

Stan Patterson, April 4, 2006

Visioning, the Power of Functional Imagination

Stan's story of early visioning in Missouri

Vision is applied imagination (Stephen R. Covey)

“Imagination is more important than knowledge.” (Albert Einstein)

“We no longer live in a world where we have the right to expect authorities to know the answers.” (Heifetz and Laurie *Harvard Business Review*)

As we have matriculated from the industrial age, authority is no longer the answer to vision.

Blackaby's sources for vision

- Because it's there
- Duplicating success
- Vanity
- Need
- Available resources
- Leader-driven

“Because it's there...”

- Does the quest have a purpose?
- Goal: conquering obstacles—need for reflection
- Reactive—leadership is proactive
- “Open door” attitude—not all open doors should be entered

Not all challenges need to be fixed—but decide whether the challenge is worthy of a vision

Thinking and taking time for reflective thought is difficult for us to do at times.

Most of us have been successful at doing.

Duplicating Success

Borrowed vision: example of disasters/failures with Willow Creek [be careful]

Instead of envisioning what might be, we try to work on improving what we have done well.

Vanity

Ego-centric leadership (Napolean—"If I had succeeded, I should have been the greatest man know to history.")

Natural compunction to enhance self.

Another problem: Sacrificing the good of the people to make a name for self. (has the idea of conquering.)

Can be a siren's call to self.

Need

Needs-based visioning favored by Christian organizations—research-based

Allows unregenerate people to set the church's agenda

Risks focusing on symptoms

Available resources

- Denominational programs
- Student workers
- Evangelism grants
- Donated equipment

Leader-driven

- Creating a vision apart from those being led
- Developing the vision—selling the vision
- Big Hairy Audacious Goals
- Leader's best thinking will not build the kingdom of God
- Leader-driven vision denies the mandate of Spirit-empowered community.

God's Revelation

- Vision is something people produce
- Revelation is something people receive
- Spiritual leadership assumes the direct involvement of the Holy Spirit
- The leader's job is to communicate God's promise to the people, not to create the vision and then strive to enlist the people to buy into it.

Gift of prophecy is a message that is not my own.
Jesus—Holy Spirit will speak what I have said.

In crafting vision we must realize it is a spiritual process.

Jay Conger—good book on vision