

Vision Casting

Vision-casting is an essential activity of leadership for every group or church, yet it is one of the most neglected elements. Without vision, people forget their purpose and direction, lose their focus, and they fall back into a self-service mode. You must be faithful to cast a clear vision—a picture of what God sees—to mobilize disciples in mission. Here are some brief stories that you can use to help keep the "big picture" before the people.

Tsunami

A tsunami is caused by an earthquake. When an earthquake occurs under the sea, it sometimes produces a circular motion of water, perhaps 1 km in diameter. This impulse can travel up to 800 km per hour, speeding through the open water virtually unnoticed. When conditions are right, this disturbance in the water forms a very definite wave form which has incredible power behind it. As it enters shallow water, it forms a large wave which we know as the destructive tsunami.

Our efforts are a bit like the earthquake. They seemingly go unnoticed. Yet a powerful, latent force builds up, and at the right time appointed by God, something big happens. We just need to keep on doing what God designed us to do, and in His timing, the results can be much bigger than we ever imagined!

What Was Missing?

We love to read about the amazing transformation that happened in Acts chapter 2. The Holy Spirit came and filled the 120 gathered in the Upper Room, and the results were nothing short of amazing. Three thousand people were converted as a result of hearing the gospel proclaimed--many from other nations hearing in their own language. These new believers gathered into what most people would call the first church, and everything seemed absolutely perfect: their worship, their devotion to God, the way they gave to one another sacrificially, and the way they grew.

But...something was missing. Something very important. What is it that was not so perfect about this new and exciting church?

What was missing was in fact a blind spot which is not revealed until Acts chapter nine. After Paul's dramatic conversion, God told Ananias, "Go, for he [Paul] is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel" (Acts 9.15). Then in chapter ten we see Peter in the house of Cornelius, leading this Roman's entire family to the Lord, and in the next chapter defending the need to reach the Gentiles. Two chapters later, Paul and Barnabas are sent out to reach the Gentiles. Amazingly, this has been God's plan all along as we see in many Old Testament references. But that "perfect" church in Acts 2 had completely missed the point, reaching only the Jews.

We must be sure not to miss this precious part of the Father's heart--that ALL people matter to Him: every race, every nationality, male and female, rich and poor. God loves them all, and we must continually keep our focus on reaching people far from God.

Seven Billion

On 31 October 2011, something significant happened for the first time in history. Our world's population reached 7 billion people. A million is hard to imagine, and yet this represents 7,000 million human souls. Most of those 7 billion do not know Jesus, a great many of them having no access to the life-transforming message. And the rate of growth continues to rise much faster than the rate of current growth in churches. How do we reach every one of them in the most personal way possible, to bring them the message of salvation? Through multiplying disciples. We must train disciples who train disciples, passing the message on through families, friends, and acquaintances—among every nation, tribe, and people.

The Call from Below

In Luke 16.19-31 we read of the story of a rich man and a beggar. The beggar sat at the rich man's gate, but that man of wealth was unwilling to reach out to help him. Eventually they both died, and the rich man ended up in agony, desperately wanting just a drop of water to cool his tongue. While this is a terrible end for the rich man, the real tragedy is that he wanted someone to go witness to his brothers so they would not come to that awful place. Abraham made it clear that no one could go back to tell his brothers.

What this story tells us is that Hell is filled with people who want us to tell their family and friends the truth about eternity. They want you and me to witness boldly so they may hear. We have the message and the opportunity to share, and we must go tell them before it's too late.

King George

In 1783, George III of England was the leader of the greatest empire at that time. But despite his power in such a great kingdom, he lost 13 colonies all at once. How could it be that those 13 tiny colonies could successfully sever ties with England and form their own nation? The answer is simple: they joined forces and worked together. None could have done it alone, but together they made it happen.

We as followers of Jesus must remember that God didn't put us on earth to fight our battles alone, but to partner with Great Commission Christians in the battle against the darkness. Alone we can do very little. But together, with the power of the Holy Spirit, we can achieve the Father's will.

The Chess Board

Imagine a chess board, 8 x 8 with a total of 64 squares. Place a one-cent coin on the lower left-hand square. In the next square double the amount to 2 cents, and in the third square double it again to 4 cents, and so on, doubling for each square. By the time you reach the 64th square, how much money would be on that square?

The answer is 9,223,372,036,854,775,808 cents, which is 92 quadrillion dollars--more money than exists in the entire world!

What this illustrates is the amazing power of simple mathematics. Starting with just a very tiny amount, and multiplying it step by step, the results grow to amazing proportions. The same is true when we multiply disciples, workers, and churches. God desires for His kingdom to multiply to fill the earth!

The Lost Sheep

In Luke 15.1-7 we read the story of a shepherd with 100 sheep. When one runs away, the shepherd leaves the 99 to go find that lost sheep. When he returns with the lost one, there is great rejoicing!

Now imagine the same flock of 100 sheep, but this time 95 of the sheep have become lost and only 5 sheep remain. How much more will the shepherd be compelled to go and find those which are lost. The task will take much more time and will require the help of many people. This is the scenario in many nations today, where over 95 percent of all people do not have a living, vibrant relationship with Jesus.

The Starfish

Most of us have heard the story of the little boy walking along a beach covered with starfish. He began tossing them into the water one by one. A man approached saying, "Son, with thousands of starfish lying in the hot sun, how do you expect to make a difference?" The boy picked up a starfish and tossed it into the sea, "I made a difference to that one!"

Indeed, the boy could save one at a time, and he could never save them all. But let's consider this story in a new light. Imagine that every starfish which was saved was able to join forces with the boy to become a starfish-saver. With this new strategy, how long would it take to save all the starfish on the beach?