

SYNERGY



Comprehensive Vision Plan for Georgia Assemblies of God



A BIBLICAL BASIS FOR VISION

As spiritual leaders, we know the enduring and motivating power of vision. The implications of trying to lead an organization of any significance without vision is a frightening prospect. The synergistic power of a compelling vision is essential to marshal the untapped potential of the Georgia District.

Habakkuk 2:1-3 (NIV) confirms this reality: “I will stand at my watch and station myself on the ramparts; I will look to see what he will say to me, and what answer I am to give to this complaint. Then the Lord replied: ‘Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it. For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay.’”

As I have prayed and processed this passage, I have sensed several revealing aspects that are applicable to the vision process for our fellowship.



A Biblical Basis of Vision (continued)

- **“I will stand at my watch...”** : As leaders, raised up by God at this moment in time, we stand at a strategic place that will prove to be crucial and decisive for a 20-25 year ministry horizon.
- **“I will look to see what he will say to me...”** : The prophet paints a multi-sensory interaction with the revelation of vision. He calls us to look with our eyes for an audible message from God. This speaks to me that the revelation that God imparts through the words of this document must take identifiable, actionable, and measurable forms in order for this to be an authentic vision.
- **“Write down the revelation...so that a herald may run with it...”** : The power of vision is found in the declaration. Until the vision is declared in understandable terms, and dispersed in intentional ways, there will be no motivating power. When vision is spiritually conceived, properly articulated, and meaningfully embraced, there is a release of spiritual momentum that is contagious among our leaders.
- **“For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false...”**: In this season of leadership change, God has created a “new season” or an “appointed time”. The term “appointed time” can also be understood as a “fixed time”. There is a season and assignment to this vision that should be completed in a specified span of time, but the Scripture says that “it speaks of the end”. The literal rendering of that phrase, according to Biblical translator Maurer, is “it pants (with anticipation) for the end.” Though we are executing a vision from God for a fixed season, the power and reach of this plan should reach far beyond this moment to an eternal impact that becomes defining for many years to come, and we should set about this task with a sense of anticipation, expectation, and urgency.
- **“Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay...”** Though there will be obstacles and delays, if this is from God, it will be fulfilled. The phrase “will not delay” can be translated: “it will break forth with a blast.” This speaks of an explosive, exponential, and tangible effect that is impacting, life-altering, and impossible to ignore.



Vision Statement:

“To create an environment for a healthy, growing, Spirit-empowered church in every community in Georgia.”

CORE Values

1. *RESOURCES*
2. *RELATIONSHIPS*
3. *RENEWAL*

1. RESOURCES

Within the Assemblies of God, districts typically take on one of three distinct realities in how they function within a particular geographical region:

1. “District Office” Model

This has been the traditional model that has been employed by larger districts through a “top-down”, bureaucratic system that is heavily dominant on perceived power and control with a largely monolithic outcome in terms of church styles/ministry approaches, governmental systems, and an unhealthy power distance between the local church and district leadership.

2. “Network” Model

This model stands at the opposite end of the spectrum from the “District Office” approach. Leadership titles are de-emphasized as a means to achieve a “flat” leadership structure, power distance is shortened, and greater levels of autonomy are encouraged. In my view, this model has tendencies that lend to an insufficient level of institutional control that manifests in an absence of doctrinal cohesion, exposed legal liability, and lack of harmonious culture.

3. “Resource Center” Model

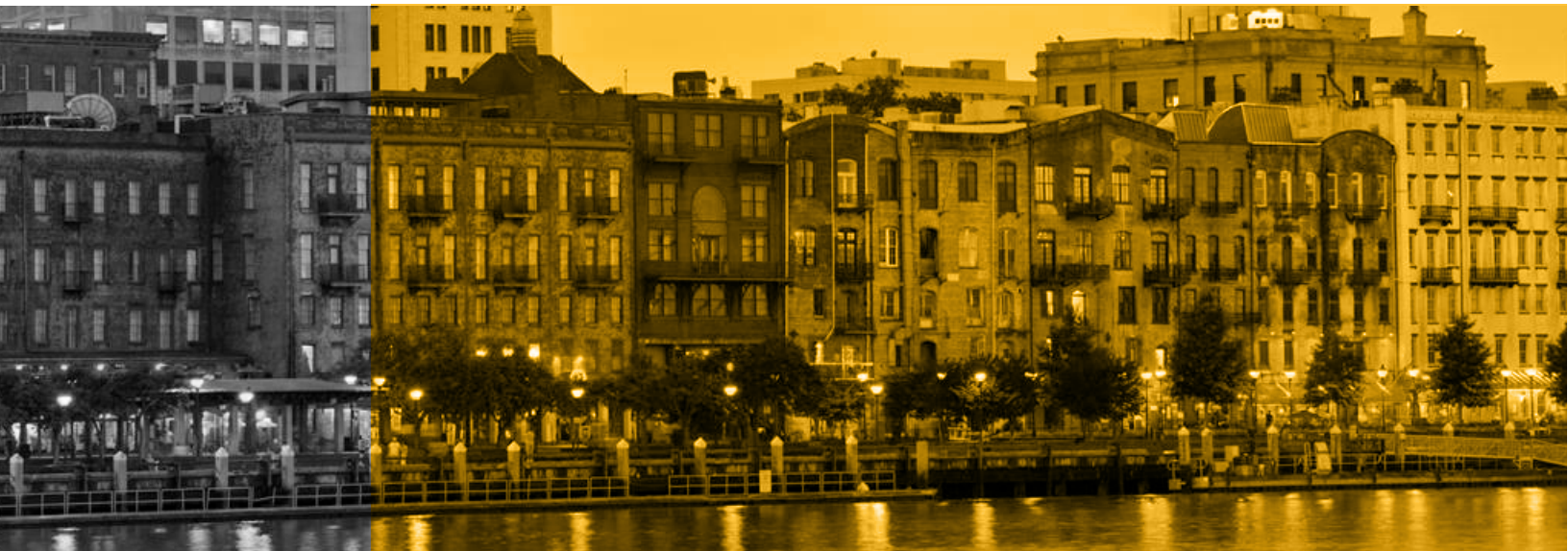
This model is a hybrid, between the aforementioned models above, that seeks to embrace the best that each has to offer. It seeks to create a harmonious culture without a quest for a monolithic culture. It seeks to create baselines of accountability, while respecting the sovereignty of the local church. Above all, it seeks to employ all human and financial assets of the district to foster a collaborative, learning, and relational environment that emphasizes relationship-building, ongoing learning, mentoring of emerging leaders, and expansion of kingdom priorities through identifiable ministry outcomes and results.

Without question, the “Resource Center” model is representative of my vision for the Georgia District. As briefly as possible, I want to describe in more detail the thought/theory behind this vision.

In the history of the Assemblies of God, the mid-1980’s represent a watershed moment for our movement. Prior to the public scandals that engulfed our movement during this time, the primary influencers for ministry came from within the fellowship itself. However, following this tumultuous period, a diminishment of Assemblies of God voices became prevalent. We began to take our direction from those in the greater evangelical movement.

While we do not propose to possess all the answers in the Assemblies of God, the models of ministry that became most popular to our churches originated from non-Pentecostal voices, and many of those from Calvinistic backgrounds. While we justified the embracing of methods apart from the message, the embrace of non-Pentecostal methods created unintentional theological shifts to accommodate the methods. As a result, the declining numbers of Spirit baptisms, and the lack of a discernable Spirit-empowered identity, moved from an alarming trend to the “new normal” for many of our churches. This trend has created an altered balance of theology that can be seen in the schools of higher learning within the fellowship, and it can be felt in the pulpits across our fellowship that have sought to distance themselves from a Pentecostal paradigm.

This dilemma requires that we take this moment to fill the vacuum that has been created by bringing to the forefront qualified, relevant, Spirit-empowered voices that can speak into the leadership development of our pastors and leaders in our District. While this “shift” will be a process that will require more work, intentionality, communication, and finances than in times past, the perpetuation of a Spirit-filled culture and identity in Georgia demands this of us.



2. RELATIONSHIPS

In the study of leadership, there are five dominant power bases that leaders operate from in the execution of their leadership. These 5 bases are:

- Legitimate: “Follow me, because I have been given a title.”
- Coercive: “Follow me, because I have the power to punish or discipline you.”
- Reward: “Follow me, because I have the power to bless or promote you.”
- Expert: “Follow me, because I know more than you.”
- Referent: “Follow me, because I have a relationship with you.”

The “Jesus Style” of leadership is referent leadership. Referent leadership draws upon all of the other four power bases, but the effectiveness of the other bases is filtered through, and enhanced by, the underlying relationship that is birthed out of love and respect based on a proximity of closeness to the leader. As we seek to resource our leaders, we must also be intentional in creating relational environments through District events, in setting relational priorities as institutional priorities, and modeling relational behaviors as institutional leaders.

The profound sense of loneliness and isolation among our ministers is pervasive. While I do not have answers for every representative case, I recognize that there is a systemic issue that must be addressed and counteracted by a new approach and emphasis at the district level.



3. RENEWAL

While a diminishing lack of Pentecostal identity has been addressed, through an absence of resourcing and lack of influential voices theorized as primary factors, the messaging of this value should be explained. When identifying the core value of renewal, this refers to the embracing of a Spirit-empowered platform that recognizes and “makes room” for the work of the Holy Spirit to produce fruitful results that can’t be gained through the acquisition of human knowledge, the employment of ministry strategy, or conjured up by human emotion. It is a corporate recognition that it is “not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord of hosts.” (Zechariah 4:6)

This core value emphasizes to every church and credential holder that we, as their district leadership, insist upon the embracing of a Spirit-empowered platform in the work of ministry through the local church. This value is NOT prescriptive in methodology.

The methods vary from one context to the other, from one generation to the other, from one demographic to the other; however, this must become an often-repeated value that we insist upon as a non-negotiable conviction. Therefore, we must construct learning environments that create greater understanding in doctrinal matters as well as ministry practices. We must make sure that elements of renewal are incorporated into EVERY district event. We must emphasize our sense of urgency in this matter in the Georgia School of Ministry, the credentialing process, our Presbytery meetings, our sectional ministry gatherings, and in our District Council and Minister's Retreat. We must emphasize this value of renewal in the district calendar through prayer and fasting emphases, periodic Sacred Assemblies, Holy Spirit convocations, and minister prayer retreats.

SUMMARY & INTEGRATION OF CORE VALUES:

The values of resources, relationships, and renewal will become the operating environment of the Georgia District. It will become the filter by which we judge ourselves and hold ourselves accountable. It will become the matrix by which we allocate our human and financial assets. It will be the ingredients by which we construct our District events.

At the end of each event, and every calendar year, we should ask ourselves the following questions:

- 1. Have we adequately addressed the resourcing needs of our leaders through continuing education, leadership development, mentoring, missions awareness, and church revitalization/church planting cohorts?**
- 2. Have we created environments through our events and leadership development for meaningful relationships to be developed in an atmosphere of fun, collaboration, and excellence?**
- 3. Have we created opportunities for "God-moments" of renewal in our individual events through the district calendar that has fostered a greater dependency upon and intimacy with the Holy Spirit?**

A photograph of a building's exterior wall under renovation. The wall is composed of large, light-colored concrete panels. A complex network of yellow metal scaffolding is erected against the wall, providing access for workers. The scaffolding consists of vertical poles, horizontal beams, and diagonal bracing. The lighting is bright, casting sharp shadows of the scaffolding onto the wall. A dark, semi-transparent rectangular box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the title text.

DISTRICT **RESTRUCTURING**

As a means to effectively carry out this vision process, restructuring is needed within the District office. I want to commend my predecessor, Rick Collins, and our current Secretary-Treasurer, Phil Wall, for their excellent stewardship and financial austerity. Through their excellent management, the Georgia District finds itself on a firm financial footing that will serve us well as we re-tool for future growth, expansion, and innovation.

At present, there are a number of part-time roles that are now vacant, some that were never funded, and others that can be redistributed as a means to create a new position that is crucial to the success of this vision plan.

The new role will be called **Director of Church Resourcing (DCR)**. This name has been chosen as a means to align the restructuring with the core values of the vision. Below, you will find a job description:

- **Director of Camp Timberlake**
- **District Missions Facilitator**
- **District Church Planting Facilitator:**
- **District Men's Ministries/LFTL Director:**
- **District Communications Director:**
- **Director of the Synergy Leadership Network:**
- **Leadership Network will be described more fully below**
- **Will organize and coordinate leadership one-day events throughout the year, District Council "One Day" Leadership Conference, etc.**
- **Assist the District Superintendent in tactical matters of the District.**

I am appointing John Dougherty to serve as the new Director of Church Resourcing. I have arrived at this decision prayerfully, and based upon the following practical considerations:

- In this role, John can provide a mentoring relationship to the new DYD.
- John's experience as a former missionary makes him well-versed in dealing with the bureaucracy of missions by understanding the nature of AGWM/AGUSM.
- His experience in raising money for Speed-the-Light qualifies him to also be a highly effective fundraiser for Light-for-the Lost.
- His 8+ years as DYD, 5 years as the previous Camp Timberlake Director, is an indispensable tool in leading Camp Timberlake to greater financial strength and into adequate infrastructure development.

Additionally, I want to approach Assemblies of God U.S. Missions for the appointment of a **Director of Rural Ministries** (Rural Compassion Missionary) to the Georgia District. This fully-appointed missionary would office in the District complex, and work as a direct extension of the District office to serve the rural churches and leaders of the Georgia District. This timetable for this position is subject to the following factors:

- **Input/approval from Convoy of Hope and Assemblies of God U.S. Missions**
- **Selection and recruitment of a suitable person for the role**
- **Length of time for itineration and missionary training/processing**

Below, you will find the job description for the Director of Rural Ministries/Rural Compassion:

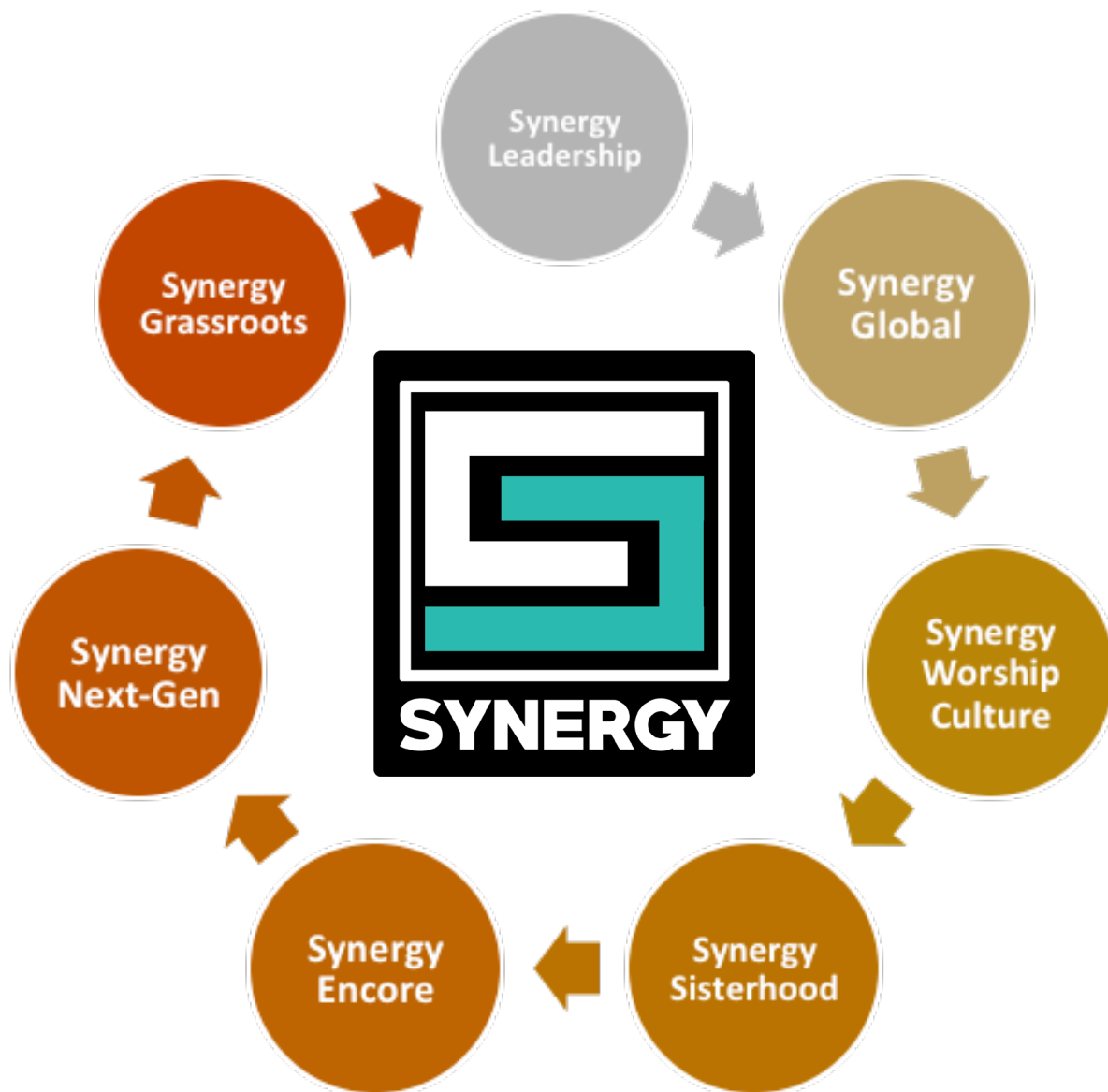
- **Implement an operational plan for a climate-controlled warehouse in Macon that would house Rural Compassion resources on a year-round basis.**
- **Coordinate and train District leaders in Disaster Preparedness Response.**
- **In the event of natural disasters, they would serve as the point-person/coordinator for the District.**
- **Serve as a liaison/resource person for Rural Church planting**

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- **Work with rural churches in building community partnerships with their local municipality**
- **Host and lead a series of “24-Hour Rural Compassion” Events throughout the year**
- **Work as a resource person for rural churches in the implementation of community out-reach events/strategies**
- **Work to develop a network of food banks in rural communities throughout the District**
- **Lead/mentor rural pastors in personal growth and development**
- **Host a District-wide, Rural Ministries conference annually**
- **Become a liaison for rural, Georgia ministries to fire and police chaplaincies in their local community.**

VISION INITIATIVES



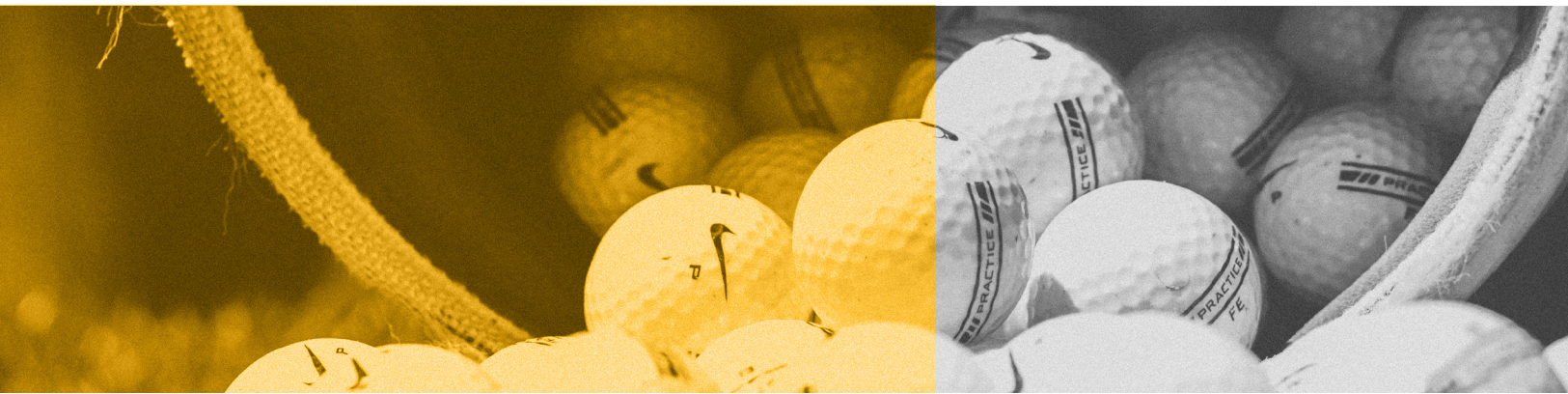
SYNERGY LEADERSHIP NETWORK



The **Synergy Network** will serve as the organizational and communication tool for the practical fulfillment of our vision. It will be facilitated by an embedded web-page within our District website. While new events and emphases will be initiated as a part of the Synergy Network, the objective for this tool is to also bring greater awareness to existing training/resource events that are already being offered. Here is a brief breakdown of the seven categories of the network:

Synergy Leadership Network Breakdown

- Synergy Leadership: GSOM, Acts 2 Journey, Church Planting training, Synergy One-Day events, Synergy Conference at District Council, Mentoring/Coaching program, Synergy Academia Program, Open-source Resources, Synergy Renewal events, Synergy Church Ministry Conference, Men's Ministries Retreat, etc.
- Synergy Global: Missions Training/Awareness events, District Missions Trips, STL/BGMC/LFTL/LIFE events
- Synergy Worship Culture: Community-building training events for the Worship Arts to develop a high-level worship culture within the Georgia District
- Synergy Sisterhood: Courageous Sisterhood Conference, Courageous Sisterhood Missions Trip, LIFE Tour, Women's Ministry Training events
- Synergy Encore: Senior Adult Encore Retreat, Encore Christmas gathering, Encore Missions Trip, Encore Ministries Cruise/Tours/Etc.
- Synergy Next-Gen: Children's Workers Ministry Intensives, Youth Ministries Cohort, Youth Alive Training, Fun Arts, Fine Arts, One Conference, Youth Leader's Summit, Children's Pastors Retreat, etc.
- Synergy Grassroots: Rural Ministries Training Events, 24-hour Rural Compassion Events, Rural Saturation events, etc.



Synergy Leadership One-Day Events:

The basic concept behind the one-day events is to provide an opportunity for relevant leadership development, cultivation of peer relationships in an atmosphere of excellence and fun, and to provide a memorable, world-class interactive event as a part of the experience.

There will be 4-6 events held per year. Other events that are being targeted include The Masters, prominent college football events, Falcons and Braves games.

The financing of these events is made possible by our corporate sponsor: Fire Bible. Our 2019 project will feature the Albanian Fire Bible project that will partner with Gexorgia missionary Kurt Plagenhoef, and the 2020 project is under prayerful consideration.

When participants attend these events, Fire Bible representative, Brian Campbell, will give a BRIEF overview of the project and the objective. Participants will be asked to contribute to our corporate annual project with Fire Bible. If there are any fears or insecurities about an ability to raise the monies, Brian will make himself available to minister in their churches to assist them in the process. Those who book a service with Brian or another Fire Bible representative will have fulfilled their obligations.

For those who represent major donations of \$12,000 or more, Fire Bible will offer an expense-paid trip to the Fire Bible launch in Albania with a 3-day stopover in Athens, Greece. The trip will be all-inclusive with 5-star hotels, meals, and airfare (upgradeable coach ticket). Business Class or Comfort Class seating will be available as a personal expense to the participant through additional fare or frequent flier miles.



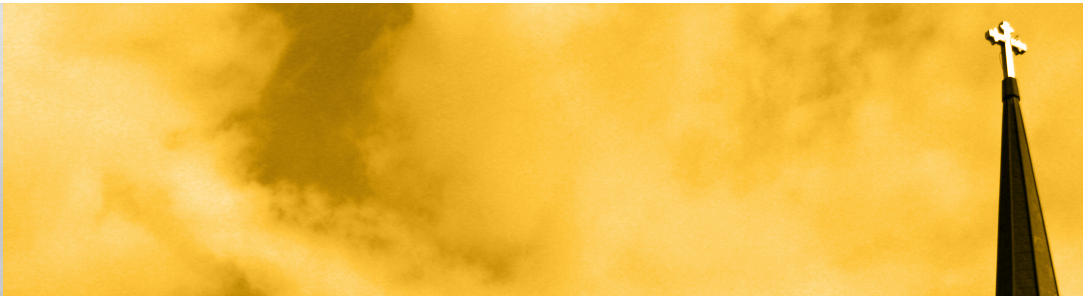
Coaching/Mentoring + Acts 2 Journey (Synergy Leadership):

The development of a one-year coaching/mentoring program is in process. The mentoring program will meet a minimum of eight times over the course of one year. It will include the following:

- **Leadership teaching/training: emphasis on trait-based leadership, ministry mindsets, healthy leader/church dynamics, cultivating Pentecostal culture, missions/generosity paradigms, etc.**
- **Leadership assessments for self-awareness: ministry gifts, emotional intelligence, etc.**
- **Field-based trips to leading Georgia churches/leaders**
- **Inclusion into two District Presbytery meetings where they can observe and give input into District processes. NOTE: All sensitive informational issues and decisions will be dealt with in Executive session with Mentees excluded.**
- **Shadowing of District Officers following Presbytery meetings**

If a Lead Pastor completes BOTH the one-year mentoring AND the one-year Acts 2 Journey in successive years, then a Holy Land Experience will be offered as a reward for their completion. Financing for this event will include a minimal financial contribution from the participant, an appeal to their church for sponsorship funds, and monies that will be raised by the District Superintendent from outside sources.

Additionally, in our December Presbytery meeting, a new policy was approved NEW pastors of DCA churches. This stipulation would require that all NEW DCA Pastors, who are approved by the District to pastor one of these churches, will be required to participate and finish the Acts 2 Journey within the first 2 years of their pastorate. If they do not comply with this requirement, and do not provide sufficient reason for non-participation, they will not be considered for another DCA church in Georgia in the future. Exceptions may be granted in special cases by the District Superintendent.



Synergy Church Planting:

Our Assistant Superintendent, Randy Valimont, has formed a committee that is currently in process developing the needed infrastructure for a church planting movement in our District. They will be reporting back in the coming months to clarify strategy, goals, target cities/communities, etc. Once their work is complete, their report will be added to our comprehensive vision plan.



Synergy Academia Program:

At present, the Georgia District allocates funds annually of a one-time \$1000 scholarship for undergraduate Georgia students pursuing a Baccalaureate degree, and a one-time \$2000 scholarship for a graduate Georgia student pursuing a Masters degree for those attending an Assemblies of God institution of higher learning or one approved by the District Superintendent.

The Georgia District is entering into a cooperative relationship with Continental Theological Seminary (CTS) in Brussels, Belgium. In the Fall of 2019 or the Spring of 2020, CTS will be launching a fully accredited PhD program in the primary fields of Pentecostal/Charismatic Studies, Secularism, and Ministry to Muslims. This program is approximately 5 years in length and is completed through directed research by means of a CTS-approved professor/mentor who guides the student through the process. Academic collaboration is maintained through internet-based, video conferencing. The total cost for the PhD will be \$10,000. The Georgia District would agree to participate in the following ways:

- Student would receive a \$3500 scholarship
- An appeal would be made by the District to their church to match the \$3500 scholarship
- Student would be left with a \$3000 personal obligation
- The District would fly the mentors to the District office for the one-time orientation for new students annually. NOTE: Any participants from outside the District would be asked by CTS to contribute to a prorated orientation fee to offset the costs incurred.
- Students receiving scholarship would agree to a “good faith” agreement to offer themselves as instructors to GSOM and/or our schools of ministry within the District (Valor, Chapel Hill, Columbus Leadership, and Atlanta School of Ministry).

The rationale for this program is to raise up a qualified “academy” of scholars from within the District. The development of scholars will prepare us, as a District, to fill the void that may be created by changing trends in Christian Higher Education (i.e. – future changing legislation with regard to LGBT issues and student loans/federal financial aid). These trends could potentially threaten the existence of existing schools. However, an academy of scholars could provide a “safety net” in the event of this catastrophe.

Dr. Mark Anthony has graciously agreed to serve as our facilitator for Synergy Academia. In this role, Dr. Anthony would also provide academic support and resourcing for those moving through the doctoral dissertation process.

Pastoral Support for Georgia Missionaries (Synergy Global):

As a means to support and encourage our Georgia missionaries, I would like to propose that we, as a collection of District leaders (as available), would personally visit each of our Georgia missionaries in their field of service over a 4-year period. These trips would seek to cluster visits in regional trips over a 10-day period on an annual basis. These visits would include spending time with the missionaries, ministering for them in beneficial venues, bringing gifts/resources to encourage them, and recording video footage of their activities as a future resource for them.



Synergy Leadership Open-Platform Resources:

As a part of the website development, we would develop open-platform resources that shares best practices in ministry, relevant sermons, District-produced media items, forms and documents for church administration, and other helpful tools. These resources will help to equip our leaders with valuable ministry tools that are not only field-tested, but are also consistent with our church culture, doctrine, and geographic uniqueness.



Synergy Renewal Events:

The initial and primary focus of our Renewal events will focus on the spiritual health of the pastor/leader. The theoretical basis for this approach is that God must revive the leader before He can revive the church. This relies upon the sovereign work of God in the heart of the leader to give shape to the spirit-empowered platform that we insist upon as a non-negotiable value in the local church. Therefore, a mixture of spiritual emphases and selective events would be encouraged and/or planned:

- Prayer/fasting emphases
- Holy Spirit Conference – begins on Pentecost Sunday night at location TBD, with a Monday conference featuring preaching, fasting lunch meal, strategic prayer service, anointing service for attendees, followed by evening meal.
- Fall Prayer Emphasis or Retreat for Leadership: in anticipation of the coming year, a prayer emphasis encouraged at district level with an overnight prayer retreat.



Synergy Grassroots Saturation Emphasis:

Led by Director of Rural Ministries, 2-3 rural communities would be selected annually for churches throughout the District to facilitate rural revitalization projects or church plants with a one-day outreach to touch their communities and raise awareness for the church.

Conformity of Annual District Council Event to Core Values:

Realizing that District Council, and its perceived need to various constituencies is different, careful thought must be given as to how we reflect our new core values in this critical event within our District. This year, as a means to reflect a “shift”, I am proposing the following schedule:

MONDAY:

- **Golf Tournament: Monday morning to completion**
- **Registration for District Council: afternoon through evening**
- **Afternoon Luncheons**
- **Speed-the Light Banquet**
- **Monday Night (Ordination): Pastor Tommy Barnett**

TUESDAY:

- **Morning: Superintendent’s Message/Memorial Recognition/Business**
- **BGMC Luncheon**
- **Afternoon: Business (if needed)**
- **Tuesday Night: Albanian Fire Bible Emphasis with various speakers and video highlights**

WEDNESDAY:

- **8am – Noon: Synergy Leadership Conference (inclusion of lay leadership from our churches)**
- **5pm – 8pm: Under 40 Gathering**

This format is reflective of input from across the age spectrum of ministers. The following observations are formative to these plans:

- **Under 40 ministers are clamoring for a longer District Council that provides more relationship building and resourcing**
- **Over 40 ministers prefer a shorter Council that does not infringe upon Sunday PM or Mid-Week services**
- **Both segments indicate a desire for spiritual impartation, a learning opportunity, and fellowship**
- **The inclusion of laity into the Leadership Conference is an attempt to provide greater openness in a collaborative leadership culture in the local church.**