



The Princeton PathFinder

Kingdom Vision

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Princeton Christian Church

Expanding The Kingdom Of God In Our Lives And The World Around Us

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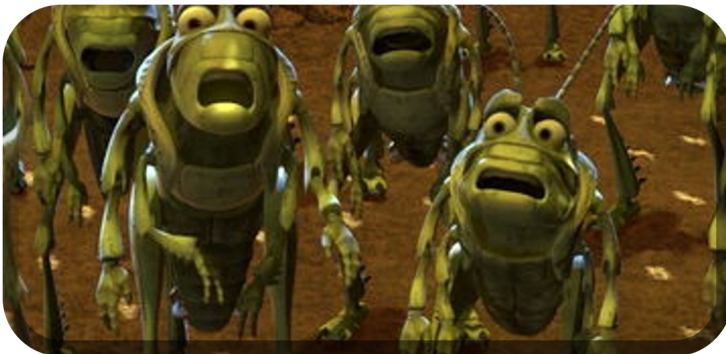
Where there is no vision,
the people perish

Proverbs 29:18a



Grasshopper Thinking

Do you remember as a child sitting in the grass, watching various bugs and creatures move about their world? There were ants, worms, and small green grasshoppers. If you watched closely, you would see the grasshopper jumping from spot to spot until it encountered an obstacle. Instead of taking a giant leap in faith, it turned the other direction to avoid the conquerable feat in front of it. Grasshoppers will not take a risk when it comes to the seemingly impossible. And sometimes, neither will the people of God.



In the book of Numbers, the Israelites finally came to the place of promise, a land full of milk and honey, as God had said. What they had not accounted for is that this land was already occupied by some of the greatest obstacles they had ever faced. Rather than taking possession of what God had provided for them in faith, the people became scared and unwilling to trust in God's continued provision for them. One of the spies sent to survey the land, Caleb, believed that God would provide a way even though there were obstacles.

Instead of siding with Caleb, the people chose to err on the side of inaction. They argued that the challenge of fighting those who already occupied the land was too great. There were the descendants of Anak, Negev, the Hittites, the Canaanites, the Amorites, and others in the land. The Israelites themselves determined they were ***"not able to go up against the people because they are too strong for us"*** (Num 13:31).

Like a grasshopper in the field facing something difficult in its path, the Israelites were unwilling to leap to the other side of the obstacle in faith.

Instead, they chose to turn around and go the opposite way.

This rationale – grasshopper thinking – is the failure to take the risk of faith to claim the promises of God. The Israelites believed the challenges in the physical realm were larger than those in the spiritual one. They thought the greater issue was not disobeying God but rather having to fight armies of giants. You might also feel like this when what is in front of you looks bigger than your future.

The consequences of this grasshopper thinking are huge. For Israel, it meant their perception was off when it came to what was true. Their fear overshadowed their ability to trust God in the midst of all that was in front of them. Instead of stepping into the promises God had for them, the Israelites were lost in the desert, wandering for years and unable to experience the goodness of the destiny God had prepared. Their future was distorted, and they were quickly losing out on the blessings that awaited them.

We are often prone to such grasshopper thinking! There is no doubt that we in God's church have many obstacles in front of us and as we hyper focus on the struggles before us; we are of the same mindset that the Israelites. We only see the seemingly physical impossibilities and neglect to remember what God has done for His church in the past, what He is currently doing and relying and trusting on Him fulfilling what He has promised He would do.

What is the solution when we see the obstacles we face as bigger than the God we serve? For the Israelites and for us, the answer is the same. When our thinking becomes small like grasshoppers, we need to repent and choose to obey in order to find our path back to the blessing and bounty that a life that trusts God and all His promises can bring. Is your focus today on the problems in front of you or on God who is with you? In faith, choose to think bigger with God's perspective instead of man's, and let the Lord's vision for your life unfold in incredible ways!

~Aaron Jones

Ant Wisdom

We can learn a lot from the little ant. I believe God gave us these small, mighty insects as an object lessons. Proverbs 30:25 tells us this: **The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer.**

Ants teach us what performance looks like.

To perform with efficiency there must be a PLAN (Vision).

At first glance at a anthill, and you just see a lot of activity. Ants running around everywhere.....but they have a plan. No doubt; that there are a lot of believers who are active, and church are being filled with programs and events.....but they have no plan; no greater objective towards a greater *Purpose*. Many have no vision for the future. We have little if any idea as to what our function is, and which way we are going. As a church we must have a vision, we must be as wise as ants. We must make all that we do count for the kingdom. Every organization, every committee, every class within the church should be geared towards reaching, and teaching people!

For us to perform with efficiency there must be PARTICIPATION

In the anthill you won't see one single ant sitting around doing nothing! Every ant has a job to do in the anthill and there is nobody reminding them of what there function is or pushing them to do it. Proverbs 6:6-9 says Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise. Without having any chief, officer, or ruler, she prepares her bread in summer and gathers her food in harvest. I believe God wants His church to perform like this. Often we find ourselves doing things half-way, throwing things together at the last moment...putting little effort if any into planning. We show up last minute unprepared, unknowing and sometimes even unaware we are even to be about our Fathers business. Ants on the other-hand work in harmony with one another. How they accomplish this harmony is because each one is fully aware of their responsibility and are busy doing their tasks and have no idle time to fight among themselves or point out what others are or are not doing.

Ants teach us about PARTNERSHIP and Sharing

A quote from an evolutionist:

"On their own, each ant's behavior is relatively useless, but when swarms of ants come together, the patterns optimize naturally and allow them to accomplish tasks that should be far beyond their reach. To the outside observer, their self-organizing efforts seem to be directed by some larger force or collective intelligence. There is a society that is truly more than the sum of its parts."

When things work together as God planned, even the sceptics take note! Scripture talks much about this.

Ants teach use a lot about solidarity. The colony is as true a picture of the early church as we have today. Ants all live together as a community. They live as a family and work together as a team to get the needs of the community taken care of. They share their food, their home, and even look after and take care of each others young. 1 Corinthians 3:9 tells us: **For we are God's fellow workers [His servants working together]; you are God's cultivated field [His garden, His vineyard], God's building.** (AMP)

Here is an illustration on sharing that I found quit interesting:

Once upon a time there were a pig and a cow living together on a farm. The cow was popular while the pig was not. This puzzled the pig. "People speak warmly of your gentle nature and your sorrowful eyes," the pig said to the cow. "They think you're generous because each day you give them milk and cream. But what about me? I'm going to give them everything I have. I'll give bacon and ham. I'll provide bristles for brushes. They'll even pickle my feet! Yet not one likes me. Why is that?" The cow replied, "Perhaps it is because I give while I'm still living."



Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! ⁷ It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, ⁸ yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest. ⁹ How long will you lie there, you sluggard? When will you get up from your sleep?
Proverbs 6:6-9

Ant Wisdom - Continued

Ants teach us about PREPAREDNESS

Ants don't know the meaning of procrastination! They don't wait until the weather turns cold to begin getting prepared. They gather while it is still warm and take it to their colony. Many of those who work tirelessly all day, go without to make for certain that everyone is taken care of **Proverbs 30:25**. Ants are a good example of good plain stewardship. We can learn a lot from these tiny creatures who are designed by God for a particular purpose. They look to the future each and every day. They prepare for what lies ahead.

We should all ask ourselves ... is there something God has told us or is leading us to do? Have we been putting off what our creator has designed us to do or in doing what we have been called to do? If so begin doing it now!

Ants teach us about PERSEVERANCE

Ants have an amazing ability to survive all kinds of weather. They adapt well no matter the circumstances, and are very resilient. Have you ever noticed how quickly they recover when the anthill is destroyed? They immediately start to repair or rebuild after the destruction is done. Ants aren't quitters. They persevere. Though they are small and seemingly insignificant, they pack a powerful punch because they don't give up and work together for the common good of the community.

In light of what we have all learned from these mighty little ants....how do we compare?

Do we have a plan?

Are we doing our best in carrying out what we are created to do?

Are you devoted to the work God has called us all to be participating in through the church?

Are we working for the future in mind?

~Aaron Jones

Wisdom from the ANTS:

1 - Ants do ALL they can.

Prov 6:8; 30:25; Eph 4:28

2 - Ants NEVER quit.

Prov 6:6; Eph 5:15; Phil 3:14

3 - Ants THINK winter all summer.

Prov 6:8; 30:25; Heb 9:27; 2Cor 5:10

4 - Ants START immediately.

Prov 6:6; Acts 16:33



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OUR VISION – THE CROWN OF HOLINESS

Proverbs 29:18 speaks of the importance of having a vision. It says it like this: “Where there is no vision, the people perish.” Without vision there is defeat or at the very least, weakness.

Marth Luther King, several decades ago, gave a speech in which he declared, “I have a dream.” His dream was more than an insignificant dream; He saw a vision of a better world. And that vision changed our nation.

Genuine visions will attract followers. The great conqueror Napoleon once said, “I found the crown of France rolling in the gutter and I picked it up with my sword.” The crown of holiness is rolling in the gutter and we need to pick it up with the sword of the Spirit.

To live the Christian life to its fullest we need vision. We need vision on how to live a Godly and a good life.



The only way the corporate Body of Christ will fulfill the mission Christ has given it is for individual Christians to have a vision for fulfilling that mission personally.

Two athletes, during the Olympics in 2019 won bronze medals at the winter games. As they were interviewed they stated that all their efforts in recent times had been driven by the vision of success at the Olympics.

We need a clear and understandable vision to live the Christian life as Paul writes about in 1 Corinthians 9:24-25 – “Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.”

That is the vision we as Christians must have for our individual lives and for the life of the church. Seeing that crown of holiness should be our vision – a vision worth living for today.

Our vision is to be a church family who will do whatever we can to prepare people to become totally sold out followers of Jesus Christ.

Vision is important. There is the sense of belonging, building up the Body of Christ as we make a difference in our corner of the world.

We have all seen and witnessed someone come to Christ. We see the joy and the excitement they are experiencing at that moment. They are infused with new hope and anticipation of living for Jesus. It is vital that that joy and excitement spreads throughout the congregation, welcoming a babe in Christ into the Body. Each new Christian causes our hope and anticipation of living for Jesus to be enhanced.

Paul says, in Philippians 1:6 – “Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” God can complete our vision.

Paul can pinpoint where his confidence lies. It began when he was physically struck down, blind and helpless on the road to Damascus. This is where he first encountered Jesus on a personal level. This is where his life took a major turnaround. The direction, or vision, was revisioned or, we could say he was remastered by the Lord Jesus Christ who became his Master at that event.

How was he revisioned? What happened on that road wasn't what Paul anticipated or what he wanted to hear. In fact, it was the total opposite of his purpose in being there in the first place. He was there to kill those who followed Jesus. Instead, Jesus killed Paul's desire to destroy Him. Paul was likely, at first very uncomfortable at what he was hearing. We, too, are uncomfortable when God speaks to us to guide us to His purpose, especially when our purpose is in the totally opposite direction.

We might ask the question, “If I am to have a vision regarding my spiritual life, how am I to attain it? The most important thing to remember in answer to that question is that how we get our vision is not as vital as who we get the vision from.

~Continued on page 5

OUR VISION – THE CROWN OF HOLINESS (CONTINUED)

Look at the vision received by the Prophet Isaiah. His vision came directly from God. It was a spiritual experience, which was easily recognized as being from God. Seraphim were present – creatures with 6 wings – calling to one another: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, the whole earth is filled with His glory.” While, in our limited image of a seraphim, might see cute little creatures, the word seraph in Hebrew means fire.

What is to follow is from God and Isaiah must follow closely what he is told. It was the same for Saul, now Paul.

We, today as Christians in the church of Jesus Christ, as a church body and as individuals, must establish a life vision that comes, not from our own desires, but from God. When this transaction between God and us takes place then we are enabled to get God's vision for our lives.

Hudson Taylor got a vision to be a missionary to China. God birthed in Hudson Taylor a vision that would change the history of the largest nation on earth. The moment came on a Lord's Day in June, 1865 on the Brighton Beach in England, which he describes like this

might labor with me.

Need I say that peace at once flowed into my burdened heart?

His own unbelief and God's calling were at war inside Hudson Taylor and it was when God won the battle that vision flowed. When the battle between humanity and God's call is won then we are able to see our way clear to birth God's vision in our lives. God birthed in Hudson Taylor a vision that would change the history of the largest nation on earth.



To walk in the vision we must commit to God's vision for us. Can you remember a time in your life when you heard God calling and you responded, “Here am I. Send me.?”

When we are called we have only to walk with what we have and God will supply whatever we need to carry out His vision and plan for our lives.

~Gary K Fair



On Sunday, June 25th, 1865, unable to bear the sight of a congregation of a thousand or more Christian people rejoicing in their own security, while millions were perishing for lack of knowledge, I wandered out on the sands alone, in great spiritual agony; and there the LORD conquered my unbelief, and I surrendered myself to GOD for this service. I told Him that all the responsibility as to issues and consequences must rest with Him; that as His servant, it was mine to obey and to follow Him — His, to direct, to care for, and to guide me and those who

CHURCH VISION: HOW TO FIND IT AND WHAT TO DO WITH IT

Would you like to have a vision for your church that brings meaning, momentum, fruit, and growth?

It's possible – and likely – for you to see the fruit that comes when your church is united behind a compelling vision.

You may wonder what vision is, how to get it, and what to do with it once you find it. You may question how to find a God-driven vision, how to get your church on board, and why it's worth all the effort.

It's worth figuring out your church vision because God has great plans for you.

Keep reading and I'll unpack the how, the what, and the why. You'll see how to be a leader with a vision. I'll tell you the story of finding and raising vision.

What exactly is a church vision?

Your vision is different than your mission. Your mission should be closely tied to the Great Commission: making disciples, baptizing, and teaching. Your vision is what the mission will look like when it is lived out in your church and your community. It is the desired change, or the end result. But it's more than the business world's "picture of a preferable future." Your vision is your faith dream for your church.

"When there is no vision,
the people perish."

-Ps. 29:18

Just to be clear, a church vision statement is not equal to your vision for your church. A vision statement is a memorable summary of the church's vision.

I believe that the leadership (elders and evangelists) gets the vision from God. Frankly, being the bearer of the vision is one of the most essential functions of leadership. It can't be done by a committee...

Here's how to explain it: "So, you as a leader and as a preacher must have God's vision for your church. The very first task of leadership is to set the vision for the organization. If you don't set the vision, you're not the leader. Whoever is establishing the vision in your church is the leader of that particular church. A church will never out-grow its vision and the vision of a church will never out-grow the vision of the leadership."

The vision for the church must come out of the leadership's heart, faith, and dream of what God wants to do through your church. It comes to life and is lived out in the community, but the source of the vision is the calling of God on the leadership to lead your church.

3. Why do we need a vision for our church?

More pragmatically, what does a vision do for a church? The vision encourages unity, creates energy, provides a purpose, fosters risk-taking, enhances leadership, promotes excellence, and sustains ministry.

And I'll add another reason why you need a vision for your church: vision creates confidence in the leadership (elders and preacher) and the congregation.

Leadership without vision feels the lack of direction and privately questions their ability to lead. And a lack of vision opens a leadership void that others will be happy to rush into, creating a cacophony of vision which ultimately leads to division and dissension.

A preacher leading the charge on a church-wide vision builds confidence and brings momentum, fruit, and growth.

~Continued on page 7

CHURCH VISION: HOW TO FIND IT AND WHAT TO DO WITH IT

4. What if I don't have a vision for my church in my heart?

You're not alone if you don't have a vision for your church. George Barna (Barna Research) found that only 2% of preachers could articulate a vision for their churches.

A couple of things are possible if you are one of the 98%, who doesn't have a clear vision to communicate:

Either you are not called to lead this movement. If that's the case, you should pray about stepping down as the primary leader and volunteering to join someone else's team.

Or you need to spend a season reading about vision, studying vision-casters in the Bible like Joshua, Noah, David, Solomon, Josiah, Hezekiah, Paul, and Peter.

And sit at the feet of God listening to him for his vision for your church.

Study movements of the Bible and you'll see that there is always only one vision carrier who gets alone with God and wrestles with him for a vision. Others will supplement or help refine the vision, but the leader must give birth to it so that he is fully committed to it.

5. How committed do I need to be to reaching my church's vision?

No one will be as committed to the vision as the leader who receives it.

- Would you be willing to give your life for this? That's a vision.
- Would you be willing to give your life savings? That's a vision.
- Would you be willing to say, "Though none go with me, still I will follow"?

---That's a vision---

If you don't care much about it, it will sit as a vision statement in a binder on a shelf, or it may be a slogan on a wall, but it won't make a difference in your church or your community. If you want people to bleed for the vision, you must be willing to hemorrhage for it.

6. What if my vision sounds like the visions other

churches have?

It's a good thing if your vision for your church is similar to other churches. Vision doesn't develop in a vacuum. Very few of us will create a vision out of nothing. We are better at adapting and adopting than at creating from scratch.

Remember, Ecclesiastes 1:9: "What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done; there is nothing new under the sun." We're on safer ground if our vision looks similar to that of other dynamic soul-winning churches.

7. How can I make a vision more compelling?

A vision should have a WOW and a HOW... The WOW compels people. It is bigger than us. We must rely on God to fulfill it. The HOW describes how we accomplish our vision.

We want to keep the vision simple: we want to reach as many people as possible to come to Jesus in our neighborhoods, our community and throughout the world. If possible, we would like to see every prospect, young and old, to have the privilege of leading someone else to Christ.

We express the vision this way: "Each One Reach One" is the **HOW**... "1" is the **WOW**... $1 \times 1 = 1$ new Christians... Extend the equations = 2, 4, 8, 16 etc. = 100s...

Ground your vision in a phrase that is compelling to you and it will become captivating for your people.

Think of it this way: *A credible idea makes people believe. An emotional idea makes people care. And people who believe and care with the proper vision make people act.* It's our responsibility to find the words that make the vision compelling...

~ Continued on page 8



CHURCH VISION: HOW TO FIND IT AND WHAT TO DO WITH IT

How to Spread a Vision for your Church

Have you ever tried to cast a vision for something, and no one joined in? Here are four ways to see your vision take root and spread.

1. Pray over everything.

You can't make your church grab hold of a new vision, but God can. So, pray. Daily... Constantly... Frequently... Fervently... pray about the fulfillment of our vision every day.

2. Introduce the vision in concentric circles.

How you introduce the vision has a big influence on its adoption. Start by "shopping" the vision to your members. Cast the vision tentatively.

- I'm thinking that God might want us to...
- Here are some of my reasons for thinking this...
- Here are some of the benefits if we pursue this....
- What part of this excites you?

They will tell you. They will help you refine the wording of your strategy. This "shopping" process will also let you know the objections you will need to overcome in order for the church to embrace your vision.

Visions are adopted in concentric circles. Start with your closest friends and most likely adopters. With them on board, shop the vision to your next most likely adopters. Mention that John, Peter, and James are already on board and excited.



Get their input. Refine the wording and presentation more. By the time you've presented it, your words will have changed some, and the scope and sequence of the vision's implementation will have improved.

3. Now write it out and announce a Vision Sunday.

Preach and teach the vision... Be compelling...

4. Once the vision is out there, embed the vision.

Discuss its implementation at every opportunity. Talk through how it can be featured in every worship service. Develop a logo or graphic for it. Post the logo on your walls.

Talk about the vision constantly. Reinforce it by telling stories about how the vision is being fulfilled.

What's Next?

If you're reading this because you don't have a vision for your church, dig into the Bible and pray. Learn about vision and study other church's visions.

If you have some thoughts about what you believe God wants your church to do, start sharing what you're thinking, getting feedback, and refining it.

If you have some level of consensus, embed the vision in your church through preaching, at meetings, in prayer, and in your ministries. Start something new that embodies the vision for your church.

And keep learning how to lead your congregation to go after the vision God has given your church.

Above all else, be in prayer about it...

~Robin Fortner

2021 Hindsight

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. Acts 2:42-47

They say hindsight is 20/20, looking back on 2021 It has been an amazing year for Princeton Christian Church. I am proud of the way our church has come together in the midst of a global crisis and modeled the first century church to our community.

You hit the ground running in January coming together for the teaching of the word, fellowship and breaking of bread. And the Lord added to our number blessing us with three new sisters in Christ.



Our Monday night Feeding Frenzy class was launched for our babes in Christ and seasoned saints came together to be mutually encouraged by each other's faith and grow in their biblical worldview.

We came together as a family and supported each other through health and family crisis, divorce and mourning.

The ministry of the SOS ladies shared the love and compassion of Christ with many through their card ministry and planted seeds for the Kingdom.

The newly formed Watchmen men's development ministry brought men together to study the biblical role of men in the church family and society. Men were blessed with brotherhood, accountability, and encouragement to fulfill their role as the spiritual leader of their families that they might become qualified as leaders in the Lord's church. Our outreach team planted seeds at Cruise in at the Square and Bike Night and got the attention of the South Gibson Star Times. We have become a familiar face at these events and are building relationships. We ask for your continued prayers for receptive hearts as we plant seeds.

Our Brother Kendall Faull blessed us in October by giving us three days of practical training in evangelism. He gave us a simple easy to use plan for sharing our faith and leading people to Christ. We have ordered a case of pocket bibles and are praying for fertile soil to plant seeds and grow the Kingdom.

For over 50 years Princeton Christian Church has been a lighthouse to this community. This year God blessed us with numerical growth. He also blessed us with spiritual growth with many getting way out of their comfort zone and stepping up to serve. This year God also blessed us with the tools to carry the Gospel forward for another 50 years. I believe our best years as a church are ahead of us. Don't stop, keep moving, keep pursuing your first love, and rescuing the perishing as you go.

~Ron Smith





The Princeton PathFinder

Kingdom Vision

CONGREGATIONAL GOALS

- If we are not united in the need for spiritual growth, it is unlikely we will set congregational goals that will nourish such growth.
- If we are not growing individually, any congregational goals will unlikely be met.
- If we desire to grow as a congregation, we need to be growing as individuals, and set our goals for such!
- Individual Growth Is Intertwined With Church Growth.
- A primary function of the church is the edification of the saints... Ephesians 4:11-16. We are challenged to minister our gifts to one another... 1 Peter 4:11.
- As we grow individually, so we grow as a church, and vice versa.



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