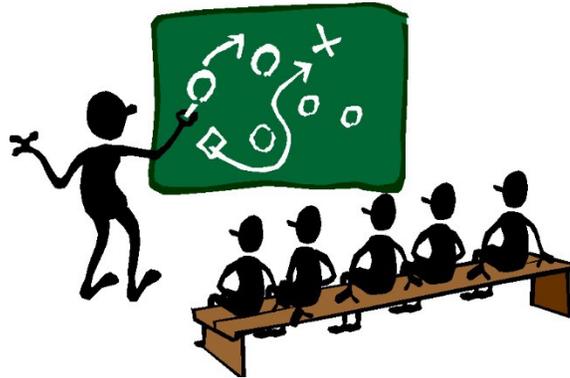


Let's Make a Plan

On Saturday, June 24 we will gather as a church family for a day of Strategic planning. The purpose of planning is action. Action is not about pressing people to spend more time at church. It is about helping people invest their God-given gifts and talents in the world. Artist William Holman Hunt painted the famous scene of Jesus standing at the door knocking a century ago. His piece proved to be enduringly popular, often been reproduced and re-painted by others. A common interpretation of the image is that Jesus is waiting at the door of our hearts to enter our lives. But there is another way to understand the picture: let's say the door is to the church and Jesus is knocking and calling to the members to come out and meet him in the mission field. Jesus is calling to us to share our faith and address the hurts and the hopes with the world.



By nature we all drift towards an inward focus—a preoccupation with our own immediate cares and concerns. Strategic planning is an intentional effort to re-focus ourselves on outward mission.

Where are we headed? Yogi Berra said it, “If you don’t know where you are going, you’ll wind up someplace else.” The church that looks to the future sees God. God goes before our church, inviting us to the future that he has promised and prepared for us. Asking this question of ourselves is the first step in taking up God’s invitation.

What kind of future are we building? Effective planning is concerned with the destiny of our families, our friends and the many people who will be helped by our church in years to come. There is a direct correlation between the strength of a church and the quality of life in

the surrounding community. We should approach planning with a theology of service, not survival. Our concern should not be maintenance but advancing the cause of Christ in the world.

What are our strengths and gifts as a congregation? Planning is not about naming your problems and lamenting your insufficiencies. That leads only to depression and conflict. Planning is about naming and claiming your strengths, your spiritual gifts and your competencies. In this way we affirm what God has done and is doing among us. The art of strategic planning is to do better what we do

best. Only in this way do we begin with God.

What is God calling us to accomplish in mission? The key word is “accomplish.” A good plan doesn’t aim at producing activity and busyness but accomplishment and achievement for God.

Winston Churchill said, “A good plan is necessary but you should occasionally look at the results.” The day of mission is at hand in Oakland County. The data is clear that some 80 percent of our population is un-churched. Of the people we meet and interact with every day it is safe to assume most don’t attend church and neither did their parents or grandparents. It is crucial to our planning to rediscover that we are living in the mission field. Only then can we begin to adopt the habits and practices of a missionary church. Jesus is knocking at our door and he is calling to us to come and join him on the mission field!

In hope and confidence,

Pastor Tom