

Treasuring Christ Together

A Multiplying Movement of Congregations,
Campuses, and Churches

*Spreading a passion for the supremacy of God
in all things for the joy of all peoples
through Jesus Christ*

A Working Vision
Bethlehem Baptist Church
Fall, 2003

Dear Friends,

When Jesus Christ blesses his church, he puts us to the test. How will we manage his mercy? Managing mercy may feel unfitting, but it is biblical. Jesus gave differing “talents” to his servants and told them to manage well till he comes (Matt. 25:15). We either do this humbly and wisely, or we do it badly. There is no non-response to mercy.

That’s our situation at Bethlehem. One fallible but crucial measure of Christ’s blessing is how many people are tasting the supremacy of God among us on Sunday morning. The answer is: more than twice as many as five years ago. Here are the first quarter averages:

<i>1998</i>	1234
<i>1999</i>	1631
<i>2000</i>	1963
<i>2001</i>	2110
<i>2002</i>	2285
<i>2003</i>	2742

This trajectory of grace set the Council of Elders to praying and planning. We would like to share with you how we think God is leading us to respond. We hope you will taste the same joyful anticipation we feel.

After four years of effort, the adult ministries team is finally in place with the call of Sherard Burns and Tom Eckblad to join David Livingston. This is crucial because it lays the foundation for aggressive growth without neglecting the relational health of the church. Never before have we had a team that includes assimilation, covenant care, and counseling. We believe the time is right to exchange the mentality of coping with the mentality of strategic growth.

We build on the past grace of what God has made Bethlehem to be. On the facing page we try to portray Bethlehem as it is today. With the glory of God at the top and the grace of God at the bottom, every ministry exists “to spread a passion for the supremacy of God in all things for the joy of all peoples through Jesus Christ.”

Most unusual are the six auxiliary ministries that span upwards at the top, from TBI to World Missions. These rise with increasing expansiveness and distance from Bethlehem. In all our planning we should not forget that the blessing and burden of being Bethlehem include an ever-expanding global responsibility.

What’s new at this point in our history is the fresh resolve to multiply congregations, campuses and churches. You see this on the facing page in the ministry called “Church Planting and Strategic Mobilization.” The church already approved Kenny Stokes as the leader of this ministry. You also see it on pages 4-6 in the vision statement called **Treasuring Christ Together** (TCT).

TCT is a strategic alternative to an ever-larger sanctuary downtown and an ever-increasing number of services at the single downtown campus. The alternative is to create and nurture a radical, risk-taking mindset for “spreading” by multiplication, as opposed to the more comfortable mindset of expansion by centralized enlargement. For Bethlehem at this time, we think this alternative vision is harder and better.

TCT means three kinds of multiplication: neighborhood congregations, campuses, and independent churches. You may read about these on page 5.

Our aim is that multiple churches be planted and that there be more than two campuses. One essential part of this vision is a mixture of live and video preaching in worship. It seems good to the elders, for this season in our history, that the congregations and campuses be united by Pastor John’s preaching. Newly planted independent churches would have their own preaching pastors.

The anchor service (always live) would be Saturday night, starting October 4. At this service a video recording of the sermon will be made. The next morning this recording will be used in the worship services where the preacher is not present. We will continue to rotate live preaching among the campuses, but now we will use this recording instead of broadcasting live. This change accomplishes four things.

- 1) It keeps the preaching pastor live downtown every weekend (Saturday night) for the sake of a consistent urban presence.
- 2) It frees us from the spirit-squeezing synchronization of services on Sunday morning.
- 3) It saves us \$1,400 a week in broadcast fees.
- 4) It enables “neighborhood congregations” to use the video in homes at creative times when outreach is optimal. For more details on scheduling see page 7.

We pray that God will create in us the pilgrim mindset to spread a passion by multiplication. The price is higher than centralization. But the saving effect for those without Christ will, we believe, be greater. And that will be our joy. Pray with us for this miracle of grace.

For the Council of Elders,

Pastor John

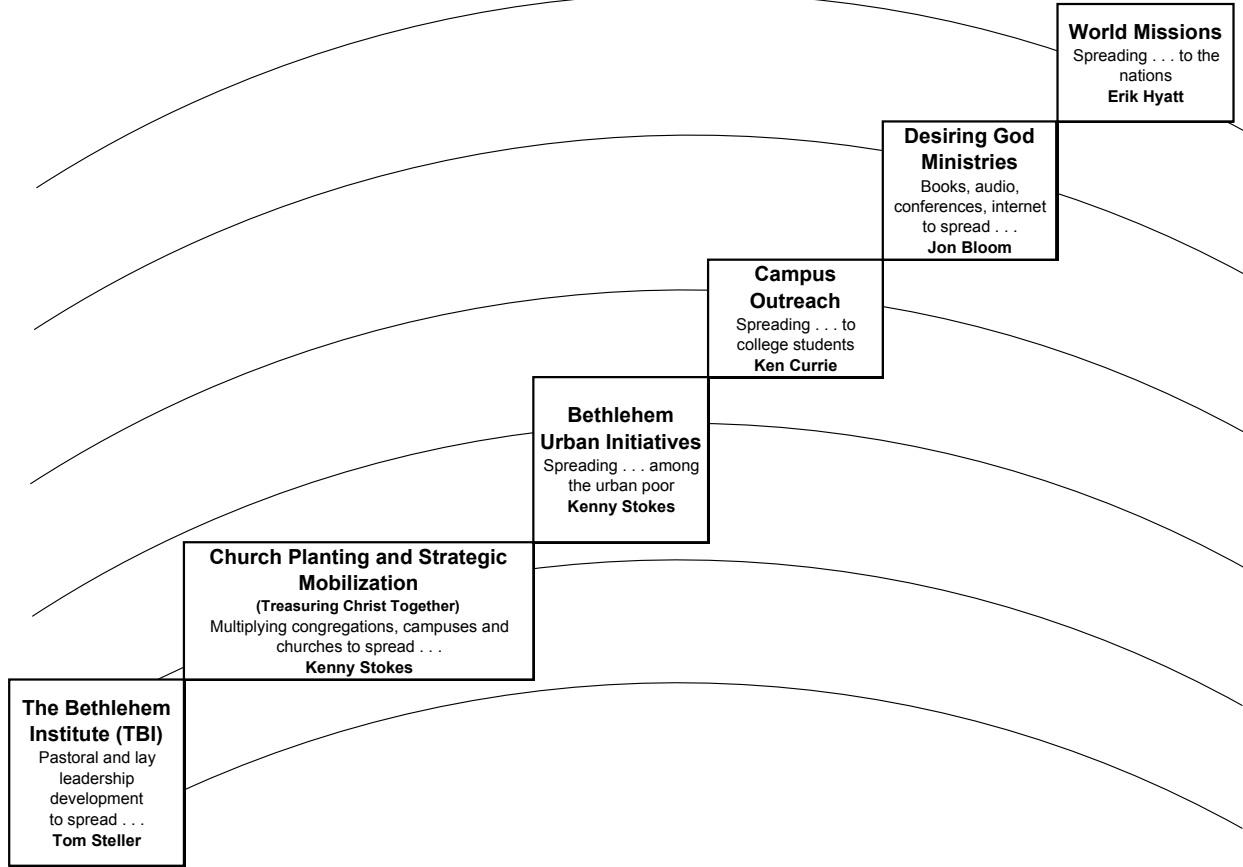
Seeing Bethlehem

*Spreading a Passion for the Supremacy of God in
all things for the joy of all peoples
through Jesus Christ.*

(as unfolded in the TBI Affirmation of Faith)

The Glorious Supremacy of God through Jesus Christ

He is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see.
To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen. (1 Timothy 6:15-16)



Equipping Children to spread . . . David, Sally Michael	Equipping Youth to spread . . . Brad Nelson, John Erickson	Equipping College to spread . . . Ken Currie, Jack Delk	Equipping Women to spread . . . Mary Delk	Equipping Adults to spread . . . Sherard Burns, David L. Tom E.	Equipping Seniors to spread . . . Erv Mickelberg	Equipping Urban Dreamers to spread . . . New staff addition
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How the team for adults works
 ▶▶ More spreading-oriented ▶▶ (Sherard)
 ◀ David Livingston ▶
 ◀◀ More care-oriented ◀◀ (Tom Eckblad)

Corporate Worship
 Expressing a passion for the supremacy of God in all things for the joy of all peoples through Jesus Christ.
 Chuck Steddum, Dan Holst, John Piper

Ministry Infrastructure Organizing ministries to spread . . . Sam Crabtree, Joby Morgan, Ministry Assistants	Building and Facilities Financial and Property Administrators, providing a base to spread... Paul Johnson, David Jaeger, Brad Arthur, Custodial Team, kitchen crew	Technical Support Audio, visual, IT to spread . . . John Gyvoai, Andy Lang, Audio Team
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The Council of Elders
 Guarding the Mission and Doctrine, overseeing the flock, praying to spread a passion for the supremacy of God in all things for the joy of all peoples through Jesus Christ.
 Tim Johnson (chairman)

The Sovereign Grace of God
 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. (1 Corinthians 15:10)

Treasuring Christ Together

A Multiplying Movement of Congregations, Campuses, and Churches

Treasuring Christ Together (TCT) is a multiplying movement of congregations, campuses, and churches defined and united by their common *Mission* and *Biblical Life and Doctrine*. • The *Mission* is to spread a passion for the supremacy of God in all things for the joy of all peoples through Jesus Christ.¹ • The *Biblical Life and Doctrine* is The Bethlehem Institute (TBI) Affirmation of Faith.²

Bethlehem's Commitment to Multiplication

As a part of **Treasuring Christ Together**, Bethlehem Baptist Church is committed to an aggressive strategy of multiplying such congregations, campuses, and churches as God adds to his church those who are being saved.³

¹ Essential for understanding this statement is our assumption that it is a *definition* of love. We believe the essence of a loving relationship is humble, sacrificial, self-giving interaction that helps people treasure Christ above all things. In other words, love seeks, at whatever cost, to spread into the heart of the beloved a joyful passion for God's supreme value in all things through Jesus Christ. People are most loved not when they are made much of, but when they are helped to enjoy making much of God for ever. For a fuller explanation of the mission statement see the Sermon from October 1, 1995, "A Passion for the Supremacy of God for the Joy of All Peoples: Unpacking the Master Planning Team Document" (see: <http://www.desiringgod.org/library/sermons/95/100195.html>).

² See this at http://www.desiringgod.org/library/what_we_believe/tbi_affirmation.html. Our aim in the TBI AFFIRMATION OF FAITH is not to discover how little can be believed as the basis of our unity, but rather to embrace and teach "the whole counsel of God." Our aim is to encourage a hearty adherence to the Bible, the fullness of its truth, the brightness of its love, and the glory of its Author. We believe biblical doctrine stabilizes saints in the winds of confusion, and strengthens the church in her mission to meet the great systems of false religion and secularism. We believe that the supreme virtue of love is nourished by the strong meat of God-centered doctrine. And we believe that a passion for the supremacy of God in all things for the joy of all peoples through Jesus Christ is sustained in an atmosphere of deep and joyful knowledge of God and his wonderful works.

Sometimes a concern for doctrinal faithfulness is questioned as a distraction from the pressing mission of the church in rescuing the perishing, healing the broken, and meeting a thousand painful and urgent needs. We feel this tension ourselves. But it seems to us that history teaches the value of doctrinal vigilance for the sake of these very concerns. The Christian groups that have neglected a passion for truth and a diligence in the defense of "sound doctrine" have gradually lost not only the truth, but their mission and Christ-exalting love as well. Eighty years after opposing doctrinal controversy for the sake of missions, some churches no longer believe in missions. Sound doctrine about God, man, sin, salvation, and eternity sustains the sacred duty and sacrificial delight in the cause of soul-winning, world missions, and compassionate social engagement.

³ We have not developed in this proposal the implicit intention, namely, that other churches besides Bethlehem and our church plants could also belong to **Treasuring Christ Together**. This aspect of the vision will be developed in another document, if God confirms this direction.

Substrategies of Multiplication

The overall strategy of multiplying congregations, campuses, and churches includes multiple substrategies which may be as diverse and creative as the MISSION and TBI AFFIRMATION OF FAITH will allow.

Substrategy #1: Neighborhood Congregations

The aim here is the formation of smaller congregations within Bethlehem which remain part of the church but may meet in homes or rented facilities for Sunday worship with a view to reaching a specific neighborhood or a specific segment of people. These congregations may use the video recording of the downtown site in corporate worship, or may provide other elder-approved means of exultation over the Word. These people would participate in as many of the other ministries of Bethlehem as helps accomplish the goals of their congregation.

Substrategy #2: Campuses

The aim here is the formation of campus branches of Bethlehem. A campus would be part of Bethlehem and would use the video recording of the downtown site in corporate worship, or may at times provide other elder-approved means of exultation over the Word (e.g., other staff or elders preaching). These campuses would develop ministries which help them accomplish the goals of the campus: Worship forms, children's and youth ministries, adult education, outreach strategies, etc. The people would use as many of the downtown-based ministries as they found helpful (e.g., shared training efforts such as TBI seminars).

Substrategy #3: Separate Churches

The aim here is the formation of independent churches. This may happen with the clear intention of church planting from the beginning. Or it may grow out of the first two substrategies. We do not believe that an independent church should use the video recording of Bethlehem's preaching as a regular part of its own corporate worship experience, but should develop its own preaching and teaching leadership. The aim of planting separate churches is that the churches remain linked not in government (not a common eldership), but in fellowship defined by the **Treasuring Christ Together** MISSION and TBI AFFIRMATION OF FAITH. What that fellowship will look like and how we can mutually strengthen each other would be worked out with input from all the churches.

Note: The future of neighborhood congregations, campuses, and new churches is so unknown to us that it seems unwise at present to say for sure whether all of these should be moving toward independency or not. We would regard that, in general, as a very healthy way of kingdom growth, provided they became healthy churches. But for now it seems wise to say that whether a congregation stays a part of Bethlehem or not should depend on whether God is blessing in accomplishing the goals of the congregation for spreading a passion for God's supremacy in all things for the joy of all peoples through Jesus Christ. Independency for its own sake, if it produces less spiritual fruit, would not be our goal. So we will bless and encourage the movement of congregations and campuses toward independency, but not assume that this is always best when variables may dictate otherwise.

Dimensions of Church Life

We believe that congregations, campuses, and churches that embrace the MISSION and the TBI AFFIRMATION OF FAITH should be pursuing an experience of church life that is marked by the following ten dimensions.

1. **WORSHIP:** Enjoying and displaying the worth of Christ in God-centered, Christ-exalting, Spirit-led, Bible-saturated *corporate worship*, including congregational singing and expository exultation.
2. **PRAYER:** Commitment to depend on God's grace and mercy in *personal, family, and corporate prayer*, so that in all our blessings the Giver will get the glory.
3. **EDUCATION:** Personal efforts to grow and help each other **grow in biblical truth and wisdom and faith and love**, which show Christ as our supreme treasure.
4. **MUTUAL CARE:** Corporate commitment to pursue a life together in *sacrificial faith-sustaining care for each* other in loving relationships at every level of youth and age, joy and sorrow, comfort and crisis, health and brokenness.
5. **WITNESS:** Personal and corporate strategies of *wartime living, courageous witness, and social action* to show the supreme value of Christ to fallen people and fallen culture.
6. **RACIAL HARMONY:** Intentional efforts to *display love across racial and cultural lines* and be a church that models the fruit of that love.
7. **COMPASSION:** Personal and corporate expressions of compassion to *relieve human suffering*, near and far, by means of short-term intervention and long-term personal and structural change, in order to show the justice, mercy and soul-satisfying beauty of Christ—forever.
8. **MISSIONS:** Corporate efforts in *cross-cultural missions* for the sake of the Name of Christ among unreached peoples.
9. **LEADERSHIP:** Humble submission to spiritual, *biblically qualified elders* who lead by example, not dominion, and with joy, not under compulsion, to equip the saints for the work of the ministry, including aggressive efforts to multiply congregational leaders.
10. **LEGACY:** The commitment of church and parents to *train up succeeding generations of children and youth* who live the vision of this church.

Schedule for This Fall

Saturday Worship (Downtown Campus only)

- Starting October 4 we will have a downtown Saturday night worship service.
- The time of the service will be announced when we have the necessary input.
- The preaching will be live each week.
- Nursery, but no Sunday School

Sunday Worship (Downtown and North Campuses)

- Services at 9 AM and 11 AM at both sites
- The preaching is live every other week and by video every other week
- The North Campus meets at Maranatha Hall, Northwestern College, until we move to a permanent North Campus. Pray with us that God would guide us to the right place.
- **NOTE!** Sunday, September 28 we have no access to Maranatha Hall. The North Campus people will meet in *one service at 11:00 AM at The Great Hall, Bethel College, Arden Hills.*

Sunday School (Downtown and North Campuses)

- There will be Sunday School on both campuses this fall on Sunday mornings.
- The start up date is uncertain because of building and staffing contingencies. We will keep you posted. (Register your children *now* for Sunday School and Wednesday Kids' Connection at the Children's Information Center at either campus.)
- Senior High School Sunday School begins both campuses October 14, at 11 AM.
- Junior High Sunday School will begin when the children's Sunday School begins.

Wednesday Connection Downtown

- 4:45-6:00 **All-Church Supper**
(Make reservations before noon on Monday by calling the church office, 612.338-0304, or filling out the tear-off portion of the Sunday worship folder and putting it in the offering place)
- 5:25-6:20 Children's Music Rehearsals
- 6:30-8:00 **Youth Connection**
- 6:30-8:00 *Girls' Club*
- 6:45-7:45 **Kid's Connection** (Register your children now at the Children's Info Center)
- 6:45-7:45 **Adult connection** (begins 6:30 starting October 8)
Our sense is that this fall the Adult Connection should be a "body-life" time with corporate prayer as the central act, instead of extended teaching. We will always make the Word of God our starting point and guide, but we sense the need to pray earnestly together for God's powerful presence among us. The challenges of **Treasuring Christ Together** are great. Along with all the other ministries on page 3 we are in constant and urgent need of God's supernatural power to see people converted and built into radical disciples who say, "To live is Christ and to die is gain." That is why we will make earnest, Spirit-led prayer the core of Wednesday Adult Connection. This means that we will not have the 5:45 prayer time but rather fold that into the main prayer service of prayer.

Ways to Volunteer NOW

Children's Ministry

Contact Joyce Heinrich at 612-338-0304 x242

Nursery Workers: Loving volunteers are needed to care for our littlest ones.

Youth Ministry

Contact Kevin Dau at 612-338-0304 x220

Sunday School Workers: Small group leaders for Junior and Senior High Sunday School classes are needed.

College Ministry

Contact Jack Delk at 612-338-0304 x209

Van Drivers: Drivers are needed on Sunday mornings to bring students to Bethlehem from the University of Minnesota.

Adult Ministry

Contact Jen Young at 612-338-0304 x211

Shepherd Group Leaders: Individuals or pairs are needed to lead small groups.

Tuesday Night Evangelists: Share the gospel with those in the Bethlehem neighborhood and in the Twin Cities.

TBI (The Bethlehem Institute)

Contact Connie Kopischke at 612-338-0304 x206

There are many ways to become involved, however, these needs change frequently, so please call!

Worship Ministries

Contact Jesse Harms at 612-338-7653 x224

Ushers: Needed for Saturday night (beginning October 4th) and Sunday mornings

North Site set-up and tear-down: For Sunday morning services at Northwestern College. Contact Dan Holst at 612-721-8508

Urban Ministries

Contact Sarah Porter at 612-338-0304 x212

Neighborhood Events: Reach out to our nearest neighbors by serving them through coffee hours, cleaning days, driving grocery vans, refugee and Somali ministries.

Foreign Missions

Contact Connie Kopischke at 612-338-0304 x206

Support Teams: Support Bethlehem missionaries through prayer, newsletter, etc.