecting what they do on a Sunday with what they do the rest of the week."

William Diehl

In our foyer we have this statement, "***We are a family following God's way to life, with purpose, prayer and passion***". And we aim to.....

Discover Jesus

Become Like Jesus

Communicate Jesus' Love

If we are truly going to do and be the church God calls us to be, we must be one that lives in the present/future, while valuing our past. We can not live in the past/present, for the past is the past, only our present and future can be lived to its fullest potential under God's direction.

Below I have tried to put into words the vision I believe God has given me for Devonport Baptist Church and the shifts that I believe God wants us to take as we move forward.

1. From a **'one size fits all' congregation to multiple congregations that are appropriate for their target demographic.**
2. From **prayer being an extra activity in the life of church, to being central and vital, in the life of church.**
3. From a church with **'just a few' small groups to having so many small groups, that we need a full time small group coordinator.**
4. From member's meetings as **'business meetings' to quarterly afternoons of prayer, worship, testimony and discernment about ministry & mission**
5. From **membership to partnership**
6. From **lowest common denominator facilities, practices and hospitality to culturally and demographically appropriate facilities, practices and hospitality**
7. From a church that lives in the **past/present** to a church that lives in the **present/future.**
8. From a **small impact upon our local community to becoming an integral part of our local community and impacting our city in the name of Jesus Christ.**

My prayer is that together with God as our guide and strength we will continue to advance the kingdom of God in Devonport and beyond, bringing many to know Jesus as Lord and Saviour.

Pastor Scott

Attachment: Vision and Aims - 2009

Vision Statements define our purpose, but they do so in terms of our core values rather than bottom line measures (values are guiding beliefs about how things should be done.) The vision communicates both the purpose and values of who we are as DBC within the community of Devonport and beyond. For all who call DBC their spiritual home, it gives direction about how God is leading us to minister and inspires all to give their best. Knowing and sharing our vision with others, helps to shape peoples understanding of why they could worship and minister with us as God's church.

I believe this statement by Leith Anderson epitomises vision, he says, "Christians of vision spend little time bemoaning the rough realities of our world and asking "why?" Instead, they look at the way things could be if the church were vital in prayer, devout in worship, informed in Scripture, aggressive in evangelism, close in fellowship and zealous in missions and they ask, "Why not!?"

So what does God say about vision?

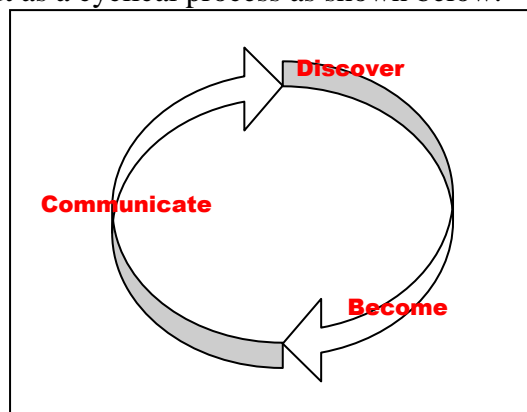
When people do not accept divine guidance, they run wild. But whoever obeys the law is happy. Prov. 29:18

We as God's church need to be guided by the one who build's the church. God's revelation through Jesus was that He will build and sustain His church and that hell (satan) will not overcome it. Matt. 16:8 *Now I say to you that you are Peter,* and upon this rock (Jesus) I will build my church, and all the powers of hell* will not conquer it.*

Even though Jesus was proclaiming Peter, "*the rock*", that he would be the key leader in the Jerusalem church, it's upon Jesus, as our rock and fortress, that the church is built. (1Peter 2:6-8, 1Cor.10:4)

"*Divine guidance*", is also translated as, vision or revelation. To be guided divinely, to understand God's revelation and to know His vision as His church is vital. As individuals and as a body of believers we must seek and follow God's direction or we'll merely be doing what we want out of disobedience and selfishness.

As we consider God's vision for our church, I believe our aims should not be viewed in a lineal way, but as a cyclical process as shown below.



If we look at our aims from a lineal perspective, (as below) there is a danger of believing that once we've discovered we will become and once we've become we'll communicate and that once we've communicated we're finished. There is a sense of obvious start and finish.

I don't believe that God works in such isolated and confined ways. God knows intimately each and every one of his creations and accordingly knows that everyone is different. 1Cor. 12:6 *There are different ways God works in our lives, but it is the same God who does the work through all of us.*

By seeing God's vision for our church in a cyclical way, always developing and growing as God directs, we ensure that DBC will be an effective, fruit producing, disciple making, church.

What does it mean to **Discover** Jesus? For all Christians, discovering Jesus begins as we, through the Holy Spirit's enabling power, realise our separated, sinful state, that God's judgement of sin is eternal punishment and that we need to confess our sin through faith and trust in Jesus as our Saviour and Lord.

Titus 3:5 *He saved us, not because of the good things we did, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins and gave us a new life through the Holy Spirit.* 6 He generously poured out the Spirit upon us because of what Jesus Christ our Savior did. 7 He declared us not guilty because of his great kindness. And now we know that we will inherit eternal life.* (NLT)

For many this may have happened many years ago and for some not long ago. No matter when you discovered freedom from sin in Jesus Christ, the process of discovering more and more about God continues all our lives as we run the race set before us.

2Peter 1:2 *May God bless you with his special favor and wonderful peace as you come to know Jesus, our God and Lord,* better and better. 3 As we know Jesus better, his divine power gives us everything we need for living a godly life. He has called us to receive his own glory and goodness!*

By then continuing to grow and develop as Christian people our discovery of Jesus as our saviour becomes more meaningful and powerful.

Romans 1: 16 *For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes—Jews first and also Gentiles. 17 This Good News tells us how God makes us right in his sight. This is accomplished from start to finish by faith. As the Scriptures say, "It is through faith that a righteous person has life."*

As we then **Discover** Jesus, it's only natural that we should **Become** more like Christ.

Romans 5:10 *For since we were restored to friendship with God by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be delivered from eternal punishment by his life. 11 So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God—all because of what our Lord Jesus Christ has done for us in making us friends of God.*

Romans 6: 1 *Well then, should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more kindness and forgiveness? 2 Of course not! Since we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it? 3 Or have you forgotten that when we became Christians and were baptized to become one with Christ Jesus, we died with him? 4 For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.*

5 Since we have been united with him in his death, we will also be raised as he was. 6 Our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in

our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin. 7 For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin. 8 And since we died with Christ, we know we will also share his new life. 9 We are sure of this because Christ rose from the dead, and he will never die again. Death no longer has any power over him. 10 He died once to defeat sin, and now he lives for the glory of God. 11 So you should consider yourselves dead to sin and able to live for the glory of God through Christ Jesus.

As we become more like Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit our strength in Christ will grow, our faith will deepen and our knowledge of God will expand. Yet all of this is for God's glory and the growth of His kingdom through His Church. Jesus' teaching in Matthew 5-7 expounds the desires of Jesus for those who say they are his followers. Jesus begins with a challenge to be effective, Matt. 5:13-16 and finishes with a challenge to listen to his teaching, Matt. 7:24-27.

If we are truly to become Christ like, we must be readers of God's holy word and then do as it instructs.

Psalm 32: *8 The Lord says, "I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you. 9 Do not be like a senseless horse or mule that needs a bit and bridle to keep it under control."*

2 Corinthians 3:*18 And all of us have had that veil removed so that we can be mirrors that brightly reflect* the glory of the Lord. And as the Spirit of the Lord works within us, we become more and more like him and reflect his glory even more.*

To be like Christ is our goal. We want to think his thoughts, show his attitudes, live as he would live here on earth today. It is an awesome goal, and since we are not perfect, that goal seems unattainable. The key is that we are not Christ, but can only hope to be like him. While we cannot achieve perfection, Christ himself does promise to give us the power for living effectively for him.

1John 2:*3 And how can we be sure that we belong to him? By obeying his commandments. 4 If someone says, "I belong to God," but doesn't obey God's commandments, that person is a liar and does not live in the truth. 5 But those who obey God's word really do love him. That is the way to know whether or not we live in him. 6 Those who say they live in God should live their lives as Christ did.*

In **Becoming** more like Christ, being His followers, His disciples, His church, we must obey Jesus' teaching. Jesus consistently taught and communicated God to the world so that people would know and understand God's character.

John 1:*18 No one has ever seen God. But his only Son, who is himself God,* is near to the Father's heart; he has told us about him.*

As God communicates to us, through creation, the holy bible and especially through His son Jesus Christ, so we also need to **Communicate** Jesus' love, as expressed through the cross.

Romans 10:*13 For "Anyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."* 14 But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them? 15 And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent? That is what the Scriptures mean when they say, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"**

Acts 1:*8 But when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, you will receive power and will tell people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*

There are many verse that express the need to communicate the truth of the gospel, yet for many of God's churches, communicating Jesus' love is the lowest priority or not done at all. I believe that as we step out in faith and obedience, trusting the power of God in our lives, too communicate Jesus' love will become more and more natural. You don't have to be an evangelist to communicate Jesus' love. You don't have to be

perfectly articulate, there's a multitude of ways that we as God's church can communicate to the community of Devonport that God loves them. The apostle Paul put's it like this in **Acts 20:26** *Let me say plainly that I have been faithful. No one's damnation can be blamed on me,* 27 for I didn't shrink from declaring all that God wants for you.*

God has given us the responsibility and the privilege of telling others about him. We should share it with delight and enthusiasm because it is not only Good News, but the Greatest News. It's also Jesus' command to us as disciples, that we **go** and tell others, not that we wait until others come to us.

Matthew 28: *18 Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given complete authority in heaven and on earth. 19 Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. 20 Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.*

Discovering, Becoming and Communicating Jesus is a continuum until our Lord returns or we go home to our Lord. As we discover more about Jesus and God's redemptive work, we should naturally become more like Christ and therefore communicate with others our understanding of Jesus. As we continue to communicate with more and more people so we discover even more so, God's faithfulness and become more mature Christians and so the cycle continues.

I would ask that we pray and journey together as we discover, understand and implement God's vision for Devonport Baptist Church.

In His service

Pastor Scott