



Strategic Plan

March, 2008

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR HARPETH COMMUNITY CHURCH

The following strategic plan is an updated version, revised for March, 2008. It is based upon the strategic plan method developed for churches by Bob Biehl, as described in his book, *Master Planning*.¹ The pastor-elders (as a group) have spent countless hours together studying, praying, working, re-visioning, and implementing modifications to the plan over the last several years. We are very excited about this plan because we believe that God is leading us in the direction that we have outlined.

From the first draft (2001), this plan has been and remains a fluid one. It will be modified again, as the months and years pass. In fact, we will revisit this plan, in greater or lesser detail, every six months (January-February and August of each year), as God leads us. We hope that you will be inspired by it. Please earnestly pray to the Father that he will help us in our quest to be a truly God-honoring and effective church, as we seek to fulfill God's mission.

Historical Background

Harpeth Community Church held her first public assembly just before Christmas Day, 1997, with 235 people in attendance. The church was formed by a small group of approximately 75 Christians (including their children) who had slowly joined together under the leadership of Bob Harrington (Sr. Minister) over the previous nine months with the desire and leading of God

to plant a contemporary Bible-based church (Restoration Movement) in Williamson County, Tennessee. The original members committed themselves to reaching two groups: a) un-churched people who are in need of embracing God's salvation, and b) those who need to be involved in a church committed to discipleship and the teaching of both Grace and Truth as found in scripture. Here is a ten year summary of the historical progress of the church.

1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
235 attended first worship service December 21 '97 @ HBES				
150 attendance average by year end	210 attendance average by year end	275 attendance average by year end	315 attendance average	375 attendance average
55 new unchurched people become regular	25 new unchurched people become regulars	33 new unchurched people become regulars	25 unchurched people become regulars	30 unchurched people become regulars
			16 Small Groups	18 Small Groups
98% in service ministry participation	90% service ministry participation	87% service ministry participation	87% service ministry participation	87% service ministry participation
Sunday School	Website launched	\$120,000 offering – property purchased		
101, 201, 301 classes	Part-time Worship leader added	Men's & Women's Ministry started	Second trailer purchased	Small Group & Involvement Minister Added
Graceworks	Part-time Youth Minister added	Full Time Youth Minister	Youth Barn construction	
	Office administrator added	Youth Group to Juarez	Vacation Bible School	
		Medical Mission to Guatemala	Youth Work Camp	
12 Baptisms	12 Baptisms	27 Baptisms	18 Baptisms	21 Baptisms
Weekly Giving Participation \$3000	Weekly Giving Participation \$4000	Weekly Giving Participation \$5000	Weekly Giving Participation \$6200	Weekly Giving Participation \$10,000

2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
425 attendance average	465 attendance average	458 attendance average	491 attendance average	528 attendance average
50 unchurched people become regulars	55 unchurched people become regulars	55 unchurched people become regulars	ACCEPT 303 adult members 37 baptisms	ACCEPT 319 adult members 29 baptisms
20 small groups	28 small groups	25 small groups	CONNECT 222 = 73% of members in small groups	CONNECT 269 = 84% of members in a small group 40 small groups
87% in service ministry participation	87% in service ministry participation	85% in service ministry participation	SERVE 193 = 64% in service ministry participation	SERVE 248 = 78% in service ministry participation
			LEAD 84 = 28% of members had a leadership role	LEAD 106 = 33% of members had a leadership role
Bookkeeper added	Children's Minister added	Strong extra pledges Open Doors For our building		Executive Minister added
Move to Centennial High School	HCC ranks in top 2% of US churches for baptisms next several years	\$1.8 million in extra offerings pledged		Part-time Receptionist added
46 Baptisms	50 Baptisms	50+ Baptisms	37 Baptisms	29 Baptisms
Weekly Giving Participation \$13,000	Weekly Giving Participation \$14,000	Weekly Giving Participation \$14,600	Weekly Giving Participation \$15,483	Weekly Giving Participation \$17,716

One of the most significant developments in the church's ten year history was the purchase of land at the corner of Mack Hatcher and Lewisburg Pike and the erection of our three buildings (for phase one). We expect all three building to be occupied by the end of June, 2008.

Philosophy of Ministry

As a church HCC was established with a clear set of **1. Beliefs, 2. Mission, 3. Vision, 4. Values, and 5. Process and Structure.** Our methods and practices have changed over the years, and the way in which we formulate things has been modified, but the basic core of HCC's DNA has remained unchanged.

1. Beliefs.

HCC has a detailed faith statement and numerous written position papers that are available from the church office, but our beliefs can be summed up in a simple fashion. We are an Evangelical and a Restoration Movement Church.

i. An Evangelical Church - We are part of a movement that crosses denominational lines and is grounded on a cluster of six controlling convictions, each of which is regarded as being true, of vital importance and grounded in scripture.²

- ❑ The supreme authority of Scripture as a source of knowledge of God and a guide to Christian living.
- ❑ The majesty of Jesus Christ, both as incarnate God and Lord and as the Savior of sinful humanity.
- ❑ The lordship of the Holy Spirit.
- ❑ The need for personal conversion.
- ❑ The priority of evangelism for both individual Christians and the church as a whole.
- ❑ The importance of Christian community for spiritual nourishment, fellowship and growth.

ii. A Restoration Movement Church – We are a non-denominational church. We are part of a movement of churches throughout the world, within the Evangelical Movement, which tries to go back and base all teachings and practices on the Bible alone. There are three branches in this movement: 1) the more liberal Disciples of Christ/Christian Church, 2) the more conservative Churches of Christ, and 3) the moderate, Independent Christian Church/Churches of Christ. Harpeth Community Church is an Independent Christian Church. We see ourselves not just “reforming the institutional church,” but seeking to go back through Christian history (learning whatever lessons that we can) and “restoring” the New Testament church as it is found

in the Bible.³ We seek to be simply Christians, following the Bible. Here are the guiding convictions that form much of our distinctive theology within the broader evangelical church.

- ❑ We strive to restore the Christianity of the Bible in our day.
- ❑ The local church is autonomous, non-denominational, and counter-cultural in lifestyle.
- ❑ Leadership Structure of the local church emphasizes the role of elders as a group who pastor and oversee the church.
- ❑ Baptism by immersion as an expression of faith in Jesus for the remission of sins is integral to the normal conversion process.
- ❑ Weekly observance of the Lord's Supper.
- ❑ Strong belief in both God's sovereignty and human free-will.

2. Mission/Purpose

The mission or purpose of the church is summed up in our original expanded mission statement: *Our mission is to glorify God by leading people to Christ and helping one another become more like him through outreach, worship, fellowship, discipleship and ministry.* We more typically use and promote the shorter version of our mission statement: *Our mission is to lead people to Christ and help one another become more like him.*

3. Vision

The following vision statement was written before the church was launched and with only slight variations, it remained the vision of the church up through her 10th anniversary.

A Clear Mission —Our mission is to glorify God by leading people to Christ and helping one another become more like him — through outreach, worship, fellowship, discipleship, and ministry. We are focused upon the twin pillars of the grace proclaimed in Jesus Christ (evangelism) and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit (discipleship). The vision is a church which evaluates itself primarily by the changed lives of the people it touches.

Outreach — Once we reach maturity (10-15 years), we see God using us to reach 100 unchurched people each year. We are specifically designing our outreach programs to reach the “Williamson Waynes and Wendys” we come into contact with each day — typically men and women in their 30's and early 40's who comprise the largest and fastest growing segment of the population in this area. We consciously develop outreach events, seminars, assemblies, classes, and groups to minister to the needs of these people and their children. We believe that when all the church joins outreach efforts by active prayer and the use of their

gifts, God brings a significant harvest. We also see God leading us to help plant many other churches, locally, nationally, and even around the world.

Worship — Through the indwelling Holy Spirit we seek to be personal worshippers of God in all of life, continually, day by day. The vision is Sunday celebration assemblies which reflect and heighten the experience of God's presence we have witnessed in our daily lives. Our assemblies display a Spirit centered, celebrative and, inspirational mood. We accent praise, the study of God's Word, the Lord's Supper, testimonies, drama, multi-media presentations, and personal ministry times. Our focus is an experience of the heart, while including the mind, the will, and the spirit. We strive to show the complementary harmony of male leadership with the full participation of women in such things as the Lord's Supper, scripture reading, prayer, drama, and testimonies. We are sensitive to unchurched people and seekers, with a desire that they will be able to say, "God is truly among these people." Our ultimate desire is that people leave our assemblies inspired to follow the ways of Christ with renewed passion.

Fellowship — We seek to be a community of Christians who truly love one another and see themselves as "brothers and sisters in Christ." To help achieve this we are as much a community of small groups as we are a community which meets on Sunday mornings. Our vision is to have as many people in our small groups each month as we have in average attendance on Sunday morning. Through our small groups we help, support, encourage, and inspire one another. Love is held up among us as a supreme commandment and the fundamental attribute reflecting the Christ-like life. We are also encouraged to become involved in one another's lives through outreach events and in various informal settings. We believe God will use these times to provide us with quality Christian friendships which can be found in few other places. These relationships make a significant and essential difference in our daily lives.

Discipleship — The power in effective evangelism and in the development of the Christ-like life is the Holy Spirit. Under the hand of God, we provide people with a specific spiritual life development path. We will support people along the way from being unbelievers to believers, to church membership, to small groups, to learning how to have a daily time with God and bring him into family life, to using one's gifts, to spiritual disciplines, to developing a sense of life mission, and finally, to having an impact in the world for Christ. This path shows people what spiritual growth is and how to accomplish it. As disciples we are in the world, but not of the world. Our discipleship program helps us to be separate from the world, but for the benefit of the world. In our homes marriage commitments are to be kept, men are taught to assume spiritual responsibility and leadership for their families, and women, as complementary equals, are encouraged to help, support, and love their husbands and children, while children are brought up in the pursuit of Christ-like character. We reach out to the lost, the poor, and the spiritually oppressed, while renouncing immorality and injustice. In the end, as God empowers us, we seek to provide an alternative way of life: singles living with purpose and power, strong families developed, racial harmony engendered, and sinful habits broken. As an alternative community we are unlike the world, because through Jesus Christ we have come to know both the love and the holiness of God.

Ministry — We will be led by a ministerial staff and elders who see their most fundamental role as equipping the members of the congregation to emulate Jesus Christ in their lives. The senior minister is the point man, coach, and most visible leader of the congregation, but he works hand in hand with elders, staff members, and deacons/deaconesses. Together they focus upon discipleship, training, and multiplication so that God's energy is set in motion through the gifts and passions of the members. Everyone is considered a minister and a priest commissioned to impact the world for Christ. While we see 60% of our members having an active ministry responsibility in the church, it may be more significant that we also look for the noticeable impact of the gospel in our relationships, in our homes, in our places of work, and in our communities.

Vision Summary — We believe this vision is based upon God's leading, God's teaching, and God's providence, but we know that it will reach maturity only as we continue to look to God as the true builder. With God at work in it, we look for thousands to join the quest to become more fully devoted disciples of Jesus Christ in this church and in the sister churches which we want to plant in the future.

In March, 2008, in conjunction with the shortening of HCC's values statement and development of a clearer discipleship process and structure, we are recommending the adoption of the following shorter vision statement:

A Vision of *Intentional Love*

We are a church which evaluates itself primarily by the changed lives of the people it touches through Christ's Intentional Love. It is a love displayed by "missional living," where, like Jesus, we serve people and help them accept the Grace and Truth of God's Kingdom. And it is a love displayed by "relational discipleship," where we help thousands connect together in the Ways of Jesus to serve and lead and become more and more like Him.

4. Values

In 2006, after prayer and an evaluation of the church's ownership of her stated values, the elders and staff led the church to re-configure and more succinctly summarize our values in a more practical and applicable manner. What are values? Core values are consistent, passionate, Biblical, distinctive, convictions that determine our priorities, influence our decisions, drive our ministry, express our personality, and are always demonstrated by our behavior. The following is the list of the 11 core values that were adopted when the church was established in 1997:

1. The Centrality of Grace
2. The Lordship of Christ Through Scripture
3. Spiritual Intimacy With God
4. Christ-like Character Epitomized By Love
5. Reaching Unchurched/Undisciplined People
6. Supportive Community
7. Personal Discipleship and Mentoring
8. Empowerment of Families
9. Ministry to the Poor and Oppressed
10. Culturally Relevant Structures
11. Excellence

These values served the church very well, but few could remember such a long list and the church did not have an explicit process or structure that helped the people to embrace HCC's values and then live them out. With the helpful insights of Rainer and Gieger's *Simple Church*⁴

and Jim Putman from Real Life Ministries (*Church is a Team Sport*),⁵ we shorted our values statements.

1. **Intentional Love** - Is the common factor at all stages of church life at HCC. It guides all that we do, as we seek to lead people to Christ and help one another become more like him – and incorporate the other values of HCC.

2. **Acceptance of both Grace and Truth** - This is the most important starting place in the Christian life. We believe that God's Grace is the greatest thing in the universe. We also believe that the Lordship of Christ through scripture helps define the meaning of Grace. The path into Ways of Jesus truly begins with the acceptance and reflection of both Grace and Truth in a person's life.

3. **Connection with other Christians and God** - It is vitally important to connect personally with both God and people. The greatest commands are to love God and love people. We learn best how to connect with God by connecting with his people, our church family. We must function like brothers and sisters, helping each other to become more like Jesus. We connect with God by learning to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit through such things as prayer, Bible study, fasting, and the like.

4. **Service** - When we truly love God and love people, we will become servants of others. We actively serve by ministering to both the church and the world.

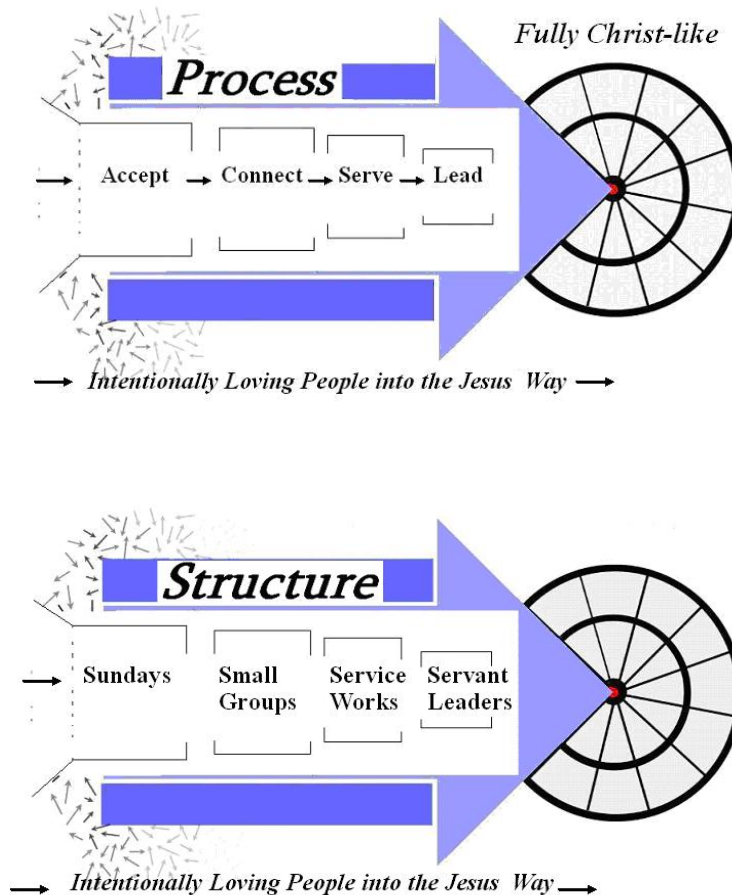
5. **Leadership** - The willingness to lead others, as servants of Jesus, is a very noble thing and the key to expanding the influence/growth of the local church. To truly impact the world, we must be constantly developing servant leaders—parents, teachers, deacons, elders, and others who all lead like Jesus.

5. Process and Structure

In 2006, we also adjusted our explicit process of discipleship to equip HCC people to adopt the values of the church as their own. Specifically, we moved from a focus on the eleven values and five purposes of the church (outreach, worship, fellowship, discipleship, and ministry) to a discipleship process that maintains our simple purpose (leading people to Christ and helping one another to become more like him) and incorporates our values.

In the words of *Simple Church*: we designed a straightforward and strategic process that moves people through the steps or stages of spiritual growth. Following *Simple Church*, we resist “programs” and “busyness,” while embracing “steps” and “environments.” Steps are about movement. By intentional love, we seek to help people move – step by step - to faith in Jesus Christ and then along the path toward increasing spiritual maturity and Christlikeness. We seek to create “relational environments” for specific stages in the discipleship process. At each step, people are moved “toward” the next step by a “specific environment.” The end result is a Christ-

like person, who has moved through our accept, connect, serve, and lead phases. Here is the very brief outline of the blueprint that people follow. Our “Check Us Out Seminar” and “Small Group Manual” cover this system in detail.



Mission Target Group

Our target group (the people we believe God has called and uniquely equipped us to reach) has been summed up by the profile of a couple that we call, “Williamson Wayne and Wendy.” Our description of them was drawn from a composite sketch found through studies of our community. They represent the typical white-collar couple, which (along with their three children) comprise the largest and fastest growing segment of the county. This trend will

continue. Demographic studies⁶ reveal the following facts about a typical Williamson County Family:

1. They are between 25 and 50 years of age.
2. Their children are between the ages of 5 and 18.
3. Both husband and wife work outside the home, although the wife usually works less than full time. The husband tends to work 55-60+ hours each week.
4. Their household income is somewhere between \$65,000 and \$120,000 each year, with the median household income being somewhere around \$72,300 (against the US average of \$40,000).
5. There is a 30-minute commute to work each day (usually to Nashville).
6. They are active in sports and recreational activities, both for themselves and their children. Although they are wealthy, they are likely to have significant loans and debt.
7. Wayne and Wendy are often experiencing marriage problems and they are concerned about the moral environment in which their children are growing up, knowing that drug and alcohol use among teenagers in this area is higher than the national average.
8. They tend to vote republican, but have been influenced by politically correct, post-modern ideology, especially in regard to gender, ethnicity, and tolerance. Consequently they are not quite sure about traditional morality and male-female roles. They reject, out of hand, the harsh lines drawn in more fundamental churches.
9. Almost all of them have some type of Christian heritage (through their teen age years and even into adulthood) and they are easily drawn to, but slightly nervous about, contemporary community churches.
10. They like the idea of a church with a more contemporary music style (baby boomer), a pastor who teaches the Bible and applies it to everyday life (but is not "preachy"), a casual atmosphere, and an environment that will help the family, especially the children (children's ministry and youth ministry).

Our philosophy of ministry has operated with the needs of these people in mind from the beginning. We have seen ourselves as missionaries, trying to reach these people with the gospel of Christ in ways that are designed to meet their unique needs.

To be clear, we hope and pray that we will continue to reach people outside of this profile. Missions (like the different ones that the apostles Paul and Peter undertook) and churches (like the churches in Jerusalem and Rome) are most effective when they know the people that they have been called to reach. The plan to reach everybody in general usually results in reaching very few people in particular. This is because the generalist church is not equipping

itself to uniquely impact and help people with the limited resources at its disposal. Bigger churches can be broader than HCC, but we also know that no single church can be everything to everybody and we feel uniquely qualified, equipped, and called to help “Williamson Wayne and Wendy.” In this way, from the beginning, the leaders of HCC have tried to think and act like the apostle Paul would, as a missionary to this group of people. “Williamson Wayne and Wendy” have influenced everything we do. And so far, by sticking with this focus, God has used HCC to reach them. By and large, we are a church full of Williamson Waynes and Wendys and their children. In 2004 God enabled us to effectively expand the range of our target mission to now include those twenty five years through their early thirties. We are now more comfortably a church reaching people 25 to 50 years of age.

Growth Barriers

Over the past few years, the Pastor-elders have carefully and prayerfully reviewed the barriers that middle-sized churches run up against in their efforts to reach unchurched people and to grow by evangelism. By God’s grace, we have delineated and worked through four of the key barriers that a church must overcome to effectively pass the 400 barrier.⁷ Our previous strategic plans describe our efforts to over-come these barriers and God has blessed us (but we still need to keep an eye on them).

Barrier # 1 – Finite Facilities

Barrier # 2 – Financial Challenges

Barrier # 3 – Staff Shortage

Barrier # 4 – The Pastor as the Pastoral Care Center

Now, in March of 2008, we look forward to moving into our own new facilities. The people have risen to this initial and significant financial challenge so that, while we face significant debt, we have also been able to put significant funds into the building project. We have a larger staff, and

the church has embraced a small group system, which causes less reliance on the lead pastor and the pastor-elders as a whole. Yet three key areas of challenge remain: 1) We must continually seek to be a “missional people,” 2) our staff and elders must function as “leaders of leaders,” and 3) they must ensure that prayer and a life of the spirit permeate every level of the church.

Challenge # 1 – Seeking to be Missional in Serving the Community & Reaching the Lost

The church was started with a clear sense of purpose to reach lost people and we have worked hard to re-emphasize this mindset among our members and newcomers. We have also emphasized, but to a lesser degree, the importance of ministering to the needs of people, including the poor and disadvantaged. In the fall of 2007, we formally adopted the language of being a missional church – which simply means *we seek to be like Jesus* by emphasizing going into the community and emphasizing both 1) acts of service and 2) telling the good news in our community.⁸

In her early years, HCC functioned with more of an accent on being an “Attractional Church.” And while we will still function as that type of church in many ways, we are explicitly developing more of an accent on being a “Missional Church.” We seek to be both “Attractional and Missional.” The following is a summary of the two approaches.

Attractional Church

Come and See
 Tell the Gospel
 Come to Building, programs, staff, services
 Worship at the church
 Proclamation and Teaching
 Join us for Religious Services
 Ministry by Professional “Ministers”
 Pastors are gifted to serve us

Missional Church

Go and Be (like Jesus)
 Show and Tell the Gospel
 Go Love, serve, and meet needs
 Worship by your life
 Good Works and Good News
 Go to the people, serve their needs
 Ministry by Everyday Christians
 We are all gifted for service

The missional church is an embodiment of Jesus' teaching in John – as the father sent Jesus, now Jesus sends us (John 17:18). As Jesus ministered to human needs, while emphasizing his mission to “seek and save the lost” (Luke 19:10), so we too will minister to human needs, while emphasizing that Jesus ultimately came to rescue us for heaven and God's glory.

Many aspects of the missional approach are unnatural to people because it requires a proactive and conscious commitment to do what is often uncomfortable or challenging. Most evangelical Christians believe that reaching lost people and ministering to the needs of the community are very important. When pressed, they would agree that the needs of the disadvantaged require our best efforts to reach them and that the eternal destiny of lost people is a horrid thing. But, then again, most evangelical Christians in North America have a hard time consistently acting on this belief. Most are too busy doing many other good things, they procrastinate, wait for the minister/pastor of the church to do it, wait for the right time, or think that it will just happen naturally, when God opens the door. Some Christians really pray about reaching lost people. But, somehow, the worries and concerns of this life make us preoccupied with lesser missions and matters of less eternal weight. There are very few examples (if any) in contemporary life or in church history where those who held such passive ideas and practices ever impacted a community or reached significant numbers of lost people.

There is an important balance that we must maintain as we seek to be missional. We are committed to both ministering to the needs of the community and to telling them about the good news, but we must hold speaking the good news, if there is a conflict between the two, as a higher priority. While the poor in this world need our help, those heading into eternity in a lost state even more desperately need our help. And, as Peter Wagner pointed out years ago, churches that do not accent the proclamation of the good news as the highest priority

(evangelism), actually end up missing evangelism and, in the end, doing less for the poor.⁹ This accent is also very important with the emerging generation of Christians in North America.¹⁰ Like Europeans who abandoned Christianity before us, many of the emerging generation have been so influenced by post-modern thinking that they are unsure that faith in Jesus is essential for other people - or they are so intimidated by our culture, believing that it will not receive the message of Jesus' uniquely saving work on the cross, they shirk back and do not boldly proclaim the gospel.¹¹

Objectively, those Christians that God uses to reach lost people are highly passionate and intentional about proclaiming the full truth of how people are eternally lost without the good news of Jesus. They boldly teach that people must place their faith in Christ to be saved. It is a driving mission and practice of their lives to do whatever it takes so that all people will know this message. The commitment to evangelism was at the heart of the lives of the apostle Paul, Timothy, and the evangelists in the early church. We must repeatedly look to 1 Corinthians 9:19, where Paul reminds us, "Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible."

That same commitment lies at the heart of effective Protestant leaders in recent history, like Whitefield, Wesley, Finney, Moody, Sunday, and Graham. D.L. Moody (the most effective evangelist in America in the 1800s) described the mindset well: "I look upon this world as a wrecked vessel," he said: "God has given me a lifeboat and said to me, "Moody, save all you can . . ."¹² England's famous evangelist Charles Spurgeon stated it this way, "It is a grand thing to see a man who is thoroughly possessed with one master passion" (evangelism).¹³ Spurgeon knew, as we must know today, that we will only be effective in reaching lost people when we make it a central aim: "If you think you are going to win souls, you must throw your soul into

your work, just as a warrior must throw his soul into a battle, or victory will not be yours . . . Indeed it is a race. As such, nobody wins unless he strains every muscle and sinew.”¹⁴

This highly intentional, missional mindset lies at the root of those churches that are reaching lost people today. We call it the “Missional DNA.” As Charles S. Kelly makes clear in his book, *How Did They Do It? The Story of Southern Baptist Evangelism*, a commitment to reaching lost people must be imbedded in every level of the local church.¹⁵ We must remember the truth about effectiveness in missional Christianity for individuals, churches, and denominations is this: only those who are *highly intentional* about ministering to and reaching lost people will be consistently effective at reaching them. We must be continually working hard, planning, and casting vision, if we are to minister to and reach lost people.¹⁶ In the end, missional Christianity (and all aspects of the Christian life) is about God’s glory. We seek to reach out to people because it glorifies God – and when others respond to our love and our words – they too will come to glorify God. There is no higher calling, nor a greater joy for a human being!

Challenge # 2 – HCC Staff and Elders Become Leaders of Leaders

In declining or stagnant churches the staff and pastor-elders function as ministers or chaplains to the members of the church.¹⁷ The church members see the role of staff and pastor-elders as being that of a personal counselor or spiritual guide to each of the members, including counseling, visiting the sick, providing personal encouragement, etc. This model is a great inhibitor to the evangelistic growth of the church. This is because the staff and pastor-elders become the limiting factor for the growth of the church. Once they have ministered to as many as they can (typically one staff person for every 75 in attendance), the church’s growth stops.

This happens because the staff and pastor-elders get burned out and the people's needs are not met, causing the attitude of the members to sour and the growth of the church to decline.

Evangelistically growing churches typically have a more biblical model, based upon Ephesians 4:11-13, where the role of staff and elders is not to “minister to members,” but to “lead leaders, who minister to the members.” To move beyond this barrier, HCC must develop a church culture where 1) staff and elders see their primary role, after being godly people, as developing leaders and 2) we have a healthy small group system, where the small group is the primary care unit for each person in the group.¹⁸

HCC will experience sustained growth only to the extent that we develop ever-expanding leaders and small groups (as centers of pastoral care) – which are not dependent on the efforts of a few. Effective small groups are absolutely essential for the continued numerical growth of HCC and assimilation of new people.

Challenge # 3 – Seeing Prayer and a Life of the Spirit at Every Level of HCC.

From the first days that HCC was established, we have sought to ground all that we do in prayer. We want to see ongoing prayer at every level of HCC, from the leadership of pastor-elders and their concentrated prayer times, to the pastor-elder's prayer walking around our buildings during services, to most members filling in prayer and care cards each week, and special prayer times in our services and small groups. We want to witness prayer testimonies in our Sunday services, special prayer groups and prayer meetings, 24 hour prayer and fasting gatherings, and a strong emphasis on personal and family prayer times. We want to be a praying people who are led by God's Holy Spirit.

Vision and Strategy March, 2008

The following descriptions are the specifics of our vision and strategy for HCC in March, 2008. The elements below are brief, succinct statements of our overall plans.

A Vision of *Intentional Love*

We are a church which evaluates itself primarily by the changed lives of the people it touches through Christ's Intentional Love. It is a love displayed by "missional living," where, like Jesus, we serve people and help them accept the Grace and Truth of God's Kingdom. And it is a love displayed by "relational discipleship," where we help thousands connect together in the Ways of Jesus to serve and lead and become more and more like Him.

We hope to do the following in the next 2 to 5 years:

1. Develop an actualized commitment to "Missional Christianity." This commitment will be reflected by the habits, ministries, and attitudes of at least 50% of HCC people. We believe "missional Christianity" focuses upon two things: HCC members *doing acts of service* to meet the needs of others and HCC members *proclaiming the "good news"* to those they encounter.
2. We will become known as a "Missional People" by our *acts of service*. This involves the development and support of signature ministries that meet substantive needs in our community. These ministries will be so important that the community would be deeply disappointed and suffer a noticeable loss without the presence of HCC.
3. We will become known as a "Missional People" by our ministry to the larger world. We commit our hearts, lives, and financial resources to this end. Not only do we see the new buildings as centers through which we will meet the needs of the community, but we will also continue with our commitment to give 10% of our regular offerings away to the poor/needy and for missions. Specifically, we will continue to give 5% of our budget to foreign missions, 3% to the poor/needy locally, and 2% to church planting in North America.
4. We will become a church grounded in "Relational Discipleship." As Jesus showed us, relationships are the key to discipleship. Our relationships will be close, authentic, and counter-cultural because they will be based on Jesus' way of loving and leading us to become more and more like him. We will create various relational environments, with a focus on our weekly small groups.
5. We will become a people who truly become "brothers and sisters" to one another and experience church life as the "family of God." We will be involved in the hard work of really loving one another – speaking the truth in love, helping each other in the hard times, holding each other accountable for Christ-living, and continually relying on God's grace that will not let us go.

We will do the following in the next 6 months:

1. Encourage HCC people to personally apply their learnings from our “Missional Church” teaching series (in January) through involvement in our **Community Needs Assessment** and by showing acts of humble service to the people we know in their community and by inviting those people to HCC classes, groups, and events. The Community Needs Assessment will help the church to determine which areas of need within the community we are most suited and called to address.
2. Encourage further exploration and feedback on ministry opportunities in East Africa, where we hope to find a signature ministry and missions focus that makes a difference for the people in that tumultuous part of the world.
3. The elders, staff, small group coaches, and small group leaders will move to more consistent follow-up with HCC people where they express greater “intentional love” through calls, emails, cards, and informal gatherings for support.
4. We develop stronger “relational discipleship” systems, specifically through our small group system, with more effective coaching and small group leadership. We will re-launch this system in a training and kick-off event in August.

Intentional Love in HCC’s Values, Process, and Structure
(*Accept-Connect-Serve-Lead*)

***Accept* – fully embracing God’s Grace and Truth**

We believe that at the very heart of discipleship today lies a balanced acceptance of both God’s Grace and His Truth. The very mission of HCC is centered on leading people into this acceptance of Christ.

We hope to do the following in the next 2 to 5 years:

1. Grow from a church which emphasizes Grace and Truth with an average weekend attendance of about 525 at the end of 2007, to a church of 700 to 800 in attendance by the end of 2009, and 1200 in attendance by the end of 2011.
2. See at least 1/2 of the growth (new people who join HCC) come from those who are truly and authentically Accepting the Grace and Truth of Jesus for the first time.
3. Adopt one or more new sites for HCC beyond the current Gardner Drive site.

4. See at least 50-125 people baptized at HCC each year. Included in this total will be 20-50 youth who are baptized into Christ.
5. Regularly offer classes and seminars that help people to an acceptance and commitment to live under God's Grace and Truth in baptism. Examples would be: "Check Us Out" seminars, Exploring Christianity Classes, 5th-6th Grade Basics, 7th-8th Grade Basics, and 9th-12th Grade Basics.
6. See at least 25 HCC people conducting one-on-one studies with those who have yet to "Accept God's Grace and Truth in Jesus" on an annual basis. This will involve the development of training for these people in one-on-one evangelism and discipleship.

We will do the following in the next 6 months:

1. Use our new facility to draw-in our community in the following ways:
 - March 1st – Love, Sex, and Marriage Seminar – with Monday night follow-up
 - March Good Friday Service
 - April or May – A Writer's Night
 - May – A Family Movie Night
 - June – A Family Movie Night
 - June – Grand Opening Party for the Youth Building (?)
 - July – Family VBS
 - **August 24th – Grand Opening of all Buildings (Big Community Outreach).**
2. Move into two out of the three buildings at our new facility (worship center and youth center) on April 27th, without providing a 5th through 8th grade program (they will be in the service).
3. Begin offering simultaneous Sunday morning services by August 15, 2008 – one in the worship center and one in the youth center. The service in the youth center will have live music (and everything else live, just like in the worship center), but the teaching will be a video-venue, broadcasting the live teaching from the worship center into the youth center.
4. Provide HCC's "Check-Us-Out" seminar multiple times.
5. Provide HCC's 5th-6th Grade Basics teaching and call for a response.
6. Provide various opportunities for our students to respond to the gospel in the 7th – 12th grade program.
7. Provide HCC's "Exploring Christianity" twice – once in the spring and once in August.

***Connect* – walking closely with Each Other and God**

We believe that small groups are the key place for meaningful connection to occur with one another – a connection that helps us to also connect with God.¹⁹ Our future plans for this phase will focus upon strengthening our small groups and congregational fellowship events that lead people into those small groups.

We hope to do the following in the next 2 to 5 years:

1. Develop our small group system so that 90% of the average Sunday morning assembly attendance is involved in a small group each month. This will require regular promotion, prayer, and focus upon our small groups as a church.
2. In annual church-wide surveys, see at least 50% of the congregation agree that HCC has a culture, in our small group environments, of Christ-like, intentional love.
3. Develop a clear strategic pathway from “public relationships” (hundreds together in weekend services) to “social relationships” (informal settings with 12 to 75 people), to “personal relationships” (4 to 16 people in a small group setting).
4. Develop and host a set number of effective “social relationship” environments (12-75+, also called fellowship events), where people can foster relationships outside of small groups, that will hopefully lead to small group environments. These events may best function as mid-sized groups, clusters of Small Groups, or ministries which meet on a pre-planned basis.
5. Connect each person who is baptized at HCC with a discipler, someone who will lead them through one-on-one studies for three months after their baptism. This helps ensure that each person is well-grounded in their fledgling faith.
6. Develop a culture of prayer within the church, so that prayer permeates all levels of life at HCC (both corporate and individual). This effort is led by our elders and coordinating deacons.
7. Hold regular prayer/fasting events throughout the year.
8. Develop or provide personal devotion materials for use by HCC members. See these materials widely used both individually and in families on a daily basis.

We will do the following in the next 6 months:

1. Develop study small groups in more public settings – on Sundays, Monday nights, and Tuesday nights to more easily invite and retain newcomers. Because these study small groups are sub-groups within a larger gathering, they enable newcomers to more easily move from “public relationships” on Sunday mornings, to “social relationship” with the larger study small group community, and then into “personal relationships” within small

groups. The goal is to develop nine small groups, ministering to 100 adults, under this format by the end of April 2008.

2. Hold an effective Good Friday praise and prayer event on March 21st, 2008.
3. Host special events this spring for both the men's (BraveHeart's seminar with Brad Stine) and women's ministries. These events will draw people into larger group "social relationships" (informal settings with 12 to 75 people) which will help inspire people in the Ways of Jesus and lead to potential men's and women's small groups or "personal relationships" opportunities (4 to 16 people in a small group setting).
4. Develop and administer an objective survey that gives feedback and direction regarding our 5th-12th grade small group system by end of May 2008.
5. Develop and strengthen HCC's system/structure of coaches and small group leaders so that it results in a 90% satisfaction report (according to an objective survey) by all the elders, coaches, and small group leaders by the kick off of new small groups in August 2008.
6. Under Chad Harrington's leadership, develop a summer "College Age Ministry" that will connect our College age students to one another and to God.

Serve – ministering to others in the name of Jesus

We believe that all Christians are called to be "ministers" by using their God-given gifts in service both inside the church family and outside in the community.²⁰ In this phase, we will seek to focus on encouraging one another in works of ministry and in the giving of our tithes and offerings for the overall ministry of the church.

We hope to do the following in the next 2 to 5 years:

1. See at least 70% of the members and regulars actively involved in ongoing ministries of the church, with a focus on "serving according to one's gifts and passions/desires."
2. Continue to encourage all of our members to give/tithe at least 10% of their income to the church. See at least 40% of the members achieve this goal.
3. Encourage service involvement in such a way that *all* HCC people feel like they *can* "do it." Make sure that all communications and publications inspire people to respond to God joyfully and from motives within themselves (placed there by the Holy Spirit).

We will do the following in the next 6 months:

1. Encourage and thank those involved in set-up ministries, etc. as we move into our new building. Also, help them find new channels for their gifts and new areas to serve, from parking lot ministry to helping with the Community Needs Assessment.
2. Start and complete a Community Needs Assessment. Using information gained in the assessment, we will commit to 1 to 3 signature ministries in which HCC people will work together to meet the needs of people in our community, making the most significant impact possible.
3. In conjunction with the Community Needs Assessment, create and distribute a church-wide survey by early summer to assess the gifts, passions, and desires of HCC people so they can be more effectively placed in areas of service and ministry.

Lead – discipling others in the Ways of Jesus

We believe that all Christians are called to be disciplers of others... someone who leads another person to follow them as they seek to follow Jesus. Developing more godly leaders within our church is crucial to the success of our overall vision and mission.

We hope to do the following in the next 2 to 5 years:

1. Develop a leadership-development culture, where every ministry and facet of HCC puts concerted energy and effort into developing more leaders, making it a top priority for all of us.
2. Regularly see that all leaders have apprentices – leaders in training who are being prepared to lead themselves.
3. Regularly see at least 30%+ of HCC members actively involved in formal leadership roles in the ministries of the church.
4. Develop established systems, processes, and material for leadership recruitment, development, and empowerment for those in all leadership roles.

We will do the following in the next 6 months:

1. Emphasize the Leading-Leaders philosophy - leadership development as the top priority for all elders, staff, deacons, coaches, and small group leaders. They must all see themselves first and foremost as “leaders of other leaders” in their individual ministries.

2. Recruit leaders and potential leaders to attend the “DNA of Leadership Development” Seminar, put on by Jon Ferguson of Community Christian Church and New Thing Network. We will host this seminar on April 12, 2008.
3. Formally adopt a modified “Policy Governance” model and position paper that will guide the pastor-elders and staff in their roles. This is a written document which outlines the roles and responsibilities of each leader. Additionally, the pastor-elders and staff adopted a Human Resource manual in the summer of 2007 that delineates staff responsibilities.
4. Develop more elders – including mentoring at least one new candidate for the eldership immediately – with both study material and process for his involvement in pastor-elder meetings and decisions. Mike Shake will assume this role and consider being put before the church to serve as an elder in 2009.
5. Develop our Coordinating Deacons as potential pastor-elders. Add two or three new coordinating deacons and implement a study program with all coordinating deacons so they can learn more about what it means to be a pastor-elder over the next year. John Williams, our deacon of men’s ministry will also join this group for the study sessions. Alan Minchew has agreed to embrace this role and we hope to add one or two more qualified men by the end of April.
6. Diane Reasons has agreed to serve as the deacon of women’s ministry. She will lead this ministry for two years and develop an apprentice.

Concluding Summary

This strategic plan is flexible, and will surely witness changes and modification. As a church, we must come together and discuss our progress regularly. We must also constantly evaluate our progress, keeping a close eye on God, who guides our beliefs, mission, vision, values, and strategies. We will need to continue to frankly and openly look at our progress and our faithfulness in these areas, while also celebrating and testifying to our successes with God’s help. We must continue to pray earnestly about our God-given mission and vision. But most importantly, in all things, we must continue to trust God, seeking His grace, wisdom, and providence. *Soli Deo Gloria! (Glory To God Alone).*

¹ Bob Biehl, *Master Planning* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1997).

² See Alister McGrath, *Evangelicalism and the Future of Christianity* (InterVarsity Press, 1995)

³ James North, *Union In Truth: An Interpretive History of the Restoration Movement* (Cincinnati, Ohio: Standard Publishing, 1994) and Bob Russell, *What We Believe* [Video Series] Southeast Christian Church, 1996.

⁴ Thom Rainer and Eric Gieger, *Simple Church* (Broadman and Holman, 2007).

⁵ Jim Putman, *Church is a Team Sport* (Baker, 2008).

⁶ North American Mission Board Demographic Report for 2121 Fieldstone Parkway, Franklin, TN 37069 in a 5 Mile Ring, May 2001 and subsequently modified.

⁷ See the extensive list in Elmer Towns, Peter Wagner, and Thom Rainer, *The Everychurch Guide To Growth* (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman and Holman, 1998), pp. 86-95. See also Carl George, *How To Break Growth Barriers* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1993) and Gary MacIntosh, *One Size Doesn't Fit All: Bringing Out The Best in Any Size Church* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Fleming H. Revell, 1999).

⁸ Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways* (2007) and Alan Hirsch and Michael Frost, *The Shaping of Things to Come* (2006).

⁹ Peter Wagner shows the balance needed here in his book *Church Growth and the Whole Gospel* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1981).

¹⁰ See Dave Olson, *The American Church in Crisis* (Zondervan, 2008).

¹¹ David Kinnaman, *UnChristian* (2008).

¹² William G. McLoughlin, *Revivals, Awakenings, & Reform: An Essay on Religion and Social Change in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 144.

¹³ C. H. Spurgeon, *The Soul Winner* (Reprint Edition; New Kingsington, PA.: Whitaker House, 1995). p. 233.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 203-204.

¹⁵ Charles S. Kelly, *How Did They Do It? The Story of Southern Baptist Evangelism* (New Orleans: Insight Press, 1993).

¹⁶ Iain Murray, *Revival and Revivalism: The Making and Marring of American Evangelicalism, 1750-1858* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1995).

¹⁷ There is a dramatic difference on this point between churches that are reaching lost, unchurched people and those that are not. See Thom Rainer, *Surprising Insights From The Unchurched: And Proven Ways To Reach Them* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2001).

¹⁸ See the important information on this point in C. Peter Wagner's, *Leading Your Church To Growth: The Secret of Pastor/People Partnership In Dynamic Church Growth* (Ventura, California: Regal Books, 1984).

¹⁹ We established our small groups on the model for small groups advocated by Carl George in *The Coming Church Revolution* (Grand Rapids: Revell, 1994) and Jim Putman, *Church is a Team Sport* (Baker, 2008).

²⁰ We utilize the ideas promoted by most church growth experts in this area, especially Christian Schwarz and the natural church development tools. For an introduction see Christian Schwarz, *Natural Church Development* (Carol Stream, IL: ChurchSmart Resources, 1996).