



part two

# GOD IS STILL SPEAKING

Stirring

Are you utterly convinced the Holy Spirit has called you to develop a new church?

**E**ARLY IN THE LIFE OF A NEW CHURCH, the primary activity of a pastor and core team will focus on discipleship, worship, evangelism, and the discernment of core values, vision and mission that will set the direction for ministry in this new setting. But first and foremost, comes the stirring of the Holy Spirit.

*(start bible study on page 14)*

## Passion

In the pages of this guidebook you will find many “how to” suggestions for organizing a new community of faith. You will find recommendations for the kinds of leadership skills that are important for church planters to exhibit. You can follow them carefully, but they will not be productive unless you undergird them with an urgent desire to build a community of faith. Do you want to have a vibrant new church? Then fuel it with passionate faith.

Passion is one of the first elements to take into consideration as you call a new church pastor and as you build a core group of leaders. Take time to explore your own passionate call from God. Are you utterly convinced the Holy Spirit has called you to develop a new church? When your work is fueled by a sense of call, you cannot help but become passionate in pursuit of that calling. Contemplate what things feed your desire to reach others for Christ, and what things diminish that passion. Pray and plan about how to develop a sense of passion in your leaders and members. Part of a church planter’s work is to help people increase and fill their lives with joy, and to help them discover their spiritual gifts and find a ministry in which to become involved.



## Bible Study on Discipleship

(see page 17)

*1 Peter 2:5 (NRSV) Like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*



Would you describe your core group “like living stones” that are built into an altar?

What other images come to mind to describe your core leaders?

Use those images and think about how to strengthen the collective power and strength of the group. In 1 Peter, the church leaders are individual “stones” who gain strength and purpose as they allow themselves to be “built together”. What will it look like in the future when you have reached a maturity of purpose and unity in the group?

What are the things that block a group’s ability to go deeper into discipleship?

## Making Disciples

The primary role of a new church developer is to build a cohesive group of persons ready to commit their spiritual gifts and financial stewardship to the planting of a new church. It is very important to make discipleship a top priority. Concentrate your energy on this from the beginning. Discipleship involves encouraging people to grow deeper in faith. New church starts are quite demanding on laity as well as clergy. To succeed, all leaders need to maintain high motivation. Receiving training for ministry, and having time together to bond as a team will lead to sustainable commitment. A wide variety of activities can engender discipleship, including Bible study, times of prayer, the discernment of spiritual gifts, and sharing the vision of the new church.

Peter said the church was made of living stones fitted together into a spiritual building (1Peter 2:5). Your new church may look, at first, like a loose pile of rocks. Your core team must connect them together into a spiritual

home. Discipleship is that work of building together. The goal of discipleship is to equip or prepare Christians to work together in mission. It is very important in the beginning of a new church to turn workers into disciple makers. Teach the people on your core team that they are to make disciples within the new church as soon as it is born. This means they should try to replace themselves in their ministry positions within the next six to nine months. They are to find and train, or mentor, someone to become active in a specific ministry. Having freed themselves from those early ministries, the core leaders can then reach out into new ministry opportunities. This pattern of training up and moving out creates an expectation that everyone has a responsibility to disciple others. Such a pattern of multiplying productive workers allows the church to keep growing.



## Bible Study on Worship

(see page 19)

*John 12: 1–8: “Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus’ feet and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.”*

Read the full text, verses 1–8.

What moved Mary to do what she did? How is that worship?

What causes us to enter into worship?

What did Mary bring to the house?

If you used this passage to prepare a service of worship, what would that worship look like?

What was the reaction of the people in the house when Mary interrupted their conversation?

What are the elements of worship found in this passage? What are the elements we bring to worship?



## Celebrating worship

Worship is more than the service of worship. Worship is the whole life of the church. It is the liturgy, the Bible study, the ministries, the celebration of the faith community. Worship in a new church will reflect the values, vision and mission of the new church start. It will be shaped by the neighborhood and its cultures. It will energize a whole people, giving free expression to the reality of their joy and commitment.

The service of worship of a new church is both a time for deep enjoyment of God's glory and a time for establishing connections among the faith community. Working at those twin goals is important. As we celebrate God's greatness we acknowledge that this greatness includes God's love and commitment to all humans. To

the extent that the service of worship connects with the real needs of people, we show forth God's radical love, and we develop a deeper, more meaningful spiritual life.

**As we celebrate God's greatness we acknowledge that this greatness includes God's love and commitment to all humans.**

What kind of worship is needed to motivate a core group to sustain high commitment to the development of a new church? How can worship express a comprehensive sensitivity to target

group culture(s)?

Most people determine whether or not they want to be a part of the church based on the service of worship—even before considering the church's programs and events. If worship is not done well, then in most minds, this is a reflection on the other ministries of the church. They don't come back for a second look.



## Bible Study on Evangelism

(see page 21)

### *The Three Priorities of Evangelism*

*John 13–16, especially 15:4–5, 12, 16.*

When you start talking to a new contact about your church it is important to keep it simple. Begin by talking about why you are doing what you are doing. For evangelism to be effective, you have to keep your priorities in order.

Priorities are important. Priorities help guide decisions that we make about the use of our time and our money. Where can we go to find those priorities?

Read *John 13–16*.

The Upper Room discourse was Jesus' last in-depth communication with His disciples before going to the cross. On the evening of the Last Supper, in an upstairs room in Jerusalem, gathered for Passover Feast, the twelve disciples listened as Jesus laid out three priorities for them:

Priority # 1: Abide in Jesus

Priority # 2: Love one another

Priority # 3: Reach the world

Don't forget: Evangelism is a natural expression of our relationship with Jesus Christ, but also is a natural expression of everything that is happening to us in the body of Jesus Christ.

What is the meaning of *abide in Jesus*?

What is the first priority in your life?

How can we *build one another up in love*?

How will you live out the concept *to give yourself to the brothers and sisters in Christ*?

The New Testament makes it clear that the church is to take the Gospel to the world. What is the implication of this assertion to you as a church planter?

How these three priorities related?

All three priorities need to be a fundamental part of our lives all the time.



## Evangelism

Most people don't think of the United Church of Christ as focusing on evangelism. Peace, justice, and mission come to mind, but *evangelism*? Well, isn't that exactly how evangelism is lived out daily—through peace, justice and mission? Evangelism is our primary response to the God who has called us “to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives” (Isaiah 61:1c NRSV). Yet when the *word* evangelism is used we may be slow to respond. Let's work to overcome our reaction to what others have made of this word, and get on with the task of sharing our love of Christ through the living of our daily lives.

Evangelism means gospel or good news and has its roots in the New Testament Christian community. D. T. Niles has popularized the saying that evangelism is “one beggar telling another beggar where to find food.” Another definition says, “Evangelism, making Christ known, is and needs to be the church's primary response to the life we receive in and through Jesus Christ.”<sup>3</sup> Whatever we say evangelism is, know that it is indicative of how we respond as the Body of Christ to all of God's people.

The Evangelism Ministry Team has as its theme “It's ALL about Evangelism.” Without evangelism we would not have received the faith ourselves, so we would not be able to “do justice, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly” with God (Micah 6:8 NRSV). We would not be a people of social witness, compassionate fellowship, or thankful worship.

As we discover or rediscover the joy of having received faith, we see our calling and purpose as people of God. Then we are able to share that personal story, or perspective, just as we share who we are within our particular family. Our everyday living is spent in improving the lives of our faith community and the community in which we live, as we use the skills and talents that have been given to us. We are to share the story that transformed our lives, and in so doing, we will transform the lives of others.

## Demographics

Census data from government resources or Percept<sup>4</sup> give a snapshot of the people in your neighborhood and surrounding communities. From demographic statistics on age, race, gender, education, household income,

lifestyles, religious preferences and growth patterns new church planters and core teams can discern ideas concerning what the community is seeking from a church. It is important for the vision, mission and core values to fit the community's demographic make up.

## Reaching out to the community

How does a new church get its message out when it probably has no permanent building? How would a community/area hear of this new church start? Consider using a variety of the following ideas.

### ***God is Still Speaking Identity Initiative***

The Still Speaking Initiative is a comprehensive United Church of Christ campaign to “get the word out” about the United Church of Christ. It is an invitation to those who have been alienated from church to be welcomed home. “No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you're welcome here . . . the United Church of Christ,” is the StillSpeaking theme.

Television advertisements, print ads, billboards, banners, and many more resources are available on [www.stillspeaking.com](http://www.stillspeaking.com) to help congregations be places of hospitality and welcome.

### ***Personal Invitations***

Core team members personally invite neighbors, friends, co-workers, family members to be a part of this exciting new church. Evangelism is about relationship, and asking people with whom you are in relationship to attend church with you is the most effective evangelism tool.

### ***Mass mailings to zip codes***

An oversized post card with clear, concise, and catchy statements about the new church can be mailed to surrounding zip codes. This can be done in the look of the StillSpeaking Initiative (red, black, comma).

### ***Telephone Solicitation***

“The Phone's For You” is a nine-week process whereby volunteers make thousands of phone calls to find the un-churched and de-churched people in the area who may be interested in becoming a part of a brand new church.

### **Door to Door Calling**

Teams walk neighborhoods, talking with people at their homes, leaving door hangers, brochures, small gifts.

### **Public Displays**

Billboards, websites, signage: use any public display that gets the attention of seekers. Display who you are and why they might want to sample your ministry. Always include your telephone and/or website contact information

### **Newspaper Articles and Advertisements**

Submit newsworthy articles as a means of getting the newspaper and its religion writer to know your ministry. They are looking for stories and a good article can get the new church “free” advertising. Publish information about your upcoming events.

Advertise on a page other than the religion page, which is mostly read by churching persons.

The evangelistic life begins with prayer and study that helps to identify and understand the needs of the community. From there, it finds ways to guide others into an authentic relationship with God and the whole Body of Christ.

Just as an individual can have an evangelistic lifestyle, so can a congregation. It is important for new churches to shape and encourage an appreciation of receiving faith, to share the stories of the Bible and of the Church, and to connect believers with the needs of the community.

---

### **Bible Study on Core Values**

*1 Corinthians 3:10–15 (NRSV) According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building on it. Each builder must choose with care how to build on it. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—the work of each builder will become visible, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each has done. If what has been built on the foundation survives, the builder will receive a reward. If the work is burned up, the builder will suffer loss; the builder will be saved, but only as through fire.*

As you discover your values, how do you know if they are the right ones to cultivate?

How does I Corinthians 3:10–15 help us to evaluate our current values?





## Core Values

Core values are those qualities or beliefs you hold most dear. They are the things that make up your church's character. Values reflect how you view the world, and how you encounter scriptures. They speak about what you stand for and determine the distinctiveness of your ministry.

Core values provide the foundation for formulating goals and setting the direction of the congregation's ministry. Both principles and behaviors can be determined from a core value. You will help people understand and clarify expectations if you can articulate the church's core values, the principles on which your ministry will be based, and the behavioral expectations that follow from those values. For example, if your church acknowledged a core value of "intimacy with God," it might state as a principle for setting goals, "intimacy with God empowers God's people for effective ministry." An expected behavior to follow from that value might be "We will make sure our worship is understandable to both church and un-church people so they may find intimacy with God."

Consider these examples: The cable television shopping network QVC is named for its three core values:

Quality, Value, Convenience; and a similarly named drug store chain is CVS, short for "Convenience, Value, Service." The French Revolution proclaimed its core values in their battle cry: "Liberty, Equality, Brotherhood." Core values differ from a mission or vision statement. For example, the E. F. Hutton slogan, "We make our money the old fashioned way, we *earn* it," is a brief mission statement. What are they in business to do? Earn money. What values stand behind such an approach to making money? You might infer E. F. Hutton's core values to be: hard work, no short cuts, integrity, and fairness. Nike inspires with its vision: "Just do it." What are the values behind that call to don running shoes? Self-discipline. Self-worth. Entitlement. Health.

Now you look in the mirror. The Church Development and Renewal Team recommends that before you determine the dream God has for your church, and before you start planning how your life together will be organized and directed you should take a good look at your core team. Determine your core values before moving on to discern your vision and mission.

*Values reflect  
how you view  
the world*

## Worksheet on Core Values



If you do this as a group exercise, work individually on the first question, then come to agreement on the core values and flesh out behaviors and beliefs together as a group. Post the lists and live with them for a while. Revisit this exercise to see if you have consensus on the core values of the developing church.

List your values, that is, the characteristics you desire to embody in your faith.

With a check mark, narrow that list to seven. Cut it again to the most important three or four. Circle those core values.

List what *behaviors* would show evidence of each value. For example, if honesty is my core value, truthfully reporting financial income might be an evidence of honest behavior.

Write a belief, or principle that underlies each value. For example, if honesty is my value, a belief might be “the truth shall set you free,” or “children deserve to hear the truth.”

## Bible Study on Vision

(see page 26)



1. Use various translations of the Bible to read *Proverbs 29:18*. Rewrite the verse in your own words. What does this verse say about why you and your church need God's vision for your ministry?

2. What can be learned from the people in the following passages about how the vision of God affected their lives? How did God's vision for them change the way these prophets lived and ministered?

*Isaiah 1:1, 6:1–10*

*Jeremiah 1:4–19*

*Jonah 1:4*

*Ezekiel 1:1–28, 2:1–10, 3:4–11*

3. Read *Genesis 12:1–3*, *Genesis 15:1–7*, *Genesis 17:1–15*. Why did God state the vision three different times to Abraham? What circumstances in Abraham's life were affected or changed by God's vision for him on each occasion?

4. What specific vision had God given his people that began to be implemented on Pentecost in Acts 2:14–22? How was this event related to the vision that Jesus gave the church in Acts 1:4–8?

## Vision

Vision is the ability to dream and envision something that is not yet created. In the beginning of the beginning, God had a vision. As people involved in new church development, you need a compelling vision. Coming to clarity about the specific vision is one of the most important activities to accomplish as the new church begins.

Core values focus on the common beliefs or understandings of the new church core team. They speak to “who you are,” how you choose to behave, and what you have in common, here and now. A vision explores not the present but the future. It doesn’t look to the qualities of the human participants; instead it looks to God. Jim Griffith has said, “Vision is something you catch from God before you cast it before others.”<sup>5</sup> What

is God calling you to do? What kind of church is God calling you to start in your particular situation? Vision is your unique, ideal picture of the future. George Barna defines vision as “a positive picture held in your mind’s eye of the way things could or should be in the days ahead. Vision connotes a visual reality, a portrait of conditions that do not exist currently.”<sup>6</sup>

Articulate your vision in a statement that is specific, detailed, and distinctive. Make sure it portrays vibrancy and vitality. Your congregation’s vision should be challenging, something to be accomplished in decades, not days. Your vision should uniquely express your church’s purpose. It should be tailor-made to fit you, not any church on any corner.



## Worksheet on Vision



Explore vision individually in your devotional time, but create a vision statement together as the consensus of a core group.

What do you think God sees when looking at your mission field?

What scriptures come to mind as you listen for God's call and clarity for your church?

God may be speaking a vision to you through others outside your church. What have you heard people say that might be God's nudge of vision for your new church?

Can you write the vision in clear, brief terms? Does it paint a picture or capture the emotions? Play around with different ways to conceptualize the ideas or words. Try to make your vision statement fit on a business card.

Will the vision make sense ten years from now? Will it still be clear and compelling?

## Bible Study on Mission

(see page 29)

*Acts 9:15(NRSV) But the Lord said to Paul, "Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel."*

Read *Acts 26:15–23* to see how Paul built the mission of his life on the foundation of that God given vision. See also *II Corinthians 11:23–28*.



Discuss how the vision God gave Paul affected his mission, that is, the way he lived and ministered.

What vision for ministry do you feel God may be giving you and your church? Can you articulate what you could be doing to accomplish that vision?

Study the mission statements God gave to Moses and to the church: read *Exodus 3:10* and *Matthew 28:19–20*. Does your church's mission put it in alignment with the missional concerns of God?

## Mission Statement

First you discover the core values that are indigenous to the new faith community. Then you identify the overarching vision of what God calls you to create. The next step is to establish a mission statement that will delineate in more detail how you will accomplish the vision based upon your core values.

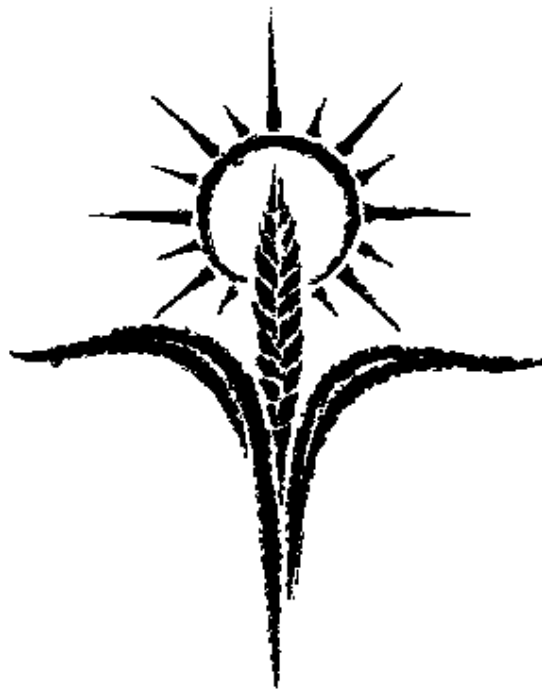
Think of the vision as responding to the question, “Where are we going?” Think of the mission statement as answering different question, “What are we supposed to be doing?”

A mission statement provides a guide to simplify decision-making. It can aid in determining which of the many possible programs or ministries the congregation should or should not undertake. When you begin, align

the ministries with the mission. When you evaluate, use the mission statement as your standard. In this way you work your way into your preferred future.

A mission statement also gives the new church a common understanding. It can give the diverse ministries and programs the ability to work interdependently. It can inspire unity by giving church members a means to rally around a common purpose.

Begin by discerning from what you read in the Bible what you are supposed to do as a church. Write the mission with clarity and brevity. You may use a form such as: your church name, what you seek to do—with whom, by what means, and a biblical image or reference that guides your path.



## Worksheet on Mission Statement

Who are we? List our church's core values:



Where are we headed? Write our vision statement:

How are we going to get there? Brainstorm all the possible ministries or programs that our new church might do. As a group, narrow the list to the ten most important. We will need to spend some time defining “important”. Prioritize that list. Now, find clues in that list that will help us articulate an answer to the following:

What do we seek to do?

With whom?

By what means?

Why? (Or, so what?)

Try to put a biblical image or reference into at least that last answer.



## Ministry Plans

A ministry plan is a plan of action that details how a particular focus, or a set of objectives, will be accomplished. It is more detailed and specific than a vision or mission statement. Writing a ministry plan usually happens later in the development process of a new church, as you seek funding from the denomination or from outside sources. We mention it here so that you become aware of it, and can see how it builds on the formational tasks of discerning core values, vision and mission.

A ministry plan, like other strategic planning methods, lists the opportunities that arise out of your core values, basic beliefs, strengths and weaknesses, and most importantly your vision and mission statement. It will help you transition from dream to reality as you gain clarity by setting measurable goals, and prioritize the steps needed to make sure all people and ministries work together toward a common end.

This plan will outline key steps or turning points on your journey as a congregation in formation, where you are at present, and where God is calling you to go. Your ministry plan will include not only goals and objectives but also implementation steps, resources needed, a time line, and persons or teams that will be responsible for meeting each objective. It should also include an evaluative process. Evaluation will ensure that the needs of the congregation are being met and that all ministries are operating and providing the highest-level service possible. The evaluation process is a step that monitors the progress made and identifies stumbling blocks. It empowers the congregation to make changes or adjustments before minor glitches become major problems.

The ministry plan will become the vehicle to help you achieve the mission to which God is calling you and will help you navigate through the twists and turns in making the realm of God a reality now and for future generations.



---

### Notes

3. Poling-Goldeen, David. "Evangelism: A Congregational Priority," Schieber and Olson, eds., *Making Christ Known: A Guide to Evangelism for Congregations*, Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1996, p.4.

4. Contact the Evangelism Ministry for information about Percept resources.

5. Jim Griffith of Griffith Coaching quoted at a How to Start a New Church training in De Forest WI, December 2003.

6. Barna, George. *The Power of Vision*, Venture, CA: Regal Books, 1997, p.28.

7. Shelbe, Donald J., Meeting the Messiah, Upper Room, January 1980.

## Bible Study on Equipping

(see page 33)



*The church is still comprised of very human mortals who are inconsistent, who make exaggerated claims and play their little games. But paradox of paradoxes: Christ summons us with those limitations—and more—to be agents of his resurrection power and hope. “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide” (John 15:16); “Greater works than these will . . . [you] do” (John 14:12); “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations” (Matt. 28:19); “Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons” (Matt. 10:8). Or, in the words of Paul: “As God’s chosen ones, put on compassion, kindness, lowliness, forbearing one another, forgiving one another. Above all, put on love . . . and let Christ’s Word dwell richly in you” (Col. 3:12ff., my paraphrase). We are called to be saints, who in our humanness are always saints without halos. Christ asks us to be his Easter people, to do for others what we ourselves need. He summons us to be for others what we have not yet become and to give to others what we have not yet completely received ourselves.*

*We are asked to be what we are not. We who follow Christ are called to offer to others what is still unrealized in us. Lessons of love and life are to be taught by us who are still learning them. Self-understanding in others is to be encouraged by us who do not yet understand ourselves. We are to witness, nurture, and admonish others in their spiritual pilgrimage while still struggling with our own. We who are sick are asked to heal others. We who are fractious and cause conflict are called by Christ to be peacemakers. We who have dark corners in our soul still unredeemed are sent out to baptize. We who need the Word ourselves are commissioned to proclaim and to preach. We who are possessed by irrational urges and baser motives are sent out to cast out demons. We are called by Jesus to do what we need, to offer what we ourselves need.<sup>7</sup>*

How do you react to the challenge of being an imperfect person who is called to do the type of great works mentioned in the above referenced scriptures?

Can you name some “saints without halos” who have influenced your life?

How does the chance to start a new church give you opportunity to “let Christ’s word dwell in you richly”?