



**VISION
AND**

DIRECTION

FALL 2019 - BEYOND

COD 2018-beyond Vision and Direction

Over the past 68 years, the Church of the Open Door has gone from a fledgling group of believers to become one of the largest churches in York County. During the first 25 years of the church's history, church attendance went from 60 to 600. This was due, in part, to the clear teaching of God's Word, a passion for evangelism and missions, and strong lay involvement in the ministry. From 1976 to 2006 the church leveled out and stayed at nearly the same number, approximately 600. Then due to some leadership issues in 2005, attendance was down to roughly 450-500 attendees, even lower on some Sundays during 2005-06.

During the past 13 years, COD has experienced another period of strong growth. The growth has been sustained, and it continues to this day, with the church now running a regular attendance of approximately 1900, between 7 services and 2 campuses.

This past ministry year God has continued to be very gracious to COD. As of this writing, our attendances at the EYC averages 550 and a healthy church continues to form and minister. Meanwhile, our WYC continues to be healthy as well. We've continued to grow at the WYC and have enjoyed great times of worship and instruction. People have stepped up to our Next Steps areas, and we've reached out to the community through #foryork, in significant ways.

As of September 2019, our giving is 11% higher than last year, and our expenses are lower than last year. As of this writing the church has approximately \$800,000 in reserves, and is \$30,000.00 over budget in the General Fund, for the year.

We are God's church, founded by Jesus Himself, with such expansive potential that even the gates of hell cannot withstand His onslaught. We are to be One, and serve as the ongoing manifestation of Christ here on earth, the focus of His activity. And we have a mission, given by Jesus, to reach out to a deeply fallen world, and call it back to God. We are to accomplish this through heartfelt worship, vibrant connection, active outreach/service, and growth in discipleship.

When people looked at the early Christians, they saw that God looked good on them. They worshipped together, loved each other and "shared the gospel like it was gossip over the backyard fence." Has God looked good on us, on our church in 2018-19? One of our jobs as leaders, is to see where God is working in this church, and to join Him in where He wants it to go. We must be willing to do whatever is necessary to help people turn to God, and hand our church over to the next generation in better shape than we found it. Here are some thoughts about our church, where we are, how we got here, and where we believe we need to go in the future.

I. Who is COD? What is our unique DNA?

We believe DNA is the essence or soul of a church, the identity that shapes traditions, values, mission and even décor. It is shaped by history, tradition, “heroes of the church’s past”, and God’s Word. DNA is like a filter for what the church is and becomes. A church that violates its DNA will bring disunity and conflict to its ranks. We must not violate our DNA, while being willing to change the things in our DNA that are not true to Scripture.

- A. A steadfast commitment to the Word of God.** We are a Word-oriented church, we teach it and seek to practice it. This makes COD unique in our community.
- B. The Gospel and Missions.** Nearly from our inception, praying – sending – going has been in our blood. We believe the gospel changes lives and the Great Commission is to be taken seriously, both here and abroad.
- C. Ministry to families, children and teens,** passing the faith onto the next generation. We are passionate about our children, and that is reflected with a “family feel” in our church, where generations worship together.
- D. Prayer dependent.** We speak a lot about this, and practice it in many ways, although we continue to need to keep this before our flock and take steps to really embrace this with our actions, church-wide.
- E. Strong lay involvement and shared leadership between pastors, elders and ministry leaders.** From early on in COD’s history, due in part to the involvement of its founders in a denominational church and a difficult break from that denomination, there was a distrust of hierarchal leadership. This history is also one of the reasons why some still see a gap between pastors and elders. And yet, the various groups have always worked their way through the differences, and this is one of the reasons why the church did not collapse during the issues in 2005. COD needs continual work here, which we regularly seek to address.
- F. Culture of acceptance.** Though we call people to move from where they are to where God wants them to be, we recognize that as sinful beings we’ll not always hit the mark. Therefore, we accept all who come to us, with whatever issues they might have, and join them at the foot of the cross.
- G. Multi-generational.** We are certainly unique in that we are a church where all the generations are strongly represented. This is a wonderful thing, and it also presents challenges.
- H. Large church with a small feel.** Though we are a church of 1900, our smaller service venue size of roughly 400 creates a smaller church feel, and enables more effective connection.
- I. Multisite in makeup.** Beginning in 2017 we’ve moved to a multisite strategy to “help York find and follow Jesus.”

II. What are our Core Values? These are not the same as beliefs, but are closely tied to belief and DNA. Core Values are the foundational components of our work, the *non-negotiable values* that shape our ministry. They're state these with a goal in mind for each.

- A. We value the Word of God...**therefore we will preach it, teach it and live it to the best of our ability. We will be a Biblically based ministry.
- B. We value the priority and practice of prayer...**therefore we will be passionate about prayer as a major part of our strategy in accomplishing God's work, expressing dependence upon God's mighty power in our lives and ministry.
- C. We value people...**therefore we will be committed to the uncommitted, passionately reaching out with the love and gospel of God to our city and the world. We will also value people regardless of gender, race or class as we pursue love in our interactions.
- D. We value excellence and relevance...**therefore we will be flexible and open to changing our methodology, and will pursue optimum quality, applying God's truth to the contemporary issues people face.
- E. We value community...**therefore we will provide specific opportunities for all the generations of our flock to do life together in smaller groups.
- F. We value growth and change in a believer's life...**therefore we will challenge every believer regarding spiritual formation, to grow and change into conformity to Jesus Christ, by pursuing worship, study, fellowship, prayer and ministry. We will also provide opportunities to strengthen families, marriages, and individuals.
- G. We value wise stewardship...**therefore we will teach generous, cheerful giving and practice wise management of our resources and facilities.
- H. We value ministry and service...**therefore we will help people understand their spiritual gifts and find their place on God's team of servants.
- I. We value grace and authenticity...**therefore we will seek to meet people in the messiness of their lives, and lead them to experience the grace we've received from God ourselves.

III. What is our Mission/Vision? Our “mission” is the one sentence description of what we are called to do in light of our DNA and Core Values. Our “vision” is how we will carry out our “mission.”

Mission: *The Church of the Open Door exists to ignite a passion for knowing God in all people, and to live this out through new and growing communities of committed followers of Christ.*

(Mark 12:28-31, Matt 28:18-20)

Vision: We will pursue this passion for God through a commitment to:

Worship... the One who gave His life for you

- Personal living that reflects a continuous attitude of **worship of God** and translates into more meaningful worship with the body of believers at COD.
- Celebrating the glory of God through **worshipping together**. This worship should be grounded in spirit and truth, culturally relevant and appropriate, and encourage freedom and sincerity of expression as well as active participation. *(Ex. 34:14, 1 Chron. 16:29, Psalm 22:22, Psalm 45:11, Psalm 111:1, John 4:23, Eph. 5:19, Heb. 10:25; 13:15)*
- Remembrance of the eternal life-giving effect of the grace of God through **celebrations of baptism, and the ongoing forgiveness of the grace of God** through celebrations of the **Lord’s Supper**.
(1 Cor. 11:23-26, Matt. 28:19, Acts 10:48)

Connect...to a community seeking to follow Christ

- Encouraging every person to **build intentional biblical relationships** with other believers through which we care for one another’s spiritual, emotional and physical needs *(Matt. 25:34-40, Rom. 12:10-13, Rom. 13:8, Gal. 5:13-14, Eph. 4:32, 1 Pet. 3:8-9, Heb. 3:13)*
- Partnering with and **encouraging believers, locally and globally**, to increase their passion for God. *(Eph. 4:3-6)*
- Emphasizing our role as **stewards of the time, talents, finances**, and other resources God has given us to be used for the advancement of His Kingdom *(Gen. 28:22, 2 Sam. 8:11, 1 Cor. 3:16-17, 2 Cor. 9)*
- Seeking to **establish intentional relationships with our neighbors**, co-workers and friends so that we may lead them into a relationship with God through Christ and assimilate them into our local believing community.

Grow... in the grace and knowledge of Jesus

- Biblical teaching that encourages us to **grow in our knowledge of God**, in our understanding of the magnificence of His character and His unparalleled works, in our recognition of His providence throughout human history, resulting in the deepening of our faith and the transformation of our lives (*Prov. 3:3, John 17:3, Rom 12: 1-2, II Tim. 3:16, I Pet. 1:5-9, Col. 1:16-17*)
- The development of increasing **intimacy in our relationship with God** through Jesus Christ, manifested in prayer; reading, studying, meditation and memorization of the Bible. This intimacy will cause us to treasure Christ so that we will prioritize the eternal values of the Word over the temporal pleasures of the world. (*Josh. 1:8, Psalm 77:12, Psalm 119:11, 2 Tim. 2:15, Jam. 5:16b*)
- Assisting all believers at COD to **discover their spiritual gifts** and use them for the edification of the body, and for the exaltation of God (*I Cor.12-14, Eph. 4:15-16, I Pet. 4:10, Rom. 12:3-7*)
- Establishing **biblical leadership** to shepherd the community of COD effectively so that we fulfill our mission in increasing measure (*Acts 14:23, Acts 20:28, Ja. 5:14*)

Reach...to a hopeless and hurting world

1. Teaching and modeling a biblical understanding of our **responsibility to non-believers in the proclamation of the gospel** (*Matt. 28:19-20, I Pet. 3:15, Col. 4:5-6*)
2. Partnering with other churches and organizations to **reach non-believers with the gospel of Christ**.
3. Seeking to **establish intentional relationships with our neighbors**, co-workers and friends so that we may lead them into a relationship with God through Christ and assimilate them into our local believing community.
4. **Helping to meet the physical, emotional and social needs of non-believers** as a reflection of the love of God for them (*Matt. 9:1-8, Mark 6:30ff*)
5. Equipping and **supporting those involved in cross-cultural ministries** as they seek to communicate the gospel to non-believers throughout the world (*Psalm 57:9, Psalm 86:9, Psalm 67:3-5, I Tim. 5:17*)

This is our Mission, and we MUST stay on Mission, and make this the “secret sauce” of COD!!.

IV. What happened in the life of our church this past year, that has, for better or for worse, affected our church life?

- A. The continued implementation of multi-site ministry, beginning in East York.**
This has caused us to leapfrog in our numerical growth, to approximately 1900 on Sunday mornings. We now have 7 worship services between our 2 campuses. We continue to attract a lot of families with children, but also people of all ages. In this new paradigm, we've been challenged in how to manage staff and resources, in communication, as well as in leadership and ministry.
- B. Our teaching times in...** "40 Days of Prayer; Christmas Dilemma, FAQs, Daniel, Psalms, 1 Timothy", have been used in great ways to help our people grow and connect. Once again, God really used the exposition of His Word this past year in the life of our church, and our people enjoy this type of preaching.
- C. Our seasonal outreaches,** namely Easter and Christmas, were again, very well received. Other outreaches such as the Day of Pampering, Sportsman's Dinners, FeedYork, #forYork, Block Party, Car Show, EYC free haircuts, Mark Gregston Seminar, Jonnie W Date night, Beth Boger concert/Joe Holt, add great value to church life and health.
- D. Our VBS and Ignition** reached numbers of young people this year, and we saw a number of families make a 1st time connection to COD through these 2 events.
- E. We've seen a number of people come to Christ** this year, at both our campuses. We've baptized 50 people, we've received 33 new members into our fellowship, and dedicated 19 children.
- F. Our financial giving** has increased 11% from last year. At this writing, we are \$30,000.00 over budget.
- G. Our local and global outreach, #foryork and #fortheworld made great strides...**
Our "FaithWorks" conversations continue to play out in church life.
#foryork: WYC – Lehman Center painting; Painting at William Penn School; Habitat for Humanity Summer Project; LifePath – Book Sale at York College; Penn State new student Day – Aug. 23; NAMI -Oct. 12; Bell Shelter – Nov. collection, Community blood Drive; EYC – Chairs for Prisoners; Baby shower for 3 community moms; back-to-school haircuts. **#fortheworld:** numerous mission trips both nationally and internationally, India Vision Trip regarding possible partnership, Mission Festival, investing \$521,000.00 in sending out partners, and seeing several of our young people prepare themselves for cross-cultural ministry.
- H. We continued our Smaller Group ministries** to help us reach, connect and grow. We continued "Starting Blocks" to disciple younger believers, saw **MOPS – Mothers of Pre-Schoolers and MOMSNext – a ministry for moms of school age**

children – grow in influence, started a **Next Gen 20/30 Something group** on Sundays at WYC, and started **small groups and men’s/women’s Bible studies** at our EYC.

- I. **In the area of staff:** Church-wide, we hired a full-time **Worship Tech** position, **Worship Developer**, and transitioned Don Heindel and Kathy Zirkle to Central Staff. Jeremy Drake adjusted to Next Gen and Administration Pastor. At the WYC **Student Min Director** and **Campus Pastor** transitions went well, and we hired a **WYC admin** and **CODkids admin**. At our EYC, we added hours for **admin, children’s and student positions**. We also made a number of organizational changes that provided organizational clarity for our staff and leaders.
- J. **In the area of prayer...**we formed teams of people who will pray before and during our services, and be available for prayer at the end of our services. In the Fall of 2018 had a church-wide **40 Days of Prayer emphasis**, including a **concert of prayer**, and **Secret Church**.
- K. **Our elders and pastors worked through and adopted a paper that defines the relationship of leaders at COD.** This is something that we’ve been working on for numbers of years. This document clearly outlines the role of leadership here at COD and we trust will be used to promote health in this area of church life. However, COD will need to continually work on a Biblical understanding of the role of pastors, elders and laypeople, so as to not promote the ill-health that contributed to the church not growing for 30 years.
- L. **Our Multisite Journey:** After getting our new EYC up and running, we’ve continue to seek the Lord for **“what’s next?”** We prayed that our **“40 Days of Prayer”** would be used by God to bring clarity to our church. We continue to explore merger opportunities with certain churches in York County, asking if they might be open to a “merger” with COD, where we would bring our DNA and health into a struggling congregation, adopting their campus and facility as our own. We received a number of responses from area churches, but as of this writing we haven’t sensed the Lord leading in any of them. We do believe we’ve received clarity and **plan to open our next campus in the Newberry Commons** in northern York County in Spring of 2020. We will commence a Capital Campaign in the Fall of 2019 with the Generis Organization assisting us.
- M. **Facilities:** We renovated to add a **“Next Steps”** area. We’ve also been getting quotes and estimates for the renovations of the 1958 part of our WYC, including the addition of a parking lot extension at the corner of Loucks and Carlisle roads. Those numbers aren’t completely in as of this writing.
- N. **Top 100 Fastest Growing Churches in America.** COD was once again honored to be #41 in the list.

V. Assessing our Past. What is happening today at COD, in light of our history, DNA, and values?

A. We continue to hear it from so many people. God is at work here at COD.

People continue to be attracted to this church. **Why? Why does COD continue to grow at this season of its ministry?**

1. **God** – for whatever reason, He has chosen to continue to bring many people to our church. There is a healthy sense of God’s presence here at COD, in our services and ministries, and people are drawn to this.
2. **Church Health.** The changes we’ve brought about in the last number of years have not been instituted with the grand scheme of seeing our church grow. Our growth has been the result of paying attention to what makes a church a healthy place and removing the disease/hindrances to church health. **This is a very important point to make in this document.** Healthy organisms grow!
3. **The Word of God.** The strong emphasis we place on the preaching and teaching of God’s Word, has attracted people to our church. There is a dearth of this in many evangelical churches. People grow when they attend here.
4. **Our Worship.** We have sought to strike a blend of contemporary and traditional music, with an emphasis on a more contemporary style. There are some who think we need to be more contemporary and others who wish we were more traditional, this blend seems to be a good fit for us at present.
5. **A warm, well-organized welcome from our people,** including the Getting Started Class, Guest Services Ministry and Next Steps areas that intentionally reach newcomers helping them get acclimated to a large church. Our parking pals, greeters, welcome/connection desk people, shuttle drivers, ushers, kiosk assistants, safety/medical staff people, and attenders have all helped our church reach people. We are known as a warm church 😊.
6. **Nursery, Children’s and Youth ministries that are attractive to young families,** that reinforce what is taught in the home, and where young people are challenged to walk with Christ. This area needs to continually be examined and adjusted as we grow.
7. **Leadership that continually seeks the Lord and His direction for His church.** The work our elders have done in recent years with: our elder-training class, understanding the role of Pastors and Elders in a church, and seeking to continue to grow and learn as leaders...has been a real plus to our flock. This is something that we cannot allow to get lost in the shuffle.
8. **People with a true heart to serve and give.** We have many people who just go about their lives quietly serving Christ where He has called them to serve.

They make up a large segment of our flock, and we would be toast without them 😊.

9. **Vision.** We have sought to catch God’s vision for where He wants us to go each year and communicate that vision in February. This year we will do it at the beginning of the ministry year in September, and follow up in February.
10. **A renewed vision for ministry here in York.** Something we have truly sought to do is reach out to our own Jerusalem. Ministries such as our Guest Services, Celebrate Recovery, Students, and #foryork have all helped us make a mark locally.
11. **COD continues to find a niche for those from a “toxic religious” background.** There is no doubt that difficult issues in some churches have brought people to COD. The style and teaching of COD has provided a church for those in our community who have become disillusioned by churches that have either moved away from solid biblical teaching or never taught the Scriptures in the first place. We’ve become a place where these folks are encouraged and revitalized. The stability and health people sense when they come here is attractive to them. **Most people come to COD from one of 3 backgrounds:** transfer from unhealthy churches, unchurched who are friends and family of COD attenders, or churched people from theologically liberal churches who come here and find Christ or grow in Him.

VI. Our world and culture today, including the Next Generation. It is my conclusion that some things need to continue to change going forward at COD, for us to reach this next generation.

- A. Most culture watchers believe we're at the end of one age and standing at the beginning of another.** The church must pay attention to the demographic shifts, global instability, economic uncertainty and technological advances of our world today. But there are other issues that more acutely affect the church: 1) The rise of Islam and the clash of civilizations. 2) The radical redefinition of marriage, gender, and the family. 3) Changing morals and a new discussion of what it means to be human.
- B. We've truly entered a world that is post-Christian, with a functional atheism that simply ignores God.** This has ushered in the rise of the "nones", a significant and rising number of our population that do not even think about God and have no religious affiliation. They are the fastest growing "religious group" in our nation, and the "under 30" crowd has the highest percentage. Included in this is a significant number of "former Christians." **Acts 15:19 truly comes into play as we seek to not make it hard for this generation to turn to God.**
- C. Gen X and Y, including Millennials have lived through the heart of this cultural change.** Their generation is unique and characterized by a number of factors, including: radical changes in technology, and understanding of family, sexuality and gender; marked by 9/11 and the economic crashes of 2000 and 2008; they are deeply worried about the present; they are "digital natives", with the internet in their pockets, spending 9 hours a day absorbing media; they are voracious social media where most of their conversations happen; they're growing up in a world where immigration has produced a world of multiracialism, resulting in this generation being the most racially integrated of any before; they are "sexually fluid", generally supporting gay marriage and transgender lifestyles; they are immersed in pornography as no other generation with 70% viewing it regularly and the average age to begin viewing it is 11; they have endless amounts of information but little wisdom, and virtually no mentors. **They are the first post-Christian generation, AND OUR CHURCH CANNOT SLEEP THROUGH THIS!!**

VII. Adjusting the Present – in light of these realities, what should be our goals/strategies in the next 1-5 years, to meet our mission/vision? This will be based on our 4 areas of Mission/Vision.

A. Worship

1. We want to be a place where people truly experience and encounter God through heartfelt, engaging worship.

a. Our worship arts team, and pastors must continually evaluate: What impression are people getting when they walk into our building? Do we have “irresistible ministry environments” for children, youth and adults? Is our setting appealing? Is it organized? Is the presentation engaging? Is the content helpful? When guests walk into our church and services, do they know that something significant is happening here? Does the stage, those on stage, the sound and tech, lighting, culture and environment all contribute toward an energetic and dynamic service, that gets better each year? Are we platforming in announcements etc, women and next gens?

2. We must continually ask ourselves if we are truly “prayer driven.”

B. Grow

1. Cultivate a strong culture of leadership development at all levels, intentionally investing in the next generation. We want to be sure that as our ministry grows we have the resources in leadership to carry us on that growth trajectory and beyond. Connecting the next generation to COD is vital for us to make this happen. Wayne Gretzky often said, “I don’t go where the puck is, I go where it’s headed next!” No church is guaranteed to last forever or be healthy forever. But if we walk through this season of our church life thinking about planning for multiple generations of health, the lifespan of the congregation will lengthen, and the kingdom of God will be better for it.

Continue to train leaders both elders, and upcoming leaders...

2. Help new people, new believers, and those who make decisions in our services, know the “next steps” of growth and involvement through the church. What do we want our members to look like spiritually, what are the first steps they should take and what subsequent steps should they be taking to grow in Christ? How do we develop leaders at COD? **Continue to make our “next steps” of Spiritual Formation crystal clear for our people, and continually kept before them.** The addition of a clearly visible “Next Steps” area at both campuses, has been huge.

3. **Keep working on creating a CODU or CODInstitute, separate from small groups, designed wholly for spiritual growth and formation.** This would include Getting Started Class, StartingPoint, StartingBlocks, classes on prayer, how to study the Bible, systematic theology, ministry leadership. **I recommend that in 2019-20 we hold some conversations on “Healthy Sexuality”, as our students, people and world are crying out for it.**
4. **Continue to live out the role of pastors, elders, and deacons, according to Eph. 4:12-15, and 1 Tim. 3:1-7, 5:17.**
 - a. **Re-visit the need for a Deacon/Deaconess Team.**
 - b. **Examine and define/refine exactly where we stand on the issues of “one woman man” in 1 Timothy 3, women, marriage/divorce and any other issues that come up.**

C. Connect

1. **CONNECTING people to COD must continue to be a priority here at COD...** Our “Director of Next Steps” should continue to develop a strategy to connect those who attend COD to the life of our church, through Guest Services, smaller groups, ministry teams.
2. **The “welcome” of our church,** including the entirety of Guest Services, must continue to see themselves as a team, leading the welcome and assimilation of people to our church. Every week people come onto our campus and determine whether or not they will return next week, *before the speaker ever opens his mouth.* **The sermon begins in the parking lot! We need a continual vision in this area of church life, led by our Campus Pastors.**
3. **Continue to implement and promote Smaller Groups within the overall structure of COD, so that our people begin to rely on this for their pastoral care.** New people need to have the body-life of our church. As we grow we must have a **system in place** to make this a reality of church life, or we will lose people and COD will be a revolving door of people coming and going. **Our Campus Pastors, along with our Director of Next Steps must continue to keep this area of church life before our people.**

D. Reach

1. **Cultivate a culture of invitation, where we share the gospel like gossip over the backyard fence.** Encourage our people to always be inviting their friends to worship and events.
2. **Continue to engage in our city, using the influence and favor God has given us.**

3. Explore an apologetic philosophy for outreach and evangelism.
4. Increase our ownership for global outreach. Explore what a partnership with India churches would look like going forward.

E. Management/Administration/Staff issues

1. Continue to address the financial and facility needs of our church and proactively plan to meet them. This includes:
 - a. Execute and finalize the plan for current facility needs on our West York campus, including: parking, renovating, and purchasing adjoining properties. Finalize and present this plan with anticipated cost and timeline to leadership and congregation, vote on and move forward with it.
 - b. Staying strong financially while we engage in our next steps facility-wise. Adopting God-sized budgets and trusting Him to help us meet them. Commence with a 2-year Capital Campaign, with a soft launch in Fall 2019 and public launch in Spring 2020.
2. Continue to clearly outline what our future ministry personnel needs are.
 - a. Because we want to reach and keep the next generation, hire and platform young people.
 - b. Strategize and bring clarity to what our current and anticipated senior staff structure should look like in a multisite church, making sure the right people are in the right seats, exploring the position of Executive Pastor/Business Manager.
 - c. As our church grows, so does the number of hurting people and marriages, and thus our counseling ministry needs. When ready, I recommend we hire a part-time, trained, competent counselor at COD.
 - d. Over the next few years, have a trusted team work quietly on a senior pastor succession plan. Wise organizations our size begin to outline this 10 years out.
 - e. Next hires on the horizon: Event planner and overseer, Social Media engager, stipend for Treasurer and Elder Chair.
3. Continue regular evaluations of ministries in Summer of each year. Engage our ministry leaders in a conversation around a list of “What’s the best way?” questions. For example: What’s the best way...to involve people in smaller groups, to assimilate people into church life, to introduce people to Christ, to introduce children to the gospel, to introduce teens to a Biblical

worldview, to equip couples to have a healthy marriage, to recruit and train volunteers, to introduce people to their global responsibility?

4. **Communication with our congregation.** Because the world is constantly changing, this area needs constant refinement. **I recommend we continue to refine our “Communication System”** which describes how we communicate with excellence to our congregation through our website, bulletin, social media, and “Connect and Grow” booklet. **Because the next generation spends so much time on Social Media, I recommend we hire someone part-time, specifically for engaging our church and world on Social Media.**
5. **Communication from our congregation.** Our desire is to get feedback from our members regarding key questions to help us better minister to them and the people who attend our church. From the reading I’ve done, the observation of our culture, and the paternalistic bent of conservative churches, we must make sure we hear from women, as women leaders need a seat somewhere at the table, giving input into decisions the pastors and elders make. **Continue to meet with the 8 godly women from our congregation under “Leaders Listening” getting their input on issues such as women leaders, women in ministry and marriage/divorce/gender.**
6. **Continue to keep character, competency and chemistry/culture in the forefront when we hire people and choose elders.**

In essence: We seek to produce lives marked by a **deep love for Jesus and God’s Word**, which is reflected in our desire to **teach and model the truth and grace of Christ**; to **value people regardless of gender, race or class**; to **aid the poor and marginalized**; to **build a strong and vibrant community** where the presence of Christ is evident as people know God, find freedom, discover their purpose and make a difference; and to **govern and lead** in ways that engender mutual confidence and trust.

VIII. What will hinder God's work among us?

- A. **Not paying attention to church health issues.** We've gotten where we are, in part, due to our strenuous work behind the scenes, dealing with disease and health issues in our ministry. **The leaders of COD must continue to do this, even when it involves dealing with difficult people.** We owe it to God and our people.
- B. **Fear of failure and negativism** as reflected in people who do not trust leadership, and in leaders who fear what certain people may think of them. **People who say they mistrust leadership or that they don't like the growth, should be confronted, and if they don't stop after clarity is given, should be asked to leave COD.** Leaders must be careful how and what we change, but when something needs to change, we must lead with courage and address the issue. Leaders don't always please everyone.
- C. **The elders and pastors not having a relationship built on trust,** collegiality and cooperation. **The pastors and elders need to continually see each other as colleagues working together, and not as an us/them situation, where they watch over each other.** Our church body loves it when they know leaders cooperate and seek to get along with each other.
- D. **Change and how it happens, not becoming part of the CODE/DNA of COD.** Our culture is changing rapidly... our job as leaders is to figure what needs to change and shepherd people through that, while knowing what should never change and preserve that. **We must never get to the place where we say "we've changed enough" here at COD.** If we will continue to be relevant going forward, we must stay "geared to the times, but anchored to the Rock." Paul's counsel to us in 1 Cor. 9: 19-23 is a great model.
- E. **No clear direction and plan regarding our Facility issues.** Not addressing these issues in a timely manner discourages people who address them, causes us to "lose steam", and gives the impression that we aren't pro-actively on top of things. **Our space and parking issues here at the Carlisle Court campus will continue to need addressing.**
- F. **Not seeking God for His vision, and not trusting Him for God-sized things to happen.** When we lose that "living on the edge, being willing to attempt great things for God" attitude, we'll lose our edge. To quote Henry Blackaby: "The problem with many organizations is that they ask their people to make great sacrifices for puny visions. Get your people to hear from God, and once they hear from God themselves, there will be no stopping them from participating in what God is doing."

- G. Failing to continue to understand and act on Church Size Dynamics.** The paper by Pastor Tim Keller of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City gave us timely advice from a seasoned veteran about church size dynamics. As a church grows, the positions of key people morph, namely the Senior Pastor, Senior staff and Elders. The Senior Pastor releases the actual shepherding of people to others, and the Elders release the day to day “running the church” to the staff and ministry leaders, as the elders spend more time on big-picture and vision issues. The book entitled *Sticky Teams*, by Larry Osborne also helps us here, as does our own paper “The Relationship of Leaders at COD.” **We must continually come back to this.**
- H. Not putting the right people in the right seats on the bus... In other words,** not creating the right positions to manage ministry here at COD, not hiring the right people for those positions, and not ensuring that we put the right kind of elders and pastors in place – men who are men of character, men of the Word, and men who are on the same page philosophically.
- I. Not prioritizing Children’s and Student ministry, and not targeting men.** If we drop the ball in the worship service but ace it with the kids and students, we’ll still have a chance to reach that family. Children’s and Student Min is the most important mission of the church. Also, if we get the man, we typically get everyone else within his orbit. **Think about men as we think about music, message and practice.**

IX. BHAGS, God sized goals

- A. See at least 50% of our people being #foryork,** with the goal of sharing the message of Jesus, so that people come to know God, find freedom, discover their purpose and make a difference.
- B. See at least 50% of our flock in smaller groups.**
- C. See at least 50% of our attenders serving in a ministry.**
- D. See more of our flock being #fortheworld,** engaging in prayer for, education about, and practical ministry in, cross-cultural areas.
- E. Raise 5 million dollars during our Capital Campaign.**
- F. Have a Podcast/TV/Radio ministry that reaches beyond our walls.**
- G. Purchase the existing homes on around WYC...for offices/ministry home, etc.**

It is truly a privilege to write this document each year. God has richly blessed the Church of the Open Door, and those of us who serve here are thrilled to be doing so. We trust that these words encourage your heart as they do ours. And may we all continue to run in such a way as to win the prize of the high calling of Jesus!