

"Church Unique"

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Notes by Dave Kraft

A unique vision must ooze from the leader's life and this vision must create a stunningly unique culture inside the church that is inclined and motivated to penetrate the culture outside the church (xxii) Nurturing internal culture must precede expanding outside influence. The central strategy you choose is not as important as whether there is ownership and integration around whatever strategy you choose (xxvii) I always wanted to be a king maker and not a king (xxviii)

Few churches understand their own uniqueness or even think about it systematically (9) The reality is that most people don't think; they only rearrange their prejudices. Today's demands can choke out needed dialogue for tomorrow. It is not uncommon that the most accomplished people in the room are the least receptive to new learning. It is easier to duplicate familiar programs than to incarnate new ones. It is easy for leaders to become talkers instead of listeners (11) Though Jesus did not meet every need, he met all the needs He was created and called to meet We need to do likewise, differentiating the voice of God from the squeaky wheels of unmet needs (12) Some conferences can attract folks who are creative for creativity's sake, and not for the sake of their church's unique calling (14) Some consultants help churches with products rather than processes.

THE FALL OF STRATEGIC PLANNING

Too much information in a strategic plan shreds the big picture into so many small pieces that the vision is hopelessly lost. More information equals less clarity. We can get "knowledge fatigue." People do not need more information; they need more meaning from the right information. Leaders of today must learn how to deliver meaning by distilling what they say (21) Too many goals threaten to make any one goal unclear (23) Leaders, according to Reggie McNeal need to focus more on preparation than planning.

THE INIQUITY OF CHURCH GROWTH

Most so-called growth is primarily "transfer growth" from neighboring churches and not true "conversion growth." (31) Our challenge today is to move from church with mission to missional church (34) Therefore the church's new identity is a re-clarification of its sentness. Sending is not something you do, but being sent is something you are (34) Is it possible that real culprit is not the church growth movement itself, but a "growth idolatry" lurking in the leader's life? People like it small, but leaders like it big (37) The tendency to nurture growth idolatry in the pastor's heart (39)

LOST CONGREGATIONS

Busyness not blueprints can tend to define success. (40) Their hearts find more meaning in working efficiently on yesterday's methods than in working effectively into the future (45) The first is a strong conviction about core ideals that never change; these are purpose and values. The 2nd is a clear understanding that everything else must change in order to preserve the core. Discerning the core ideology and distinguishing it from what is noncore, a leader can free people to embrace by connecting their identity to the core ideology. (46) Granite etching verses. Sand writing-In the absence of vision, the stuff of sand becomes the vision. In the absence of granite, sand is all we can grasp. Make no mistake; our change management problems today are vision problems first and people problems second (47)

THE GOOD NEWS OF CLARITY

"Clarity is the preoccupation of the effective leader. If you do nothing else as a leader, be clear"-Marcus Buckingham (51) Being clear as a leader means being simple, understandable, and exact (52) Followers cannot travel an unmarked path. The leaders compass can't be broken; the trumpet blast can't be uncertain (53) Henry Ford said that the great weakness of all human beings is trying to do too many things (54) If the secret to concentration is elimination, you can't do it without clarity first. Firing one disconnected idea after the next, year after year, leaves church members cautious at best and disillusioned at worst. Real visionary leadership is not about just having a bunch of creative ideas; it is about having creativity within a clarity that builds momentum over time (55)

Four Clarity Gaps:

1. Between a leader's perception and reality
2. Between what the leader is thinking and saying
3. Between the leader's words and how followers receive the leader's words
4. Between the follower's understanding and the words they use to communicate their understanding (56)

If your life and energy are spent living in response to the opportunities that come your way, then someone else has dictated your mission; you are essentially at the whim of whatever invitations come across your desk next. Leaders must constantly fight the good fight of clarity to overcome complexity (59)

CLARITY PRE-EVANGELISM

Most leaders spend their lives driving decisions, directing resources, and deploying people without the vantage point of substantial clarity. "I would not give a fig for simplicity on this side of complexity, but I would give my life for simplicity on the other side of complexity"~ Oliver Wendell Holmes (62) James Michener hints of the beautiful place where the pursuit of excellence and clarity in life is so focused that it leaves others wondering if we are at work or at play (63) When it comes to a visionary's walk with God, listening must become lifestyle. In the Apostle Paul's writing, no less than 13 times people are called "fellow workers" (the Greek is *Synergos*) (64) None of us is as smart as all of us (65) The greatest performers in any arena are so because they demand coaching (66)

THE ALPHA AND OMEGA OF CLARITY

As each leader relates, rules and rescues with God in this messy world, God reveals to him or her a *better intermediate future* to pursue. That is God sparks in their hearts new ideas, new aspirations and new mental pictures of what could be (72) A defining moment occurs when a particular call from God collides with a concrete need in our little corner of the world (73)

DISCOVER OUR KINGDOM CONCEPT

Think of your kingdom concept as your organization's sweet spot; what can we do better than 10,000 other churches? (84) The book of Acts reminds us that David found his specific calling, "For when David had served God's purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep ~~Acts 13:36. (85) The Kingdom concept is a combination of:

1. Local Predicament-the unique opportunities and needs where God has placed you
2. Collective potential-What are the unique resources and capabilities that God brings together in us
3. Apostolic esprit-what particular focus most energizes and animates our leadership (85) Esprit is more than your passion. It captures both the empowering and direction of the Holy Spirit and the human side of fervor and vitality that springs from team morale. Apostolic esprit lives in and through the leadership community (94) Noel Tichy calls apostolic esprit "E"~~ the leaders emotional energy and edge. Bill Hybels refers to it as a "holy discontent." (95) What one thing bothers you the most about the world? What do you tend to pray for the most? What gives you energy? (97)

TAKE A CLOSER LOOK

Navigating Your Discovery Process

"To be of maximum service requires a ferocious focus on doing good only if it fits your Hedgehog Concept. To do the most good requires saying "no" to the pressures to stray and the discipline to stop doing what does not fit ~~Jim Collins (99) The first question should not be what about my ministry area, but what area is God wanting us to address? (103) The example of In-and-out Berger ~ Fewer options, but tons more business (104) In "Simple church," Thom Rainer reminds us that, "Focus is the ability to eliminate everything that falls outside of the simple ministry process." (105)

SEE WITH NEW EYES

Defining Your Vision Frame

Think of your Kingdom Concept as the operating system of your church that is running in the background largely unnoticed (111) How would you describe your church in ten words or less? Say more by saying less. Fewer words that are well focused have further reach (112)

The Vision Frame:

1. **Mission** as missional Mandate ~What are we doing; a clear and concise statement that describes what the church is ultimately supposed to be doing
2. **Values** as missional motives ~Why are we doing it? The missional motives are shared convictions that guide the actions and reveal the strength of the church
3. **Strategy** as missional map ~How are we doing it? The missional map is the process or picture that demonstrates how the church will accomplish its mandate on the broadest level
4. **Measures** as missional life marks ~When are we successful? The missional life marks are a set of attributes in an individual's life that define or reflect accomplishment of the church's mandate
5. **Vision proper** as missional mountaintop + Milestones ~Where is God taking us? Vision proper is the living language that anticipates and illustrates God's better intermediate future (113)

The goal is not to put a one-page vision on paper and be done but to keep the work of visioning in the daily flow of leadership (115) The Vision frame must be Clear, Concise, Compelling, Catalytic and Contextual (116)

CARRY THE HOLY ORDERS

Mission as Missional Mandate

"People who linger in the shadows, leading unfulfilled lives, would burst into the sunlight of kingdom possibilities and Spirit's power. Those who have never known what it's like to feel a passionate commitment to a cause would be catapulted from their couches onto the playing field, tasting the dirt, feeling the sweat and the sting of tears, and having the wind knocked out of them...and in the process become fully alive" Laurie Beth Jones, *The Path* (119). We need to ruthlessly avoid what Reggie McNeal has described as "Mission Amnesia" Our mission lives within the boundaries of making disciples, teaching personal obedience to Jesus as Lord, and taking the message of the *Gospel to the Nations* (120) If you want to reach people for Jesus, you're going to have to sit in the smoking section (122)

A missional statement by its nature is a relatively small container. It is intended neither to carry a theological treatise nor to communicate strategy. Too many opinions lead to too many words and too many complex sentences (124) Jesus taught people to act; the emphasis was on practice over knowledge. Taking our cue from the Savior, I believe it is clear that He will be measuring not how much we know but how well we loved. The test is not IQ but EKG (127)

FEEL THE COMMON HEARTBEAT

Values as missional motives

You won't do ministry that really matters until you define what matters- Aubrey Malphurs (128) You need to spell out the "die-fors." (129) Most values statements have too many values (more than six is too many) Values often present meaningless redundancy because they repeat doctrinal beliefs or rehash general purpose ideas, such as worship, evangelism, and fellowship; these don't differentiate your church (131) Values/motives cannot multiply without modeling. If the value/motive communicates an idea and not an actionable idea, it is a piece of deadwood; the best way to accomplish this is to articulate a "demonstrated by" statement for each value (133)

SHOW ME THE WAY

Strategy as Missional Map

"Churches with a simple process for reaching and maturing people are expanding the kingdom...Conversely, churches without a process or with a complicated process for making disciples are floundering. As a result, cluttered and complex churches are not alive" ~ Thom Rainer, Simple Church (136) Kingdom effectiveness and missional movement require more than spiritual unity; they require strategic clarity "The Map" is defined as the process or picture that demonstrates how the church will accomplish its mandate on the broadcast level (137) The map can be defined as:

- The Church's organizational logic for achieving the mission
- The pattern of how ministry fits together for fulfilling the mission
- The rhythm of church life as the body of Christ on mission

Keep in mind that 50% of the people in our churches have never taken a step beyond the worship service itself (138) One of the problems is that ministries have no vertical alignment with the mission and no horizontal alignment with each other. This creates complexity and confusion for people, which is hard for most pastors and ministry staff to appreciate. Individuals stay lost with regard to where they are and what to do next (139) A good "map" brochure would show the newcomer a simple and obvious pathway of involvement (140)

A man in the restaurant said, we have learned that the fewer specials you have, the more specials you sell. Serve up a few great ministry specials. The work of organizing, staffing, and budgeting ministry becomes easier with fewer balls to juggle and less clutter in the closet. Fewer options become meaningful when they exist in relationship to one another and show a clear pathway (142) Think steps, not programs.

Think steps, not programs. The story of Matt Emmons at the 2004 Olympics who was one trigger pull away from winning his 2nd gold medal. He hit the bulls eye, but it was the wrong target and he was eliminated from the competition (151) What happened to Emmons is happening right now in tens of thousands of churches in North America; well meaning leaders are shooting across lanes at other targets. Your mission is what you measure. You can measure the ABC's (attendance, buildings and cash) and be very successful but be a circus (152) "I am convinced that the reason for so much burnout, lack of commitment, and low performance in our churches among staff and members is directly related to the failure to declare the results we are after. We don't know when we are winning." Reggie McNeal in The Present Future (155) It takes consistent use of the same language over three years for the culture to be affected (156)

FRAME THE FUTURE

Preparing for a vision lifestyle

Leaders must encourage their organizations to dance to forms of music yet to be heard (165) We need to focus our attention on the missional outcomes of life change, not just on attendance, buildings and cash-ABC's (166). A good vision statement is the living language that anticipates and illustrates God's better intermediate future (heaven being the ultimate destination) We want to move away from vision as statement to vision as dynamic vocabulary (170) Chick Corea, Jazz pianist and composer said, "Only play what you hear. If you don't hear anything, don't play anything (171) Once mission, values, strategy and measures are known, it is easier to imagine what our tomorrow will look like (172) Someone with strengths in process thinking may grow frustrated with the leader who is always jumping from one thing to the next. I meet many pastors who are distractible and always trying new things (173)

One of my deepest frustrations on behalf of leaders is the inability to use vision daily. Pushing the future forward is the natural inclination of the apostolic bent (175)

SPEAK WITH NEW TONGUES

Articulating Vision Proper

Think of vision proper as your travel brochure that builds anticipation and excitement (178) Mission is like a compass and Vision Proper is like a developing Polaroid picture of the adventure. One gives direction, and the other gives stimulation (179) Vision Proper is the breakdown of your living language into two types: Qualitative (mountaintop) and Quantitative (milestones). Mountaintop should always precede milestones (180,181) Aristotle said that the soul never thinks without picture. Take on the role of chief story officer (182) Jesus skill as a masterful storyteller and metaphor handler points the way for the aspiring visionary today (183) Leaders touch a heart before they ask for a hand-John Maxwell (185) "It's taken me all my life to learn what not to play-Dizzy Gillespie. (190) Don't put the complexity of multiple milestones on your people's shoulders, thereby turning them into millstones (192)

WAGE WAR AGAINST THE STATUS QUO

From Articulation to Traction

We must move from confusion to communication to coordination to collaboration. We must learn to lead from missional vision and a vision pathway rather than individual goals (201) Having a map is the clearest way to explain the concept of focus, the single greatest need in or churches today (203)

MEET LONG IN THE UPPER ROOM

The Secret of Attunement

We define attunement as the attraction and emotional connection in the heart of the follower to a given organizational direction. We can align many things in the organization, but you don't align hearts; you attune them (208)

You can create a climate as a leader that produces real, dynamic, emotional resonance for your vision. It is not uncommon for leaders to be listening with their ears wide shut (209) We cannot do anything great until we know what

we cannot do. Your church cannot move toward God's vision if people are trying to steer the ship in a different direction or are trying to poison the crew as to the vision's integrity. There is a needed skill in knowing how to say no. William Ury wrote a book titled, *The Power of a Positive No.* (212) There are three traps keeping us from getting to a positive no:

1. Accommodating-Saying yes when we should have said no
2. Attacking-Which is saying no poorly
3. Avoiding-which is saying nothing at all

TRANSFORM THE FUTURE

Delivering Vision Daily

"The key to radical discipleship is the development of trainer-coaches that carry the DNA to the edges of the movement"-Michael Slaughter (215)
Take leaders out of the equation and the visionary is a daydreamer (217)
The individuals who make up your team can profoundly accelerate-or aggravate your ability to deliver vision daily. Do they demonstrate the egoless clarity required to collaborate on a team? (218) I recommend striving for an equation of "progress before order," making sure that the team is weighted toward progress.

It is gifts, personality and strengths that attract and connect people, rather than those that train and sustain people (219)The church today demonstrates a profound disproportionate emphasis on crowds over core, "crowd fixation (220) Communication needs to be: Personalized, trustworthy, brief and emotional. Keep good communicators close to the core leadership (222) A good leadership maxim is, it's not about what you can do, but what you can duplicate (224) Make assimilation a function of culture through microsteps that everyone can take. How do you concretely encourage the practice of missional living and give people the tools and processes for them to be evangelists (225) Pastors who want to impact church leaders on the cultural level must become proficient with the tool of story (231)