

## Sharing the Vision

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March 6, 2007

How many speeches have we heard about the importance of having a vision for the future? Obviously, we know it is crucial! King Solomon said, “Where there is no vision, a people perish....” Another translation of Proverbs 29:18 is “Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained....”

Now, that is an interesting word. “Unrestrained” reminds me of strained prunes. I suppose if they were re-strained that means prunes were strained twice. Then putting the ‘un’ in front of it means the prunes were backed to being strained once again.....oh the trials of the English language and the struggle for correct interpretation.

However, I assume the good king means, a vision is essential to give direction. In addition, unrestrained means, without a vision, people gravitate to chaos, mayhem, and destruction.

It is very important to have the right vision, too. Moreover, that the dream is pleasing to God? In fact, vision according to biblical wisdom, refers to seeking the will of God. Visions come from yearning God’s Will through prayer and Bible study. Visions, without God’s help, often reveal self-centered motives and ill-gotten gains. Therefore, vision is not without its moral context and this is why King Solomon continues the instruction, “but happy is he that keeps the law.”

I would be the last one to claim absolute knowledge regarding God’s will. However, for me, vision is seeking His will, much as a seafarer determines direction by lining up with the North Star. In order to do so, one must be positioning and repositioning to stay on course.

It is about positioning, you know. In the game of pool, if the player thinks only of getting one ball into the pocket, he or she may lose the game. However, a good player is thinking about how to land the cue ball in such a way to set up the next shot.

Where do you think The Baptist Home needs to be in 10 years? More importantly, what do you think God wants for this ministry? What steps are needed now to stay on mission?

Goals allow us to position, reposition, and take steps to stay on mission. In 2006, we took significant steps, some historic, to position The Baptist Home toward greater success in the fulfillment of its mission.

1. We began plowing around the stump of the SBC/MBC controversy. We began exploring new opportunities, while keeping our eye on this ministry.

- Along the way, we found opportunity in Belarus and discovered an old friend in the Baptist World Alliance.
- International visitors came to our Home from Belarus and Moldova.
- We are anticipating visits from a Chinese delegation this year.
- We are relating to Southern Baptists from other states and welcomed into their fellowships.
- We have very strong support from churches, some associations, and many, many donors and members who belong to churches affiliated with the Missouri Baptist Convention, Baptist General Convention of MO and Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of MO.
- We will relate to any individual or group that shares our values and our historic Baptist principles. I hope someday the Missouri Baptist Convention will come to its senses and align itself with its

mission. However, in the meantime, we are determined to continue to plow around the stump by staying true to our mission.

2. We took another step by developing master plans for each facility. These plans will identify and guide capital needs over the next several years. The architect met with our staff leadership to visualize what was needed to keep our facilities in a contemporary state and provide for generations to come.

3. We developed a new Admission for Residency Policy that is more inclusive. As we have said before, the old policy was not up-to-date with the direction of the SBC/MBC or the mobile aging culture of the 21st century. As far as I know, The Baptist Home is the very last institution to make these changes.

- Baptist colleges and seminaries receive students from other denominations,
- The Children's Home minister's to children and families who are other than Baptists,
- The old annuity board of the SBC changed its name to Guidestone and offers services to multiple faith groups,
- And churches have methods to receive Baptists from other states by transfer of letter or on statement of faith. They have methods to receive people from other denominations, depending on local church polity. They have methods to receive the unbeliever by profession of faith.

While every Baptist institution seems to have an open door policy, and many have done so for years, they continue to work within Baptist values and beliefs. It is unfair, un-Christ-like, impractical, and apparently un-Baptist for The Home to reserve its ministries for only Missouri Baptists. God has given us an opportunity; let's seize it!

4. Our Development Team has reorganized and has become more effective. We had a good year financially. Our administrators worked hard to control expenses and increase revenue. However, our Development Team has done an excellent job, too. We have added several new donors, we are conducting Estate Planning Seminars and Senior Adult Ministry events, and we are exploring new ways to gain access to foundation and corporate gifts.

What about 2007?

We need to develop and implement a marketing plan. Due to the ongoing changes in Baptist life and the aging culture, we must find ways to relate to multiple groups. An effective Marketing plan will create awareness thereby opening doors to new donors and new residents.

We need to develop and implement a Capital Needs strategy that will meet current and future facility needs. This plan will help our facilities provide up-to-date equipment, buildings, and furnishings. This should reduce liability and strengthen our financial position by taking care of our properties & equipment.

We need to develop and implement a Research and Development plan to address inquiries for future expansion. As you know, The Baptist Home has a wonderful heritage and reputation. Many communities, families, and pastors of churches want closer access. Two of our homes are located in less populated areas. Both areas are showing strong potential for growth and ministry. While shoring up our rural campuses and fulfilling growth opportunities on the Ozark campus, we need to be more open to the populated areas. We have interest from Kansas City, Central Missouri, and St. Louis. In the last year, we attended several meetings and explored new opportunities. Perhaps a few of our most

interesting invitations has come from our neighboring state of Illinois and from Jefferson County.

We need to explore new ways of sharing our experience with the global community. We need to expand our Aging Education Services and increase relationships with the Baptist World Alliance through voluntary relationships.

We need a Risk Management Plan to address the issue of liability. In addition to the steps we have already taken, we need to continue to implement plans that will reduce our exposure to liability. We are thankful for our competent attorneys. We will continue to work with them to find new ways of reducing our liability exposure.

In addition to these goals, I have asked each of our key leadership to dream dreams for his or her area of work. I asked them to develop goals, which will conform to the 2004 Strategic Planning Directives and, Mission, Vision, Ministry and Core Value statements. I asked the goals be achievable or, at the very least, get underway in 2007. The goals should respect the overall integrity of The Baptist Home; should make life better for the recipients of this ministry and staff; and coordinate with this ministry as a whole.

I am sure God wants this ministry to be successful, to reflect His good character, and to give testimony of His Love through Christ for all people. The Baptist Home's role is to do this by serving aging humanity. Thank you for believing in and supporting the sincerity of this endeavor to do what God expects of us.

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