



Action Guide.

1. Agree your mission statement.

A mission statement clarifies what you are aiming to do as well as what is not a priority. It enables everyone to work with the same purposes helps newcomers understand what sort of church they are potentially joining.

Discuss

Brainstorm what elements should be contained in your mission statement. For each potential element ask:

- is it Bible based?
- is it clearly about mission purpose rather than vision, values or solutions?
- is it true to our context and calling or more generic and less relevant to us?

Formulate

Agree which elements should go into your mission statement. Ask:

- are evangelism and discipleship aspects of Great Commission included?
- Put the elements into a sentence and ask:
- is it worded in a way that reflects the particular nature of our situation?
 - does it define a clear purpose and priorities for the church so any ministry leader can see how their activities fit within the mission statement?
 - is it understandable by an unbeliever and does that matter?
 - is it memorable?

Communicate

Discuss how to communicate the mission statement. Ask:

- will it appear on publicity or will we focus on our vision and values on outsider facing documents?
- how will people in the church learn about what the mission statement is and what it means? Will that be in newcomers gatherings or membership and leadership classes? Will there be a strategy document or web page explaining mission, values and vision?
- how will we be accountable to this mission? Will we monitor it in leadership meetings and pray about it in prayer gatherings?

Output: Agreed mission statement and communication strategy

2. Choose your growth strategy.

A major decision at the start of a church strategic planning process is whether the strategic plans will focus on building healthy growth or incubating new growth through revitalisation, replanting or planting. As Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3, we all have the same purpose of working in God's field which he makes grow (v6-9) but how we participate in his growth plans is highly varied.

Some pointers that would help choose a growth strategy include:

Healthy Growth Strategies

- Is the issue more about improving the effectiveness of current activities than deleting them and starting again?
- Are you wanting to build on current fruitful ministries with more activities in that area and multiply skills by expanding into new ministry areas or will what you do be a more stand alone project less connected to current ministry and expertise?

Revitalise / Reboot missional activities

- Is the best way of bringing growth to prune the existing activities to enable healthy growth by starting again with a new team or approach or location?
- Is the church in a rut of doing the same things as have always been done without really knowing why?

Replant congregations

- Has an existing church got to the stage of needing a fresh injection of people, resources and vision from elsewhere?
- Is there history and goodwill and resources (such as buildings and experience) in the current church that is worth holding onto and building upon with a replant (rather than simply planting on a fresh 'site' from scratch)?

Plant new congregations

- Is the best approach to reach a particular people group to start with a new location, planting congregation, strategy, ministry DNA and funding model?
- Are there no other churches already reaching that area or people group we should be working in cooperation with?

Output: Agreed growth strategy with reasons based on the internal resource situation and the external opportunity context of the church