



# **PlayBook**

Vision & Values



## **PlayBook Purpose**

Our PlayBook is not a higher authority than the Word of God, nor does it supersede our Elders whom He has appointed to lead in this local church. It exists for the purpose of church unity in the practical outworkings of our beliefs, doctrine, government, organization and purposes as a church.

Hebrews 13:17; 1 Corinthians; 1:10; Ephesians 4:3,13

## **How to Use It**

We encourage you to read the PlayBook and utilize it with your groups and teams, as a way to express, engage and unite around practical Biblical values. The PlayBook exposes the “why” of most everything we do as a church. Consider meeting with some others to talk through specific sections, or use it as a helpful reference tool.

## **Evolving Nature**

In order to be responsive to God’s leading, the PlayBook is an evolving and flexible document – a work in progress, just as we are.



# Contents

**Foundations** Page 6

- Jesus
- Scripture
- Statement of faith
- History
- Mission
- Vision
- Baptism
- Communion
- Giving

**Leadership** Page 22

- Heart
- Roles
- Pastors

**Strategies** Page 32

- MultiSite Movement
- Missional Living (BLESS.10)
- Minimal Programming

# Jesus

Jesus is the solitary and completely sufficient solution for the separation from God that our sin creates.

Only by grace, through faith, are we reconciled to God and assured of eternal life in heaven with Him. At Vista, we're all about Jesus: to know Him, to follow Him, to lead others to Him.

*<sup>1</sup>As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, <sup>2</sup>in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. <sup>3</sup>All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.*

***<sup>4</sup>But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, <sup>5</sup>made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.***

*<sup>6</sup>And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup>in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.*

*<sup>8</sup>For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—<sup>9</sup>not by works, so that no one can boast.*

—Ephesians 2

# Scripture

## *Applying God's Word in the context of community*

*Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. – James 1:22*

Far too many people hear the Word of God and then do nothing with it. If that is true, how powerful is it in your life *really*?

### **The Word of God is incomplete without application.**

To be committed to the Word of God means more than simply hearing it or repeating it . . . it means doing what it says, in community with others. You cannot do what the Word says on your own; you need others -- a biblical community in which you can dig in, understand, apply, and be encouraged in your application of Scripture.

At Vista, we are deeply committed to the Word of God: it is present in every sermon, Kids Community class, Lifegroup gathering and missional outreach. It is in Scripture where God outlines His design for the church, and how we are to love and serve one another. The Bible is where we derive our “life instructions” and encouragement to “be Jesus” to those who don’t yet know Him. It’s where we find the hope and encouragement to get through each day with joy and peace this side of Heaven.

So, here's His promise to you: Jesus has an encouragement or an instruction specifically for you from Scripture whenever you read it. Sound ridiculous? It’s not.

Through Scripture and the Spirit, Jesus will meet you right where you're at today. The Word of God will hit you in a spot that you actually long to change. It will provide the hope and the strength you so desperately seek, or maybe don’t even know you need.

If you grab onto it, practice what He instructs you to do, and include others in the process, you will not only be changed, you'll know Jesus better. An honest, consistent, practical and relational approach to Scripture works.

# Statement of Faith

**God Is:** We believe there is one almighty, perfect and triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, eternally coexistent personalities of the same essence.

**Jesus Lives:** We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, His sinless life, His substitutionary death, His bodily resurrection, His ascension to the right hand of the Father and His personal return in power and glory.

**The Bible Speaks:** We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God.

**The Spirit Empowers:** We believe in the personality of the Holy Spirit, and in His ministry of convicting and regenerating sinful people, and indwelling, sealing and empowering believers.

**Man Sins:** We believe in the fall of humankind from the state of innocence in which they were created to one of total depravity in which they are devoid of spiritual life, and incapable, apart from divine power, of pleasing God.

**Grace Alone:** We believe in the justification of the sinner by grace alone through faith in Jesus.

**The Church Is Vital:** We believe that the church universal is composed of all true believers and that its members should assemble themselves together in local churches for worship, prayer, fellowship and teaching with a view to being equipped to fulfill the Great Commission.

**Eternity Exists:** We believe in the bodily resurrection of the saved to immortality, and in the conscious, eternal suffering of the lost.

# History

Our faith goes back 5000 years. The apostle Paul tells us in his letter to the 1<sup>st</sup> century church at Ephesus that the gospel was introduced through our forefather, the Jewish follower of God, Abraham. Abraham foreshadowed Jesus, God's promise to make a way for those far from God – to make a way of forgiveness and reconciliation where there is no way.

Our church roots go back 2000 years. Jesus commissioned his followers to go and make disciples (Matthew 28), and he told the apostle Peter that on the foundation of Jesus the church would thrive. Though not always perfect in practice, but in spirit we tie Vista to that very commission through a succession of Elder affirmations and commissions.

Our most recent history goes back to the late 1960's with the partnership of a Brethren pastor and a Campus Crusade leader who followed a call to together plant churches on the Midwest's largest universities. In the late 1970's, out of one of those churches at The Ohio State University, a community church was planted in the Linworth Road area, now called Linworth Road Community Church. Out of LRCC, in 1989, Heritage Christian Church was planted in the Westerville Area.

In January of 2007, Vista began as a new church planted out of Heritage. The concept originated as we considered what God wanted us to do with the unprecedented growth at Heritage; it seemed as though we should do as we've taught our children – share, go, step out, risk, exercise faith.

Since there were quite a few folks from the northwest side of town who were making their way to attend Heritage, it seemed to make sense that we might start a gathering of folks in that area. We started with about a hundred from Heritage, but our first service had over 200 in attendance that came mostly as a result of the personal connections the Vista team had in Northwest Columbus.

With a vision to equip and empower the church, we started to organize a small, centralized equipping staff to develop missional church leaders. We also started developing simple, reproducible platforms to free pastors from the production and administrative burdens that diminish the critical work of community building, discipleship, and outreach.

Now there are three Vista Sites operating on the same platform – the original site in Dublin (Jan '07), the Worthington Community (Oct '11), and the Hilliard Community (Oct '15).

# Our Aim (Mission)

*To help one another be transformed into His image*

Within the first few lines of the Bible we discover that we are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26). Out of that image God whispers for us to seek Him and to live according to His Son, Jesus, whom the Gospel narratives tell us is King, and who launched and leads the Church still today.

The critical question is what is the Church to *do*?

A healthy church embraces Jesus and his critical and uncomfortable teaching that God is interested in something much deeper than our performance. We naturally think that what is most important to God is what we *do*, but Jesus taught and demonstrated (Matthew 5) that what's most important is who we *are*. Jesus calls us to *be* before we do (BB4DO).

*2 Corinthians 3:18 And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*

The point isn't simply to be *involved* in church, but that through what we do as church God would truly and deeply *transform* you into what He has always intended.

Jesus never said this would be an easy process, because it isn't. That's why we shy away from it and search instead for churches that focus instead on what to *do*. It's often easier just to be told what *to do* and what *not to do*, than it is to admit our deep need and to humbly let God *change* us.

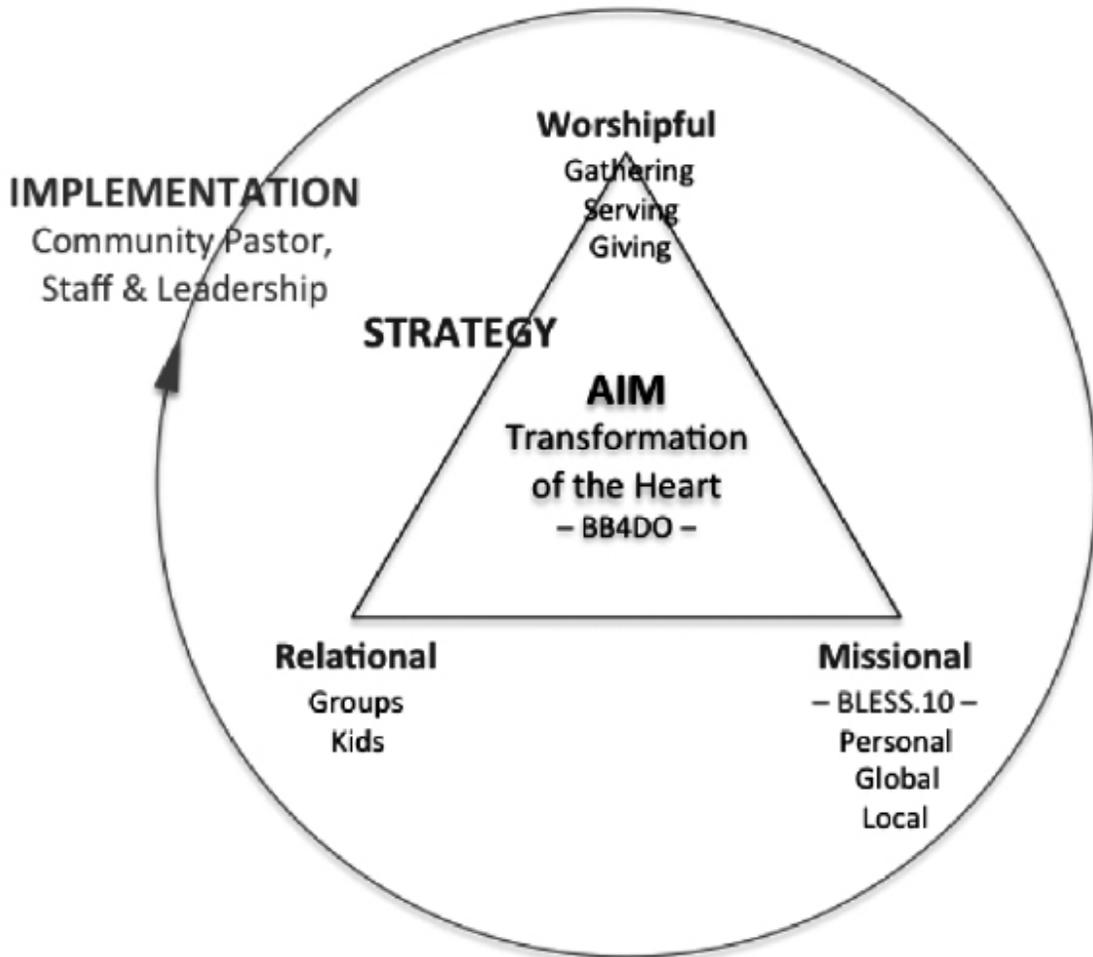
*1 Peter 1:6-7 In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith -- of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire -- may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.*

To that end, our pastors and leaders are commissioned to leverage everything we *do* toward *transformation* for the glory of God.



# **BB4DO**

be before do



# Vision

As God transforms us we will end up being and joining the **global movement of worshipful, relational, missional communities at the intersection of Jesus and real life.**

If God transforms us we will be a **worshipful community**...

*The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. Mark 12:29–30*

...a community that honors Jesus as King, that acknowledges that God is the Center of the universe; a community that yields everything to God, that gives everything for His use, that gathers to honor Him, and pray, and confess, and thank him.

If God transforms us we will be a **relational community**...

*And love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these." Mark 12:31*

...a community that loves one another just as Jesus exemplified and taught us (Matthew 5–7); a community that loves sacrificially (Luke 14:33), that deeply knows that losing our life means to gain it (Luke 9:24).

If God transforms us we will be a **missional community**...

*Therefore go and make disciples of all nations... Matthew 28:1*

...a community that is deeply concerned for those who are still far from God, creatively finding ways to **BLESS** (Page 15) them and tell them our story and about God's great mission.



***To be a global movement of  
worshipful, relational, missional  
communities at the intersection  
of Jesus and real life.***

# BLESS.10

## *Building relationships for the sake of the gospel*

Essentially, <sup>1</sup>BLESS.10 is a model for practicing and living a missional life – a life that is intent upon sharing the gospel with those who haven't yet found their way back to God.

The Christian church has always had outreach (evangelism) in its DNA: Jesus commissioned his followers (See Matthew 28) to *go and make disciples*. And so we've tried - hard, and we still do but it is tough duty. Very few are inclined to deeply respond (and of course, cannot apart from God's timing) and so it can become a discouraging effort – an effort we gladly and quickly hand-off to anyone willing to take on the responsibility. There are those gifted in such things that not only love reaching out but are also productive in it!

But the truth is that the most effective way to reach the most people who still need to find their way back to God is through the natural, genuine and lasting relationships of *everyone* in the church. In the casual and natural spaces of life and spheres of influence the numbers of un-churched contacts is almost too numerous to track!

There are 3 problems. First, most haven't looked at their world of relationships as a mission field (it is shocking to see what is there in front of you when you look). Second, we try to reach our friends on our own. Third, we are sadly ill-equipped in building authentic relationships within which it is actually quite natural to tell the gospel story that we live in.

**BLESS.10** is simply a prayerful and simple way to discover those whom God is drawing, build a real relationship with, and tell the Story of God.

<sup>1</sup>BLESS.10 is an acrostic we've adapted from the acrostic BLESS (Christian Community Church, Naperville, IL), which is adapted from the acrostic BELLS (Michael Frost, *Exiles*), which is probably adapted from somewhere else. *What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun. (Ecc 1:9)*



## **BLESS.10**

**B**egin with prayer for **10** people who haven't found their way back to God.

**L**isten to them, a lot. No answers, just listen, and listen for their story.

**E**ngage them on their turf. Take an interest in what they do.

**S**erve them. If you listen well & long enough you will discover needs.

**S**tory. Tell them God's story and your story about your life with Jesus.

# Baptism

## *The dramatization of our surrendered life to Jesus*

At Vista, we see in Scripture that Baptism is the dramatization of our surrendered life to Jesus – we are “dead” with Him in our sin, and come “alive” or are “washed clean” by His death on the Cross.

Christians, churches and denominations make a big deal out of baptism. Well, it IS a big deal, but we tend to make the wrong things the big deals. In all actuality, the big deal is the new believer’s step to put their faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus for the forgiveness of sin and eternal life!

During the time of Jesus’ ministry, those born of the Jewish faith did not believe they needed baptism because they were descendants of Abraham. At that same time, John the Baptist began his public ministry, proclaiming that everyone was in need of baptism. Although Jesus was sinless in nature, He was baptized by John as a way of identifying with the people. Later, in Matthew 28:19, Jesus tells the disciples to baptize those who respond to the gospel: “Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” All who believe in Jesus and desire to follow Him as disciples are to be baptized as a witness to their identification with His death, burial, and resurrection.

### Baptism is a Sacrament

A sacrament is quite simply a sacred practice, and as such, important to know why it is deemed to be sacred. In the case of baptism (and communion), all Christians recognize it as sacred because Jesus instituted it. And when you read the surrounding context in Scripture, it is evident that He intended the church to practice them regularly and forever (Matthew 28:8; Luke 22:19).

### Baptism is not Regenerative

Scriptures do not teach that the act of baptism is regenerative – that it is the cause for a person's salvation - their eternal life. Instead we follow Colossians 2:12 where it is clear that our reconciliation with God comes by faith alone in Christ alone (Ephesians 2:8; Colossians 2:12).

### Baptism is Symbolic of Jesus’ Saving Grace...and Your Receiving of It

A sign is something by means of which something else is made known. Baptism represents and reminds us of the gospel: letting go and being forgiven of the old, and instead living for Jesus. The symbol of baptism is a moving dramatization of one’s new and permanent personal association with Jesus; in Jesus we are no longer subject to the death

penalty of sin, so in an ironic twist we "die to" the powerful grip of sin and its resultant spiritual death. Yet we are also powerfully "raised with" Jesus into an eternal relationship and presence with him (1 Peter 3:20-22; John 3:22-23).

#### Baptism is not Essentially About the Method or Amount of Water

Immersion was the early church practice and a profound symbol of the burial and resurrection of Jesus and the believers' association in it. If we have lots of water available we use it because Jesus and the early followers did. If we don't have lots of water we don't let the amount or method delay the urgency and desire of the obedient heart. We use as much water as we have to symbolize what Jesus did for us (Galatians 3:1-3, 26-28; Ephesians 4:4; Colossians 2:6-13; Titus 3:5-7; Hebrews 10:19-23; 1 Peter 1:3-9, 20-22; Exodus 30:18; Ezekiel 36:25; Joel 2:28-29).

#### Baptism is a Personal Proclamation of Faith in Jesus, and a Church Celebration

We encourage new believers to be baptized without delay, not to secure salvation, but as an immediate and outward obedience demonstrating an inward change and as a vow of commitment to Jesus. We practice it publicly so that the church can celebrate along with God and the angels, while hoping that the world will watch and wonder (Acts 8:26-29, 9:18, 10:47-48, 16:14-15, 16:31-33, 18:8).

#### Infant Dedications vs. Baptisms

Rather than baptize, we dedicate infants and toddlers to God into the earthly fellowship of the local church. Once a child/person places their faith in Christ to join the eternal fellowship of Christ we baptize them (as Spiritual infants).

*Note: At Vista, we practice two sacraments: baptism and communion. Where other faith traditions have others, these are the two sacraments we practice because Jesus clearly asked us to continue them indefinitely.*

# Communion

## *A common Christian practice of remembering Jesus*

Communion is a somber remembrance of the dramatic death of Jesus and the sufficiency of that sacrifice to reconcile sinners with God. Therefore, it is also a celebration for those who believe it, knowing that through the breaking of Jesus' body and the letting go of his blood we are made spiritually and eternally right in God's eyes.

It is also a practice that we do in the company of other followers of Jesus around the world, to demonstrate unity among the many diversities of the Church. It is a joyful occasion to join together in what is the single most important element of the Christian church – the solution to our sin in Jesus.

We use juice and bread in some form during main services occasionally throughout the year to celebrate and remember the work of Christ. We also encourage smaller gatherings to remember Jesus whenever the opportunity presents itself.

There are various beliefs among Bible-believing faiths about the nature and substance of communion, in what form Jesus makes himself present, and how it is to be administered. Like Baptism, we try to be less concerned about how it's done and more concerned about remembering what it represents. Precisely how Jesus shows up in the celebration is a mystery and so we don't hold a dogmatic position on that aspect...we know that according to Jesus, the Holy Spirit is present and sufficient for us, and so we rest in that promise.

*Note: At Vista, we practice two sacraments: baptism and communion. Where other faith traditions have others, these are the two sacraments we practice because Jesus clearly asked us to continue them indefinitely.*

# Giving

## *The Godly use of the resources entrusted to you*

As a church we work hard to understand the practicals of faith – of what it means to believe and to follow Jesus. He exemplified a life that was worshipful, relational, and missional, and so we are challenged to have everything we do reflect those three essences – trusting God, caring for others, and being a Godly influence in our daily lives.

**Generous living and giving is a life-long challenge and a practical way we can be worshipful, relational and missional.**

Jesus often said we must choose to put our trust in either God or money, so in a very real way, when we loosen our grip on the resources He has given us, we are learning to worship God...learning to trust God, and breaking free from false securities.

### You

Consider how your resources can be used within the context of your everyday life. Who could benefit from your time, your talent and your treasure? Which neighbor? Which associate or customer? Which soccer mom or football dad? Which friend? Which teacher or coach? Which fast-food drive-thru attendant? Which pharmacy doc? Which hardware store clerk? Which mechanic? Which customer service rep?

Remember, *you* are the Church. And the people who most need the church, who need the love of God and the forgiveness of Jesus, are in the space of your life "outside" the church. Give yourself, your life and your resources first to the world around you – that's being worshipful, relational and missional with your resources.

### The Church

Generous living and giving support the work of the local church, which is responsible for equipping and encouraging believers for the Godly work at hand in normal life, while also maintaining larger gathering and worship spaces, developing leaders, caring for the sick, forming our children's faith, building community partnerships, engaging global missions, and multiplying churches. That's being worshipful, relational and missional with our resources. We try to keep giving channels at Vista fairly simple, and if everyone participates, the church will have all the resources it needs for the purposes to which God has called it. Consider these simple faith-growing, life-changing ways and opportunities to give:

### *Regular Giving*

Give to the church consistently and generously. Start with a carefully considered percentage of your income and be faithful to that commitment for a year. Reconsider your percentage each year thereafter, in a continuing effort to trust God more deeply with everything He's given you.

### *Global Missions Offerings*

Include an additional and consistent monthly offering to a Vista missions work (Asia's Hope orphan homes in Cambodia and India or Kenya church planting) that captures your heart or the heart of your family. For additional information and giving opportunities, see Part A as well as [vistacommunitychurch.org/missions](http://vistacommunitychurch.org/missions).

### *Special Gifts*

Look for one-time opportunities to bless or meet needs...maybe because something grabbed your attention or because you were blessed with additional time or treasure.

There is no limit to what the people of God can accomplish when individuals are consciously, sacrificially and faithfully managing and releasing the resources entrusted to them by God. He promises that in and through the church he has provided all that is necessary to accomplish His purposes.

*“And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.” –Philippians 4:19*



*Which is growing faster,  
your standard of living  
or your heart for **giving**?*

# Leadership Heart

Always remember that to lead in God's kingdom you must **first and foremost be a follower of Jesus**. If you're not a disciple of Jesus, you cannot be a leader for God.

A leader clearly demonstrates the centrality of Jesus and trust in God: through **sacrificial serving and giving** (worshipful) to a surprising degree; through a **lifestyle of multiplication and leadership development** (relational) in challenging, vulnerable biblical community; and through **practical and compassionate involvement with un-churched** (missional) family, friends, neighbors, and associates; as well as community businesses, clubs, governments, and schools across boundaries and borders that are difficult and uncomfortable to cross.

And leaders must lead, spiritually. Oddly, we forget that our leadership is spiritual first, not managerial. We expect every leader to always keep the gospel (the mission and story of God and his Son, past, present future) in front of everyone they're with. Sail the leader "ship!"

## LeadersHIP

**Show them God.** Share thoughts regarding Kingdom vision, values and mission. Inspire others toward God's ultimate purposes and plans for them as individuals and for the world.

In Scripture, In Your Life, In the World, In their Life

**Develop a Heart for God** *Do what's necessary to bring ones nearer to God's heart and into a listening posture through scripture, prayer, worship, study, etc. And through sacrificial service.*

Hear from God, Give like Jesus

**Individual inquiry.** Ensure that ones are connecting individually outside the group and monitoring/assessing their transformation.

Spiritual/Emotional, Marital/Relational, Physical,  
Work/Life Balance, Family

**Practical aspect of the Group.** The functional purpose of any group is important and should be done with excellence, but never at the expense of Spiritual leadership set forth as a priority over the first three above.



# Leader**SHIP**

**Show them God**  
**Develop the Heart of God**  
**Inquire of the Individual**  
**Get the Practical job done**

# Leadership Roles

Christian leadership is not secular leadership. In many ways, it is upside-down, counter-cultural, and foolish sounding. Godly leadership is a balance of sustaining Biblical vision, pursuing Jesus character, and emulating “staying out of the way.” To be modeling and teaching the gospel to create a culture in which everyone flourishes.

For those who aspire to leadership by God’s prompting, the pathway is one of humility, sacrifice, service, community and multiplication.

## Elders

Vista governs via a Board of Elders complemented by an Advisory Council of women and men who demonstrate the same exceptional character.

Vista exists because of, and under the authority of, Jesus, who works in and through the Board of Elders, empowered by the Holy Spirit. The Board of Elders governs according to Biblical authority and the Vista Constitution.

The New Testament uses a form of the Greek word *presbuteros* (translated "elders") over sixty times with respect to a distinct group of leading men within the local church and a form of the Greek word *episkopos* (translated "overseer") five times to more broadly refer to the same.

According to 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, Paul requires elders to be men who possess and exemplify Christlikeness, demonstrating (inside the home and outside the church) character commensurate with the gravity and loft of the elder role.

The task of the Elders is to seek and discover God's direction and leading within the church body. Not appointed by men, but called by God (Acts 20:28), existing elders qualify, affirm and/or assign elders and new pastors according to 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1.

With the exception of the elder role, and in the absence of a clear whole-Scripture mandate excluding women from leadership, we are inclined toward a less restrictive view so that God's Spirit may not be hindered in selecting gifted leadership in our church. Giftedness by the Holy Spirit is the primary basis of qualification for ministry (Rom 12:1-8; I Cor 12 & 14; Eph 4:1-16; I Peter 4:10-11).

## Lead Pastor

An elder assigned and compensated to lead the strategic leadership team, teaching team, global partnerships, and operations.

The Lead pastor sets the tone for leading, preaching, multiplying, communicating and strategy, and initiates strategic dialogue. He doesn't stop at making disciples, but makes disciple-making pastors. A student and expert of both Scripture and culture, the Lead Pastor is an effective preacher and persuasive communicator in one-on-one meetings and small groups. The Lead Pastor tells the story of what Jesus is doing in a way that listeners are compelled to take action, and communicates by writing blog posts, social media content, proposals, and biblical position papers.

## Executive Pastor

Acts on behalf of and supports the Lead Pastor by ensuring ministry and operational implementation and execution. Focuses on systems, management, and implementing the vision. (See: <http://theresurgence.com/2012/06/21/what-is-an-executive-pastor>)

## Strategic Leadership Team (SLT)

Following guidance in Ephesians 2 that church leadership exists to equip the church people for ministry, as an extension of the Lead Pastor, the SLT sets the multisite direction and pace. SLT exists to bring training, uniformity and quality to the key ministry areas of Kids, Groups, Production, Leadership Development, Teaching and Communications at each Community, while being constrained by the available volunteer base and budget of the communities. SLT is not responsible for the execution of the community ministry, but for ongoing training and development and to keep the community leadership abreast of their observations and evaluations.

As "keepers of the constants (shared strategies)," the SLT also ensures that we are doing what we have agreed and believe we are to be doing as a church movement. In the early stages of a new community, the SLT has greater authority in decisions, but in the long run is expected to assist the community in uniform excellence and self-management.

## Teaching Team

Equipped and developed by the Lead Pastor and designated elders, the Teaching Team is a uniquely gifted group that conspires to bring biblically and theologically sound, practical, Jesus-exalting, gospel-contextualized weekly preaching to all of the Vista communities.

## Community Pastor

Accountable to the Strategic Leadership Team, Community Pastors need to be uniquely capable of both leading and following. They must meet the Biblical qualities of elders and be gifted in shepherding (Ephesians 4:11). They are high-capacity individuals with a broad spectrum of skills to include interpersonal, organizational, teambuilding, managerial, etc. They should be exhibiting Vista DNA and a missional heart along with experience vocationally, professionally and educationally.

A few roles *not* assigned to the Community Pastor include:

- Strategic vision (Strategic Leadership Team)
- Theology and Biblical interpretation (Teaching Team and Elders)
- Production of Sunday services (Production Director)
- Development of Kids Community safety, security & curriculum (KC Director)

## Community (Local) Staff & Directors

Supported by central equipping and office staff, local staff are accountable to their community pastors and responsible to develop initiatives, and organize and manage assigned portions of church responsibility in order to further advance its primary mission.

*Note: Early church elders delegated certain ministry affairs to deacons (diakonous – which means servant or minister). We use the title of director instead.*

Each site has a Community Pastor, a Kids Community Coordinator, and a Production Coordinator.

## Coach–Leader–Individual–Apprentice

Leaders are recognized, qualified and developed through a structure that requires experience and results at each level. “Individual” servants demonstrate leadership of others, and may become “Leaders”; Leaders become “Coaches” by recruiting and leading Leaders. “Apprentices” are the potential new leaders serving alongside existing Leaders and Coaches.

# Pastors

*What are they? Who are they?*

If you were to read through the pages of the New Testament you would not find any of the church leaders called pastors. Instead you would locate those given the roles and titles of apostles, elders, overseers and deacons. Biblically, the word “pastor” is used to describe many within the church gifted and equipped by the Spirit to shepherd people (Eph 4:11).

*Poimen*, translated “shepherd” (“pastor” in Latin), is an equipping of the Holy Spirit to those within a local body of believers to humbly teach, guide, protect and lead the church in the Great Commandment and Commission.

**Pastors are servants.** Remember that Jesus Himself said "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whomever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:25-28).

**The church does not belong to the pastor.** It is not *their* church. The sheep are not *their* flock. All belongs to the Chief Shepherd. Pastors and elders are His assistants. Scripture designates only one Person to be the Head of the church: Jesus Christ. Churches through the ages have divided because people have taken possession of that which only belongs to Christ. The church of Corinth was called worldly because of such attitudes (1 Cor. 3:1-11).

**Pastoring is a gift.** The word 'pastor' or 'shepherd' in the noun form is only used for believers in Ephesians 4:11 referring to a spiritual gift, not a *role*, per se. *Gifts* are understood to be Spirit empowerment – a talent or a strength attributed to the grace of God in one's life. References in Acts 2 and Joel 2 don't seem to isolate the evidence of the Spirit of God in people to one age group, nationality, ethnicity or gender. Instead, we see an unbiased sweep of the Spirit empowering “all who respond in faith.” **Giftedness by the Holy Spirit is the primary basis of qualification for ministry** (Rom 12:1-8; I Cor 12 & 14; Eph 4:1-16; I Peter 4:10-11).

# Pastoral Care

## *The Church caring for one another*

*Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone (Romans 12:9-18).*

**For the church to be healthy, everyone must share the burden of providing pastoral care to one another.**

We have experienced that the best pastoral care happens through existing relationships and similar experiences – this is one of the primary motivations in encouraging everyone to be building into the lives of other believers through Lifegroups or some form of Biblical community.

Together, then, we can help fellow followers of Jesus walking through difficult times with others, rather than employing or designating a "Care" Pastor for such purposes. Our pastors and leaders come alongside to equip you with encouragement, guidance and resources as you care for one another.

Another critical aspect of pastoral care is to affirm and remind those who are in need or are suffering in some way that all of life is designed or used by God for much greater purposes than what we usually realize. *"For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all" (2 Corinthians 4:17).*

We pray through the God-ordained fires and trials of life, that we might become more Christ-like in the way we care and in the way we respond – that through it all we might ultimately bring more attention to the greatness of God!



**Much (90%) and the best care  
in the church happens through  
your **closest** relationships**

## Vista Life Support Team

As a church, we want to ensure that when we're helping others through difficult times, that there are people and resources available to help along the way. **Vista's Life Support system is a training and resource tool.** We have brought together people, books and other resources for you to reference as you help others navigate their challenging intersections of life. Maybe you're a Lifegroup leader looking to help a couple through a rough space in their marriage. Maybe you're a single mom walking with another single mom through a parenting challenge. Maybe you're a friend supporting a coworker through a time of grief. Whatever capacity you find yourself in, we most likely have someone or something that can help. See [vistachurches.org/pastoral-care](http://vistachurches.org/pastoral-care) for details.

*Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.*  
--Ephesians 4:15-16

*But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.*

--1 Corinthians 12:24-26



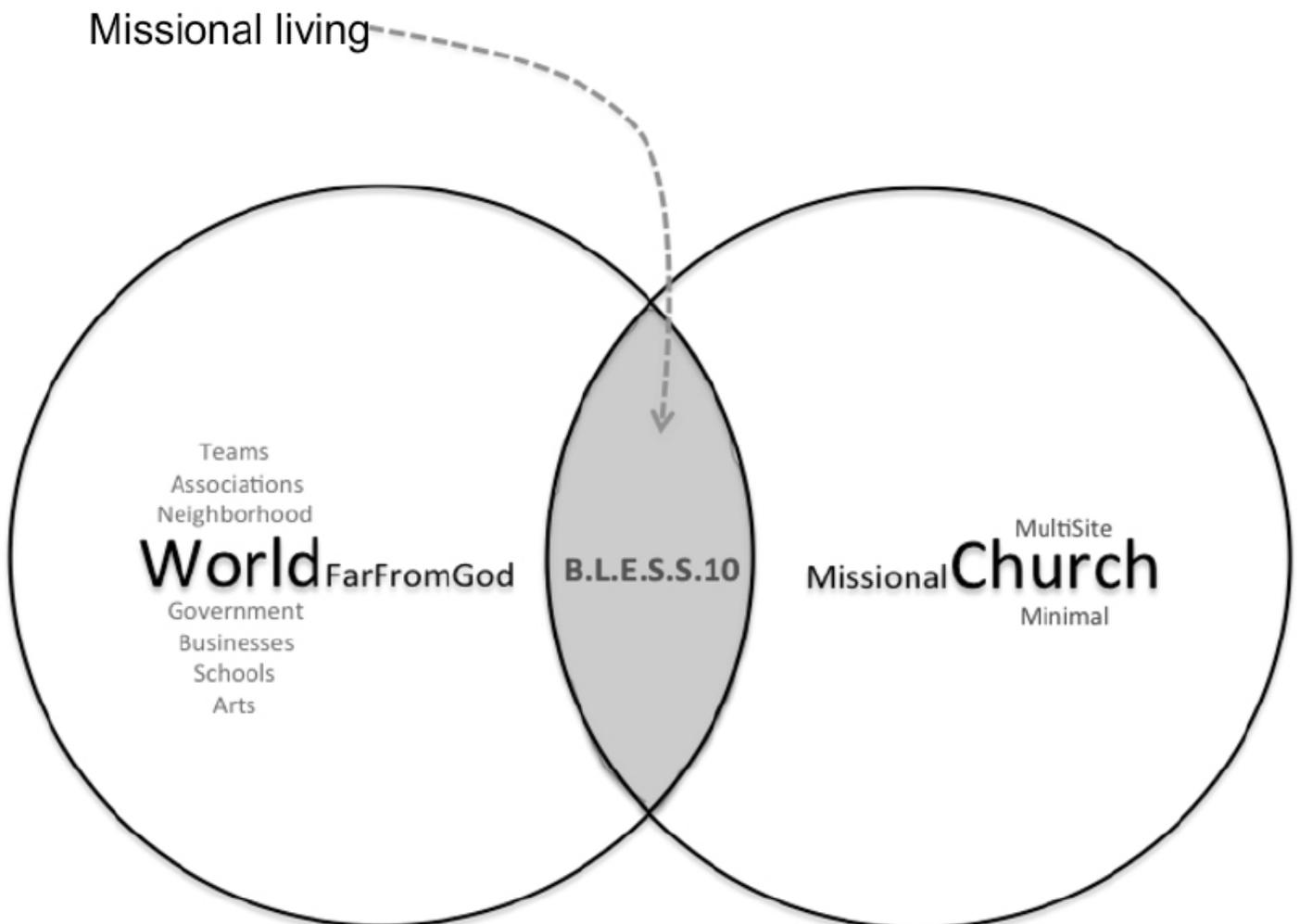
# Strategy

# Multisite movement

With a church planting history and multiplication mindset, we collaborate to launch more churches since research and our own experiences show that new churches are the best form of leadership development and evangelism.

## Missional living

Every person in the church is commissioned to work on the front lines, on the *Gospel's Edge*, at the intersection of God's People, God's Spirit, God's Word, and those Far from God. We use the acrostic BLESS.10 (Page 15) as a method for connecting with and building relationships with those who are far from God in order that we might play a part in ones finding their way back to God.



## Minimal programming

Other than our central support ministries, we limit ourselves to 5 key local ministries: **Missional** living, **Sunday** gatherings/serving/giving, **Group** application, **Kids** volunteering, **Global/Local** missions. (Pages 37–39)



## **3M STRATEGY**

**MultiSite movement**

**Missional living**

**Minimal programming**

# Shared Strategies

*We have a few central staff and programs designed to equip and maintain uniformity and quality at every Vista location.*

## **Sunday Production & Creative Arts**

This central team relieves the burden from the local community to develop musicians and the look and feel of Sunday morning, resulting in a unified and quality experience at all sites.

## **Parent Equipping / Kids Community**

A central Kids team partners with parents and ensures safety & security for our Kids as well as uniformity and quality in content and leadership throughout Vista.

## **Leadership Development**

The movement of God, the church, is dependent upon passionate, educated, values-rooted, envisioned leaders and so we commit significant resources to our Leadership Community.

## **Teaching Team**

Although Pastor Mike is our main preacher, we have a team that rotates with him, and we occasionally utilize video. Series content is organized with an even broader team that includes elders, community pastors, and a few others with public speaking ability.

## **Global Partners**

Vista Community Church works together with these partners:

- Asia's Hope Homes (Cambodia & India)
- Restoration Churches (Kenya)
- The Bridge (Columbus, OH)
- Sharon Kozar/PBT (Papa New Guinea)

## **Christmas Program**

Each year, Vista comes together for a worshipful, relational, missional experience – the Christmas Program. Together we rehearse, worship and connect, and we make it missional by inviting those with whom we live, work and play, to encounter Jesus and be transformed by the gospel. It's our largest outreach of the year, welcoming thousands of people and hundreds more who have yet to find their way back to God.

## **Finances & Office**

Vista operates with one budget and a central office that supports all our local sites/communities.

# Local Strategies

## *Five transformative ministries in every community*

It is our deeply held belief that a healthy church is the church whose people embrace their God-given values and purposes, and increasingly own and share the work of the church in their respective spheres of influence. To truly let ownership, responsibility and purpose rest upon each member, it's imperative that church be kept simple, reproducible and manageable; it's in this way that church can seamlessly intersect with the normal course of life.

We encourage everyone to be involved in all five key areas in the church, which adds purpose and meaning to normal life rather than subtracts time from one's schedule. If you're doing these things consistently and in increasing measure – that's it! Here they are in brief; you can find greater detail in Papers.

### **1. Missional living**

Connecting at Vista may be significantly different than what you're used to or than what you might expect. Think of it this way: you'll be most fulfilled and connected to the church when you are connected with the mission of the Church. So, most importantly, connect with Jesus, connect with family and friends, and stay connected and/or build connections with neighbors, friends and associates who don't know God. We are on mission 24/7 in our daily lives with family and friends, in our interactions and involvements in community service, and in our global opportunities and partnerships overseas. We don't just *do* missions, we *are* missionaries all the time. One way we do this as a church is to make our "List of 10." Ten folks in your sphere you're praying for consistently to know God. Make the list. Pray consistently. Watch God move. Read more on our Missional bent in our Papers. We ask everyone to *Give and Go*. To whom is God pressing you to *give*? To whom will you *go* – locally and/or globally?

### **2. Sunday gathering, serving, giving**

Like a decentralized franchise, God is in search of innumerable "shareholders and owners," rather than a small group of contributors and a large group of consumers. The healthy church understands and communicates not only the value, but also the necessity and ownership of every person on mission. Sundays are one of our most visible elements and the best arena to demonstrate massive co-ownership – shared vision, value and work. So we ask everyone to serve consistently on Sundays in set-up/tear-down, musical worship,

sound/tech, or Connections and Kids Community. Visit [vistacommunitychurch.org/serve](http://vistacommunitychurch.org/serve) to get plugged in.

We hold that a fully functioning member of any family shares its financial burden in increasing measure. Furthermore, as Jesus asks His followers to forfeit *everything* to follow him, we not only consider how much to charitably give to our local church, etc., but to responsibly and wisely consider how we spend every dollar and every minute that we have been given. The average "church goer" gives 2.5% of their income to the ministry of their local church. What's of equal importance to consistent and increasing regular giving is the increased attention and consideration as to how the other 97.5% is managed and spent. We recommend reading the *Giving Value Paper* for more, and visiting [vistacommunitychurch.org/give](http://vistacommunitychurch.org/give).

### **3. Group life**

Christian safety, health and longevity is found in numbers...in community. It's difficult to find a page in the New Testament that isn't talking about what to do with, and how to live with, "one another." We encourage everyone to gather regularly with a small group of people for authentic gospel-fluent community, mutual encouragement, support and challenge in the life of following Jesus. Do you have a consistent and trusted group of Jesus-following friends that mutually challenges and encourages one another in the pursuit of God? For more information read the *Lifegroups Value Paper*.

### **4. Kids & Students**

One of the most forgotten mission fields is the next generation. Parents will always carry the primary spiritual responsibility for their children, and the church pulls together to partner with parents in this profound process. It's super important to us to keep our "generations" overlapped. We want young working with old, old serving young, kids knowing other parents, grandparents adding wisdom to the toddler room, etc. Everyone serves in our Kids Community classrooms on Sundays, at least once per quarter. More on our Kids Community values is in Value Paper K, and [vistacommunitychurch.org/kids-students](http://vistacommunitychurch.org/kids-students).

### **5. Global/Local partners (missions)**

Everybody gets to play globally by Going, Giving and Growing together. (Page 46)



# **FIVE THINGS**

the stuff we *all* do:

**Missional** living

**Sunday** gather.serve.give

**Group** application.care

**Kids** community

**Global/Local Missions** give.go.grow

# Kids Community

*Partnering with parents to develop worshipful, relational, missional children*

Don't tune out if you're not a parent – Vista holds a strong **multigenerational** value. You are critical to the community of God and that includes the community of kids. Our Kids Community is going to be its absolute best when it includes the support and input of all generations. We ask *everyone* to serve at least once per quarter in Kids Community.

And if you have already been a parent or suspect you won't ever be a parent, you are no less valuable than anyone else to our kids. Everyone who follows Jesus has a valuable contribution to the entire community.

## The Objective

The discipline of children's ministry might best be referred to as *Family Ministries*, but the element which gets the most questions and requires the most explanation is children's ministry – which Vista calls **Kids Community**.

What is the objective of children's ministry? What is the objective of Vista's Kids Community? These are critical questions to have answered, since there are so many models and intentions among churches. But there is no question that Jesus encouraged ministry to children. He says in Mark 10: 13-16, "Permit the children to come to Me; do not hinder them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."

This ministry can include teaching the application of Biblical principles. It may provide entertaining activities and programming. It could organize a safe and secure environment. These are all important objectives to consider, but they are not the primary objective behind what we do.

**The primary objective of our Kids Community is to partner with parents in the development of worshipful, relational, missional children.**



***Partnering with parents  
to develop worshipful,  
relational, missional kids***

Think about it: if parents were able to effectively lead and develop their children according to Jesus, not much else would be needed. Parenting is a form of discipleship – God's model for raising children. He says in Deuteronomy 6:7-9 that parents are to impress their own love for what He commands into their children. It would be counterproductive to build a ministry that takes that responsibility from its rightful place. Future generations do not lack faith or maturity when it's modeled for them. That's the issue. **Spiritual development of one generation must be transferred to the next.** This transfer takes place through mentoring and community. Faith and maturity are caught more than taught.

We want to help one another follow Jesus and better demonstrate His ways to all children. We believe what John 1:12 says, "To all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God." We all can spiritually parent the next generation best by focusing on following Jesus ourselves.

### The Model

The Biblical model of teaching closely resembles what we know as mentoring. Deuteronomy 6:7-9 talks about passing on faith through walking, talking, waking, sleeping. It involves sharing life together both inside and outside the home. Jesus also used this method with His own followers. A successful Kids Community model is validated when parents and kids reflect Jesus within the crucible of life.

**The first, most critical element of the Vista Kids Community model is *parents*.** Old parents, young parents, experienced parents, hurting parents, future parents, mentor parents and learning parents. All parenting fosters spiritual growth in children as they walk, talk, live and breathe together.

**The second and most important element is the *home*.** The home is the playing field – the real-world, real-time application of the training. Spiritual development objectives taught in Kids Community find their resolution in the home - in the raw, unpredictable, challenging, gut-wrenching reality of family relationships.

**The third element is *curriculum*.** A good curriculum for us is Bible-based, Jesus-centered, parent-friendly, and mentor-oriented. At Vista, our Kids Community uses *Orange* curriculum.

**The fourth element of the Vista KC is the *Training Room*.** Commonly referred to as a classroom, we consider each classroom a training environment for both parents and children. Each room on Sunday morning is safe, secure, and set-up by **Room Staff**. A team of parents serves on a rotation as teachers and the other parents serve as Helpers. Helpers are also a combination of young parents, experienced parents, singles, students, empty nesters, etc. Everybody!

# Lifegroups

*A regular and practical expression of worshipful, relational and missional values*

Lifegroups study, rehash, dig into and try to practically apply the Word of God (particularly what is introduced on Sunday). We publish weekly Sermon Application studies instead of asking leaders to prepare or conduct a secondary Bible study, for two reasons: First, we challenge our Lifegroup leaders to use their time to meet with others, and to live out and create missional opportunities for their group. Second, God's Word needs to be pressed down into our minds and souls through deeper discussion and debate and through real-life application. It's not more knowledge, but more transformation that Jesus demands.

*They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. –Acts 2:42-47*

In Lifegroups we are learning to honor God and to obey all that Jesus commands (worship); we are learning to live in grace while offering it to others (relational); and we are moving together into the spiritual and physical poverty of our communities (missional).

*And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching. –Hebrews 10:24-25*

Christianity isn't an individual sport; instead followers of Jesus find their greatest health, joy and purpose through community. Our Creator is a community – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Jesus modeled transformational community with his disciples, and nearly every page of the New Testament talks about how to live well with "one another."

*Carry one another's burdens (Gal 6:2)*

*Speak truthfully to one another (Eph 4:25)*

*Look to the interests of one another (Phil 2:4)*

*Admonish one another (Col 3:16)*

*Build up one another (1 Th 5:11)*

*Confess our sins to one another (Jas 5:16)*

*Offer hospitality to one another (1Pet 4:9)*

*Lay down our lives for one another (1Jn 3:16)*

We encourage everyone to gather with a small group of friends every-other-week for gospel-rich and authentic community, mutual encouragement, support, care, and challenge and by being missional every-other-other-week (if not all the time) to our friends, neighbors, co-workers, etc.

Finally, we believe the best pastoral care happens through existing relationships and shared experience – this is one of the primary motivations in encouraging everyone to be involved in biblical community like Lifegroups. Together we can help one another walk through difficult times. We pray through the God-ordained fires and trials of life, that we might become more Christ-like and that we might ultimately bring more attention to the strength and compassion of God!



## **Sermon Apps**

**Less theology, less philosophy,  
more personal application.**

**Application. Application. Application.**

## **Bi-Weekly**

**We gather together at homes every other  
week.**

**We get out of the home together on the  
other weeks.**

# Missions

*A lifestyle of giving and going, locally and globally*

*“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. --Mt 28:19*

## Global Missions

We are on mission globally to partner with indigenous leaders and Jesus-following churches of similar mind, heart and evangelistic vision for their local communities.

As we partner with the global movement of God, we are actively living at the intersection of the Jesus-taught prayer and the revelation of John: *The multi-tribal and multi-national Kingdom of God coming on Earth as it is in heaven!*

The greatest personal benefit of global missions might simply be a much deeper, broader and clearer understanding of how God works and is working, and who He truly is.

## Local Missions

We are on mission locally to introduce Jesus to others by consistently seeking and building relationships with un-churched people in the normal course of life and through the activities we're already involved in like teams, associations, school, work, politics, etc.

## Give, Go and Grow together

Everybody can play in Missions by consistently **giving** to one of our global initiatives or by **going** locally and globally, and by continuing to **grow together** in relationships with our global and local partners.



***Give, Go & Grow together  
around the city & around the world***



# Membership

## *A relational commitment vs. an organizational contract*

Membership at Vista is more of a relational commitment than an organizational contract – we're in this together – as contributors rather than just as consumers.

Most of us bristle at the thought of commitments. Flexibility is necessary, even prudent we think. We shy away from commitments and tilt toward independence and autonomy, but . . .

**a journey with Jesus is an interdependent and selfless journey with others. God's way is a way of community.**

Attending church is too often viewed as a “ticket” to eternity – a safeguard guaranteeing eternal rest – but that's a deception. **Eternal security is a gift that only Jesus can provide.** If you've not placed your faith in Him, you have yet to assure your reconciliation with God. However, that doesn't mean you cannot enjoy God's people and join in the work of a local church to some degree. Just don't confuse your participation in the church community with your place in heaven.

Being a real part of any organization or movement is not without its requirements and expectations. Vista is no exception. You are always welcome to simply attend, but to be more than a spectator and a consumer...to be a contributing family member requires a minimum commitment to these things:

**Pursuing God personally**

**Yielding to key leaders and to one another**

**Sharing the load (serve/give)**

*If formal membership is important to you, as it is for many, please indicate your familiarity with the vision and values of the PlayBook and your commitment to the three things above by signing below. Mail it in to the office and you're Community Pastor will follow-up with you to talk it through!*

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Signature

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Printed Name

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Date

