

NEWSLETTER



AB, SK, MB, NWT, NU
Fellowship Prairies
Region



**Encountering God
Equip God's People
Engage God's World**



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It Matters: Encounter 2025

Mark Breitzkreuz
Regional Director

This year was another incredible time with the Lord and one another during our Encounter Retreat in Canmore. Our speaker, Kent Maddigan was used by the Lord to really minister to us. The theme he brought to us was entitled, "*It Matters*". He then broke that down into four amazing talks: *You Matter*, *The Church Matters*, *Holiness Matters*, and *The Gospel Matters*. Once again, our time together storytelling was a highlight this year. It is always great to hear what the Lord is up to within the Region (looking forward to that time of sharing occurring again at this year's EQUIP as well). It helps us to know we're not alone in ministry as we hear stories of what God is up to, and as we share our hearts with one another. We get to celebrate and support. God is so good, and to see Him at work across our Region is a wonderful experience.

May God continue to bless you as you serve Him!

Encounter 2026 Update: We will be holding Encounter in the Edmonton area (still working on details as we make this transition). There are a number of reasons we're sensing the Lord's lead in this new direction, and it's exciting! Pray for us as we continue to plan. We're committed to making it a continued highlight of your ministry year, and can not wait to share more down the road!



These past few weeks I have been trying to understand what is causing so many, especially millennials, to deconstruct their faith or leave what they were taught behind. I went back to Mark 4:1-20 to look at the story of the types of soil and why the seed in three of the four soils does not produce fruit. The second soil refers to how difficulties and suffering came and dried up the roots that were not deep enough. The third soil was one that had weeds that choke out the seed, referring to the worries, wealth and desires of the flesh. Though I believe these two types of soil describe many who are supposedly leaving the faith, I wonder if these are the symptoms of something deeper.

I have children who have also had their own struggles navigating their faith. So, I have questioned my own parenting, what was deficient or did not help them in their faith journey. I am thankful that their journey isn't over and that I still can have influence in it.

Can I suggest we look at three of many possible answers to why so many are leaving their faith behind? But I also want it to encourage us as we continue to live out our faith before others.

Deuteronomy 6:6-9 may have something to do with it.

“And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.” [NKJV]



These verses are a great reminder of how we should live out our faith in front of our children. It is a faith that is integrated into every aspect of life. Our children can recognize if our faith intersects with every sphere of life or not. If there is anything I would like to redo as a parent, it would include being more intentional in this aspect. Our faithfulness to attend all the services at church did not fulfill this integration. Relying on the programs of the church was not enough.

Another criticism of many who are “deconstructing” is that they feel that their faith journey was concerned with doing what was right, but did not give them the tools to deal with relational challenges that life brings. Paul, in Romans 13:8-10, reminds us that love accomplishes the whole law. What he is saying is that

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Phil Webb
Regional Coach

our faith journey is one of loving God. Do we need to return to teaching our children how Christ restores not only our relationship with God, but also with others and ourselves? A faith that does not respond to the relational demands of life will fall short.

The third challenge for many millennials is their distrust of authority. Because we taught truths that we did not practice, they were quick to challenge our hypocrisy. Postmodernism distrusts traditionalism. Hypocrisy choked out the seed sown in one sense, so again they would say that they didn't see our faith integrated. Many would say that we preached a Jesus who loves the outlier, but we ourselves were not that welcoming of the outlier. Where it is appropriate, we need to admit our failings and recognize where we have been hypocritical. In most cases, our confessions reopen a door to continue constructing faith together.

Because of space, we cannot develop these ideas further, but I am thankful that we can correct some of these errors of integration, loving the outlier and teaching a relational theology that offers answers to the challenges we all face.

Phil Webb, Regional Coach



Visit fellowshipprairies.ca/Equip2025
for more information.

Equip

May 1 & 2, 2025



The Mission, Vision, and Values of a Local Church

Lalo Ramkissoon
Regional Coach

Sometimes, when we hear the words mission, vision, and values in church we associate them with corporate business practices. This article is aimed at reminding us of these leadership principles of Jesus and His church as He continues to draw all peoples to Himself. The biblically based Mission, Vision, and Values of a local church are the foundational elements that shape its unique culture, making it distinctly different from other churches around it. These elements are crucial in guiding the church's purpose, direction, and behavior, thereby fostering a cohesive and thriving community of believers.

Mission of the Local Church

The Mission of the local church defines the purpose for which it exists in its specific location. It answers the fundamental question: "Why does this church exist?" According to Matthew 28:19, Jesus commissioned his disciples to "go and make disciples of all nations. The mission is the driving force behind all activities, ministries, and outreach programs of the church. It provides a clear and compelling reason for the church's presence in the community and serves as a constant reminder of its ultimate goal. A well-defined mission statement helps the church stay focused on its core objectives and prevents it from being sidetracked by activities that do not align with its purpose. It also motivates and inspires the congregation to work towards a common goal, fostering unity and a sense of shared purpose.

Vision of the Local Church

The Vision of the local church provides direction to the entire body of believers. It paints a picture of the preferred future of the church, a dream built upon information and knowledge of the past, and a willingness to discern the move of God in the local church and join Him in His mission. The vision is forward-looking and aspirational, outlining where the church aims to be in the future and what it hopes to achieve.

A compelling vision statement helps the church set long-term goals and prioritize initiatives that will move it closer to its desired future. It encourages the congregation to look beyond the present and imagine the possibilities of what God can do through their collective efforts. The vision also serves as a source of inspiration and motivation, rallying the church members to work towards a shared future with enthusiasm and dedication. By articulating a clear and inspiring vision, the church can mobilize its members to actively participate in making that vision a reality.



Values of the Local Church

Values are the principles or standards that help decide what is worthwhile or desirable for the church in its location. They reflect the core beliefs and convictions that guide the behavior and decision-making of the church community. Values influence how the church interacts with its members, the community, and the world at large. The values of a local church shape its culture and identity, influencing the behavior of its members and setting expectations for newcomers to the body of believers. They serve as a moral compass, guiding the church in its actions and decisions, and ensuring that it remains true to its mission and vision.

Building a Unique Church Culture

Building a unique church culture requires intentional effort and commitment from the church leadership and the congregation. It involves consistently communicating and reinforcing the church's mission, vision, and values through sermons, teaching, and practical examples. It also requires creating opportunities for members to engage with and embody these foundational elements in their daily lives.

Lalo Ramkissoon, Regional Coach



Benefits of Mission, Vision, and Value Statements at a Local Church

Taken from Malphurs, Aubrey. Advanced Strategic Planning: A 21st-Century Model for Church and Ministry Leaders

Why a Mission Statement is Important for a Local Church	Seven Reasons a Vision Statement is Important for a Local Church	Nine Reasons Why Values Statements are Important for a Local Church
It dictates the ministry's direction	Provides energy	Determine ministry distinctives
It defines the ministry's function	Creates cause	Dictate personal involvement
It focuses the ministry's future	Fosters risk taking	Communicate what is important
It provides a guideline for decision making	Legitimizes leadership	Embrace good change
It inspires ministry unity. It shapes the strategy	Energizes leadership	Influence overall behavior
It enhances ministry effectiveness	Sustains ministry	Inspire people to action
It ensures an enduring organization	Motivates Giving	Enhance credible leadership
It facilitates evaluation		Contribute to ministry success
		Determine ministry mission and vision