

# **Covenant Life Church**

# Taking the Next Step

**A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR YEARS 2008-2011**

**September, 2007 VERSION**



When Martin VanBuren was Governor of New York, he wrote the following letter, dated January 31, 1829, to President Andrew Jackson:

To President Jackson:

The canal system of this country is being threatened by the spread of a new form of transportation known as “railroads”. The federal government must preserve the canals for the following reasons:

1. If the canal boats are supplanted by railroads, serious unemployment will result. Captains, cooks, drivers, hostlers, repairmen and lock tenders will be left without means of livelihood, not to mention the numerous farmers now employed in growing hay for horses.
2. Boat builders would suffer. Towline, whip and harness makers would be left destitute.
3. Canal boats are absolutely essential to the defense of the United States. In the event of the expected trouble with England, the Erie Canal would be the only means by which we could ever move the supplies so vital to modern war.

As you may well know, Mr. President, the “railroad carriages” are pulled at the enormous speed of fifteen miles per hour by “engines”, which endangers the life and limb of passengers, roar and snort their way through the countryside, setting fire to crops, scaring the livestock and frightening women and children. The Almighty never intended that people should travel at such breakneck speed.

Imagine what would have happened if there had been no one who looked ahead, who envisioned what the future could be! We might still be pulling ships along the canals of the Eastern United States.

Over the past two years the leadership of Covenant Life Church has been thinking about our future as a congregation. With the departure of Andy DeJong, CLC’s first pastor, the church went into a time of reflection concurrent with a desire to move ahead in key areas. A Vision Team was formed, and progress toward a Mission, Vision and Values statement was made. Specifically, the following areas were investigated:

A survey of the Tri-Cities area done by Percept.

A survey of Covenant Life Church, also compiled by Percept

A study of carefully identified churches that were used as benchmarks for our future.

After Pastor Bruce was settled we took up the task of developing a Mission/Vision/Values statement and preparing a strategic plan. What follows is the shortened version of the report that was endorsed by council in the fall of 2007.

## WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING IN THE CULTURE?

One of the things to consider in making our plans for the future is the answer to this question: What's been happening in the broader culture? In the longer version of this report we extensively looked at the following general trends of the Church in the United States:

### More Larger Churches

Just as large schools have replaced small ones, and large stores have replaced many smaller ones, so there is a move toward larger congregations.

The reasons for this move seem to be the following:

- The Baby Boomers and Busters are looking for full-service churches, ones that will meet a variety of needs for education, programming, and socializing.

### Raised Expectations

Another, similar way that the culture is impacting churches is in the area of raised expectations. This phenomenon has affected church planning in two ways. First of all, people want choices. A couple of generations ago Henry Ford could say that you can order a Model T in any color you want—as long as it is black. Today people want choices. In a supermarket today people expect to have at least 50,000 items for sale, whereas the local grocery of the 1940's had less than 1,000. The local grocery store now offers a drug store, flowers, banking services, etc., or they will not be competitive. Even when they are thinking about long-distance service for the telephone, people in this culture expect choices. As Leith Anderson says,

What does this mean for Covenant Life as we plan for the future? Simply this: we must look at the expectations of people who have been raised in a consumer generation. This means we must focus in our church life on **Relevance, Quality, and Choices**. We will especially need to multiply the ways that people connect with CLC. Leith Anderson refers to this as the Velcro Effect. He says,

In a church, multiple options work like Velcro. The more choices there are, the stronger the bond is likely to be between the church and the people, and the longer the bond will last. (*Leadership that Works*, p. 86).

### Busyness

In the 1960's a group of futurists predicted that by the year 2000 we would only work for a short time each week. All of the new inventions would allow us to focus on leisure instead of work. But that's not what happened. In 1977 the average work week was 43.6 hours. In 1997 it had grown to 47.1 hours.

In summary, "workers are more frazzled, insecure, and torn between work and family than they were in 1977." (Joe Tevlin, "Report says workers need more family time," *Star Tribune*, Minneapolis, MN (April 15, 1998)

In addition, busyness has become a value in our society. To not be busy is considered dishonorable by most of our society. Busyness is virtuous in our culture!

So if people are spending more time at work, and trying to spend more time in family activities, where is the time “made up”? One of those places is church. These trends have been noted in regard to busyness and the church:

- *Short-term commitments are replacing long-term commitments.* We’ll have to think of this when we are recruiting. Team teaching and leading will become more and more the norm.
- *Church activities are selectively attended.* In other words, we cannot expect people to show up for every program. People will pick among those in which they have a personal interest.
- *Churches have to compete.* When time is at a premium, people will go where they perceive they are getting the greatest value and convenience for the least expenditure of time.

(From Leith Anderson, *Leadership that Works*, pp. 73-74).

### **HOW DOES COVENANT LIFE RELATE TO ITS COMMUNITY?**

A survey was done of the congregation and this community in 2005, utilizing materials provided by Percept, a national consulting agency. In the table below we’ve placed the basic information about the community alongside the basic information about Covenant Life.

## Our Community Is...

Growing moderately (47,189 people in 2005—21% growth since 1990. 4.7% projected between 2005 and 2010)

Somewhat diverse in lifestyle (Middle American families make up 64.3% of the families)

Not very diverse in ethnic groups (95.4% are Anglo)

Somewhat Boomer oriented (45 to 62 in age – 24.4% of the population)

Children abundant (27 are 4 to 23 yrs old)

Traditional in Family Structure (78% are Married Couples)

Somewhat highly educated (89.4% graduated from high school; 30.8% college graduates)

Have identified personal needs in the areas of:

- Marriage
- Child care
- Parenting skills
- Aging parent care
- Good schools
- Hopes and dreams (33%)

Has a low stress level (poverty, basic necessity lacking, jobless, etc.)

Is average in its church involvement (35% not involved, 31% somewhat involved, 34% strongly involved).

Is well-off financially (Average income of \$70,113)

Is somewhat traditional in its Christianity (22% prefer traditional worship; 26% prefer contemporary)

Church programs preferred:

- Marriage Enrichment
- Day-School
- Divorce Recovery
- Family Activities
- Recreation Opportunities

Average resistance to change (Average age 38.2)

**What does this mean?**

## Our Church Is...

Growing (188% since 1998. Since 2004 stable, no growth)

Only slightly diverse in lifestyle/age (36.2 Age 44 and under with over \$50K per year; Mature and affluent (36%--over 45 and more than \$50K) Very little ethnic diversity (97.2% white)

Mix of Boomers and Survivors (24-44) (22% Boomers; 23% Survivors)

Children abundant (43% 4-23)

Extremely traditional in family structure (85% married couples)

Extremely highly educated (96.7% graduated from high school; 50.6% graduated from college)

Have identified personal needs in the areas of:

- Marriage
- Finding Spiritual Teaching
- Parenting skills
- Finding life direction
- Divorce
- Personal/spiritual growth (33%)

Has a very low stress level

Extremely committed to church (9% not involved; 48% somewhat involved; 43% strongly involved)

Extremely well-off financially (average household income of \$76,051)

Is extremely contemporary (61% prefer contemporary worship; 62% prefer contemporary music)

Church programs preferred:

- Parent training
- Sports/camping
- Bible study and prayer groups
- Family activities
- Spiritual Development programs (31%)

Somewhat low resistance to change (Average age 29.7)

There are several things to note as we apply this information to strategic plan.

- Young families make up a significant proportion of this area, and this church, with its emphasis on youth and children's ministries, is well-positioned to reach them.
- We "fit" in this community, and therefore it will be an easy transition into this church for people from the community.
- The "felt needs" of the community and church are similar, giving us a guide to programming that will be successful.
- Though this community appears to be well-churched, 35% of the population is not involved in a church, and 31% are only moderately involved. In other words, there is a great potential for harvest among unbelievers.
- A large proportion of the community population is made up of children, youth and young adult, a good target for hopefully fruitful ministry.

In summary, Covenant Life Church is in a place and at a time when we can expect a significant harvest. After a time of re-orienting, we see a time of growth ahead. There have been 2 years of transition in this church. Andy's departure provided a great challenge. Yet the interim period was handled well, with priorities listed and work going ahead.

#### **OTHER INFORMATION ABOUT COVENANT LIFE**

The anticipation of a longer term pastor has contributed to a sense of excitement about the future. That excitement is seen in attendance trends and in the monies that people are entrusting to our care. Attendance has stabilized, and has increased. Some months in this past year the attendance growth from a year before was 25%. What should we plan for? The Vision Team concluded that we should plan for a growth of

30% in our ministries  
50% in our worship attendance.

This means that we will have to plan and prepare and pray for:  
900 people here on Sunday morning (600 adults, 300 children)  
90 to 100 youth in high school  
60 to 80 youth in Middle School

Corresponding growth in each program.

Our Building Task force is making plans for this growth to be managed with increased ministry space on our upper floors.

#### **Congregational Health**

In the spring of this year we also used an analysis tool developed by a ministry called *Natural Church Development*. The theory behind this information is that churches grow "biotically". In other words, if an organism is healthy, it grows very naturally. In

his research of over 10,000 congregations around the world he found that there are eight variables in the church that affect the health of that congregation. They are:

- **Empowering Leadership:** The leadership in growing churches seeks to empower people for ministry. People in these churches are equipped, supported and motivated for ministry. It is clearly communicated that ministry belongs to the people.
- **Gift-Oriented Ministry:** People are encouraged to discover their gifts and to focus their volunteer work in those areas where God has empowered them.
- **Passionate Spirituality:** Members in healthy churches are excited about their faith.
- **Functional Structures:** The structure permits and encourages new ministries and new ideas. There are few hoops to jump through to get permission.
- **Inspiring Worship:** In the healthy churches attending worship is fun because there is a sense that God shows up.
- **Holistic Small Groups:** It is essential for health to have people in small enough groups that they can go beyond discussing Bible passages and share the issues and concerns of daily life.
- **Need-Oriented Evangelism:** Outreach is focused on the questions and needs of the non-Christians in the area.
- **Loving Relationships:** People in healthy churches care for each other and gather outside of the official “church” functions to care about each other.

After defining these signs of health, Brian Schwartz investigated healthy, growing churches and declining churches. His conclusion was that a church cannot grow beyond its “Minimum Factor”, the weakest of these 8 links. He used the analogy of a barrel with 8 staves. You can’t fill the barrel beyond the shortest stave.

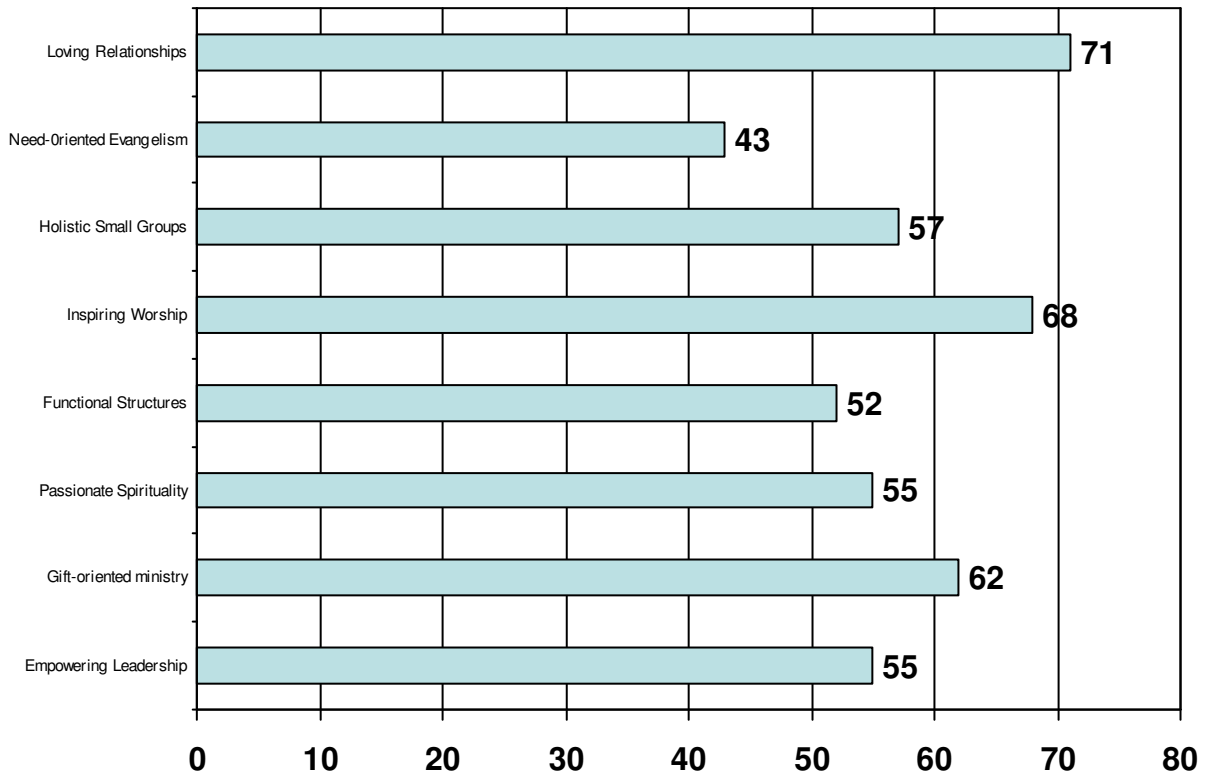
How does Covenant Life score in these various areas? The table below shows the result of the questionnaire answered by involved members of Covenant Life. There are a couple of things to know that will help with interpretation of the information below:

- 50 is the “mean” score—in other words, that is the average in the churches around the world.
- 70% of the churches surveyed scored between 35 and 65
- 15% score above 65
- 15% score below 35.

So health is defined as having a score over 50. Glowing health in an area would be defined as any score over 65. Growth-destroying sickness would be represented by any score below 35.

How did CLC do?

See the graph on the next page.



In summary, we are very healthy. We should make plans to address the weakness in evangelism and the somewhat weak area of functional structures in this plan.

**WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?**

The following Mission, Vision and Values statements have been endorsed by council.

**Going**

**Growing**

**Our Mission: Taking the Next Step: Gathering**

**Gathering** people for authentic worship and mutual encouragement to live for Jesus  
**Growing** as we study and apply the Word of God in a way that's relevant today  
**Going** to our community, country and world to share Jesus and serve people

**Our Vision:** In the next three years we will Grow Deeper, Grow Larger and Reach a New Generation as we share Christ.

Growing Deeper will be evidenced by being a community of people who are each taking the next step to:

- Gather regularly in both large and small groups
- Engage in committed relationships within the community of believers
- Actively grow in the love and knowledge of Jesus Christ
- Identify and use their spiritual gifts
- Understand grace and extend it to others
- Share Christ through relationships with people outside the church

Growing Larger will be evidenced by:

- People regularly coming to faith
- 900 people in worship regularly
- An average growth of 30% in our programs

Reaching a New Generation will be evidenced by:

- The priority we give to youth and adult ministries in programming
- A decline in our median age

**We Value:**

**God's Word as our rule for faith and life**

**Authenticity** – a transparency and sincerity in our worship and witness.

**Celebration** of God's goodness in good times and difficult times.

**Cooperation** with other organizations and Christian churches to build up the kingdom

**Creativity and Innovation** in accomplishing our vision

**Effective Communication** that informs and unifies ministry

**Empowerment** to follow our God-given passions and use our spiritual gifts

**Flexibility** as we seek effective ways to Gather, Grow and Go in Christ

**Freestyle Small Groups** that connect us around common passions

**Inclusiveness** which opens our programs and services to the wider community

**Involvement** with people in our community, nation and world

**Ministry** that impacts every age and stage in life

**Teachable Moments and Transformational Experiences** for every age

**Team-Based Leadership** where we encourage and support each other

**Prayer as the foundation - expecting the supernatural to happen.**



### **Step 5: From Maturity to Modeling**

There is a profound depth to these people. They have been molded by and rest in the power and love of God. They become the models for people around them. Service is normative for their lives.



### **Step 4: From Discovery to Maturity**

The experience of God is focused. They understand the message of God and are able to teach revealed truth. They understand their spiritual gifts and are using them. They are learning dependence upon God in difficult times. They are serving in their area of giftedness and passion in the local church and beyond.



### **Step 3: From Commitment to Discovery**

People are experiencing the love of God in many and diverse ways. They are studying the Word and are being changed as they interact with God's people. They begin to discover the joy of serving and are becoming involved in the local church.



### **Step 2: From Seeker to Commitment**

The seeker has a willingness to embrace the love of God as a possibility for their life to change. They are open to pursue and consider the revealed truth of God in Jesus Christ.



### **Step 1: From uninformed to seeker**

The uninformed person has no real experience with the Living Lord Jesus. He/she may have many misconceptions about the love of God. There has been a refusal to acknowledge or yield to the authority and power of the Lord.

Notes: There are two things of importance to note in regard to our use of these descriptive steps. First, the expectation is that we will continue to cycle through steps 3, 4 and 5 in various areas of our spiritual life. Secondly, though we have a Step 5 that is listed, this should not be construed to mean that someone at Step 5 in an area of the Christian life has “arrived”. We are constantly in formation through the powerful work of the Holy Spirit, and the more one grows in one area of the Christian life, the more he/she realizes, with humility, the need to grow in other areas.

### **SO WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR US IN THE NEXT THREE YEARS?**

The material above suggests a plan for us to move forward, to prioritize aspects of ministry. As we make our plans, there are three different time-frames to think about. *Tactical* plans are those that are for immediate implementation. They are usually plans for the next three months. Though there will be a few tactical plans in what appears below, most of what we will be focusing on will be *Conceptual* plans and *Strategic* plans. A strategic plan usually covers a period of three to 18 months. A Conceptual plan is a picture of what we intend to develop over a longer period of time, usually three to five years.

Each area of ministry is working on strategic plans that have been developed. Below is a picture of some of the exciting conceptual plans that are being prayed over

#### **Prayer**

Conceptual Plan: We thank God for the many people who have dedicated themselves to prayer in this church. Trudie Kok has shepherded a prayer ministry that is varied and effective in seeking blessing on this ministry. As we look to the future, living out our value that prayer is the foundation of all we do, we propose that we develop the prayer ministry in the next three years so that it has the following aspects to it.

- Training in prayer. There will be regular, once or twice-per-year classes on the basics of personal prayer. Out of this class will come others on how to pray for healing, etc. (Ministry in steps 3,4, and 5)
- Prayer after the morning services. We will offer prayer after each morning service so that people who attend our worship will have opportunity for their personal needs to be addressed in prayer. (Ministry in steps 2, 3, 4 and 5)
- Each staff member will have prayer partners who are praying for their needs on a regular basis. (Ministry in steps 3, 4 and 5)
- Prayer will become part of our outreach, with prayer walks in neighborhoods around the church prior to events such as the Turkey/Ham giveaway. (Ministry in steps 1, 2 and 3)
- A mid-week prayer worship service on a regular basis. (Ministry in steps 3, 4 and 5)

- A Sunday morning prayer meeting before the worship services.  
(Ministry in steps 2, 3, 4 and 5)
- Congregational-led prayers in worship services, with services in which we take prayer requests.  
(Ministry in steps 3, 4 and 5)
- An additional, larger prayer room.
- CLC as a Mom's In Touch hub.  
(Ministry in steps 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5)
- Additional prayer teams similar to the Pastor Prayer Matrix for specific ministries.  
(Ministry in steps 3, 4 and 5)
- A Church-wide network of prayer partners, where people are called to see what we can be praying for in their lives.  
(Ministry in steps 3, 4 and 5)
- Development of a Prayer – Chain, a place where via telephone and email immediate and emergency needs can be met through prayer.  
(Ministry in steps 1-5)
- Development of a Request means for people to communicate their prayer requests. (Ministry in steps 1-5)

That's a conceptual picture. Here are some of the strategic steps to be taken in fulfilling this dream.

## **Evangelism**

### ***Conceptual Plans***

At the end of 3 years the Evangelism ministry of CLC will have the following characteristics:

- A team of those gifted in and passionate about evangelism will be formed that will follow-up on visitors to worship and those referred from other ministries.
- Training will be offered for anyone wanting to share their faith more effectively.
- People who are gifted and passionate on discipleship will be ready to follow-up with anyone making a first-time commitment to Jesus.
- Our new members' process will be revised to focus more on the discovery of spiritual gifts, with the result that more people will be able to discover and rejoice in the gift of evangelism.

- Each ministry in Covenant Life will be encouraged to develop step 1 and step 2 aspects to their ministry, and will keep track of those coming to faith.
- By year 3 of this plan we will hire a part-time Evangelist who will become responsible for the maintenance of our local outreach programs and will coordinate with the Care Ministry.
- We will have a regular, twice-per-year Alpha course for seekers.

### **Youth and Young Adult Ministry**

Our vision indicates that we want to grow younger during the period of this strategic plan. That means that youth and young adult ministries will have to be a priority for us. The reasons for this are obvious in the material above. Millennials (ages 4-23) make up 27% of the population of the Tri-Cities area. Survivors (ages 24-44) make up another 29%. Youth and young adult ministries, therefore, hold the potential for us to grow younger in the next three years as we help them take the next steps in their relationship with Jesus Christ.

In 2005 a task force was established to look at Youth Ministry and make a strategic plan for its growth. At that time, after the departure of a full-time youth director, the ministry had shrunk almost out of existence. This task force benchmarked churches with successful, growing youth ministries. As a result, the organizational structure for our present youth ministry was developed, Sandy Mast and Wendy Sabatino were hired as part-time leaders for high school and middle school. In the summer of 2007 Bob DeVries was called to become the full-time overseer of children and youth ministries, another recommendation of the youth ministry task force that has been fulfilled.

The Vision Statement (included as appendix A to this document) had recommendations that included percentage of budget dedicated to youth ministries, staffing needs projected, and dedicated facility for the growth of youth ministries in CLC. With all that in mind, we project the following plans for Youth Ministry.

### ***Conceptual Plans***

- Youth ministry will be staffed by two-full-time equivalent ministry leaders and one part-time worship leader.
- We will have an intern or two for this ministry on an annual basis.
- Pastoral support will become more focused on youth ministry.
- The structure of youth ministry will reflect the steps, identifying seeker events, as well as those that encourage students to go deeper. So Steps 1,2,3, and 4 will be reflected in the programming of youth ministry.
- Within three years the youth ministry will have dedicated space on the second or third floors that will be designed with updated ministry in mind.
- Within the education program of Youth Ministry our youth will be taught about a “world view” that is Christian. This will likely come in the cross-cultural mission trips, but will also become part of the curriculum for youth.
- Youth ministry will also develop a plan for a sports ministry component that will engage youth in this area.
- Within three years youth ministry will develop a Worship Component with a

- band and an engaging worship leader.
- Youth ministry will continue to adhere to the values expressed in the Vision document from June, 2006.
- We will have developed an effective ministry to the 20-something age group.

### **Children's Ministry**

Children's ministry has gone through many adjustments during the past few years. The major transition was to move from one full-time person in this department to three part-time people. This transition has gone very well. As we look ahead there are several aspects of Children's Ministry that should be addressed. Our reality is that we must have an effective Children's Ministry if we are to achieve our vision of growing younger. Young couples look very carefully at nursery and other ministries for children when they check out a church. Several of the people who left CLC during the transition years said that one of the major reasons they were returning was Upstreet.

#### ***Conceptual Plans***

- Children's Ministry will continue to be known by its quality, this to be appraised each year with the staff for Upstreet.
- In year 3 of this strategic plan we will hire an additional part-time Children's Ministry position that will focus on expanding Children's Ministry into the mid-week educational time.
- We will make more of our connection with GEMS and Cadets, advertising them as another option for Children's training in our materials.

### **Small Groups**

Small groups are essential to the future growth of Covenant Life. Over and over again studies have shown that unless people are involved in face-to-face relationships they do not stay in a church. In the study of the congregation that was commissioned in 2005 there is the telling statistic that there had been a decline in involvement in small groups. One of our values is "Free-Style Small Groups". This means that we allow people the freedom to discover and capitalize on their interests by using those interests as an avenue of ministry. Thus we will have a variety of kinds of small groups, begun by people within the church for connection with those who are interested in a similar passion. We expect groups for men and women will form, but also one for fishermen, for fly-tying, for new mothers, for people with a temper, for those who want to study a section of the Bible, for those who want to discuss a book, etc.

#### ***Conceptual Plans***

- In three years we will have a system by which new leaders are recruited, equipped and deployed..
- We will have all groups identified so that we can move new members and seekers into a group immediately.

## **Care Ministry**

There are two primary Visions for Caring Ministry. First of all, we want to become a congregation that cares for people the way Jesus cared. So we want to be the means by which needs in the church and community are met. So this ministry will be a primary channel for being the hands and feet of Jesus.

The caring ministry began early in 2007 with a desire, secondly, to become the major means of having people engaged in mission. This has been shown to be one of the primary ways to transformation. Those who go on mission trips regularly point to that time on the trip as life-changing. However, the estimate is that around 80% of the church won't engage in a mission trip outside the country. Therefore, we need to engage them in mission at home or closer to home.

### *Conceptual Plans*

- Design for caring ministry up and functional in this 3-year period.
- Additional staff added in 2008-2009 to manage an expanding ministry.
- In 2009 we will package the care ministry materials for duplication in other churches/ministries.

## **Facility**

We are blessed with a facility that enables our connection with the community. However, we are at the point where many ministries are experiencing a crunch. Youth Ministry, which is intended to be one of our premier ministries, is limited to shared space, and limited in program development by the facility. Children's Ministries are outgrowing their ministry space back in Upstreet. In addition, we have the potential of running out of parking space right near our building.

### *Conceptual Plans*

- In three years we will have the upper floors developed.
- We will own other properties around our physical plant. The Building Committee will be aware of any properties that come for sale and come to council with a strategy to purchase them.

## **Adult Ministries**

This division doesn't fit in any of our present organizational system real well, but is needed if we are to continue to move people from steps 3 to 4 to 5. This division will have to be developed, but could include Men's Ministries, Women's Ministries, Family Ministries, Small Groups and Adult Education. (Prime Time and Now Quite Ready for Prime Time would fit here as well)

This division of ministry will begin to think in terms of the Steps that have been outlined. In the area of outreach, we have a growing number of people who are 50+ in our community who have purchased condominiums in the vicinity of our church. We need to strategize on how to effectively reach them for the Kingdom and help them take next steps.

### *Conceptual Plans*

- In 3 years we will have a discipleship/mentoring program for new believers.

- We will have an adult education system that will provide opportunities to know more about the Word and prayer, but will also provide training in various spiritual gifts so that disciples may grow in their use of them.
- We will provide a comprehensive and varied menu of ministries to men and women that will allow a variety of choices.
- We will have a varied and active ministry to Seniors that is flexibly responding to the needs in this community.

## **Worship**

Worship is one of the primary ways that people get connected with Covenant Life. We are blessed with a growing number of quality vocalists and instrumentalists. We want to continue the quality that is connected with worship. In both the congregational survey and the NCD questionnaire worship was rated very highly. We want to continue offering worship with variety and excellence. With an expected growth of 30% in our worship there are several implications for Worship. We need a plan to seat growing numbers, though we believe this can be managed in our present worship center in two morning worship services. We also need a plan for assimilating new people who have an interest in being involved in worship. And we will need to explore worship for youth and young adults during their meeting times.

### *Conceptual Plans*

- In three years we will seat an average of 900 in worship. This includes the children who exit for Upstreet and those who are in nursery through kindergarten.
- Worship will become a more integral part of Upstreet, Middle School and High School.
- We will identify and experiment with different worship venues to attract the college and career age groups.
- Explore a Musical Production at Christmas and/or Easter as attraction event.
- Find ways to incorporate a variety of new instrumentalists and vocalists.

## **Missions**

Missions has been and continues to be one of the ministries that most effectively moves people from step 3 to 4 to 5. There is a dynamic to getting people involved in mission that encourages the spiritual transformations that go along with spiritual growth. Therefore, a vital and varied mission outlook is key to our desire to help people take the next step in their relationship with Jesus Christ. The Missions Leadership Team (LCT) has been working on a plan since 2005. Their desire is that CLC move from a Stage II Missions church to Stage III (Reference Appendix for thorough description). This means that in the next three years the vision of serving outside the walls of the church will gain in focus and grow in the number of people involved.

### *Conceptual Plan*

In three years Missions will

- Have a clearly defined long-term and short-term missionary support strategies.
- See the sending of long-term missionaries who are sons and daughters of CLC.
- Have a funding strategy to support the increased emphasis on missions.

- Support of at least 5 long-term missionaries in the 3 categories defined of Sending, Support and Seed.
- Provide support to our educational program so that children through high school are introduced to a Christian world-view early and develop a view of the world that involves caring for the lost and the poor.
- Enter partnerships in addition to Vida Abundante and Circle Urban.
- Educate the congregation so that *most* understand the importance of missions.
- Have a full-time, paid staff member to facilitate the missions enterprise of CLC.
- Work in partnership with other local churches.