

Vision 2008  
Super Sunday 2/3/08  
Text: Joshua 3: 5 and Ephesians 3: 20-21

**Show Video Clip: Bluefish DVD – Sports Sunday: The Big Show**

Today's message is not a teaching message – it's a sharing message –the title is simply - Vision 2008.

As Pastor, a big part of my responsibility involves leadership and leadership involves vision (looking ahead to determine what God wants us to be and to do). It's been said & I quote "The Pastor is the protector of the vision"

God's vision for us **comes out of revelation.**

**Proverbs 29: 18 - Where there is no vision (revelation) the people perish (cast off restraint) but blessed (happy) is he who keeps the law" (KJV and NIV).**

**If people can't see what God is doing, they stumble all over themselves; But when they attend to what he reveals, they are most blessed (Message)**

**Vision is a process, not a product.**

**Vision is a journey, not a destination.**

**Vision is continual – it is constantly changing and developing.**

The essence of vision is: Seeing what God is doing and joining him!

Vision is a picture of what God wants to do in and through us!

God always has something fresh and new to do in and through us. Regardless of how much we've seen God do in the past, there is always more ahead. God is a God of change and of transformation.

Two passages of Scripture – one OT one NT that I have chosen to be theme verses for us at MCC this year!

**Joshua 3: 5 -- "Joshua told the people, "Consecrate (devote, dedicate) yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do amazing things among you!"**

**Read Ephesians 3: 20-21 (on power point –from NIV and NLT)**

Minister's Little Devotional Book --

Every pastor (and church) that is making an impact in their community has a sense of destiny that is driven by the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Vision is a key to making an impact for God in an unholy world.

These simple steps will help you search for God's vision:

--**Spend time in prayer** –it is the engine that fuels vision.

--**Study the needs of your community and the people God has called you to reach!**

--**Seek wise counsel from visionary leaders**

I have 10+“networks” of Pastors and leaders (locally and nationally) that I'm part of -- as I seek to continue learning and growing]

---**Examine your resources** –

---**Accept what God reveals to you and share it with your followers**

**Think BIG! God does!**

Our logo includes a mountain range. It symbolizes thinking big!

**Matthew 17: 20** “I tell you the truth if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, “Move from here to there and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.”

ILLUS. Encouraging email I received last week – I noticed a typo – it referred to MCC as MMC. **MCC is MMC! (Mountain Movers Church!)**

The church is not an institution. It is a movement of God!

God invites each of us to join in how He's moving and what He's doing!

So just how is God moving right now? What are some ways that God is working right now? What are some of the things he wants us to BE and to DO in 2008 and beyond?

Today I want to share an overview of how I sense God is at work and how we can join him this year and beyond. I want to share these things as they relate to our priorities as a church. In CLASS 101 we call them the “5 P's” – the 5 P's do not represent my family by the way –.

Seeking first the kingdom of God means pursuing the following in this order:

**PRIORITY # 1 – PURPOSES OF GOD –**

**The 5 NT purposes will continue to be what drives everything we do!**

The 5 purposes are: Worship, Fellowship, Discipleship, Ministry and Evangelism]. They help the church stay us balanced, healthy and focused!

**PRIORITY # 2 - PEOPLE – the purposes of God are all about people!**

Years ago they told us that the church should to be structured organizationally. But today it needs to be structured relationally!

It is so important for us to structure around being relational rather than organizational! Because everything that happens in the kingdom of God happens through relationships!

I want you to know that God is really moving in the lives of people!  
I can't share all of it – but God is working!!!  
I can think of five talks with people I've had just this week that have been so encouraging -- It's been a WOW kind of week!  
God is working in lives – this is so exciting!

As well as God working in people's lives he is also bringing together a **great TEAM OF PEOPLE at MCC!**

**Leadership Team** – changes in this have been needed – in fact I think our church has not grown as it should because we've had a leadership deficit!  
I am excited to see our new structure in place and moving forward!  
Today we will be voting to affirm 12 men that God has called out to serve in our new leadership structure.

**---Deacons (9)** – have the men and their wives stand.  
No longer a limit on the number of deacons – and there is no longer any term limit of service – They also now have a new role! (see attached)

The more deacons we have the more the burden is lifted from me to be able to lead and feed! Deacons were first instituted so the Apostles could devote themselves to prayer and the Word.

To be honest we've struggled -- to find men who could fit the bill – and when the deacons didn't do it – it always fell back on me! If I would concentrate on being the Shepherd -- people accused me of being a bad leader with no vision – and if I spent my time leading – people complained I didn't care, I never called them – I didn't visit them in the hospital – this has been a constant source of frustration for me – and it's been a negative to our church.

One person can't care for the needs of the church once it grows beyond about 50 people!

All nine of the men that have been nominated are Pittsburghers!  
They have also all already been serving and servant hearts!  
One is a volunteer hospital chaplain, others willing to help with hospital visits –and mentoring – and helping care for people – some already serving

in helping with benevolence requests – recently helped with a situation with a homeless lady we encountered! Most of these guys have already been “deac-ing”! All of these men are very supportive of me also!

You’ll meet them in a little more personal way before we vote this morning –give them a minute or two to informally share a couple of questions – when they came to know Christ and how long they’ve been part of MCC.

--**Elders (3)** – the first ever in the history of the church! Help in setting direction, vision, giving leadership. In the NT it is always plural!

A team of men, not just one guy! Need to be biblically sound – but also need to help me give strong leadership (direction, vision) to the church!

Introduce the three guys – Dale, Jerome, Stan.

Again these guys have already been doing what they are being called to do now in the role of Elder – I respect and admire all three and all three of them are very supportive of me and have already served as a sounding board for me and I also know they pray for me!

### **Church Staff –**

In addition to the Deacons and Elders -- adding to our church staff is a **MUST** if our church is going continue to grow!

Over the past few months since the Cunningham’s came in view of a call last March (and even the past few weeks as I’ve prayed --and read -- and shared with other pastors and friends -- I’ve changed some of my ideas and expectations – become much more open to some options I didn’t really consider before. Here’s what I do know...

**You’ve got to have the RIGHT PEOPLE in the RIGHT PLACE serving with the RIGH SPIRIT!** When it comes to education/skills/qualifications vs. calling and attitude – I’ll take calling and attitude every time! A great staff involves a lot more than just fulfilling tasks and working together day by day. I don’t care what degree or skills you have -- if you don’t have the right spirit and attitude – I don’t want you to be on my staff– in fact, I don’t think you should be on our leadership team!

Take a minute to affirm Dave!

### **Character – Chemistry – Competency – hire in that order.**

This does not mean you hire staff that is incompetent – just that you don’t look at that first! It’s different in the church than in the world! A calling from God and a heart for God and how the person fits in with the team are more important than how much education or how many degrees a person has!

The spirit, the vibe, the chemistry of the team is more important than the skills or the education of the team members! I want to surround myself with people who want to do more than just work at a church or fulfill tasks – I want to surround myself with people who want to do life together! I want to enjoy them!

In reading and studying a lot of church staff's -- this is the difference between just having a team and having a GREAT team!

ILLUS. Iron City Church – has 4 staff-- none of them are full-time paid! And only one or two of them has a seminary degree – but they have a great team with a heart, a calling and a passion to serve God and reach people! One of them is my son, Brandon!

Conversation Brandon and I had this summer – I was cutting grass—and Brandon came out to share with me about Jeff – Tommy and Lamar met him in Atlanta at the Catalyst conference. They challenged him to come work with them here in Pittsburgh – and after praying thinking about it –he did!

While I was still cutting grass - I began to pray differently in regards to the staff team God wanted to bring to me and our church– I began praying that instead of going through the traditional process (contacting the seminaries and collecting resumes -- etc --I ask God if he would just send us a staff member – that somehow we would meet somewhere -- like Tommy and Jeff did!

Then while I was at a conference last September I heard God speak to me and clearly reveal some things to me about building a staff team – and that I needed to take more initiative and be more pro-active in the process --- and so behind the scenes I have been – some cool things have begun happening - - it's not time to share them yet – but God is at work!

I don't have specifics to share with you right now – but I sense we need to add two staff positions in the next year or so (full or part –time)? These staff positions will include some kind of combination of – Youth, Children, Recreation/Sports Ministry, Outreach/Community Impact, and possibly even Worship-----

**Summer Missionaries/Interns** – discussions about this are already underway – in fact I had a meeting this past week in regards to this. We are going to pursue this and look into utilizing 2 summer missionaries who will

not only work with us – they will live with us this summer for about 8-9 weeks.

### **PRIORITY # 3 - PROCESS -**

\*Core Classes - Class 101, 201, 301, 401 – these are the basic discipleship classes we offer – to lay a good foundation! Class 101 is required to be a member – implementing this has been one of the best things we've done! Had 5 just graduate – started taking another person through it yesterday – we spent 2.5 hours together!

If you have not been through all four of our Core classes – you need to!

\*Prayer – will continue on Wednesday evenings – Our Wednesday night prayer gatherings are the engine room of the church!

\*Community Outreach – a big part of our process will be to continue & expand our outreach into the community.

We are here for them, not just for ourselves!)

---Monroeville Night Out – expand and continue to improve what we do and how we do it.

--- Do an outreach event with a couple of other churches in our community!

---Expand our outreach at the Park this summer – I've already made contact with the Recreation office about a totally new idea – using the new amphitheatre!

--- Maximize our great facility (Gym /Activities Center) -- an observation – most or all of the sports and recreation ministry taking place in our building is by outside groups.

We've never really had any Sports/Recreation outreach ministries – so with the help of the summer missions interns we're going to do a test pilot outreach this summer –

**\*Summer Sports Outreach Camp** – already made a contact with a group/ministry that does this and see how God leads as far as a new outreach ministry in the fall or next winter – focused on kids (maybe even youth) utilizing sports and recreation – more on this in just a minute!

### **PRIORITY #4 - PROGRAMS (Ministries)**

**These help carry out the process –**

Note: We are going to stick to the simple church structure – doing fewer things and doing them well – rather than doing lots of things mediocre!

**\*New Sunday morning Children's Ministry kicked off today! (BLAST)**  
**\*Simple Wednesday evening program/ministry for Kids – that will begin in a few weeks.**

\*God began speaking to me about something I was to do that I've never really focused on as Pastor- to focus on building the lives of men!  
I feel qualified and unqualified at the same time!

**Two weeks from tonight we will kick off a new Men's Group** – it will meet every other Sunday evening – some special things are also going to be part of this -- the vision is that this will be more than a bible study and more than a small group – we're going to also have some fun and also do some ministry together! **Name: 'Steel Sharpens Steel' -- Proverbs 27: 17**

I want to invite all men -- of all ages, married or single to join me 2/17!  
This has more potential than I can even ask or imagine!  
In fact, I think God is going to do some amazing things through this!

### **PRIORITY # 5 - PROPERTY**

We not only have an entirely new Children's Team a New Preschool director a new group of deacons and our first ever Elders we also have a whole new group of Trustees on board – and had another volunteer this past week who will be presented next week! I'm sure there are more things than I know going on but here's what I do know....

\*Audio Room renovation plans are underway  
\*New Carpet for Worship Area

Two other property things I'd like to see --- (low on the priority list compared to everything else ---to end on a fun note!!

\*A Nature/Hiking Trail – I've suggested this before a few years back – a trail that would connect our church property to the old park!

This might make a great project for our outdoorsy guys in the men's group!  
[One of the guys even talked to me about an obstacle course out there!]

\* Some fitness equipment (a couple of treadmills etc.) added to our gym!

These will be some of the priorities that we will be praying about and continuing to work toward and develop this year.

I want to close by sharing some things I've learned from some of the pastors and leaders that I network with (locally and around the country)

#1. A vision has to be primarily about passion and not programming.

The problem with many churches is that they have created such a programming mentality that there isn't room for a move of God anymore!

#2. People get passionate about something that changes their life. I am passionate about helping people find their purpose for living. Are you?

#3. It is awesome to be part of something that is so big that it will fail unless God shows up. We can never get comfortable, or always play it safe.

Risks of faith must continually be taken.

#4. The church was and IS God's idea for reaching the world.

#5. We MUST believe that God wants to do a great thing in our church! (Ephesians 5: 20-21) - We can't think that we've arrived or that the best days are behind us! Our best days are yet to come!

#6. It does not take seminary trained "professionals" to do ministry. Every revival/reformation took place first among the common folks – not the religious elite.

#7 – God's vision must be accompanied by some kind of simple strategy – the vision God gives us is achieved step-by-step.

#8 – The church has been called to shake the world!

The church was never intended to be simply an organization or an institution. The church is a movement of God.

#9 – The church doesn't need to move ahead – we need to go back 200 years to the first 300 years of our existence and focus on being a movement not a monument!

MCC Vision statement: Where You can BELIEVE, BELONG AND BECOME! I want to see that happen in as many lives as possible this year! I want the purpose of our church to be to help as many people as possible find their purpose in life through Jesus Christ!

Let's make MCC stand for MMC -- Mountain Movers Church!

**Read Joshua 3: 5 (on power point)**

**Read Ephesians 3: 20-21 (on power point)**

**Show Video Clip: Bluefish DVD – Challenge the Ordinary –**

Will you allow God to make you an extraordinary person (servant, worshipper, and witness?) Will we allow him to make us an extraordinary church or do we just want to be normal?

God wants His church to impact and to change the world. The question is, “Will we?”

**A CALL TO PRAYER (for our church – for the leaders we will be affirming and voting on following the service)**

SONG: “Be the One” - begin playing after a few minutes of prayer (tape)

**TIME OF GIVING:** Bluefish DVD – “Take a Shot”

What are you going to do?

Are you going to sit on the bench or are you going to step up?

I know what I’m going to do! A few weeks ago I challenged you to join me on the Great Adventure! I’m going -- I hope you’re going to join me!