

Growth Points

with Gary L. McIntosh, Ph.D.

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Communicating Vision

A few years ago the movie, *Field of Dreams*, caught the attention of leaders. At the time some church leaders felt the main insight in the movie was the concept of building—If we build it, they will come. Actually, the main focus in the movie was on the vision to build. People are attracted to vision, not to building projects.

Vision is an ability to foresee or perceive something that is not visible. It is a word that brings to mind a mental picture of a preferable future.

“Resolve rises on the language of leadership—on clear, inspired words.”

—Claire L. Gaudiani

Spiritually, vision is a picture of what God wants to do in and through us in our place of ministry. Vision is a prompting to do what God wants.

Tom Peters shares eight ingredients of a vision in his book *Thriving on Chaos*.

Vision is inspiring. It transcends the day-to-day work of just doing a job to creating a place of impact and change.

Vision is clear and challenging. Think of Martin Luther King saying, “I have a dream.” A simple dream of black and white Americans living together in harmony. Simple, clear, and powerful!

Third, vision fits the context. It makes sense to the people. Vision is evaluated, critiqued, and fine-tuned until it motivates the followers.

Vision is stable but constantly changing. Real vision includes core biblical truth, but the “how to’s” are flexible. Making disciples is the core. Where we do it. How we do it. When we do it. These aspects may change.

Vision beacons and controls when all else is up for grabs. When all around us is

changing, vision reminds us of what matters most. Gifted leaders have the ability to focus on the vision, and to bring all decisions back to it when necessary.

Vision empowers our people first, and then the people we hope to reach. Vision causes our people to give their lives away in service to others. It creates radical differences in people’s lives when they join with us.

Vision honors the past but prepares us for the future. It does not trample on our history, but instead radically moves our history into a more fruitful future.

Vision lives in the details. It may be the big picture, but at some point vision must take on shoe leather. Vision that is never lived out is a daydream, not real vision.

**For information on scheduling
Dr. Gary L. McIntosh**

call toll free . . .
1-877-506-3086

e-mail . . .
cgnet@earthlink.net

write . . .
PO Box 892589
Temecula, CA 92589

Vision is a picture of the future.

When we move toward the vision, people will come.

Developing Vision

First, get to know God. We cannot develop vision without spending time with God. The key is prayer. Especially prayer that listens to what God says in His Word. Ask God to show you His dream for your ministry.

Second, get to know yourself. Determine how God has uniquely gifted you for ministry. It is rare for God to ask us to lead a vision that does not fit us in some manner or form.

Third, get to know visionaries. Some will be outside your church or ministry context, but at least one or two percent of your people are most likely visionaries. Find them and spend time with them.

Fourth, get to know your people. Discover what God is doing and saying through your leaders and followers. God speaks through the gifts, talents, and passions of your people.

Fifth, get to know the community. God has placed your ministry in a particular context. It is likely that He has provided resources through your people to meet needs in the community.

Sixth, get to know your priorities. What does God want you to say “yes” to? What does He want you to say “no” to? Answering these questions will give your vision precision.

Seventh, get to know your dream. Close your eyes and picture the future God has for your ministry. Paint a picture of what the future will look like, then write it down. This is God’s vision for your ministry. Some pictures may begin a little blurry, and that’s okay. Remember, however, the clearer the picture, the clearer the vision.

You will need to fine-tune the vision, of course. But, following these steps will get you eighty to ninety percent of the way there.

Communicating the Vision

Vision shapes the future from decade to decade, even century to century, but only when communicated well.

Communicate actively. Important words call for actions. Use verbs and summon to transformation. Use the positive voice rather than the negative.

Communicate repeatedly. Vision becomes second nature to us, but our people forget it in two to four weeks.

Communicate memorably. Use words and slogans that people will remember. Consider the power of “I have come to seek and save the lost.”

Communicate pictorially. Use stories that illustrate the vision. Tell the same stories over and over again until people identify the story with the vision.

Communicate excitedly. Share your passion in everything you say and do. Talk about the future in all your meetings.

What are you passionate about? What is God’s vision for your ministry?



Gary L. McIntosh, D.Min., Ph.D. is
President of the Church Growth Network

For information about training workshops, seminars, and church consultations call 951-506-3086.

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