

Executive Summary

Redeemer, Englewood

Vision Path Experience

8/24/13

The Survey

Vision Path is created to help a ministry discover an “organic” vision, that is, a vision that bubbles up from within the ministry, rather than is imposed from the outside. Often, church ‘experts’ point to key components of ‘successful ministry’, as if by adding those components a ministry is being faithful to its calling. Vision Path operates with a bias that the Mission is the same from ministry to ministry, and is nuanced differently according to community, internal giftedness, and the leading of the Holy Spirit.

The survey is intended to tease out the three components of an “organic” vision: 1) the need within the community; 2) the peculiar DNA of the local ministry; and 3) the tug of the Holy Spirit on the hearts of leadership.

Question 1 – **What is the greatest opportunity facing Redeemer today?**

This question was designed to have the respondent look outward. While answers were varied, a number of respondents referenced youth, children and school. Nothing stood out as exceptional within the answering of the question. It is typical for an aging congregation to speak to the need to get ‘younger’.

Question 2 – **How would the community describe Redeemer?**

The question is intended to have the respondent think about the relationship between the congregation and the community. The value of this question lies not in the answers, but in the process of having the respondent put themselves into the position of the community member. Generally, if the responses are positive, i.e., “Redeemer is a warm, loving group of people”, that is a projection onto community members of the respondent’s feelings. Significant among the answers to this question were the great number (not majority, but plurality) of respondents who wondered if the community has much awareness of Redeemer).

Question 3 – **What’s the greatest need in Redeemer’s community?**

Again, the focus of the question is external. This question is another attempt at having respondents think in terms of the community, and the opportunity for Redeemer to respond to needs. A number of respondents focused on the need for Christian education, with some reference as well to meeting the needs of the elderly.

Question 4 – **What is the one thing Redeemer does that would have Jesus say, “Well done.”?**

This question starts to turn inward, and attempts to identify the particular DNA of the congregation. Answers to this question were so widely varied it is difficult to identify a particular ministry or ministry emphasis. Answers ranged from preaching the Truth, to being welcoming, to ministry to snowbirds, to faithful pastor(s). Such varied responses indicate a very general approach to ministry.

Question 5 – **What is the most important thing Redeemer can do right now?**

This is a ‘timing’ question, and speaks to urgency and priority. This question generally surfaces ‘needs’ that are demanding attention. Several respondents spoke to the need to improve the child care facility. A number of respondents voiced their encouragement to “grow” in one form or another, but particularly to get “younger”, which is often the cry of an aging congregation.

Question 6 – **Write a Mission Statement for Redeemer in six words.**

The purpose of this question was twofold: 1) to have the respondents think in terms of ‘mission’; and 2) to identify things which the congregation does well (congregational DNA). Answers were across the board and did not fall into any specific mission. Most answers were written in an active tense, and spoke to the need to share the Gospel. Words like Share, Reach, Grow, Bring, Build, Serve indicate a willingness to take action.

Question 7 – **If resources were not an issue, what should Redeemer add to its ministry program?**

In every Vision Path survey, there is one critical question. In my mind, this question is the critical one for Redeemer. It identifies need and opportunity while removing ‘fear’ or being good stewards. This was the one question that seemed to have a predominant answer. While a number of respondents spoke to reaching the youth, the most often expressed answer was a school.

Question 8 – **What makes Redeemer unique?**

This is another attempt to ferret out congregational DNA. Most answers were positive in some form or another. No pattern of ‘uniqueness’ was indentified, unless it might be ‘everything’.

The Saturday Event

The event began with a Bible study, and a brief explanation of Vision Path. Discussion then focused on the makeup of the community. The survey results were shared, and some discussion ensued.

Discussion then turned to the future, and the purpose for which Redeemer exists. There was much silence in the beginning, to the point that some were uncomfortable. A few ideas were shared, and the idea of a school was brought forward. There was some referencing of the history of the discussion of school. Another thought expressed was engaging in the politic of the area, specifically exercising a citizenship that makes a difference. Someone suggested that a school provides an opportunity to ‘salt’ the community, by preparing students who will make a difference.

It was then the energy in the room increased. The discussion about a school turned from protecting Redeemer’s children from the vagaries of the educational system to providing an opportunity to make a difference in a child’s life, who would then, in turn, make a difference in the community.

Discussion turned toward making a difference in the community in two ways: 1) engaging the community as citizens; and 2) equipping children through a school.

In my assessment, there was general consensus around the above statement, and genuine excitement.

The Conclusion

Based upon the surveys and the discussion held at the Vision Path event, it was determined that Redeemer pursue the concept of making a difference in the community, with opening a school being the most immediate opportunity to facilitate that concept.

It would be the expectation of those who attended the event that Redeemer would do its due diligence in regard to the opening of a school.

Still to be determined is the issue of making a difference in the community by engaging it as Christian citizens.

A Vision Path team was identified and charged with the task of moving the general direction of making a difference in the community to the next level.

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