

Designing a Youth Ministry for the Future

Definition of Vision: *The picture of God's potential, purpose and possibilities.*

Jeremiah 29:11 *"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."*

Many times the meaning of something is best described through a picture. Today I want to help paint a picture for you concerning the future of your youth ministry program.

When you think about vision – Abraham's life is a good picture to look at.

Hebrews 11:8-12 *"⁸By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going ⁹By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. ¹⁰For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. ¹¹By faith Abraham, even though he was past age—and Sarah herself was barren—was enabled to become a father because he considered him faithful who had made the promise. ¹²And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore."*

God has a vision for every one of us. It is a detailed itinerary of things he wants to do through us, but we must follow the plan and strategy God has put in place.

Psalms 37:23 *"If the LORD delights in a man's way, he makes his steps firm."*

Definition of Strategy: *A calculated plan of action that will help you accomplish God's objectives and vision with excellence.*

Vision Strategy

- Purpose – Why does it exist?
- Potential – What are the possibilities?
- People – Who will take ownership?
- Price – Commitment and sacrifice
- Prayer – Power to carry it out
- Patience – Willingness to finish
- Provision – The resources to carry it out

Our effectiveness to vision fulfillment depends on our ability to obey and implement the plan of God.

When it comes to vision we will know what God has put in our hearts to do, before we know how he intends to bring it to pass.

We see this point explained when the angel Gabriel came to the Virgin Mary.

Luke 1:26-37 ²⁶*In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." ²⁹Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. ³¹You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. ³²He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, ³³and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end." ³⁴"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" ³⁵The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. ³⁶Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. ³⁷For nothing is impossible with God."*

"How" is never a problem with God when he puts a vision in your heart. He goes to work to make sure it happens.

Psalm 78:70-72 ⁷⁰*He chose David his servant and took him from the sheep pens; ⁷¹from tending the sheep he brought him to be the shepherd of his people Jacob, of Israel his inheritance ⁷²And David shepherded them with integrity of heart; with skillful hands he led them."*

All I have to do is be obedient to him and his word. Where there is obedience there is grace to carry it out his will.

What God Originates, He Orchestrates

We are not responsible for figuring out how to make the vision come to pass. Just do what you know to do and what you can do and leave the rest up to God.

Philippians 2:13 *"For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose."*

God's work, done in God's way and in God's timing, will always be successful.

I Corinthians 15:58 ⁴⁵⁸ *Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.*

THE BIG QUESTION: With a culture that views church as irrelevant and out of touch, what will we do different to attract this generation to our church and to live for God?

What we have to do differently is to first realize that the change starts with us.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-3 *“To everything there is a season. A time for every purpose under heaven; A time to be born, a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck what is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up.”*

When it comes to change in our youth ministries, we cannot bypass the process of time.

Definition of Change: To replace or become different, to revolutionize or to undergo a transformation.

Change is not only important, it is necessary when it comes to reaching young people.

Matthew 19:13-15 *“Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hand on them, and pray and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said suffer not the little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven. And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence.”*

Everything is in the process of change

We are not talking about changing the world or the vision, but it is important that we are connecting with them even if it goes against tradition.

Definition of Tradition: An inherited, established or customary pattern of thoughts or actions.

Colossians 2:8 *“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”*

John Walter – President of AT&T: *“When the pace of change outside an organization becomes greater than the pace of change inside the organization, the end is near.”*

LIFE POINT - If God called you to change, he will also give you the potential ability, resources, provision and wisdom to carry it out.

Psalms 33:11 *“The counsel of the Lord stands forever and the plans of his heart are to all generations.”*

Think For A Change

- Methods – Are they relevant?
- Motives – Why are you doing it?
- Message – What are you saying?
- Money – Are you investing in them?
- Mission – Where are you going?

Albert Einstein: *“The problems we face today cannot be solved on the same level of thinking we were at when we created them.”*

LIFE POINT - Change will not happen on accident; it is on purpose and it requires commitment and discipline.... Expect resistance.

Why should we change?

1. Change brings growth.
2. Change helps others to change.
3. Potential is hindered until change happens.
4. Takes you out of your comfort zone.
5. Change brings adventure and excitement.
6. The world is raising the bar.

Isaiah 59:19 *“So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west and his glory from the rising of the sun; when the enemy comes in like a flood the spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him”.*

When it comes to change...

- You can resist it.
- You can accept it.
- You can ignore it.
- You can initiate it.

Proverbs 13:19 (NIV) *“It is pleasant to see plans develop. That is why fools refuse to give them up even when they are wrong.”*

Developing a Youth Ministry Program for the Future is important because:

- It keeps them spiritual accountable.

Proverbs 12:25 *“A foolish son brings grief to his father and bitterness to the one who bore him.”*

- It brings excitement and life to the church.

Ecclesiastes 11:9 *“Rejoice, Youngman in your youth and let you heart cheer you in the days of your youth.”*

- It produces purpose and potential in them.

Proverbs 22:6 *“Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it.”*

- It prepares them for spiritual warfare.

Eph. 6:11 *“Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”*

- It encourages righteous relationships.

2 Cor. 6:14 *“Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness?”*

Vision for this Generation

The vision and mandate for this generation should be influence young to have a life-changing encounter and uncompromising relationship with Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Philippians 2:13 *“For it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.”*

Every youth in youth ministry program should be built on the foundations of:

- **Discipleship** – To follow Christ.
- **Fellowship** – To associate with and have relationship.
- **Leadership** – To be an influence.
- **Ownership** – To buy into the vision.
- **Mentorship** – To keep them accountable.
- **Worship** – To have a heart after God.

Luke 6:47 – 48 *“Whoever comes to me and hears my word, and does the, I will show you to whom he is like. He is like a man who built a house and dug deep and laid the found on a rock, and when the flood arose, the stream beat against that house and could not shake it; for it was founded on a rock.”*

Psalms 100:5 *“His truth endures to all generations.”*

How to Jump Start Programs

Start with the simple and move toward the difficult, Drama team vs. Media Ministry.

- ⇒ Highlight every little thing
- ⇒ Countdown CD
- ⇒ Set goals

Start by researching other successful and unsuccessful programs.

- ⇒ Ask tough questions
- ⇒ Don't start out of emotion
- ⇒ Go to the Internet

Start by casting the program vision.

- ⇒ Vision attracts vision
- ⇒ Vision attracts haters

Karen Ford: *“People will never attain what they cannot see themselves doing.”*

Start by recruiting those with program knowledge.

- ⇒ A police officer for security/actress for the drama team
- ⇒ Go to the congregation
- ⇒ They give direction, leadership, encouragement

Start by defining the purpose of the program.

- ⇒ Do nothing without a purpose
- ⇒ If you don't know the purpose, it can destroy you
- ⇒ Is it for ministry, fellowship, unchurched students, etc.

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

Start by making programs relevant.

- ⇒ Don't start a Parachute Ministry in the Inner City.
- ⇒ Address cultural issues.

Start by determining the operating procedures of the program.

- ⇒ Guidelines Do's and Don'ts
- ⇒ Rehearsals and Schedules
- ⇒ This eliminates confusion
- ⇒ This promotes consistency

Start by keeping the leadership accountable.

- ⇒ Both students and adults
- ⇒ They must be responsible
- ⇒ We need leaders, not chaperones
- ⇒ Regular leadership and training meeting

Start by evaluating the program's progress.

- ⇒ Is it fruitful – **Matt 7:17** "*A good tree produces good fruit?*"
- ⇒ The spirit of the program.

Start by getting the Pastor's blessing and approval.

- ⇒ Make sure this is his vision
- ⇒ Seek his input, support, refinement
- ⇒ Keep your heart right

Eph 4:11 "*And he gave some pastors and teachers for the perfecting of the saints.*"