

Journey of Growth

Having identified the vision that we have for us as a church -- to be a church that is for, of, and by, the peoples of many nations -- we recognize that we are joining in a journey of growth. It is a recognition that growing into this vision is something that is inherent, is a necessary part of what we are doing.

Joining in a Journey of Growth
in this Vision

Doctrine
(truth)

- We all need to grow in this vision
- We are committed to grow in this vision
 - Collectively → *As a church*
 - Individually → *each of us*

Devotion
(relationship)
Together

Duty
(action)
Grow

- It is complex and can be confusing
- It is rich and rewarding

We recognize that we all need to grow...every last one of us. A key thing to say is that it's not as though we have some people who get this and some people who don't... and somehow the people who get it are supposed to be patient and help the people who don't, and to get them to move along. All of us need to grow.

It is true that some of us have experiences that help these people to better understand key aspects of this vision. So in that sense, people who have lived much of life in the minority, in a part of society that is not broadly represented, or perhaps even misunderstood, or is not highly valued... people who have had this experience understand important parts of this vision that are harder for people who have always lived life in the majority.

And yet for all of us, we need to grow in this. We need to understand how this is experienced by different people, and what does it mean to be "for, of, and by the peoples of many nations." We all need to grow in this vision. And being a part of this church, it's important to recognize that.

And more than just recognizing it, we are committed to grow. And this is an expectation for everybody who wants to be a member of the church: There is a commitment to grow into this vision. We want to grow into Christ. We want to grow in our knowledge of Him and in loving our neighbors as ourselves. Within this community, we also want to grow in understanding what it means to be "for, of, and by the peoples of many nations."

We're committed to grow collectively. And so there are many things that we will do as a church to try to grow into this vision. In our worship services, there will be ways in which we try to grow into this vision. In our governance, in how we behave in our church meetings, how we do prayer together, what we do for discipleship and evangelism, and fellowship. In all these things we will find ways in which we are seeking to grow as a church.

We also recognize that as individuals, we need to work to grow into this vision. Each of us. And so there are things that are asked of people, ways in which we will be asked to experience things that are maybe unusual for us, a different kind of worship service... to experience that. Or conversations to have or places to go foods to eat... things that will stretch us, things that will be different and they're important things for us as a whole and as individuals to be doing to grow into this vision.

We know enough so far to know that it can be complex. It is complex. It can be confusing when I encounter someone who uses the same words as I do yet seems to mean something quite different than I thought it meant. Or sometimes we use very different words and it turns out we're actually talking about some of the same things. Or maybe they're just a new category of things that I don't understand. It can be complex to say, "How do we care for people and serve and welcome people who are very different.

It's a little bit like serving a meal when you have people with very different tastes and an ability to tolerate things. And so some people want spicy food and some people can't eat spicy food. And some people are allergic to certain kinds of food that other people just love. And it might be simpler to say, "Well, everybody go eat whatever you want to eat. We'll come back later!" But we're committed to saying, "We want to do this together." It is more complex.

And it can be confusing when I don't quite understand what it is that you see and you're using terms that I'm not used to, or describing ideas that are new to me. And when I try to explain things, and other people look at me confused, or worse, they think I am wrong because it's different. And so we deal with things that are complex and can be confusing.

And yet we recognize and rejoice in the reality that what is happening through this vision is rich and rewarding. There's a way in which we better understand the fullness of God and the manifold wisdom of God that is not very apparent when we're on our own. Then when we come together across differences, we better understand the richness of who He is and what He has done and what He is doing in the world.

And so this commitment to growth certainly is a key part of our duty, that we have to be willing to say, "I'm going to grow. I'm going to work at this. This will be a task that I'll take on." And sometimes it would be a lot easier just to say, "I don't feel like growing in that, or I'd like to put my emphasis elsewhere." But being a part of the church, this is a part of the duty: it is to grow into this vision.

And we do this together. And that's a wonderful part of this vision, is this is a way in which we grow together and are enriched by people around us in ways that are new to us.

And in this, our doctrine is enriched to see the fullness of God. We see His wisdom in ways that we couldn't see otherwise. We see the richness of what He has designed in this world and people and his vision for His body. So we join together in a journey of growth into this vision.

Reflection Questions

- Why is it important to see our vision as a journey of growth in which everyone has to grow?
- What might a commitment to growth look like for us as a whole church? As small groups? As Individuals?
- How have you experienced or seen the complexity of this vision?
- How have you experienced or seen the rich reward of this vision?