



Greater Sydney SDA Conference Re-thinking Vision

Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails. Proverbs 19:21

Vision is not just a destination; it is a journey

Vision is a picture of what God wants us to do.

Vision is an active process, an ongoing process. It is a continual search for what God is doing and wants to do.

We must keep dreaming and keep visioning to keep our churches, ministries and personal lives from perishing.

Preparing The Vision

1 – Prayer – Vision is usually birthed out of a serious search for God's direction.

2 - Vision is best birthed out of thorough knowledge – collect the right information.

3 – Holy discontent for the status quo. As long as we are content with the status quo, we will not discover God's vision.

4-Timing – Rushed preparation result in sloppy vision. The reason 99 out of 100 churches that try to make major transitions fail is that they go too fast."

Defining The Vision

Discover your purpose

Vision is a lot like a jigsaw puzzle. You work it one piece at a time – and it takes a long time to get all the pieces in place. Discovering your purpose is the border of the puzzle.

Define your strategy

You can not find the right answers without asking the right questions:

What process will accomplish our purpose and reach our target?
Programs and events will not get the job done. There must be a deliberate process in place.

How do we move from where we are to where we want to go?

What must change?

What must not change?

What is the best order of change?

Planting The Vision

Take time to plant before moving on to implementation

Vision is a seed... it must be planted in the proper soil.

Take time to plant the vision with key leaders before sharing vision with the entire church.

Secure the understanding of the power brokers (Nehemiah 2:5)

When a recognised leader does not know what is going on the result is confusion.

A leader who is uninformed often feels unwanted and unneeded.

When people are not included in the change process, they can feel you are taking their church away from them. This causes them to feel threatened. They often react by digging in and waiting for you to change or leave.

Secure the assistance of those whose help you will need.

Seek the advice of your team

You need a vision team for feedback, for balance, for accountability and for fellowship.

Sharing The Vision

Leaders first, church second

Nothing devalues and alienates a leader as quickly as not knowing what is coming next before the rank and file know.

It is very difficult for leaders who do not know what is going on to support it.

Share With The Church

The success of any vision comes down to one issue: will the majority of the people of the church get behind it?

Since vision is both caught and taught, it must be shared in multiple ways.

Preaching

Small group vision studies

Purpose Statements

Vision phrases

Vision verses

Faith stories

CD's, books and articles

One on one

Living it out in your own life – You can't expect a church to catch a vision that you are not living out in your own life.

Implementing The Vision

Most churches spend far too little time in preparation and move far too quickly into making changes

Implement your changes one at a time in a strategic order.

The order of change is different in every church

You can teach an old dog new tricks – but you must be really patient with the dog.

Many churches are led by insecure leaders who are more concerned about what people think than they need to be.

Dealing With Opposition

People can only handle so much change

People feel awkward when asked to do something new

People think first about what they must give up

People are at different levels of readiness for change

People tend to revert back to their old behaviour the minute the reason for change is removed.

Anyone who is trying to do something for God will face some opposition.

You will be criticized. It might as well be for doing the right thing

The reality is that criticism and opposition will drive you somewhere. Let it drive you closer to God and you will become better; let it drive you away from God and you will become bitter.

Keep on leading. "You can define the greatness of a man by what it takes to discourage him."

Don't let the whiners set the agenda of your church. Don't let the complainers have the time that you need to be giving to the workers.

The angrier you are about a complaint, the more sensitive you need to be in your response,

You can measure a leader's maturity by how he/she responds to complainers.

Evaluation

One of the dangers in seeing God's vision take root in the church is that we again settle in and get content

Vision is a Journey

People need to hear vision again and again until it becomes a part of their soul.

Summarised from:

Dan Southerland, *Transitioning*.

Alan Nelson and Gene Appel, *How to Change Your Church Without Killing It*.

Randy Frazee, *The Comeback Congregation*.

Andy Stanley, *Visioneering*.