

The diagram shows a 3D rectangular prism with a 2D net on the right. The net consists of six rectangles: a large rectangle on the left, four smaller rectangles in the middle, and a large rectangle on the right. The four smaller rectangles are arranged in a 2x2 grid. The large rectangle on the right is divided into four horizontal sections, each containing a dot. Dashed lines connect these dots to the corresponding rectangles in the 3D prism, illustrating how the net is folded into the 3D shape.


The Horizon Storyline  
is the fullest picture of  
"Where God is taking us"



## THE HORIZON STORYLINE DEFINITIONS

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### Beyond-the-Horizon Vision (5–20 years)

The beyond-the-horizon vision is a vivid picture of a network's future five to twenty years away depending on the life stage and context of the network. It is an aspirational sense of destination and clarifies the network's ultimate contribution for the given time frame. It should build from a singular idea that can be stated as both a sentence and a vivid description narrative. It is primarily qualitative and will have a compelling character that feels almost unbelievable to the listener. The primary benefits include:

- Shapes the destiny of those connected in “the cloud.”
- Creates deeper meaning for church leaders.
- Cultivates heroic sacrifice generative churches.
- Guides the development of long-term strategy (background).

### Background Vision (3 years)

The background vision contains four ideas, primarily qualitative, that clarify the four most strategic emphases in the next three years in order to fulfill the beyond-the-horizon vision. Each emphasis can be stated in one or two sentences. The background vision is not designed to inspire, but to clarify. As such, the background vision:

- Creates a broad-level road map to approach the future.
- Directs long-term allocation of network resources.
- Limits blind spots that would inhibit progress.
- Provides context for short-range goal setting (midground).

### Midground Vision (1 year)

The midground vision is a single emphasis stated as both a qualitative and quantitative goal in the next year. That means the midground or one-year vision should be both an inspiring picture and a measurable number. They accompany each other. Like the beyond-the-horizon vision, the midground vision is designed to inspire people and stretch their thinking of what might be possible. It can be stated in one sentence and adapted regularly for communication every day. The midground vision:

- Generates excitement for what God is doing in the next year.
- Focuses the attention, prayers, and resources of “the box” in a dramatic way.
- Reveals progress for celebration (or recalibration).
- Highlights one shared priority for all ministry areas in “the box.”
- Cuts through the complexity of life and ministry in “the box” with one focus.

### Foreground Vision (90 days)

The foreground vision contains up to four specific initiatives that must be started within ninety days, as needed. The foreground initiatives are typically led by crossfunctional staff teams or may be carried by individual ministry departments. Most initiatives support the midground vision directly or indirectly. Think of these as the four most important next steps in order to complete the single, midground vision.

- Clarifies weekly action steps and daily priorities for leaders.
- Sequences short-term projects, tasks, and goals.
- Activates the unique gifts and abilities within “the box.”
- Provides regular, positive accountability for individuals and teams.

