

Vision Casting & Vision Catching

by Dr. Leon van Rooyen

Proverbs 29:18 (KJV)

Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.

Vision Casting

Through years of experience in ministry, I have discovered that churches stagnate because the congregants are disconnected from the vision of the church. When I talk about the vision of the church, I need to qualify a few things:

1. The vision of the church is souls; reaching the lost will always be our primary mission and the supreme responsibility of every believer. If we lose our passion for the harvest of souls, we lose the right to say that we are the church.
2. The vision of the church is also to make disciples or students of those who are saved, taking these baby believers to maturity. The discipling process is not accomplished merely through public pulpit teaching but also includes mentoring in small groups (or better yet, in one-on-one relationships). Spiritual maturity is not measured by the number of years that one is a believer; rather, it is the result of being raised to the point where one can become a leader and reproducer.
3. The vision of the church must be upwards, for we are a worshipping community that gathers to magnify God.
4. The vision of the church should also be aimed at being a caring and loving family, a place and people where love is the glue that keeps us together.

In all this, God will direct lead pastors and their ministry teams in specific assignments and areas of focus such as children, youth, prayer, men, women, business, etc. The progressive vision will also include building projects, missions projects, and other short-term goals.

People stagnate spiritually because they are disconnected from the vision and don't share the blazing passion of the pastoral team, thus becoming an audience rather than connected "joints" and members. Their participation consists of attending meetings and supporting the work financially (even then,

this financial support is often guilt or fear-driven rather than generosity born of shared vision). Other symptoms of being stagnant and disconnected:

There is a low level of participation at extra events outside of the main church service.

Volunteerism is left to a handful of overworked members.

Pastors who ask for help are met with a blank stare that says, "Leave me alone, I already have too much to do."

We often interpret these symptoms to mean that the church needs revival, but in reality the people just need to catch the vision. More than needing a fresh touch from God, they need to belong; they need a sense of divine purpose and a holy mission. This sense of loyalty and "connectedness" is imparted by consistent vision-casting.

Vision Catching

As a leader you can cast vision, but will the people following you catch it? I am reminded of Moses who sent the spies into the land. Though he cast vision, they were unable to catch it to the point of laying down their lives for it. Their inability to catch the vision caused that entire generation to miss God's provision and their opportunity.

As a fly fisherman, I can cast my fly into the water, but if I do not make a good presentation it is unlikely that the trout will take the bait. It takes skill and experience to select the best fly for the conditions. I also must be proficient at casting the line so that I don't spook the fish.

With this example of casting a fly, let's look at casting vision:

As a leader, you are not only expected to share the Word of God to equip the believers but also to share the vision of the church. People follow a leader who can take them somewhere while at the same time help solve their problems. These followers don't simply need their problems addressed, but also their aspirations and potential awakened. Casting vision will take the people into something bigger than their own world and needs.

Nehemiah was a leader who cast vision in such a way that the people caught it:

Then I said to them, "You see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lies waste, and its gates are burned with fire. Come and let us build the wall of

Jerusalem, that we may no longer be a reproach.” And I told them of the hand of my God which had been good upon me, and also of the king’s words that he had spoken to me. So they said, “Let us rise up and build.” Then they set their hands to this good work. (Nehemiah 2:17-18)

Nehemiah’s presentation succeeded in getting the people to willingly throw their entire weight and support into his cause. They said, “Let us rise up and build.” Not only did they affirm that they would be a part of the plan, but they matched their words with action: “Then they set their hands to this good work.” Now that is vision catching!

52 Days

Nehemiah 6:15-16 (NLT)

So on October 2 the wall was finished—just fifty-two days after we had begun. When our enemies and the surrounding nations heard about it, they were frightened and humiliated. They realized this work had been done with the help of our God.

The result of Nehemiah’s ability to cast vision and the leadership’s team to catch the vision combined with action is the destroyed walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt in 52 days. Oh! Did I mention that Nehemiah and the people of God accomplished the impossible constantly being harassed by the their enemies?

Some hints on “Vision Casting” so that others will catch it:

1. **Unless the vision is truly yours, it will never be theirs** - As the leader, you must first be the possessor of the vision; you can’t give away what you don’t have. This is where the vision and who you are become inseparable. This process can happen rather quickly, especially when produced by an encounter with the Lord, or it can be a drawn-out process in which you spend time in meditation until it becomes fully established in your being. One thing I know is that people can tell whether your vision is from your heart or your head. They will catch a “God idea,” but if it’s just a good idea they will be suspicious and unlikely to buy into it.
2. **Write out the vision** - This simple exercise will enable you and those partnering in the vision to stay focused. So many things clamor for our attention in today’s world, but writing out your vision will help keep you from becoming distracted. A clearly-defined vision statement will also keep you accountable to your goal. As a leader, you must translate your

vision into reality. By writing out your vision, you are creating a plan of action to bring your dream to fruition. Use banners, brochures, and e-mails, and feature the vision in a prominent way on your home page.

3. **Communicate, communicate, communicate** - “Men will never cast off their dearest pleasures upon the dreary request of someone who doesn’t ever seem to mean what he says.” (Richard Baxter)

For a vision to be caught, it needs to be communicated in a way that motivates people to want to partner in it. This should be done in stages. Ensure that the leaders closest to you hear about it as early in the process as possible. This will allow for their input as well as give you a real sense of the response from the people. If the leaders closest to you are not excited, then those farther from you will probably be equally unenthused. Once the leaders closest to you are in full support, go to the rest of the leadership and ensure that they are also on board. Finally, present it to the people without rushing it or cramming it into a five-minute window as people are getting ready to leave. Take sufficient time to present it, but don’t go on for too long either; your presentation of the vision has to be just right.

Use graphics or media to make a memorable presentation. Marketing companies have found “teasers” to be very effective in the build-up to a launch, so you might try these to arouse curiosity and create interest.

Rehearse your presentation so that you are comfortable with it. Have an audience (preferably not your dog or cat) and watch their response. Get their feedback and make adjustments. Once launched, keep the progress in front of the people for some time. You can do this with updates, videos, articles, and letters.

4. **Build a leadership team that can help you get the job done** - Empower your leadership team through training, inspiring their loyal support, and giving them resources to do their part. Your leadership team is critical; unless they catch the vision and help you in the work, you are unlikely to advance.
5. **Measure the progress** - Set regular feedback meetings so that you can measure the progress that has been made and then make adjustments where necessary. I recommend holding monthly meetings with the leadership team to discuss the momentum, pace, and progress that has

been established.

Accomplishing God's will, growing the church, and winning the lost will require the following:

Faith

Passion

Character

Anointing

Vision

To accomplish God's will will also require a united leadership team and people who will participate in this process of running with the vision. To gain both the support of the people and in order to build an effective team the visionary-leader will need to be skilled at vision casting. The leadership team will need to recognize and catch the vision.

There is grace given to your life, just like Nehemiah, so that when you share the vision with conviction and determination the people drawn by the Spirit of God to your vision will catch it. As a visionary-leader you must ensure that you have a deep-rooted conviction that what you are communicating is the vision that God has given you. Don't confuse the people surrounding your life with weak, unplanned strategies that are doomed to failure before you start. Don't leave a legacy of unfinished projects. Get clarity in your own spirit and only cast vision, not good ideas. One of the greatest hindrances to people running with the vision is a double-minded leader who says things are from God and then they never see it through. Eventually, the people won't trust you. They will doubt your credibility. Nehemiah was able to communicate the vision and he had the courage to see it through to the end. He did all this in the face of severe trial and opposition from his enemies (who were the enemies of God), but he never allowed the size of the attack to discourage him from the size of the vision. He was so convinced about the task of rebuilding the vision that he called it a good work and then later he called it a great work.

Nehemiah 2:18

And I told them of the hand of my God which had been good upon me, and also of the king's words that he had spoken to me. So they said, "Let us rise up and build." Then they set their hands to this good work.

Nehemiah 6:3

So I sent messengers to them, saying, "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down. Why should the work cease while I leave it and go down to

you?"

As a leader you have to be fully convinced that what you are doing is:

1. A good work
2. A great work
3. That it's from God and for the glory of God

You have to believe it and the people must believe it. This is what I call God-confidence. This is not be confused with arrogance or ego-driven ambition. It is awareness in the depth of your being that God has called you and empowered you for the vision. Then cast it in such a way that the people surrounding your ministry catch it and then watch the impossible becomes possible.