

The Context

In the latter half of 1998 we had reached a time in Antioch Network of strategic planning. The ministry was expanding. We thought there was a need for fund-raising, and a strategic planning process seemed to be the next step. The Board of Directions was fully involved, and we scheduled four board retreats of two days each over a period of several months for this purpose.

During our first retreat we sought to define Antioch Network's "vision". I came away from that discussion with a significant level of unease. I knew I had to get alone, get in touch again with my sense of God's call to us, and articulate it in writing as best I could.

I ended up going an upscale mall in Scottsdale, Arizona, and sitting the entire morning with my computer in the Starbucks outlet. Below is the result. When the Board read it, they voted unanimously to include the document in its entirety in the records of the strategic planning process.

Since this was written thirteen years ago, God has said many more things to Antioch Network. Our understanding of His call continues to mature and expand. But what is written here continues to resonate deep within me. This is a statement, not to define or limit our future, but to establish important foundations upon which our future rests. For a fellowship like ours to know where we are going, we need to be in touch with where we have come from.

Kyrie eleison.

George Miley
Dahlem (Eifel), Germany
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My Vision for Antioch Network **By George Miley** **December, 1998**

This is what I see in my heart and spirit when I think of Antioch Network:

- A champion for and proclaimer of a high view of the local church; an insistence that the work of the kingdom in our time is being seriously hindered by an inadequate understanding of who God designed the church to really be.
- An organizational framework, with a heart to stimulate and serve, not dominate or control, a movement made up of local churches.

- An aggressive church planting thrust among unreached peoples, fueled by a passion for the completion of Christ's directive to disciple all nations, with a bent toward placing our highest priority on the most unreached.
- A fellowship of church planters and church leaders, who find deep personal enrichment through friendship with one another, and from whom come those who give oversight to the ministry. (The Antioch Network board would come from this group.)
- A staff, led by a growing circle of leaders between the ages of 30-50, who would increasingly assume the leadership responsibilities which people like George, Dan, Bill Thrall and Mike Tait have provided.
- A leadership composed of a chosen-of-God diversity of men and women, coming from many regions of the world and many ethnic groups.
- An environment in which younger leaders are identified, affirmed, matured and released to start and give leadership to new works of God, especially churches.
- A highly effective organization, filled with integrity, compassionate and responsive, demonstrating that the teachings of Christ can be lived out without compromise while in the midst of operational excellence.
- A commitment to bold organizational goals, which honor the parameters of Christ's "all nations" directive and our sense of His calling, which only make sense in the context of faith in the God of the impossible, and which inspire younger leaders toward life commitment to Christ and His purposes.
- An atmosphere where it is safe to fail, an openness to honestly acknowledge that failure, a freedom to share forgiveness and grace with one another.
- Overflowing with worship.
- Permeated with prayer.
- Characterized by love.
- Manifesting the unity of the worldwide body of Christ; believers from different denominations receiving one another, from different doctrinal persuasions esteeming one another, from different races and cultures honoring one another, from different economic and social classes sharing with one another, and from local churches and mission agencies submitting to each other's strengths and protecting each other's weaknesses.
- Beautified by the sweet aroma of humility.
- Passionate to initiate; to move forward by faith, to believe God for the impossible, to break through walls of spiritual darkness, to establish kingdom beachheads in territory claimed by the enemy.

- Embracing the suffering of the cross, which our Savior embraced.
- Affirming every believer as a gifted-of-God minister, turning aside from any hint of a clergy/laity pecking order, insisting that serving is as honorable as leading, administering is as vital as evangelizing, giving is as central to God's work as teaching.
- A commitment to the development of Godly character as God's pre-requisite to the mature expression of any gifting.
- Championing the cause and addressing the needs of the poor, the maltreated, the abandoned, the despised.
- Incubating and developing business enterprises which serve as organizational vehicles for church planting and kingdom extension.
- Committed to the pastoral care of those who serve cross-culturally.
- Expanding through churches in Latin America, East Asia, Europe, India, Africa and wherever the Lord wants to take us.

