

# Developing a Vision for Ministry in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

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### Chapter 1 It's a Must!

#### The Importance of a Vision

- A vision clarifies direction
- A vision invites unity
- A vision facilitates function- a characteristic of many ministries today is that they do not know what they are supposed to be doing.
- A vision enhances leadership – developing a vision and then living it vigorously and authentically are essential elements of leadership.
- A vision prompts passion- While vision is a seeing word that involves what leaders see in their heads, passion is a feeling word that involves their emotions –what they feel in their hearts. Passionate people are those who feel strongly about something. The “something” in this context is the vision.
- A vision fosters risk taking – People with a compelling, passionate vision are willing to take risks that they might not otherwise take.
- A vision offers sustenance – God uses the picture we carry in our mental billfolds to sustain us in the worst of times.
- A vision creates energy – Visions are exciting and energizing-they energize people. How does a vision generate such energy? One way is that it inspires people.
- A vision provides purpose- the right vision provides meaning to people's lives.
- A vision motivates giving – people are moved to give to organizations that project a clear, well-articulated vision of what they believe is God's future for them.

## Chapter 2 What Are We Talking About?

### The definition of a vision

A vision is a clear, challenging picture of the future of the ministry as you believe that it can and must be.

### Seven Differences between a Mission and a Vision

	<b>Mission</b>	<b>Vision</b>
1. <b>Definition</b>	Statement	Snapshot
2. <b>Application</b>	Planning	Communication
3. <b>Length</b>	Short	Long
4. <b>Purpose</b>	Informs	Inspires
5. <b>Activity</b>	Doing	Seeing
6. <b>Source</b>	Head	Heart
7. <b>Development</b>	Science (taught)	Art (caught)

- A vision is clear
- A vision is a mental picture
- A vision is the future of the ministry – It is a mental picture of what tomorrow will look like

### How vision relates to the future

- Short-term visions are eventually realized.
- Long-term visions are in a constant state of becoming
- A good vision has potential. It rests firmly on the bedrock of reality thus it is highly feasible.

### Three issues that affects the size of your vision

1. Who is the visionary?
  2. Who are the visionary's people?
  3. Are the times right for the vision?
- A good vision grabs hold and won't let go.

### The Vision Audit

1. Is my vision clear: Do the people in my ministry understand it?
2. Is it challenging: Does it move my people to action?
3. Does it create a picture: Can they see it in their head?
4. Is it future oriented: Does it present a picture of the ministry's future?
5. Do I believe that it can be: Is it feasible?

6. Am I convinced that it must be? Am I passionate about it?

### **Chapter 3**

#### **The Vision Personnel**

##### A Visionary Leader

A church or parachurch ministry's vision begins with and is the primary responsibility of the point person.

What does the Point Person do?

- Vision cultivator – The vision cultivator initiates and develops the organization's unique vision, which empowers the vision community for ministry.
- Vision clarifier- there must be someone who regularly serves to rethink and further refine the dream.

##### Significant Others

It is imperative that he involve others, "significant others," in the process.

The function of these significant others in birthing the vision is fourfold:

- Cooperation- First, they must cooperate with and follow the leadership of the visionary point person.
- Contribution- Second, these leaders must be a part of the process.
- Support- Third, the leadership team must rally in support of the vision.
- Communication- Finally, the significant others need to be involved in casting the vision.

### **Chapter 4**

#### **The Vision Process**

The Conception of a Dream- the conception stage of a vision has at least two crucial phases initiation and expansion. The end result of this stage is a dream that eventually leads to the vision.

The Initiation Phase – The dream is often initiated when the dreamer either recognizes untapped opportunities or becomes dissatisfied with the status quo.

Untapped Opportunities- Most visionaries are quick to recognize untapped opportunities.

Most often, however, leaders conceive a dream when they have a deep dissatisfaction with what is and a deep, pressing desire for what they know could be.

The Expansion Phase- While the dream is initiated most often by a dissatisfaction with the status quo, it expands as a result of the desire for a viable alternative.

Visionaries are not the “Squeaky Wheels” – Visionary leaders are completely different from squeaky wheels. The only thing they have in common is an awareness of the flaws. However, visionaries may be characterized as opportunistic.

### **The Source of Your Dream**

- Directly from God
- Indirectly through reading, listening, and other experiences.

The development of your vision

- Step 1: Envisioning Prayer

- Step 2: Thinking Big  
**Is your vision big enough?**

First, the vision has to be bigger than the envisioner in the sense that it goes far beyond him and his abilities to accomplish it.

Second, if the dreamer’s vision is too small, his people will not feel challenged.

Third, the natural tendency for most Christians is to think too small.

Fourth, he needs to ask, how big is my God?

#### **How to increase the size of your vision:**

One way is to pray and ask God to increase his faith and consequently his vision (Mark 9:23-24). Second, he can surround himself with people who think big and expose himself to visionaries by reading their books and articles and by listening to their tapes.

Another way to expand vision is to think strategically.

- Step 3: Written Brainstorming  
Begin writing thoughts down on paper, recording the dreams.
- Step 4: Determining the Contents  
While creative people never cease to brainstorm, they do come to a point when it is time to organize the collected information, the fourth step in the development of the vision.
- Step 5: Questioning the Dream  
First, is the vision clear? Can others understand it?  
Second, is the dream challenging?  
Third, is the dream visual?  
Fourth, is the dream future oriented?

Fifth, is the dream realistic yet stretching?  
Sixth, does the dream inspire passion?

- **Step 6: Demonstrating Patience**  
A sixth vision development step is giving the process enough time. Do not rush it. The dream must be carefully wrapped in the foil of creativity and baked slowly, often very slowly, in the oven of time. In short, be patient.

## **Chapter 5** **It's a Vision!**

### **The vision casting process**

**The Senders:** The first step before announcing any vision is to determine who will take the responsibility for casting and conveying the vision. This should be the responsibility of everyone who is a part of the ministry: the primary leader, other leaders and followers.

**Primary Leader-** Conveying the vision becomes the primary responsibility of the visionary leader who is the organization's point person and, by virtue of the position, most likely its primary spokesperson.

**Other Leaders-** The other conveyors of the vision are the other primary and secondary leaders on the team, whether they are hired, as in some parachurch situations, or voluntary, such as the elder board of a church.

**Followers-** Finally, it is important that those who are the followers in the ministry be vision casters.

**Comprehension-** Do people understand the dream? The visionary leader can capitalize on every conceivable opportunity to convey the vision.

### **Credibility**

A second key factor that affects the communication of the vision message is the credibility of the vision.

**The Visionary Leader's Performance**  
People want to know the track record of the visionary leader.

**The Content of the Vision**  
Another element that affects people's acceptance of the vision message is the content of the vision itself. Does it convince them of its own value?

**The Visionary Leader's Integrity**

A third element that affects the people's acceptance of the vision message is the vision caster's character.

### **Practical Methods for Casting Your Vision**

- The Visionary's Life-The leader's life communicates the vision by modeling the message.
- The Visionary's Message – Second, the leader's message communicates the vision.
- Understand the Audience – The speaker must know and understand the audience, which most likely are the people who make up the ministry community.
- Use expressive language:
  - “An all out full-court press”
  - “To burn brighter than ever”
  - To be a beacon of hope”
  - “The starting gun goes off”
  - Turn up the evangelistic thermostat”
  - Becoming contagious Christians”
- Speak Positively- speaking positively, not negatively
- Speak with Charisma – those perceived as charismatic were characterized by the following: they smiled more, spoke faster, pronounced words more clearly, and moved their heads and bodies more often. They were also likely to touch others during greetings. What we call charisma can better be understood as human expressiveness.
- Speak with Conviction
- Visual Images – can effectively communicate the vision
  - Slide-Tape Presentation
  - Well-designed Logo
  - Tapestry Banner
- Skits and Drama
- The Newcomers Class- another good opportunity to convey the vision is in a newcomers class.
- The State of the Ministry Speech- in a church ministry this opportunity could be called the pastor's state of the church sermon.
- A Brochure
- A Song
- Audio and Videotapes
- Personal testimonies
- A Web page

## Chapter 6

### Overcoming Initial Inertia

Two problems of implementation

1. The leader's lack of interpersonal skills and ability to work with people.
2. The followers' inability to work together as a team.

The Role of Leadership in Team Building- Successfully building a team depends primarily on the visionary's leadership skills more than management skills.

How Leadership Copes with Change

- Establishes a direction- the development of the vision
- Communicates the vision-casting the vision
- Motivates and inspires-team building

How Management Copes with Complexity

- Planning and budgeting
- Organizing and staffing
- Controlling and problem solving

Two Agendas of Team Building

1. To acquire a commitment from all players to join the team and move down the field together.
2. To help these players overcome obstacles that are sure to surface

Team building cannot be accomplished without two key ingredients: commitment and cooperation.

Four ways leaders can build commitment in their people are helping them discover that they need one another, creating a climate of trust and vulnerability, developing a sense of community spirit, and maintaining clear lines of communication.

Four ways Leaders Develop a Climate of Trust and Vulnerability

1. They must trust people themselves.
2. They must delegate ministry responsibility.
3. They must model openness and vulnerability.
4. They must encourage others to participate in decision making.

Two Keys to Developing a Sense of Community

1. Use the pronouns we and our.
2. Spend time together as a team.

How to Maintain Clear Lines of Communication

- Keep your people informed.
- Communicate face-to-face.
- Communicate in a group context.
- Seek to resolve conflicts.

## **Chapter 7**

### **Overcoming Obstinate Obstacles**

Empowerment Through Self-Worth - Visionary leaders empower their teams by helping them to recognize their true value and significance in light of the grace of God through Jesus Christ.

Performance- We must realize that our value does not depend on our abilities to meet certain standards, whether our own or others', but on what Jesus Christ accomplished at the cross, in particular our justification.

Acceptance- We must be accepted by others to feel significant.

Blame- The third obstacle to a sense of significance is the belief that when we fail, we are unworthy of love and deserve to be punished.

Shame- The fourth obstacle to a sense of significance is the belief that we are what we are. We cannot change; therefore, we are hopeless.

#### Empowerment Through Personal Confidence

Visionary leaders empower their teams by developing each person's confidence in his or her abilities to be used by God.

#### Three Reasons People Should be Confident

1. God has uniquely designed and gifted them.
2. All have a ministry niche where they can excel.
3. The Spirit indwells and empowers them for their ministry.

Empowerment Through Servant Leadership – Visionary leaders empower their teams by personally serving their teams.

Individual Accomplishment- It is important that team members experience individual accomplishments in a ministry.

Empowerment Through Delegation – Visionary leaders empower their ministry teams through granting them the power and authority to lead in their areas of ministry influence.

Empowerment Through Modeling – Visionary leaders empower their teams through all their own example of sustained excellence.

Credibility and Emulation – Leaders whose lives are consistent with what they profess both gain credibility and encourage their followers to emulate their behavior.

Values – Personal examples empower followers by imparting to them what leaders value, the things most important to them, which penetrate to the very depths of their being and give meaning to their life.

Encouraging the Team- the fifth step in building the team is to encourage the members.

Recognize Individual Achievements- Visionary leaders encourage their teams by recognizing their people and their individual accomplishments.

Celebrate Team Accomplishments

## **Chapter 8**

### **Bittersweet**

Human Sources of Discouragement

Vision Vampires – are people who attempt either intentionally or unintentionally to suck the lifeblood from the vision.

Vision Vultures – are similar to the vampires but with less intensity. They attack the vision not by sucking the lifeblood from it but at attempting to pick it apart. They are nitpickers.

Vision Firemen – are leaders, or better, managers in the organization who, when they hear of a good vision, run and grab the nearest fire hose to put it out.

Four Sources of Discouragement

1. Failure
2. Fear
3. Fatigue
4. Frustration

The Solution

- Recognize That Discouragement is Universal
- Remember the Lord
- Past Goodness
- Present Goodness
- Future Goodness

- Ask God for Strength
- Hang Tough
- Encourage Others
- Spend Time with Visionaries
  - Individual Meetings- visionary leaders can seek out other leaders in ministries similar to theirs or possibly one that is different
  - Group Meetings- leaders to meet in groups
  - Pastors conferences- attend pastors conferences sponsored by churches that are led by strong visionaries.
  - Tape Ministries
  - Literature

#### Confront Vision Adversaries

- Meet in Private
- Identify the Problem
- Attempt to resolve the problem