

**My vision for the ministry at:**  
***Penn Forest Worship Center***  
**Pastor Myron D. Atkinson**

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I've been the pastor here at PFWC for ten years and I realized recently that I have never written out exactly what my vision is for this church. I have shared it from the pulpit in bits and pieces. I have written out parts of it in my yearly pastor reports as well as here and there in the bulletin. So today, I decided to put it all in writing.

So, what is my vision for PFWC? You might expect me to talk about numbers and the growth I would like to see in Sunday school, worship, and midweek. You may expect me to talk about buildings and the new facilities that we will build, or about our children, youth, and adult ministries. Certainly you expect me to talk about our finances, mission, outreach, and other areas that pastors and business leaders usually talk about when they are explaining their vision. However, these topics are the by-products of lives lived passionately for Christ. My vision for PFWC is that everyone who makes this church their home will put Christ in the center of all they do, because then the numbers, finances, ministries, etc. will follow. My vision includes:

**A Church that is team lead with Christ as the Coach – (John 1:1-5)**

**<sup>1</sup> In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God.**

**<sup>2</sup> He existed in the beginning with God.**

**<sup>3</sup> God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him.**

**<sup>4</sup> The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone.**

**<sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it.**

Some churches have a pastor who is dictatorial and their philosophy seems to be “it’s my way or the highway”. Some churches are run by one person, typically not so affectionately called a “church boss,” or they are run by the church board in a similar fashion with them telling the pastor and the congregation what to do. In both of these scenarios, God is often forgotten about and it becomes all about “what’s in it for me”. I believe that God’s desire is to see a team ministry mindset with God as the leader and us following His instructions and seeking His wisdom. In this mindset everyone knows it’s all about Him!

## **A Church where the generations come together – (I Timothy 4:12, Titus 2:4, II Timothy 1:5, 13)**

I've seen at too many churches an "us versus them" mentality when it comes to the generations. The younger ones think it's all about them because they are young and have new fresh ideas. The older people think it's all about them because they have experience. In actuality, I believe that once again, it's a coming together as a team and learning from each other. The more experienced are to be mentoring the young as Timothy was mentored by his grandmother, his mother, and by the apostle Paul, who shared their wisdom and were examples of faithfulness and compassion. The young are to be examples to the older generations in their enthusiasm and passion. How do we accomplish this?

- **First**, we all must realize that every generation is important to God! When we realize this, we will treat every person young or old with dignity and respect.
- **Second**, we must acknowledge that we are all teachable and should be continually learning! This means all of us guard against the mentality of "I already know it all."
- **Third**, we begin serving each other! This means we stop focusing on "What's in it for me?" and start focusing on "What's in it for Him!"
- **Fourth**, we step out of our comfort zones and reach out to one another instead of staying where it's easy for us to be.

Some ideas of how we can pull the generations together:

- The older generations could share life stories & testimonies with the younger generations.
- The older generations can mentor younger generations through small groups, Sunday School C.G. groups or one-on-one interactions.
- The older generations should be encouraged to reach out and get to know the younger generations (i.e. talking to them in the worship service, visiting them, attending their special events or even becoming a youth sponsor).
- The younger generations should be encouraged to view the worship service as a collective time of coming together to worship our risen Savior and actively participate. They could do this by singing corporately, singing or playing an instrument on the praise team, serving as ushers and greeters, sharing praises and prayer requests, etc.
- The younger generations should reach out and get to know the older generations so they can learn from them. Participating in the nursing home service is a great idea as well.

## **A Church where everyone is a minister – (I Corinthians 12)**

Too many churches have become a spectator activity, much like a basketball game with five people on the floor playing the game, and the bleachers packed with spectators watching. It's much easier to be a spectator than to be involved in the game. Why? Sacrifice & risk! When we aren't involved we don't have to sacrifice our time in preparing, practicing, or playing. As a spectator we can voice our opinions and not have any of the responsibility. We don't risk criticism from others because we didn't do it right. We don't risk others counting on us. It's much easier to be a spectator. But that's not what Christ has called us to do! It's much more rewarding to win the game as a player, knowing you contributed to the success of the team.

## **A Church that is passionate about reaching the lost both at home and abroad– (Matthew 28:19-20, Luke 4:18, Luke 15)**

What is important to God should be important to us! Evangelism is so challenging for many people, but it shouldn't be. We get excited about sports, politics, business, and hobbies and have no problem sharing our excitement with others. Shouldn't we be excited about the One who has saved us from an eternity in Hell? Yes! So how do we effectively do this? The most effective way is by genuinely living out your faith and reaching out to others. It's been said that people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. When you take the time to get to know people and show them you are interested, then they are more likely to be open and receptive. However, once again this involves us stepping out of our comfort zones and taking risks. We invite people to eat with us. We go to activities with them. We get involved in their lives. People want to know that someone is interested in them, and as Christians we should be the ones reaching out.

Evangelism is not just about reaching out to those around us. It's about reaching around the world. This means saying "yes" to supporting missionaries financially, prayerfully, and by encouraging them. It means making the sacrifice of time, energy, and resources to go on short term missions no matter how young or old we are.

As we do these things we will be doing what God has called us to do!

## **A Church that realizes worship is not a style of music, but a lifestyle – (Deuteronomy 6:5, Luke 10:27)**

Worship is an action verb which requires participation. Many people think of worship as music. But worship is so much more. It is to encompass every aspect of the church service and our lives. In the church service we worship through our testimonies, through giving of our tithes and offerings, through our singing, through our listening to the Word so that we can learn and grow closer to God, through our serving, and through our attitude. Every part of the church service is an act of worship and it involves every individual both young and old. Worship is loving God with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength. This means that it's a lifestyle. It's not just something that takes place when we come to church. True worship of God puts Him first in everything. Our love for Him affects our language, our work, our entertainment, our attitude, our actions, our hobbies, our family time, our personal time, our driving, and in turn affects others! When we come to the place where we realize that our entire life is an act of worship it will change us as well as those around us.

### **A Church where the men will rise up and be the leaders God has called them to be – (1Timothy 3:1-7)**

God has called the men to be the leaders in their homes. It means leading the way in personal devotions, family devotions, and devotions with your spouse. It means being a man of integrity always. It means making time to lead by example in serving the church. I've heard it said so often that certain men will do things in the church if they are asked.... It's time that men take the initiative to say "I see this need and I would like to do something about it!", both at church, at home and in their communities.

### **A Church that is passionate about prayer – (Luke 5:16)**

Jesus understood where the power comes from. That's why He often slipped away to quiet places to pray. Jesus realized the power of prayer, and prayer is where we should be deriving our source of power. Prayer is not something that we are to shy away from. In fact, corporate prayer is extremely important because that's when we come together in agreement. It's where healing can take place, where demonic strongholds can be defeated, and it's where the body of Christ can be strengthened. Prayer is important; corporate prayer, individual prayer, prayer meetings, and prayer chains! It is my desire that the Wesley Prayer Room will begin to get used during the services with people praying for a great move of God. Prayer is the furnace that will heat this church up and cause us to go out in boldness and power.

### **A Church that is more consumed with God than the world – (Malachi 3:8-12)**

Instead of seeing how much we can acquire here on earth, we should be storing up treasures for Heaven. We need to get beyond earthly distractions and focus on what is

truly important for eternity. Instead of asking, “What do **I** have to give?” or even “What do **I** get?” ask “What **more** can I **give**?” Our money goes to what is important to us, and what is more important than living with God in eternity?

We should be giving financially, and of ourselves, out of faith, trust, and love.

**A Church where the believers are filled with the Holy Spirit, producing the fruit of the Holy Spirit and ministering in the gifts of the Holy Spirit. – (Acts 1:8, Galatians 5:22-23, I Corinthians 14, Hebrews 2:3-5)**

Some people think that the gifts of the Holy Spirit disappeared with first disciples, but I read nowhere in the Bible that this would be the case.

Are we bearing good fruit and using our gifts? Some focus on just one or two gifts but did you know that there are over 25 gifts of the Holy Spirit? We must acknowledge all of them! The Holy Spirit has given them to us to be able to serve others within the body of Christ and to reach non-believers.

**A Church that is radically committed to Jesus Christ both in life and in death – (Philippians 1:21, Galatians 5:22-23)**

What does it mean to be radically committed? It means being so passionate about Jesus Christ that we are willing to die for Him, and even more challenging, live for Him. In order to do this we need to be growing in our relationship with Christ through discipleship. We need to fan into flames the gifts that God has given us (II Timothy 1:6). We need to pursue holiness...(without holiness no man can see God), pursue being filled with the Holy Spirit (sanctification - being set apart as holy) in all areas of our lives. When we do this we will see our families, our marriages, our church, our communities, and ourselves changed for HIS glory!

**What will all of this result in?**

1. A church that is reaching across the generations with the hope that Christ offers!
2. A church that is growing through planting other churches!
3. The peace of mind of knowing that one day you will stand before God and hear “Well done!”