

## Vision – Practice and Promotion

By Rev. Derek Li (translated by Deacon Robert Lam)

A vision should be seen as goals with workable steps to achieve them. The church community needs to know why and how they will benefit from such goals. Lay leaders should participate in the planning and promotion of the vision, while the congregation must be involved in the practice.

For the three language groups in SCBC:

1. Visions and goals should be led by the respective pastoral teams (xPTs) comprised of pastors and deacons.
2. Respective ministry teams (xMTs) formed by pastors, deacons and lay leaders should play an important role in the assessment of the present situation and condition of the congregation, and implementation:
  - a. Each year a “Brain-storming Retreat” should be held in the 4th quarter for the assessment and implementation processes. The congregation should be informed of the details.
  - b. A prayer meeting focusing on an interim review and evaluation should be held in the middle of the following year. Adjustments, changes and encouragement of the members are made wherever deemed necessary. The congregation should submit this to God in prayer, and let the Holy Spirit guide them.
  - c. A town hall meeting should be held after each of the above two meetings, to inform the congregation about the focus of the vision, how people should be involved, and prayer for renewal and God’s guidance.

The above is applicable not only to the three congregations, but also to fellowships and larger groups. We need constant renewal so that our ministries do not become too set in their ways or stale. The vision should be people-based, without over-emphasis on the administrative processes.

In general many churches will set directions and goals at year end for the coming year. However, if there are no interim reviews and evaluations in place, the church may lose steam very quickly despite enthusiastic starts. It is not easy to get back on track once the passion dies down, directions are forgotten and goals are confused.

Different levels in church leadership must focus on the promotion and implementation, so that our visions and goals do not become mere slogans or a projects. Our aim is to build an “organic church” that adapts, changes and is true to our Christian faith.

To achieve each of the above-mentioned steps, we need to ascertain the state of the congregation in terms of their daily and spiritual needs. First, a big picture is put together by seeking contributions from leaders of different parts of the church. From there it is used to guide and encourage the whole church to move forward together. In a big church like SCBC, it takes time to inform and encourage the individual languages, fellowships, ministries and community groups. Also, it takes time to help the leaders of the different areas fully understand the direction, so that they all may fully participate in the review and evaluation processes in their capacity as stake-holders. Leaders are responsible for not only declaring visions and goals, but also promoting them and providing living examples.

During busy years of simultaneous involvement in theological education and church ministry, I always set aside 20-30% of my time to interact with my co-workers and the members. Whether during appointments or in casual chats, I listen carefully and try to understand their issues and hopes in order to give them encouragement and support. I desire that our leaders would also set aside 10-30% of their time to connect with brothers/sisters, building bridges between God, people, and the church going forward.