
Asbury UMC Moves from Coasting to Making a Difference

Restarting the Conversation for Long-range Vision

When it comes to vision statements, many church leaders have lost interest. And for good reason—most vision statements are generic and useless. I like to say that your church really doesn't need a vision statement, it needs a visionary state of mind. Yet, there needs to be a way to cultivate that state of mind. **Your team does need some ideas on paper to become a sort of "mental charging station" for themselves and other leaders.** Think of a vivid vision statement as "base camp" for the team to assemble around, in order to take "vision casting treks" and "meaning excursions" all day long; that is the daily work of ministry.

So how do you get this vision thing right? What does success look like? I answer the question for you in my new book [God Dreams](#). More than that, I created a step-by-step guide for church teams.

To inspire you along the way, **here is a case study from Asbury United Methodist Church in Raleigh, NC, led by Terry Bryant.** Before we jump into their "Coasting or Difference Making?" vision, let's clarify what it is we are looking at.

First, it is a vivid description example of a long-range vision or what I call a "beyond-the-horizon" vision. Many have abandoned thinking long as discipline as a result of the constant changes of culture and technology. But for the church, there are many foundational reasons why leadership should think long-range. [Here are twelve of them.](#)

Second, it is only one fourth of what you need to have a complete visionary plan. This is the start – the long-range **context** to visionary plan. There are three other horizons to develop and the plan is eventually anchored in four immediate action initiatives in the next 90 days. To see the model for visionary planning check out [how the Horizon Storyline works.](#)

Asbury's Vision: Coasting or Difference Making?

Summary: In the next five years, every person who calls our church home will be linking arms in difference-making relationships. We will focus efforts on two needs—hunger and education—in the three concentric-circle ministry areas (in the geography of Acts 1:8).

We live in a highly educated, thriving, and dynamic culture in North Raleigh. What we experience far too often is that while we are constantly busy, we often feel like we are coasting through life. We always have stuff to do but seldom feel like we are making a difference. So we will move from coasting to engaging gears, moving past meaningless self-centered activity and accelerating new and practical ways of living out our faith. We will be salt and light to our neighbors (Matt. 5:13–16).

Strengthened through our common worship and group engagement, we intend to be difference makers in our local community and world through two key areas of focus: First, being on mission to end hunger, recognizing the call of our Lord, “For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat” (Matt. 25:35 NIV). Second, being on mission to improving underresourced education centers, recognizing the call of Scripture to “train up a child in the way he should go” (Prov. 22:6). We are going to become a place where it becomes inescapable that to be part of Asbury is to respond relationally and tangibly to these needs in our community and world.

***We intend to do this specifically through relational involvement and service with the Asbury Preschool, Lynn Road Elementary, and our partners in Haiti (Hearts and Hands for Haiti). We will accomplish this through mentoring children, encouraging educators, improving school campuses, and engaging with parents. We see hundreds of unchurched parents and children from the Asbury Preschool finding new life in Christ at Asbury. We see thousands of pounds of fresh produce donated locally. We see not only hundreds of Asbury’s people visiting Haiti and engaging with children there but also sending millions of meals to Haiti. We see hundreds at Asbury serving as lion pals in our mentoring program for children. We see hundreds of backpacks filled with food for children on the weekend. That our Lord might proclaim, “You loved me when you packaged that meal, you walked with me when you grabbed the hand of an underresourced student and served, you blessed me when you received that family into my church” (Matt. 25).**

***Jerusalem and Judea (Asbury Preschool), Samaria (Lynn Road), ends of the earth (Haiti) (Acts 1:8).**

Church: **Asbury United Methodist Church, Raleigh, NC**

Pastor: **Terry Bryant**

Vision Template: [Need adoption](#) in harness with [geographic saturation](#)

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