

Vision statement development

CCCC has only ever had two vision statements. The first was crafted in the 2002 strategic plan and read:

To encourage responsible leadership and stewardship from a biblical world view.

The second vision statement was also crafted by staff for use in the action plans and strategic plan since 2008:

A vibrant community of exemplary Christian ministries effectively fulfilling their missions.

The second vision statement is very much in accord with the consensus about our values and goals. It speaks of community, excellence, accomplishment, and the church's mission. It describes the external effect that we want to have.

The Work of the Holy Spirit Today

When considering our vision for a desired future, we must take note of what the Spirit is doing in the world. Almost every survey respondent said there is a desire among Christians for unity beyond denominational boundaries that focuses on the common faith that binds us together in the one body of Christ. There is an intense interest in collaboration, with spiritual leaders and their churches in many cities coming together to cooperate on programs and present a common witness to Jesus Christ.

The laity is becoming much more activist, both in terms of their financial donations (wanting greater control and accountability) and their time (wanting to do front line work themselves rather than sending others). When they do send others, people want direct access to the missionaries and also to the beneficiaries they are supporting overseas. Churches are becoming much more concerned with mission and an outward focus. People want to find ways to get their hands dirty. They are not content for the kingdom to come some day far in the future, or to accept the kingdom as only a spiritual reality. The church is waking up to the biblical fact that it has a role to play in working with God to live out the kingdom in the here and now.

There is also a trend towards small groups, home churches and simply by-passing charitable status to get God's work done, perhaps funded by social enterprise but often by donations without a tax benefit. People are becoming more concerned with effectiveness than with numbers. It is no longer "How big is your church?" but "How effectively is your church transforming people's lives?" There is a focus on being strategic in conducting ministry activities and donors are looking for sustainability so that programs will ultimately cover their own costs.

Finally, the Spirit may be calling us to a more costly faithfulness as it appears we may be entering a time of testing for the church. Will we remain faithful to God and his ways when society grows increasingly hostile to those ways? Human rights rulings affect the ability of Christian ministries to be able to hire only Christians with biblical ethics and morality. There is a societal aversion to evangelism and conversion, and some would say that religion, particularly Christianity that holds to biblical values, should not have charitable status. We must remain true to the faith that has been handed down to us and be willing to pay the cost.

Based on the work of the Holy Spirit, our vision could include these elements:

- a diverse church living and working in unity
- an active church focused on a flourishing, democratized, effective ministry that cuts out middlemen and traditional structures
- a church that withstands strong external pressure to compromise its beliefs

Based on how survey respondents answered the questions about what they love about CCCC and want to be able to tell their family about their service here, somewhere the strategic statements should acknowledge the privilege it is to serve the church and help its ministries accomplish their missions. I have put this into the proposed mission statement.

Survey respondents also said that our distinctive competencies are:

- affordable programs and services
- ability to hear from a wide variety of ministries about emerging trends and issues
- understanding of Christian ministry and mission that free information providers do not have
- due to our size, we carry weight as a sector representative
- ability to advise Christian ministries in how to deal with government bureaucracies
- a trusted advisor

The staff's aspirations for CCCC are to:

- promote Christian unity between ministries as a witness to the presence in this world of the love of God;
- facilitate ministry; we champion, support and promote Christian ministries, enabling them to be all that God has called them to be;
- be a catalyst for continuous improvement and adoption of best practices so that Christian ministries are worthy of the respect and trust of the public;
- provide accessible, practical and relevant services that offer high value to our members;
- be respected educators who create, source and share expert knowledge as we model how Christian charities should operate; and
- be an exemplary Christian workplace.

The survey respondents had a number of aspirations that relate to specific initiatives or programs that will be considered fully when the strategic review gets to that stage.

Vision Statement

The existing vision statement appears to fit within the future that our call, values and aspirations naturally lead to, with only some minor tweaking. The statement as it is reads:

A vibrant community of exemplary Christian ministries effectively fulfilling their missions.

The only significant aspect that is missing is cooperation or collaboration. The word 'community' implies this, but to make it more visible, because it is such a strong desire of the survey respondents, the vision could be changed slightly to read:

A vibrant community of exemplary Christian ministries working together to effectively fulfil their missions