



**Millwood Community Presbyterian Church**



**Compass Group**

**Final Report**

**November 5, 2002**



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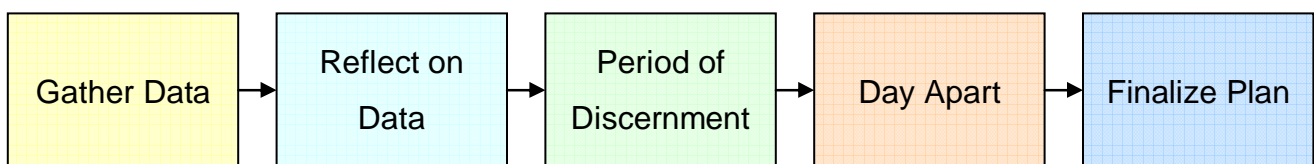
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## Overview

The Compass Group was chartered by the Session and the congregation of the Millwood Community Presbyterian Church to complete a process of strategic planning for the church. The Compass Group is comprised of church members who are a cross section of the Millwood population. They are Sylvia Barney, Ray Blackstone, Ben Couper, Marilyn Gillam, Dan Hansen, Rich Harvey, Mae Johnson, Herb McIntosh, Randy Olson and Tom Shannon. Because strategic planning has not been done at Millwood before -- at least not that anyone could remember -- the church hired consultant Frank Beatie to assist the group.

The name "Compass" was chosen because of the association with being guided on a journey. A compass cannot show a person his location or where he is going, but it helps guide the traveler along the way. An unseen external force gives it the power to tell direction. This is much like the Compass Group, which is providing direction along the church's journey and is being acted upon by the Holy Spirit.

### Strategic Planning Process



The figure above shows the steps of the strategic planning process. Among the data the Compass Group gathered were a wide variety of church statistics, including trends in membership and attendance and demographic data. A twelve of focus group sessions gave individual members an opportunity to provide input in a small group setting. A survey of the entire congregation was conducted and sent to the Percept Group, Inc. for analysis.

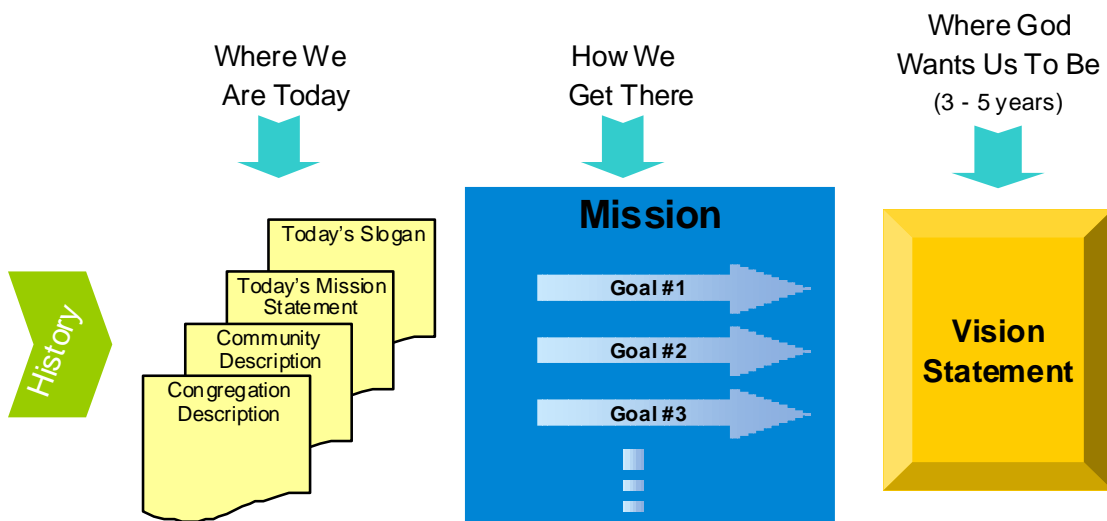
The Compass Group followed three steps while reflecting on the data:

1. First, the information was analyzed, the implications understood and relevant applications developed.
2. A period of discernment allowed the Compass Group to look to God for the answers to the problems facing the church.
3. This was followed by a day spent apart from our everyday lives, to write a Vision for the future of the church and the Mission Goals that would take us there.

The Compass Group spent the remainder of its time refining the Vision and Mission Goals, as well as recording many of the other findings that were discovered along the way. During this finalizing stage, the Compass Group began rolling out its results to the Session and the congregation.

Although the members of the Compass Group may help implement the recommendations in this report, the responsibility for deciding which recommendations get implemented and leading the work lies with the Session. The responsibilities of the Compass Group will be completed with this report and its communication to the Session and the congregation. Additional meetings may be scheduled with the Compass Group to help convey our findings to individual leadership committees, such as the pastor nominating committee or the worship and music committee.

This document attempts to capture all of the knowledge gathered by the Compass Group during the strategic planning process conducted April through November of 2002. The document is organized in three main sections, where we are today, where God wants us to be and how we get there. The relationship between these sections is shown graphically in the following figure.



The Where We Are Today section includes descriptions of the congregation and the community along with the slogan and mission statement we currently have. The Looking To The Future section has a vision statement for where we think God wants the church to be in 3 to 5 years. The How We Get There section includes the Mission Goals. These mission goals are the areas that the leadership of the church needs to focus on in order to guide the church toward where God wants us to be.

## **Section 1: Where We Are Today**

### ***Definition of Church Congregation***

Viewed strictly by the numbers, Millwood Community Presbyterian Church is a congregation in decline. There are fewer members in the pews than in years past, and they are growing grayer. In fact, the size of the congregation has been slipping since the Kennedy Administration. There were 1,700 members in 1963; now there are 478 – a drop of two-thirds. If this trend continues, the church will have 397 members in 2007, and will continue to decline.

About 60 percent of our members are women, many of them widows. We are nearly mono-ethnic, with Anglos representing 98.6 percent of the congregation. Most of the adults are married (about 71 percent) and most members live in two-parent families (about 65 percent). However, we are above the national and local average for single-parent households, with 27 percent of families led by single mothers and 9.5 percent led by single fathers. About 42 percent of our adults (age 25 and older) hold college degrees, which is twice the national average.

Despite our declining numbers, Millwood church members remain faithful with their resources. Annual contributions by member rose from \$434 in 1990 to \$1,090 in 2000.

The recruitment and retention of new members has not kept pace with deaths. And the rate of deaths among church members is likely to increase because our congregation is aging. Nearly two-thirds are 61 or older. Only about 9 percent are between the ages of 18 and 35.

Multi-generational families are common in the church. Former Associate Pastor Dave Steane noted two families of five generations each his 1998 study<sup>1</sup> of MCPC. The longevity of these

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<sup>1</sup> David J. Steane, A Renewal Strategy for Millwood Community Presbyterian Church Spokane, Washington, 11

pillar families creates stability, but without large numbers of new members, it also creates an air of nostalgia that may hamper innovation. As Frank Beattie has noted, members who attended focus group meetings during the summer of 2002 “tended to glorify and glamorize the past.” They used terms like “We used to have...” when discussing membership and programs. Few seemed to have a vision of a vibrant church in the future. For instance, they generally did not use terms like, “God is calling us to...” “Let’s live up to our potential” or “Let’s get going.”

Further evidence of this tendency toward tradition was found in Steane’s study. He noted that the church has developed a set of beliefs and customs. This is manifest in the way worship is conducted and Christmas decorations are arranged, for instance. It is revealed in the habit of some members to sit in the same spot each Sunday. It shows when the congregation is reluctant to make decisions on certain matters without consulting key members.

Members are split over the value of two Sunday morning services. Some are uncomfortable with the informality of the contemporary service and like the liturgy and other elements of the traditional service. Others crave the energy of the contemporary service and feel their worship stifled by strict adherence to tradition. And many in both groups feel the church has lost a sense of community by splitting on Sunday mornings. They wonder whether it would be possible to satisfy everyone by incorporating contemporary and traditional elements into a single service. While that may work for those who now prefer the traditional service, some fans of the contemporary service fear they would not find the energy they seek in a service of mixed styles.

The Compass Group heard from some members who said they feel no sense of “awe” during our worship services. People who have left the church commonly told us that they feel closer to God during worship in their new church homes. Members have sensed that void, as well.

Another common complaint from current members: The congregation often is unfamiliar with the hymns selected for the traditional service. They want more of the old favorites. There was

some resentment toward the hymnal now in use, although some speculated that the problem might be hymn selection, rather than the book itself.

People are worried about the very survival of the church. Persistent themes during focus groups were the lack of youth, the declining attendance and financial concerns. In that atmosphere, there is an air of desperation in which community outreach is viewed as essential to bringing more people into the church, rather than as an unselfish response to God's love.

As Steane noted, the members represent a variety of theological positions and biblical interpretations, ranging from "conservative evangelical" to "progressive liberal." This is bound to create conflicts, yet it quickly became apparent to Frank Beattie, as an outsider looking in, that the church avoids dealing with those conflicts.

Several members who attended focus group meetings stopped themselves when on the verge of bringing up points of conflict, saying they didn't want to be negative. Few made direct reference to recent strife in the church – over the issue of whether to advertise the anniversary of a homosexual couple, for instance. The Compass Group noted that the Session was invited to engage the church in a discussion of homosexuality long before it became a conflict, and was offered money to bring in outside speakers for that purpose. That discussion did not occur then and has not occurred since. As a result, reconciliation has not occurred over the issue of homosexuality. The rift is not healed, it has simply been ignored.

The Compass Group feels that the church suffers from a poor process of selecting lay leaders. The apparent prerequisite is whether individuals are willing to take on a task, rather than whether they are suited for the job at hand – to chair a particular Session committee, for instance. Members often are reluctant to serve, so recruiters typically are relieved just to find a body to fill a seat. Once lay leaders are recruited, they receive little training. In fact, Session members rarely receive any training. We are told this is highly unusual among Presbyterian churches, as well as unhealthy.

In such an environment, it's little wonder that the senior pastor – rather than lay leaders – tends to be the decision-maker. That has created resentment among some members who feel that the pastor has not kept the congregation in the loop about important or controversial matters.

Selecting a pastor will be the church's next big leadership challenge. As will be discussed in greater detail later in this document, the members want a pastor who is an extrovert, will attend most functions and make visitation a priority. They want someone who is a strong preacher, and will unify the congregation and members to greater service in the church and in the community. They want someone who is a good administrator, but is willing to delegate tasks to the Session, committees or lay leaders.

In short, the members want Super Pastor. While a single person might be able to meet all these needs in a smaller church, it would be a unique individual who could do everything desired in a church the size of Millwood.

### ***Our Community***

For purposes of our work, the Compass Group defines the church community as an area that covers nine ZIP codes. It encompasses the town of Millwood and a large portion of east Spokane, as well as the new cities of Spokane Valley and Liberty Lake. It includes some sparsely populated areas, like the foothills of Mount Spokane and the Freeman School District.

The population of that community is about 120,000, or slightly more than one-quarter the population of Spokane County as a whole. The area's population has grown by 29 percent since 1980, a period in which the church membership declined sharply. Demographers expect the area to grow by 7,200 people in the next five years. That's a 6 percent increase, compared to the national average of 4 percent. Anglos account for 93 percent of the population, compared to 70 percent nationwide. Similar to the national average, the age of the typical community resident is 36.5.

Adults here are slightly more likely to be married than the typical American, and slightly less likely to divorce. Married couples head 74 percent of the households with children, while 19 percent are led by single mothers and 5 percent by single fathers.

The residents are less likely than the typical U.S. citizen to be high-school dropouts, at 15 percent. However, college graduates account for only about 17 percent of those 25 and older, compared to 20 percent nationally.

The annual household income is \$54,899, compared to \$61,904 nationwide. Compared to America as a whole, a resident here is far less likely to live in poverty.

About 42 percent of residents say they are not involved in religion, compared to 35 percent nationwide. Recent U.S. census data show that Northwest residents are among the least churched in the nation.

In the area of church architecture, the community prefers a combination of both traditional and contemporary buildings. In the area of worship style, the community prefers a contemporary/informal service that is both emotionally uplifting and intellectually challenging. Local missions were a bigger concern than global missions. Community residents said they were most interested in church programs that offer marriage enrichment, parent training, youth social programs and sports/camping programs.

### ***Current Vision Statements***

Previous members of the Session adopted a mission statement that has served the church well. However, the church is now charting a new course, requiring a new vision. The Compass Group urges the Session to retire the existing Mission Statement, with thanks to those who developed it. We hope the Session will replace that statement with the Vision Statement written by the Compass Group. It is our vision of Millwood Community Presbyterian Church, circa 2007.

In addition, the Compass Group recommends that the church drop its advertising slogan, which was written by a former pastor. If a slogan is desired, it should be short and easily remembered by those who read it. Examples of good slogans from the world of advertising are “We Love to See You Smile” and “Quality is Job One.”

Current Mission Statement:

By the power of the Holy Spirit  
The Mission of the  
Millwood Community Presbyterian Church  
Is  
To glorify God,  
Reach out with the good news  
Of Jesus Christ,  
Nurture those in our midst  
With love and encouragement  
And be disciples  
With one another  
In our community  
And the world.

Current Slogan

Millwood is a Christ-Centered Church with  
a People-Centered Message serving the  
Spokane Valley and beyond.

## **Section 2: Where God Wants Us to Be**

The Compass Group recommends the following Vision statement to help guide the church into the future:

### ***Vision Statement***

Millwood Community Presbyterian Church is a Spirit-filled congregation that joyfully worships God. Through worship, Bible study and prayer, we equip and challenge people to spread the Word of God, provide shelter for those in need and serve as a beacon of God's Truth and Light in the community. Our members use their time, talents and treasures to serve the Lord. We embrace youth and respect age. Our older members provide stability and mentor the younger members, who challenge the church with fresh ideas. We proclaim the majesty of God's Grace through traditional and contemporary forms of worship. We acknowledge, discuss and accept our differences, unified by the assurance that Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior.

## **Section 3: How We Get There**

### ***Mission Goals***

The overall objective of the Mission Goals is to create an environment in which members experience spiritual growth in their daily lives and respond to opportunities to serve the church and the community. In short, the Mission Goals are the path to the future. But it won't be a challenge-free path: The Mission Goals will require extra effort beyond the day-to-day running of the church. We believe the congregation and Session are up to the task.

The Mission Goals encompass the full spectrum of the biblical mandate "to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God." (Micah 6) There are goals for offering loving and caring support for members and the community, and for offering a hearty welcome to guests. There are goals for offering compassion to those in need. There are goals that call for supporting the efforts of Christians they address oppression and injustice. There are goals for assuring that our leaders are well-equipped for the tasks God has given them.

Each Mission Goal is comprised of two parts.

- The first part, the mission, is the specific area that needs attention in order to achieve our vision for the future. It includes an objective and a brief summary of the research data that supports the mission.
- The second part, the goals, includes specific actions recommended by the Compass Group, with target dates for starting or completing the work. The lists of recommended actions are not necessarily complete, but are a starting point.

The Mission Goals are organized under the following headings:

- Leadership
- Programs for Everyone
- Welcoming Guests in the Church Family
- Worship and Music
- Community/World Outreach
- Embrace Our Differences
- Properties and Facilities

The Mission Goals are temporary by design. The intent is to focus on these areas, or missions, make the necessary improvements, then select a new set of missions that continue to guide us into the future. In the coming year, there should be significant progress demonstrated in these initial Mission Goals. Some will be accomplished and some will be continued. There will be additional Mission Goals formulated to provide on-going guidance for the leaders, the organizations and the members of our congregation.

To assure that these goals are not overlooked or forgotten, the Compass Group makes recommendations for reviewing the church's progress. Those recommendations are contained in the Review Cycle section of this document.

## ***Leadership***

Objective: Develop and strengthen the church leadership so it is prepared to lead the church into the future.

**Pastor:** The congregation's expectations for the skills, abilities and number of their pastoral staff are captured in Appendix 2. In short, the congregation is looking for a pastor who is a strong, outgoing leader. The pastor needs to have a clear vision for the future and work to move the church toward that vision. Members expect the pastor to be active in the programs of the church and the lives of its members.

**Session:** The Session is too big to be an effective decision-making body, and better training is necessary. The Compass Group collected many ideas for strengthening the leadership role of the Session. They include:

- Directing the nominating committee to carefully consider the talents and expertise of potential Elders so each person is assigned to the committee that can best use his or her talents. Elders should be elected to a specific committee within the Session.
- There must be a planned progression within each committee to help with training and consistency. We recommend that new Session members serve on a committee under the current leader for one year, then serve as the leader of that committee for the following two years. Each leader would mentor a replacement during his or her third year as head of a committee.
- All Session members will be required to attend an annual overnight retreat, to be held shortly after new members have joined the Session. This retreat could also be part of the leadership training for the new Elders. It will also be a time to stress the importance of achieving Mission Goals and working toward the church vision.

- There must be more communication from leaders to the congregation about the activities of the church, the Presbytery and the General Assembly. The congregation should have the opportunity – through adult education and other avenues – to discuss stances taken by the denominational leaders regarding national and international issues. One recent example is the “call for restraint” letter from the General Assembly to President Bush, regarding a potential pre-emptive, unilateral war with Iraq. In many cases, the denomination provides study guides to facilitate such discussions. Often, it may be wise to bring in local experts to provide perspective.

**Deacons:** While some Deacons are aware of their roles and carry out their duties effectively, some church members have little or no contact with their Deacon. More effective training is needed to equip each Deacon for the work and support his or her sense of call. Deacons must also be trained to help integrate new members into the congregation.

**Lay Leaders:** Focus group participants were eager and ready for the significant training required to do God’s work. The church needs a systematic process for leader identification, development and training. .

The Compass Group recommends the following steps:

1. By <Date>, select and commission a pastor nomination committee that will begin the careful and prayerful process of selecting a new Senior Pastor to fit the needs of the congregation.
2. By <Date>, re-evaluate the size of the Session. Determine the most effective size, based upon program committee requirements, accountability, and future goals. We anticipate that this process will lead to a much smaller Session.
3. By <Date>, develop and implement a new process for elder recruitment and nomination based on matching each committee’s function with each candidate’s qualifications,

skills, experience, and avocation. In other words, candidates would be nominated to fill a specific role, known to the candidate and made clear to the congregation at the time of commissioning.

4. By <Date>, develop a continuous three-year tenure schedule that maps each elder's term and committee assignment. Use this schedule to ensure adequate committee chairmanship training, apprenticeship, and succession.
5. By <Date>, develop similar nomination and tenure-mapping tools for Deacons, with a focus on maximizing the talents of those selected.
6. By <Date>, develop an Elder and Deacon training curriculum and begin classes.
  - a. Elder training should focus on a deep understanding of the Book of Order.
  - b. Deacon training should emphasize spiritual support of others and successful integration of new members into the church family.
7. By <Date>, develop a lay-leader training program that helps each member identify and develop his or her God-given talents.
8. Ongoing, provide regular and adequate supervision for all staff and committee work.

## ***Programs for Everyone***

Objective: Increase the feeling of belonging for every member and each repeat visitor by adjusting the programs, social groups and study groups as necessary to make sure everyone finds a place to fit in.

Millwood exhibits some traits of a program-sized church. Within such churches, it is common that once programs get established, they take on a life of their own and are repeated month after month, year after year. Even as different people come and go, the programs continue. While this creates stability, it can cause the church to become rigid and lag behind the times. Family Camp, the bell choirs, the women's circle groups, and even the advent party are all examples of programs that are so well established, few people can remember when or how they were started. While those particular programs are highly successful, it was evident in the survey results and in the focus group sessions that there are many other programs with only a few active members; most people are not aware those programs even exist. The vast number of church programs does a good job of keeping members busy. The question remains: are they busy doing God's work?

We have programs for older members and programs for younger members but offer virtually nothing for college students, single adults, young couples, single parents or growing families. Our youth don't stay at Millwood after high school because we have given them no reason to stay. We know that the Survivor (born 1961– 1981) and Millennial (born after 1982) generations tend to be anti-establishment and look for organizations that fill personal needs. We need programs that target these generations, now missing from our church.

From the Percept report we saw that both the congregation and the community are looking for recreation and spiritual development. There is an opportunity here to develop programs that combine these two interests and take advantage of the tremendous assets we have at the church, Camp White and Camp Spalding.

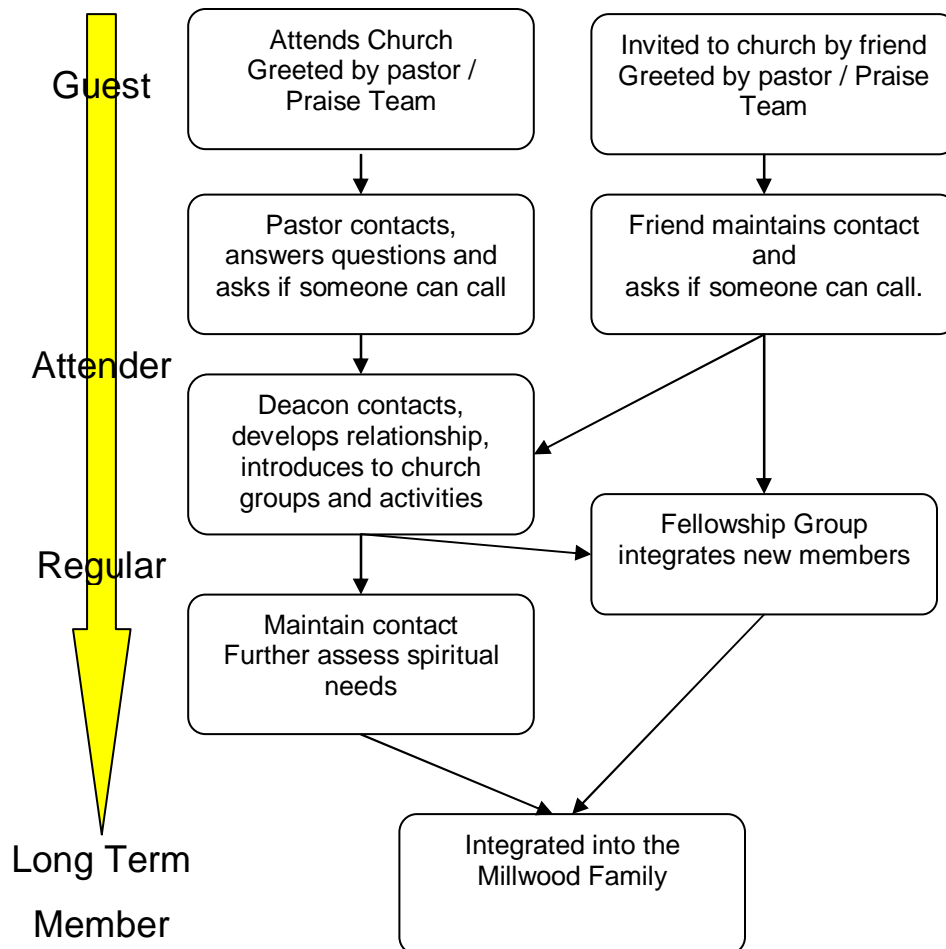
The Compass Group recommends the following steps:

1. By <Date>, create an inventory of all the programs currently available. That inventory should identify how many people are involved in each program, as well as its target group (age, gender, interests, etc.) and its focus (social activities, study, spiritual growth, personal development, etc.)
2. By <Date>, evaluate each program to determine whether it is viable or should end, whether it is a bright spot that could benefit from increased attention and whether it is consistent with our vision for the future of the church.
3. By <Date>, create an inventory of the different groups of members and visitors that are currently present at Millwood, as well as those we are trying to attract.
4. By <Date>, evaluate the needs of each demographic group of members within the church and the needs of the age groups we want to attract. Make sure we have programs that meet those needs..
5. By <Date>, create or expand programs as needed to meet the needs of MCPC.
6. By <Date>, develop a plan so all those who attend MCPC will belong to at least one group or program. This will increase each member's feeling of belonging and provide each with opportunities for spiritual growth.

## ***Welcoming Guests (Visitors) into the Church Family***

Objective: Ensure that guests and new members have a consistent, positive experience when beginning their association with Millwood Community Presbyterian Church.

The church needs a systematic process of welcoming guests, encouraging them to become regular attendees / members and integrating them into the life of the church. This process may look something like this:



The Compass Group recommends the following steps:

1. By *<Date>*, create a systematic process for consistently welcoming guests into the church.
  - Assign specific responsibilities among pastoral and lay leaders, based on rotating calendar assignments.
2. By *<Date>*, develop and implement training in this process.
3. By *<Date>*, regularly test the process to assure it's being used effectively.
4. By *<Date>*, adjust programs, social groups and study groups as necessary to assure everyone has a place to fit in.

## ***Worship & Music***

The experience of coming together as a congregation to worship God through prayer, music and hearing the word of the Lord is a vital part of our spiritual lives. This process requires and deserves careful analysis, planning and sensitivity, to assure it is filling the needs of the community and congregation. Some of the steps listed below are intuitive in nature and are already in different stages of implementation. Others are new.

The Compass Group recommends the following steps:

1. By <Date>, thoroughly analyze the Percept report results regarding community and congregation feedback on worship and music. Particular attention should be paid to comments regarding the timing of Sunday morning services and worship styles.
2. By <Date>, carefully weigh the value of continuing with three separate services. Should there instead be one “blended” service?
3. By <Date>, consider including the following worship service components, which were suggested by various church members who participated in focus groups:
  - a. Time for silent meditation, enhancing the sense of awe at the presence of God.
  - b. More familiar, traditional hymns.
  - c. Sermons that are deeply biblically based and relevant to today’s issues
  - d. Fewer bulletin inserts.
  - e. More space between the pews.
  - f. Encouragement for participants to sit toward the front of the sanctuary.

- g. An opportunity for participants to share their joys and concerns for corporate prayer.
- 4. By <Date>, consider the value of maintaining a more active program throughout the summer.
- 5. By <Date>, implement a multi-phase planning schedule for worship and music.

Long Term (12 months): Schedule annual inspirational planning sessions with the Worship and Music committee and church staff to develop the long-term schedule.

Intermediate Term (3 months): Block in all special aspects of upcoming worship services to permit guest leadership or the development of internal talent.

- 6. By <Date>, members of the Worship and Music Committee should regularly visit other churches, looking for new worship experiences to test at Millwood.
- 7. By <Date>, expand the role of lay leadership in the worship service.
- 8. By <Date>, ensure that the Worship and Music Committee is represented at weekly church staff meetings.

## **Community / World Outreach**

Objective: Develop a Comprehensive Mission/Outreach Strategy that spreads the Gospel, helps those with material needs and helps right social injustices.

Focus group feedback indicated some confusion regarding the definition of community mission programs. Are they designed to provide unselfish service to the community? Or are they tools to increase church attendance and membership? Depending on the discussion context, the answer to each of those questions is “yes.” We believe each is an integral element of God’s plan to spread His good news of love and redemption through Jesus Christ. However, common understandings and coordinated approaches will maximize the effectiveness of individual programs MCPC chooses to undertake. Therefore we recommend the following steps:

### 1. Community and World Service

- a. By <Date>, identify each community- and world-mission program MCPC currently supports
- b. By <Date>, increase the congregation’s awareness of each program.
- c. By <Date>, bring people into our worship or educational settings to share their mission and ministry experience.
- d. By <Date>, participate in the worldwide mission of our denomination through special offerings.
- e. By <Date>, support youth and adult involvement in mission trips and projects. We recommend sponsoring or supporting an annual community service project, with special out-of-area projects – such as building homes in Mexico – at least once every three years.

### 2. Reinvigorate Outreach Programs to increase MCPC attendance

- a. By *<Date>*, thoroughly analyze Percept report, paying particular attention to community demographics, congregation statistics and those areas in which the two are different.
- b. By *<Date>*, target a specific community age group. We recommend starting with those between the ages of 25 and 40, since that group is under-represented in the congregation.
- c. By *<Date>*, establish annual growth targets.
- d. By *<Date>*, develop an advertising campaign, highlighting new MCPC programs that meet the needs of the targeted age group, such as social/sporting events and community programs.
- e. By *<Date>*, designate “Visitor” parking spots near the church.

## ***Embrace Our Differences***

Objective: Create an environment in which members' differences can be discussed and celebrated, and the congregation is equipped to address injustices outside the church.

Focus group feedback indicated that MCPC members avoid discussing differences until those differences boil into conflict. As a result, there is a current of unresolved conflict within our church family. Moreover, we recognize that the issue of homosexuality and the church is still a monumental source of conflict that has not been resolved. The Compass Group feels that real healing and growth cannot be accomplished without providing methods and opportunities for church members to discuss and resolve conflicts in a safe, caring, and respectful environment.

In addition, the Compass Group noted that MCPC rarely discusses world or community issues as a congregation, perhaps because the members represent a wide range of political opinion. Yet, we should not shy away from such issues out of fear of disagreement. As the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) has written, neither the church, nor Christians, "can be neutral or indifferent toward evil in the world." Indeed, the Presbyterian denomination frequently takes biblically based positions on matters ranging from war and political oppression to racism and other forms of social injustice. In cases when Presbyterians are divided on an issue, the differences are noted, as are the areas of agreement. Our own members are affected by corporate and political decisions with deep moral implications – issues that are ripe for discussion and action.

We recommend the church take the following steps toward creating an environment for free-flowing discussions:

1. The church staff should always include at least one pastor who is trained in conflict resolution. That service should be offered to individuals, couples and, when needed, the entire congregation..

2. Engage the congregation in a discussion about homosexuality.
  - a. No later than June 2003, offer adult education classes with guest speakers who can discuss the issue from a theological standpoint. The speakers should represent all points of view. Several sessions may be needed.
  - b. After thorough discussion and prayer draft a position statement for the church on this issue. This statement may note differences within the congregation. This task must be done before potential pastors are interviewed. And the statement shared with those candidates.
3. By <Date>, identify other significant areas of ideological differences, and address them in adult education classes or other forums. We anticipate that aggressively seeking out such topics will yield at least one topic for discussion each quarter. Guest speakers or uniquely qualified members should help the congregation sort through their feelings about such topics and accept that it's OK for Christians to disagree on such matters.
4. By <Date>, introduce the congregation to other cultures and religions by inviting guest speakers from outside the denomination to speak at MCPC at least once per year. Whenever possible guest speakers should be women or minorities. Make it clear to the speakers that they are welcome to discuss topics that may be considered controversial.
5. Encourage participation in ecumenical events. MCPC should take a leadership role in such events whenever possible.
6. By <Date>, develop a program to help members see the biblical relevancy of such modern issues as racism, sexism, corporate misbehavior, refugee assistance, war

and political oppression. This program may include regularly scheduled forums designed to educate about specific issues, and provide avenues for advocacy.

7. By <Date>, develop a system for calling MCPC members to action on specific community issues with moral and social justice implications.

## ***Properties and Facilities***

Objective: Develop a process to ensure full and efficient use of all church properties and facilities.

The properties and facilities owned by MCPC represent a sizeable investment and a major fixed component of our expense budget. Therefore it is of utmost importance to ensure that the church's material possessions are used to their fullest. Future decisions regarding property additions or modifications should follow the basic architectural tenet that "form follows function".

1. By <Date>, inventory all properties and facilities owned by MCPC. The analysis should include such information as the property size (i.e. lot dimensions) and the type of facility (e.g. Manse, Christian Education Bldg, Camp White), the age of the facility and its condition. It should also include a schematic drawing of each facility broken down by floors and rooms, including dimensions.
2. By <Date>, develop a chart for each facility illustrating which groups use the facility and at what times.
3. By <Date>, review the master plan for MCPC properties and facilities. That plan should be tested against the use chart for each facility to uncover redundancies or gaps between programs and available space. The master-plan review should be coordinated with the work of groups developing new programs to serve the community and members.
4. By <Date>, explore additional or alternative uses of church facilities that support the Vision Statement. Such exploration may point out the need to add facilities or the opportunity to dispose of some to free up resources for other uses.

5. By <Date>, develop a master plan for Camp White, including a risk/use analysis that may rely on Camp Spalding as a model. The plan should identify the roles Camp White currently plays in the life of the congregation and how its use can be expanded to help achieve the church vision. It should address recreation and camping, Family Camp and vespers. The plan should include ways to encourage the camp's use for outreach, such as potlucks and youth activities.

## **Section 4: Evaluating Success**

### ***Measuring Progress***

In order to assure we are effectively addressing the correct Mission Goals, we need to measure our progress toward our vision for the future. This may be even more difficult than it sounds. According to Dave Steane's report, spiritual growth is a "subjective phenomenon" that may differ from person to person and church to church. Dave goes on to explain that spiritual renewal is a process, not an event. It is a journey, not a destination. God must be continually sought to work against complacency.

While we may not be able to measure the spiritual growth of the church directly, we can look for signs of dedicated spiritual activity. We can also look for results in each of the mission areas. Some recommended measures are:

1. Track the number of active prayer and Bible study groups (or the percent of members who are taking an active part in these groups).
2. Track the number or percentage of guests that are greeted and receive a follow-up telephone call.
3. Track trends in church attendance and membership including ages.
4. Track the percentage of members or regular attendees who are NOT involved in church programs.
5. Track the number of people who are involved in the prayer chain. (As a side note, why do we limit ourselves to a prayer chain? Why don't we have a prayer tree? Or better yet, why don't we have a prayer forest?)

6. The importance of Mission Goals achievement and working toward the church is an integral part of the new Elder/Deacon training program.

### ***Review Cycle***

As stated previously, the material in this report is time-perishable and must be reviewed and updated over time. This review process should become part of the regular strategic planning process for the church—a checks-and-balances requirement for church leadership. If adequate progress is not being made toward the Mission Goals, then the Session must take steps to identify and remove roadblocks to progress.

The Compass Group recommends the following process and timing elements to the review cycle.

- Each Session committee responsible for one or more of the Mission Goals will report its progress as part of its monthly report to Session and in its annual report to the congregation.

The Session will review all Mission Goals at its annual retreat.

- The Session will reconvene a Compass Group after one year (in spring 2004) to review the status of the current Mission Goals and to select new goals to continue the growth within the church. For the sake of efficiency, we recommend that this new Compass Group include some of the same people who were involved with the first effort.

## Summary

The problems facing Millwood are not trivial and will not be solved quickly. There is no quick solution such as hiring a new pastor or building a gymnasium that will change the membership trends or will create a desire in our youth to stay within the church family. The decline in church membership started 40 years ago and mirrors trends within the mainline Protestant denominations. We can make dramatic changes in the way we operate and the programs we offer. This may create a fun environment that attracts new members, but it is only by refocusing our attention on the Lord Jesus Christ that our church will experience true growth.

The current Mission Goals are somewhat inwardly focused. We need to build a strong foundation by making sure our church and our individual lives are centered on the Lord. Only then can we actively reach out to our community and our world to proclaim that Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior.

## **Appendix 1: Problem Areas Identified but Not Addressed**

### ***Community vs. Congregation***

There is a large discrepancy between the congregation of Millwood Community Presbyterian Church and the community. The Percept report highlighted several areas that may have implications for programs and activities. The community prefers a very contemporary worship service while the congregation is somewhat split: some people prefer traditional worship and some prefer a contemporary worship style. Other differences include:

- The community is younger than the church.
- The church members tend to be more highly educated.
- The community is growing while church membership is declining.

### ***Mission Work***

The church should consider developing a common focus for all of our mission activities. It could be helping under-privileged families in our community, for instance. By developing this theme, we could bring additional energy to the work that we do and create a sense of teamwork across multiple mission activities. It would also make for clearer decisions about which mission activities we should invest in and which we should not.

Some of our current mission work includes:

- Crosswalk
- Habitat for Humanity
- Blood Drive

## ***Church Building***

There are several opportunities to make the church building more inviting to guests. The pews are too close together. People need to move aside for others to pass, which causes disruption during services. And if one person stands to sing but the person in front of him does not, the standing singer has no place to put his or her hymnal, except practically on the head of the sitting person. This problem could be solved by removing every third or fourth pew and spacing the rest. At this point in our church life, that should not cause crowding in the sanctuary.

- The sanctuary is painted in very dull neutral colors. This gives the impression of a dull boring church. While lighter paint and some stained glass windows would completely change the feeling a person gets when they enter the sanctuary, a lot could be done with some colorful banners on the side walls.
- There is a real lack of flexibility in chancel area. This makes it difficult to have both the traditional choir, the praise team and the bell choirs take part in worship. Many churches have removed their choir pews and use a more flexible seating arrangement.
- There is no “cry” room where parents can sit with infants who are being noisy during the service. A small room could be easily added under the balcony next to the coat closet.
- We want guests to stick around and meet members after Sunday morning services. But, to get to the coffee pots, they must make a right turn, away from the door, and make their way through the many people socializing in the entry area. This is quite an effort for someone who may be feeling uneasy about being among so many strangers. It may help to have coffee stations near the door.

## ***New Program Ideas***

There were many ideas collected that would both attract younger adults into the church and better serve existing members. Here are a few examples:

- Marriage counseling and enrichment programs.
- Parenting classes.
- Career-choice guidance/counseling.
- Programs and social activities for single adults (college and career aged).
- Programs and social activities specifically for divorced and widowed members.
- Grief counseling.

## **Appendix 2: Expectations of the Head Pastor**

### ***From the Focus Group Conversations:***

Participants were asked about the qualities of pastoral leadership they feel are necessary to help Millwood church move into the future. The responses seem to fall into two general categories: skills/abilities; and personality traits. In some cases, it was clear that respondents seek leadership attributes that offer a sharp contrast to previous pastors. Others like what they've seen in the past and seem to be hoping that the church will use some of our previous leaders as a model for the future.

For the most part participants expressed themselves without reservation, and without a sense that the composite list provides a formidable task for any person. A few times in the discussions, someone would comment that the job requires more than any one person can do. Indeed, the Compass Group does not anticipate that the church will find the perfect pastor to fulfill everyone's expectations. It is good, however, to get the members thinking about what they'd like to see in candidates.

### **Abilities and Skills**

Preaching --- Participants want preaching that probes the Scripture in depth, and which relates the Scripture to life situations and circumstances.

Ability to Motivate --- Participants seek a pastor who will create an environment in which laity are motivated to take an active part in the work and life of the church. They want a pastor who leads the effort to "equip the saints" for the work of ministry. They want a pastor who will "challenge us" and will "make things happen". They are willing to be pushed beyond comfort. They want someone who "gets us excited".

Teacher and Trainer --- Participants desire a pastor who can teach members to be effective servants of God, or teach a few leaders who would then go about the work of spreading these skills within the congregation. Specifically, some participants are willing to be trained in how to visit people and encourage them to take part in Millwood's life and ministry.

Communication --- Members expect the next pastor to be a good communicator, particularly when it comes to preaching and teaching. They want to know what the Session is doing, and hold the pastor responsible for assuring that the information gets out to the members. Some participants hope to hear more regular reports from the Presbytery and the General Assembly. Some mentioned a desire to be part of a church in which difficult issues could be discussed without intimidation or prejudice.

Visionary --- Some participants mentioned their desire to have a pastor who will encourage developing a "vision for the church" in which the members of the congregation are involved. We believe this effort has been started with the work of the Compass Group. It will now be vital to select a pastor who is committed to seeing the vision continued.

Pastoral Care --- Many members expect the pastor to make personal visits in times of crisis, emergency, and sickness. Others expressed a desire for the pastor to make social calls in homes, and to follow-up with guests to the church.

Business Ability --- Participants want a pastor with good administrative skills. They want a person with a head for business and management, but one who will encourage the Session and/or appropriate committees to carry out and implement decisions and policy. They also hope to streamline the process by which the congregation makes decisions.

Unifying Force --- Participants indicated they want a pastor "who will bring us together" and encourage members to work together.

Develop Staff --- The participants were aware that Millwood will be a church served by a solo pastor for a period of time. But they're expecting the church to grow numerically, and for the staff to be expanded as that happens. They want a pastor who will nurture staff and help them develop professionally and spiritually.

## **Qualities**

Gender --- Interim Associate Pastor Cindy Wuts broke through the gender barrier at MCPC, and the congregation appears to now accept that the next pastor could be either a man or a woman. We noted that many participants were careful to use mixed pronouns – “him or her” – when discussing the pastor of the future. In some cases, participants corrected those who used only male pronouns when discussing desirable attributes for the next pastor.

People Person --- Participants want a pastor who will come to church events even when not directly involved in a program. They want one who is comfortable mingling and “touching bases.” Adjectives commonly used to describe the next pastor included “enthusiastic,” “warm,” “open,” “sociable,” “extroverted” and “outgoing.” They want a pastor who eagerly greets people during worship and fellowship and is willing to “go the extra mile” to comfort members and contact first-time visitors.

Committed --- Participants expect to see a strong indication that the next pastor truly wants to be at MCPC and is deeply committed to the church's ministry. They expect him or her to work closely and cheerfully with members, providing strong leadership and exhibiting “tough love” when necessary.

Energetic --- The participants want a pastor who is vital and enthusiastic. They want a pastor who will keep focused and will be able to maintain a sense of humor as he/she initiates ideas and holds people accountable for follow-up.

Spiritually Challenging --- The participants said they would like a pastor who challenges members to deepen their spiritual lives. Yet, they want a pastor who is sensitive to individual needs, accepting of those with diverging view and not judgmental.

***From the congregational Survey:***

The Percept survey asked respondents to rate certain attributes of leadership. Two-hundred thirty people participated, representing an estimated 173 households. They answered two types of questions.

**Key Pastoral Roles**

First, the participants were given a list of nine “key pastoral roles” and asked whether each was “Very Unessential,” “Unessential,” “Neutral/Neither,” “Essential” or “Very Essential.” The roles were not judged against each other; a respondent could, for instance, mark each of the nine as “Very Essential.” Some participants skipped some questions.

As with the Focus Group discussions, this portion of the survey shows the high expectations that this church – probably any church – places on its pastors. All but one of the nine pastoral roles was rated as either “Very Essential” or “Essential” by a majority of the respondents (they will be consolidated as “essential” in this report). In only one case did 10 percent of respondents say that a particular pastoral role was “Very Unessential” or “Unessential” (in this report, they will be consolidated as “unessential”). In three cases, more than 20 percent of respondents marked “Neutral/Neither.”

Judging from the responses, it is most important to the congregation that the pastor be a minister of the Word/teacher of the congregation. Precept defines this as a pastor who finds primary fulfillment in preaching and teaching. Such a person would be attracted to a congregation with a strong educational emphasis. About 92.5 percent of participants said this was essential and only 4 percent said it was unessential.

About 91 percent of respondents said it was essential that the pastor be a spiritual guide. This is a pastor who has an exemplary spiritual life and encourages each member to develop his or her own spiritual life. Only 2.5 percent said this was unessential.

About 79 percent said it is essential that the pastor be a witness/evangelist whose primary focus is sharing the Gospel with others. An equally high percentage place importance on finding a pastor who's an excellent church administrator. This is someone who finds fulfillment in managing a productive, varied and effective church program. About 4 percent said a witnessing pastor was unessential while 7 percent said an administrator is unessential.

Seventy-seven percent of respondents want a counselor/healer who spends a major part of each week in pastoral counseling. This person would visit members in homes and hospitals and find satisfaction in helping people through crises. Six percent said that was unessential.

Sometimes a pastor is an excellent enabler/facilitator, meaning he or she works well with small groups. Seventy-five percent said that's essential, 4 percent said it's unessential and 21 percent said it was neither.

About 64 percent said it's essential that a pastor be most at home leading the congregation in worship. Precept says this is a "celebrant/liturgist" who appreciates ritual and ceremony in both formal and informal settings. Nearly 11 percent said this trait is unessential and one-quarter said it was neither unessential nor essential.

About two-thirds of respondents felt it's essential that a pastor place the Gospel in a social context. This type of person enjoys being on the cutting edge of social concerns and is involved in community affairs. About 9 percent said this is unessential and 29 percent said it was neither.

The least valued of all roles is that of community chaplain, meaning someone who finds fulfillment in civil roles and leadership. Only 42 percent of respondents felt this type of activity

is essential, while nearly 19 percent said it was unessential. Almost 40 percent who responded did not feel strongly about the trait, marking the box for neutral/neither.

### **Style of Ministry**

In the second round of questions, participants were given nine pairs of ministry styles and asked to choose between the two. For instance, should a pastor have a formal or relaxed style? Should her preaching emphasize the Bible or contemporary issues? Should he be highly spiritual or have a lot of biblical knowledge? In each case, respondents could state that they prefer or slightly prefer one over the other, or that the two choices are neutral. In reality, of course, many of the choices are not mutually exclusive. A pastor could be both spiritual and a theologian, for instance. Nevertheless, asking the congregation to choose between the two traits is yet another way to form a picture of the pastor who might be suitable for Millwood.

Not surprisingly, many respondents had difficulty choosing between competing traits. Twenty to 35 percent of respondents said they were neutral on each of the pairs.

The most overwhelming preference was for a pastor who “welcomes new ideas and approaches” (55 percent) over one who shows “a deep appreciation and commitment to tradition” (21 percent). Respondents also strongly favored a pastor whose preaching “emphasizes the Bible” (52 percent) to one whose preaching “emphasizes contemporary issues” (25.5 percent).

Likewise, they prefer a relaxed style of preaching (48 percent) to a formal style (17 percent). But more than one-third of respondents said they were neutral on this matter.

Focus Group participants frequently said they felt that the pastor had become too strong a force within the church, making or influencing some decisions better left to lay leaders. That was reflected when respondents were asked whether they’d rather have a pastor who “encourages decision-making by other pastors and/or lay leaders” or one who “is a strong,

decisive force in decisions regarding policy and programs.” They chose the encourager over the decision-maker by a margin of more than 2:1. About one-third were neutral.

About 44 percent of respondents would like a pastor who “tends to be provoking and challenging,” while 31 percent want one who “tends to be comforting and assuring.” Twenty-six percent couldn’t – or wouldn’t – choose between the two.

Members had the most trouble choosing between a pastor with “expertise in biblical or theological matters” and one with a “high degree of spirituality.” They were split 36.5 percent to 39 percent, with nearly one-quarter of respondents saying they couldn’t choose between the two. Hopefully, we will find someone who exhibits both characteristics.