



VISION 2021 ... AND BEYOND

HILLS BIBLE CHURCH



www.hillsbiblechurch.org

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Vision

The mission of HBC is to see believers:

KNOW God's Word (2 Tim 2:15)

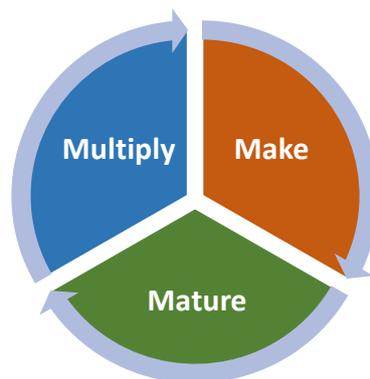
LIVE by God's Word (1 Pet 1:22-2:3)

COMMIT to God's Work (Rom 12:1-2)

IMPACT God's World (Matt 28:18-20)

In other words, HBC's mission is to produce faithful disciples of Jesus Christ who in turn make disciples (Matt 4:19; 28:18-20). This is articulated in the following vision statement:

*"HBC exists to glorify God by **making**, **maturing**, and **multiplying** disciples of Jesus Christ in our local communities and to the least reached peoples of the earth."*



Philosophy of Ministry

Scripture provides three clearly defined categories that govern and direct the church and its ministry. These are detailed as follows:

Glorify God (upward)

(1) The glory of God is the aim

The ultimate purpose of the church is basically the same as the primary purpose of man, “to glorify God and enjoy Him forever” (Isa 43:7). The church has been established for the glory of God (Eph 1:12-14) and should do all things for the glory of God (Col 3:17).

Preaching, teaching, discipleship, pastoral care and evangelism are all directed to this aim. They are never ends in themselves. Rather, they are the means to the greatest end, God’s glory and our enjoyment of Him.

Edify believers (inward)

(2) The gospel is the centre

While the heavens declare the glory of God, the Scriptures illuminate His glory with technical clarity through the person and work of Christ. Christ, in the gospel, is the centre of gravity for life. He is the entry point to spiritual life and through His Spirit brings transformation and sustaining power so that we experience a joyful, spirit-filled life. This results in a maturing relationship with Him.

Our knowledge of Christ and His purposes for our lives comes via the ordinary means of grace (i.e., preaching, teaching and reading of the Word, practice of the ordinances, prayer). Among these means of grace, the preaching and teaching of the Word, empowered by His Spirit, are significantly and powerfully used to bring about conversion and change.¹ Thus, the preaching is the centrepiece of the worship service. However, this Word-based ministry is not limited to preaching in a service, but it underpins all personal and community life and ministry activity, including music, personal devotions, Bible studies, Life Groups, discipleship, pastoral care, counselling, evangelism etc. In short, all ministry and activity must be gospel-centred, which comes from being Word-centred.

(3) The people are the ministers

One of the mandated tasks of the pastors and elders is “to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ” (Eph 4:11-13). In other words, the church is not an audience; it’s an army. Disciples of Christ make disciples of Christ (Matt 28:18-20). Practically speaking, for the church to display Christ and advance His name, every member must play their role. They must be trained in the Word of God (point 2) and lead by example. In practice this means living a lifestyle of practical love, support, and service, for God’s glory and their joy in Him. This is best done in community and discipleship relationships. These relationships partner with gospel preaching and teaching to provide the necessary encouragement, guidance and accountability that make for the healthy and safe spiritual environment we all need “to grow up in every way into him who is the head,

¹ This is affirmed by the fact that an elder must be able to teach (1 Tim 3:2). The three-fold charge Jesus gave to Peter was to “feed my sheep” (John 21:15-19). Interestingly, immediately after Paul upholds the inspired Word of God (2 Tim 3:16-17), he solemnly charges Timothy to “preach the word” (2 Tim 4:1-2).

into Christ" (Eph 4:15). What this means is that the people are responsible to care for and strengthen one another in order for Christ's body to function for His glory.

Evangelise the World (outward)

(4) The church is the means

Christ has ordained the local church to be the means through which the world is evangelised so that God might be glorified and enjoyed. Therefore, this is best done through the planting of healthy churches in strategic locations. For this to happen a culture of discipleship and evangelism must be present before it is replicated. This culture is realised when each person is being equipped, motivated, and empowered by the Holy Spirit to live and share the gospel among their work mates, neighbours, friends and family. Then, as God gives fruit, they take responsibility for their spiritual growth and inclusion in the church community.

As this culture is developed at HBC, we want to see it multiplied throughout Melbourne, Australia, and then cross-culturally to Asia and beyond through our missions efforts.

Strategy to accomplish our vision

In order to achieve our vision and stay true to our ministry philosophy there are four key areas or pillars we will develop:



Pillar One: Discipleship Focus

We will focus on building people and not ministry programs

The focus is not primarily to build up programs and slot people into those, but to disciple people and encourage them in service according to their gifts, talents, and passions, and to build ministries around them. This does not mean that there are not certain ministries created to allow the church to adequately function (e.g., Youth, children's, morning tea etc). But it does mean that these structures are only so big as they support the needs of the church. Like a trellis (programs) holding a vine (people), one should not outgrow the other.

We will focus on building a disciple-making culture

It has been said that "culture eats strategy for breakfast." We aim to develop a culture of discipleship within the body, starting from the elders to the leaders (Life Groups, Sunday School, Youth Group, etc) and then to the individual congregants.

We will challenge, empower, and train our people to grow in their love for and service to Christ. We will do this by training them in the Biblical disciplines of studying the Word, devotional reading, praying, discipling and evangelising. We will grow them in the knowledge and love of Christ and encourage them in the areas of service born from this. We will use current ministries as "greenhouses" to train and equip others.

We will aim to do these things through the following ministries and initiatives:

1. All ages and stages

- **Lord's Day public worship**

We will prioritise the weekly assembling together of the whole congregation for public worship as this is the most important gathering in our church (Heb. 10:24-25). It will consist of the Biblically required components of praise, prayers, public reading of Scripture, preaching, and the practice of the ordinances. We believe it is important for families to be in this service together as the Scriptures do not speak of a segregation of family in the context of worship but assume the gathering together of the people of God with their families (Deut. 31:12-13; Ezra 10:1; Neh. 12:43).

- **Regular contact and follow-up**

The elders will maintain close contact with all regular attendees and covenant members through monthly communication follow-up, especially with those who are regularly absent from the body.

2. Parenting and Children

We believe children are a gift from the Lord (Psalm 127:3) and are like arrows in the Saviour's hands. He gives us our children so that we can prepare them for His mission (Psalm 127:4-5). To equip and help support our parents we will undertake the following initiatives:

- **Parent celebration and commitment**

We understand that the home is the first and primary place where the Great Commission's command to make disciples takes place. Therefore, we would like to officially celebrate God's gift of parenting and affirm our parents' God-given task and role by officially recognising first time parents for those who are interested. This will be done by firstly having our new parents go through a 60-minute class that looks at (1) God's design for parenting, (2) what it means to be a gospel-centred home, and (3) how HBC wants to partner with them in this endeavour. Secondly, we will publicly celebrate this during one of our Sunday morning services (see Parent Commission document).

- **Catechising of Children**

Each father (or single mother or mother with an unsaved husband) will be encouraged and trained to lead his or her family through regular family devotions. Part of this discipleship will be to follow the Baptist Catechism. Added to this, the children's catechism will be part of our regular Sunday morning worship services.

- **Sunday School**

Through the children's Sunday School, we endeavour to partner with parents by teaching our children to know God, love God, and commit to God's mission. This will be done through the activities of instruction, singing, activities, and teaching (for more see the Children's Ministry Policy Documents).

- **Youth**

The Youth Group ministry will function as a friendly and safe environment where the youth can ask questions and be strengthened and challenged in their faith. This ministry is crucial for building in our youth a Biblical worldview that would help equip them to discuss and

challenge many of the secular narratives that they are being bombarded with. It is also a place to build close friendships through various activities (for more see Youth Ministry document).

3. Adults

- **Life Groups**

We believe that Life Groups offer one of the best breeding grounds for our vision to be carried out, due to their ability to be highly relational environments. We do not class Life Groups as ministries that 'compete' with other ministries within the church. Rather, they are key, organic, relational environments that play the role of living out what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.

We believe that Life Groups serve the purposes of gathering and scattering² through reaching the community with the gospel, being open to outsiders, and praying for the lost. Personal evangelism will be a key component of Life Group ministry, and includes four key aspects:

- i. Organic: It happens spontaneously, outside of the church's organised programs (even though it occasionally makes use of formal programs).
- ii. Relational: It is done in the context of informal personal relationships.
- iii. Word-deploying: It prayerfully brings the Bible and Gospel into connection with people's lives.
- iv. Active, not passive: Each person assumes personal responsibility for being a producer rather than just a consumer of ministry.

Life Groups mature disciples through carrying out the many "one anothers" throughout Scripture. They provide encouragement, accountability, mutual care, fellowship, the use of spiritual gifts and growth in the knowledge of the Word. This is especially so when smaller accountability groups are formed outside the Life Group.

Apart from general Life Groups, we will aim to have specific groups that cater for particular life stages, such as newly marrieds, men's, women's, elderly etc.

One of the goals of Life Groups is to multiply their effectiveness through raising up trained leaders for the establishing of new groups.

Goal: We hope to have 80% or more of our regular attendees engaged in a Life Group.

- **EQUIP Class**

We aim to use these classes to renew the minds of our people and equip them to be disciples of Jesus Christ.

Classes will be tailored to address important areas of life and ministry. They will include teaching on topics such as: marriage, parenting (discipling our children), work, spiritual disciplines, evangelism, disciple-making, missions, relationships, church history, Biblical counselling, systematic and Biblical theology, Bible survey, biographies, and preaching.

² The idea of gathering and scattering means that we as a church gather each Sunday to worship Christ together as one body in Christ, and then scatter throughout the week to be His ambassadors for the gospel.

To raise up leaders, teachers will choose and partner with a trainee. The leader will have them teach, then make comments, reflect on the lesson as well as give them constructive feedback. This will be part of a larger mentoring/development plan for ministry trainees. We hope to then release these trained men to teach their own classes and train others in the future (cf. 2 Tim. 2:2).

Goal: We hope to have 50% or more of Sunday worship attendees participating in Equip Classes each Sunday.

- **Men**

We believe men are the God-ordained servant leaders of the home and the church. Therefore, it is essential to build godly, strong, wise, humble, bold Christian men if we want to build mature disciples. This ministry seeks to facilitate this through having activities such as men's Bible Study, men's breakfasts, retreats and service opportunities inside and outside the church.

- **Women**

The Women's Ministry exists to strengthen women in their faith by means of biblical teaching *by women, to women*. We desire to see women grow in their understanding of Biblical principles so that they would know practically how to apply God's truth to every circumstance they face. In obedience to our Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20), we desire that each woman at HBC be actively involved in either discipling or being discipled or both³. This will be achieved through small discipleship groups, women's WhatsApp communication, regular women's events, bi-annual retreats etc.

Pillar Two: Leadership Development and Strengthening

We will intentionally identify and train men and women for leadership

1. Develop Current Leaders

- Leaders will continue to be developed and united through various means to ensure we as a leadership are unified in our vision and philosophy of ministry and that we are trained, equipped, and bonded by the love of Christ (Phil 1:27-2:2).
- This will be achieved through activities such as regular leadership training, retreats, attending conferences, prayer times, reading books together, etc.

2. Establish New Leaders

We want to intentionally work towards developing the congregation to be disciple makers while identifying men and women who have the developing character and qualities of an elder (men only) or servant leader (men and women) and discerning their suitability formally and informally in the areas of preaching, teaching, shepherding, and discipling. We will integrate them into the various pastoral ministries of the church, appropriate for their gender, such as preaching, teaching, leadership, pastoral visitation, evangelism etc.

³ To be discipled means to be in a close relationship with another believer for the purpose of growing in your knowledge of and obedience to Christ.

We will do this through the following:

- **Train Life Group Leaders**

Life Group leaders will be identified within each group, tested within each group, and specifically developed through bi-monthly leadership training.

- **Leadership Training Group**

The LTG is a two-year program designed to raise up men and women (women over women and children) from within the local church to lead the local church. The elders recognise that it is primarily the responsibility of the local church to test, train, and affirm people for pastoral ministry, church planting, and missions. This program is designed to facilitate that work here at HBC (2 Tim 2:2).

We will meet and work through a book and Bible reading program that will intentionally challenge and shape our thinking in ways that are reformed, evangelical and missional.

Accepting an invitation into the LTG program is an acceptance to the possibility of serving Jesus and His church as a leader and potentially as an elder (men only) in the future. It is not a guarantee to leadership/eldership roles within HBC but we believe the program would be beneficial and would even accelerate maturity and service in the gospel.

Pillar Three: Missional Engagement

In order to carry out our vision⁴, be faithful to the Lord's command to His church to reach the nations with the gospel, and to follow the example of the early church (Acts 13:1-3; Rom 15:23), we at HBC are guided by the following formal missions' strategy.

John Piper famously said, "missions exist because worship doesn't." Worship is the ultimate end of everything in creation (Ps 96:3; Isaiah 12:4; Rom 9:17, 15:9; Rev 7:9-12). Since this is the case, worship is the primary aim of all our missions' endeavours. To say it another way, missions is not the goal, worship is. Missions is only the means to the goal.

Upon His death and resurrection, and before His ascension, Jesus commanded His followers to make disciples of Jesus Christ by sharing the good news, baptising converts and teaching them to be obedient to all the words of Christ (Matt 28:16-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-49; John 20:21; Acts 1:8). In our endeavour to make disciples of all nations, the following will be important to implement:

Scope of Mission

We will seek to incorporate the geographic distinctives of Acts 1:8 into our plans

- Locally (South-Eastern Suburbs)
- Regionally (Melbourne metro)
- Nationally (Australia)
- Globally (around the world, particularly throughout South-east Asia due to its proximity)⁵

⁴ We glorify God by making, maturing, and multiplying disciples of Jesus Christ in our local communities and to the least reached peoples of the world.

⁵ This doesn't mean that we will not support and be engaged in mission work outside of South-east Asia, but that we will intentionally focus on this region.

Strategy of Mission

We will seek to serve our communities as salt and light

While the church's primary objective is to preach the gospel by announcing the finished work of Christ, we as a redeemed community seek to do this by serving one another. We will empower and bless, formally and informally, congregants to more effectively, as individuals or as groups, serve our community, allowing the gospel to be proclaimed more powerfully.

We will seek to equip and lead our people to participate in missions

To foster this, we seek to lead them to:

- **Learn** about missions and missions' opportunities. We understand God cannot direct us with information we do not have. This was true in Scripture, and it is true today. Jesus was moved with compassion "when he saw the crowd" (Matt 9:36). We want to expose our people to the needs locally and overseas, to allow God to stir up a heart for missions. We also want to teach about missions and equip our people for missions.
- **Pray** for missions' endeavours.
- **Give** financially to support missions.
- **Go** to their neighbours and all the world to share the gospel and make disciples. As part of this we will prayerfully define those places we believe missions should be carried out.

We will seek to prioritise church planting

In Rom 15:19, Paul says that he has "fulfilled the ministry of the gospel of Christ" throughout the Roman world, even though countless communities presumably remained unevangelised. Paul could say this because he had planted missional, self-sustaining churches that would carry the gospel into those communities. From Paul's perspective, the aim of a missionary is to establish healthy churches that would act as salt and light in their own context and culture. Paul understood that local evangelism is the work of the church. We will aim to send out church planters, or partner with those who are intentional about launching new churches or serving young, still forming churches.

We will seek to prioritise missions among unreached people groups

While we seek to support those areas that are deemed "reached" with the gospel, we want to give a natural priority to missionary efforts where gospel penetration is less. This means prioritising missions toward the 3+ billion people who currently have little to no access to the gospel, primarily in the 10/40 window⁶ (Rom 15:20-21).

We will seek to prioritise the strengthening of national churches

We understand that healthy disciples are born out of healthy, theologically sound, and scripturally obedient churches. We will partner with those who work to strengthen national churches through pastoral, practical, leadership and theological training (Tit 1:5; 1 Tim 1:3-4).

⁶ The 10/40 Window is the rectangular area of North Africa, the Middle East and Asia approximately between 10 degrees north and 40 degrees north latitude. The 10/40 Window is often called "The Resistant Belt" and includes the majority of the world's Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists. Approximately 5.22 billion individuals residing in 8,945 distinct people groups are in the revised 10/40 Window. 6,187 (69.2%) of these people groups are considered unreached and have a population of 3.16 billion. This means approximately 61% of the individuals in the 10/40 Window live in an unreached people group.

We will seek to develop strategic partnerships

To allow us to be effective in our strategy we will establish and maintain ongoing relationships with individuals, churches and mission agencies.

Where there is a need we will provide support to our partners to enable them to expand the gospel through disciple-making. This may be towards the persecuted church, or it may be refugee and humanitarian support.

Support of Missionaries

We will seek to support our missionaries

William Carey, known as the father of modern missions, famously said, "I will go down, but remember that you must hold the rope." In other words, Carey is saying, I will go overseas permanently for the sole reason of propagating the gospel, but the church must provide a support infrastructure from home. We must be that home-based infrastructure for our missionaries, providing the necessary support: financially, emotionally, physically, theologically, prayerfully etc. Therefore, we will seek to support our missionaries through:

- Regular Communication
- Pastoral visits
- Sending short-term teams where appropriate
- Extending hospitality on home visits
- Praying for them
- Keeping our church informed of their work and needs

Pillar Four: Intentional Prayer

Undergirding and permeating this strategy is persevering, passionate prayer. Nothing less will ensure that our vision becomes a reality. We must be people who know God intimately, who share God's purposes and who intercede with Him with a faith rooted in His promises. People whose lives are so captured by Christ, that our natural response to our circumstances, relationships and service is to seek the Lord in prayer. 'If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.' John 15:7

Personal

We will encourage all our people to spend time in God's Word and prayer daily, to grow in their personal praise, thanksgiving and confession, as well as their requests for themselves and the needs of family and others.

Family

We will encourage and teach that families, especially spouses, should regularly pray together. Parents should model to their children the life of prayer and teach their children the ways of prayer.

Community

As a church community we want to be known as a community of prayer. Prayer will permeate our gatherings and will regularly be a part of our informal relational times together.

Corporate

We want to organise regular times for corporate prayer. Some formal corporate prayer meetings may be:

- Last Sunday evening of the month 5:00pm prayer meeting
- Midweek early morning prayer meeting to pray for missions and the unreached peoples of the world
- Prayer time prior to our regular worship services
- Specific times of prayer and fasting in times of crisis or for special needs

Assessing Realisation of our Vision

We understand that often success is measured by the number of people that come on a Sunday. This can certainly be a measure of spiritual interest and growth, but not always. Therefore, we will develop a multi-faceted process of assessing how we as a church are carrying out our vision. We will measure those things that clearly show developing growth and maturity, such as:

- Conversions
- Baptisms
- Joining membership
- Participation in corporate prayer meeting
- Life Group inclusion and attendance
- People trained for and sent to the ministry
- Number of people attending Sunday worship
- EQUIP Class attendance
- People in a ministry
- People engaged in discipling and evangelism
- Monthly giving