

CROWDED HOUSE

Vision and Plan
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A Manifold Vision

The vision of Crowded House is to become a light in Central Florida pointing to the greater light of the glories of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Light is brightest when all of its manifold wavelengths are combined. But light is best understood by looking closely at its component parts.

Similarly, the vision of Crowded House is best understood as the combination of the following five essential components ::

1. **Corporate Worship** :: The body gathers to *remember* the ground of the gospel and to *celebrate* the fruit of the gospel.
2. **The Face of the Church** :: Churches made of disciples are churches who make disciples.
3. **Gospel Communities** :: A missional church requires missional households.
4. **30, 60, even 100-fold** :: Fruitful multiplication as households and as a movement.
5. **Incarnational** :: Don't institutionalize what can be embodied.

* "Households" is used throughout this document as a technical term referring to a variety of home environments (i.e. traditional families, college room-mates, single-parent homes, single individuals, etc.)

* The name, Crowded House, is what we are calling our church plant until we have identified our location and a core team.

Five Rays of Vision

1. **Corporate Worship** :: The body gathers to remember the ground of the gospel and to celebrate the fruit of the gospel.

The weekly gathering of the believers for worship has been a defining component of the church since the beginning. In their emphasis upon the incarnational and missional aspects of the church some have jettisoned the need to gather for worship. Crowded House views corporate worship as the gathering of believers who understand that their purpose in this world is not only to be gathered, but to be sent.

Remember :: In the corporate gathering the believers receive the Word and the Lord's Supper in order to remember the ground of the gospel that creates salvation and compels the mission.

Celebrate :: In the corporate gathering the believers share in song, testimony, and fellowship how they have seen the fruit of the gospel and the glory of God in their lives, in their community, and in their relationships. The gospel is the ground of the celebration so it is important that we have remembered well even as we move into celebration.

2. **The Face of the Church** :: Churches don't make disciples. Disciples make disciples.

There are many ways to encounter a church plant. Some move into a new town and do a search on Google. Others happen to see a church sign on the way to the grocery. Still others hear about a new church service on a Saturday night from a friend at work. These are the faces of the church to the community.

The face of Crowded House is the people. We believe that the world finds it easy to pre-judge institutions, but finds it more difficult to dismiss a person just because they are a Christian if they are actually engaged in a personal relationship. Instead of promoting a church service the believers at Crowded House will engage in friendships with the people in their community. Instead of inviting the community to outreach events and worship services the believers will invite their neighbors, coworkers, friends, and family into their lives and into the natural fellowship that they share together with the other believers.

It is, therefore, imperative that the disciples at Crowded House understand that they are each partners together for the sake of the gospel having received their Master's command to make-disciples.

3. **Gospel Communities** :: A missional church requires missional households.

When Crowded House thinks of being a church on a mission it does not first think of the ministries that we do together or the evangelist activities of its leaders. For Crowded House being missional means believers and households leveraging every part of their lives for the sake of God's glory and gospel proclamation.

At Crowded House we do not leave individual believers and household to figure this out on their own. We gather as collections of households into gospel communities where the disciples faithfully attend to the renewing of their minds and their faithful life together.

The gospel communities are in constant prayer for opportunities for relationships and hospitality in the community. It is in community that we discover the ways in which we can extend our fellowship by proclaiming the gospel with our lips and the gospel's fruit with our lives. In this way we make known the glory of the gospel in the face of Christ to the community in which God has placed us.

4. **30, 60, even 100-fold** :: Fruitful multiplication as households and as a movement.

Jesus gave a parable to His disciples before He sent them out to proclaim the gospel that would give them perspective as to how the good news would be received. In the parable of the soils only one soil receives the seed and actually bears fruit. At Crowded House it is not lost on us that while only one soil bore fruit, it did so in extraordinary fashion!

The faith question for Crowded House is do we believe that if we will plant the seed of the Word that God will grow His church? We believe that if we are faithful in the Word and prayer both as households and as a movement and if we are faithful to open our lives and homes to those around us that just like the parable of Jesus there will be some who reject the Word, but there will also be some who not only bear fruit but join Crowded House in bearing fruit themselves, 30, 60, even 100-fold.

It is our desire that God would multiply our gospel communities and grow our worshiping congregation. We also desire to plant Crowded House with the expectation that God would use us to multiply into multiple congregations throughout the Central Florida region.

5. **Incarnational** :: Don't institutionalize what can be embodied.

Congregations are full of believers who have been empowered by the Holy Spirit with gifts and vision for the fulfillment of God's mission. Sometimes these gifts are funneled into church ministry slots and new vision is channeled into the creation of new institutional ministries that create even more church ministry slots to be filled.

At Crowded House we believe that since God's Spirit is One that He will grant a unified vision and complementary gifts within the body of believers. There will be times when a visionary idea will be best implemented by the creation of an official ministry at the institutional level, but we desire that our impulse will be to embody in our lives, in our households, and in our gospel communities the gifts and vision that God has given to the body.

If a household desires to meet a need in the community without the creation of a larger ministry it should. If a gospel community desires to engage in a particular outreach opportunity they should. In this way the ministry of the church remains as close to the lives of the believers as possible so that the watching world will not see institutional ministries alone, but the faithful obedience of disciples responding to the steadfast love of our God on mission.