



NEW CITY FELLOWSHIP ST. LOUIS

Our Vision



THE VISION OF NEW CITY FELLOWSHIP ST. LOUIS

New City Fellowship exists to humbly announce the good news of the kingdom of God in Christ by discipling the nations in the reconciling Gospel of Jesus Christ through a clear proclamation of salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone, and by doing Spirit-led deeds of justice and mercy that will help bring God's restorative peace to his people, the city of St. Louis and the nations of the earth until the end of time, when the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of Christ and of God.

This is the first of a set of primary documents explaining the basic Vision, Mission, and Strategies of New City Fellowship. Our hope is that these articles will help clarify for everyone the basic reason and purpose for our existence as a community of believers, as well as the fundamental commitments we are making to bring our life together as the family of God to its fullest possible expression. *Our ultimate goal is to participate in the advance of the kingdom of God and the spread of His glory revealed in Jesus Christ our King.*

For those not accustomed to thinking in terms of Vision, Mission and Strategy, this is just one helpful way of explaining Why We Exist (Vision), What Commitments (Mission) we are going to make to flesh out that Vision, and then, What Specific Plans (Strategies) we will use to implement the Vision and Mission of the church. ***These three components, starting with the Vision, drive every decision we make as a church.***

The first thing you may notice is that we do not have a brief, concise statement of our Vision summarized in one phrase. Some good examples of this might be: "We Exist to Love God and Love Our Neighbors" or "We Exist to Proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ." Either of these statements can serve as a very good, basic explanation for the existence of any church.

The reason we have a more detailed Vision Statement is because we think it helps people get a more defined sense of what our purpose is when we say something like - 'We Are Here to Proclaim the Gospel.' We want people to know from the start ***the core, defining elements*** of what that means for us. So we included ***three key elements*** in our Vision Statement.

"New City Fellowship exists to humbly announce the good news of the kingdom of God in Christ...."

These phrases are chosen very purposefully. To "humbly announce" is emphasizing that we are actually "proclaiming" something. We are "witnesses" to the world around us sharing The Truth about God's great reign and salvation in Jesus Christ. ***We want this proclamation to be a central part of every aspect of ministry and community life we engage in.***

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, 'Your God Reigns.'
Isaiah 52:7

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. Acts 1:8

How we do that, the spirit in which we proclaim the Truth about Jesus Christ, is meant to be done with humble love. And that humility has both a heart attitude and an external look to it, which help give shape to our mission and our strategies.

Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; a bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. Isaiah 42:1-3

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Philippians 2:5-8

This commitment to “humble hearts and humble circumstances” has a very profound effect on how we operate all the ministries of New City Fellowship. It is something we see as a part of the glory and power of God revealed in our weakness, so that no one may boast in human achievement, but only in what God has given us by His grace.

The three temptations of Christ (Matthew 4) were Satan’s deceptive scheme to move Christ from the humility of the Cross to the deceptive power of:

Economic wealth (bread)

Religious power (the Temple)

Political power (authority over the nations)

We also want to embrace the humility of Christ in every aspect of our ministry.

Our Vision Statement also emphasizes that we are humbly proclaiming “the good news of the kingdom of God in Christ.” We chose this phrase because this is how the biographers of the life of Christ (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) describe how Jesus himself announced the good news. The good news of the kingdom of God in Christ implies much more than only the forgiveness of sins. While forgiveness in Jesus Christ is the central, most crucial starting point for our restored relationship with God and each other, the “goodness” in the “good news” is so much more. This goodness includes God coming to establish His kingdom rule and reign of righteousness and justice ***in the lives of his people, gathered together as the church, the family of God, the One New Humanity.***

And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people. Matthew 4:23

And [Jesus] came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Luke 4:16-20

The Kingdom of God being brought to expression in and through the people of God is something far more distinct and greater than what it means, in a broad sense, that God reigns over all the nations of the earth.

He does reign over all nations, including those who reject Him (Psalm 2). But he reigns in a special, unique way over His people.

Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. Exodus 19:5-6

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.
1 Peter 2:9

“...by discipling the nations in the reconciling Gospel of Jesus Christ through a clear proclamation of salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone, and by doing Spirit-led deeds of justice and mercy...”

This phrase also has several parts which further describe the breadth of the Vision. We describe - “discipling the nations” with an adjective that highlights a central, core, defining effect of the Gospel - its “reconciling” focus.

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Matthew 28:18 -20

I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. John 17:20-21

For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. Ephesians 2:14-18

This vision also has a profound impact on our decision making. It means we are going to proclaim this good news to every ethnic group and every kind of person that we come into contact with - ***for the express purpose of seeing them reconciled to God and reconciled together with us as the One New Humanity in Christ.***

It does not mean everyone will necessarily come to our local church. But for all who do, we will make an intentional effort at making sure they are embraced and included in the family.

We believe this good news of the kingdom rule and reign of God and the reconciling of the nations only comes **through preaching salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone.**

We believe every-single-aspect of this Vision can only be received as a gift of God through Christ that provides both the free mercy of God’s forgiveness through the Cross, and a place of standing before God with the righteousness of Christ Himself as our covering.

This is the beginning, middle and end of the basis of our entire relationship with God and with one another.

We are only and always confident as sons and daughters of God because of the grace of God in Christ, and informs and directs the basis of our reconciliation with God and with one another.

For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
Galatians 3:26-28

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. Ephesians 2:8-10

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, that in every way you were enriched in him....so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. 1 Corinthians 1:3-9

We also state clearly our understanding that our proclamation of the Gospel is rooted both in Word and in Deed. This approach to proclaiming the Gospel by action and word marked the ministry of Christ and is meant to mark our lives as His followers. We describe these works as **Spirit-led deeds of justice and mercy.**

We believe the good works God has called us to are not left up to us to define, but are only those that God Himself has revealed in His Word, and can be directly applied and/or deduced from the teaching of Scripture.

We also believe that the justice of God brought to expression -in and through the church- is different from, and greater than, the justice of the world. That it is rooted in the Cross of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit and all for the glory of God.

These three commitments woven together - **proclaiming the Risen Christ as our King, living in a reconciled family with one another and practicing justice and mercy** - are what makes us the light of the world and the salt of the earth as the people of God.

He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? Micah 6:8

Then the King will say to those on his right, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me." Then the righteous will answer him, saying, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?" And the King will answer them, "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me." Matthew 25:34-40

"....that will help bring God's restorative peace to his people, the city of St. Louis and the nations of the earth until the end of time, when the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of Christ and of God."

We believe the life of the eternal age, when absolutely all things will be set right, has already begun with the coming of Christ - and that we get to participate in the beginning of that restoration here and now, as the people of God.

We also recognize there is a definite "not yet" aspect to the full blessings of eternal life that will only come to its complete expression when time and history are no more and Jesus returns to usher in the blessings of the new heaven and the new earth.

Until the end, we recognize there will always be a spiritual battle and opposition from an unbelieving world that rejects the Lordship of Jesus. And yet, for the here and now, Jesus has come that we, as His people, might have the life of God and have it abundantly. *We have the privilege and responsibility of sharing the benefits of that life freely with the world around us.*

We believe God is a missional God. He is on a mission to heal and restore men, women, and children from among all the nations of the earth through faith in Christ. We also believe that part of His answer to our prayers for the global impact of His kingdom coming and His will being done, will be answered as we accept His call - ***the call to take our small part in participating in the spread of the Gospel in our city, our country, and the broader world around us.***

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Matthew 28:18-20

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. Acts 1:8

But how are they to call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!" Romans 10:14-15

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.

Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

Ephesians 4:10-16

Since this is our Vision, what kind of commitments will this lead us to as a church? In the next document we will describe how this Vision informs our specific Strategies.



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