

REACHING FOR THE FUTURE

by Ken Behnken

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Is your church “reaching for the future?” What will it be like in one year, five years, ten years? What do we need to do to “reach the future” that God has planned for us? This leads you to ask, “What is our vision? What picture do we have in mind for our ministry?” and “How do we get from here to there?”

Jesus definitely had a vision for His church on earth. It was to be His body in the midst of His people. His disciples were to make disciples, who make disciples, who reach all nations with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. His vision was to open the doors of Heaven, to give eternal life to all people who have faith in Him as Lord and Savior.

As we focus on the vision of Jesus, we are forced to ask, “Do we have a vision? Is our vision connected with Christ’s vision? Are we reaching for the future or standing on our past?” These important questions need to be asked by every congregation, new or established.

Every Mission Planters training held by the Center for U.S. Missions focuses on developing a mission plan for each congregation. We take a good look at core values, community analysis, mission statements, vision, and strategies. As participants understand each of these components, they put them together in the form of a mission plan. They learn how to work with their core group, building a plan together so that everyone has ownership. This plan then becomes their road map, their guide, to help members unite in “reaching for the future” to fulfill the vision of Christ and their congregation.

What is your road map? Have you taken the time to develop a mission plan for your congregation? It is so easy to focus on daily problems and situations that we have no specific plan for the future. In such cases, our wheels spin and we feel like we are going nowhere. How are you doing in training disciples that make disciples? What mission strategies lead to a Matthew 28 mission vision for your congregation, in your community? If you don’t have a vision, and an accompanying plan to reach that vision, this may be an excellent time consider working with your leaders to develop a process that will help you “reach for the future.”

The Center for U.S. Missions can help your congregation develop a mission plan. The book *Advanced Strategic Planning* by Aubrey Malphurs, and the accompanying workbook *Developing a Mission Plan for Your Congregation* by Ken Behnken, available on the Center’s website for \$35, will walk you through a step by step process that will result in a mission plan specifically designed for your congregation as it ministers in your community. The Center can also provide a one-day seminar to initiate the process, or

personal consulting services to help you deal with special circumstances. Contact the Center for more information.

Are you thinking about your fall program? This is a good time to call together a focus group to develop a mission plan to help your congregation “reach for the future.”