

Creating the Vision



How God Creates

From: Metaphysics I

“There is one underlying law and through this law all things come into expression; also there is one universal Mind, the source and sole origin of all real intelligence.”

1. First is mind
2. Then mind expresses itself in ideas
3. Then the ideas make themselves manifest

“Each idea created by Divine Mind is whole and perfect. Man catches mental sight of an idea in Divine Mind and proceeds to put it in terms understandable to him. All ideas have their origin in Divine Mind, but their character as unfolded by man depends entirely upon his acquaintance with God.”

“If we are truly willing to enter into conscious co-creatorship with God, we must understand the law upon which all creation is based. This is The Law of Cause and Effect. All cause is in the realm of the mind. Effects are the result of the thoughts we hold in mind. Most of us begin with effects and try to work from them, but the true metaphysician begins with causes.”

“To recognize the power of thought is the key to working consciously with the creative process. It is by our thoughts that we transform not only our inner but our outer world. It is important to remember that when we use the term ‘thought’ we are referring to the combined energies of both thinking and feeling. Words themselves are not the power but carry the power of the thoughts they represent. Words express a thought already held in mind. Therefore, in addition to changing our words to effect transformation in our lives, we must also change the thoughts which have inspired the worlds. The most powerful of all spoken words are affirmations of Truth.”

“Our Thoughts Are Prayers”

Our thoughts are Prayers,
And we are always praying,
Our thoughts are Prayers,
Take charge of what you’re saying.

Seek a higher consciousness,
A state of peacefulness,
And know that God is always there.
And every thought becomes a prayer.

So the Creative Process is defined as “The Law of Mind Action or The Law of Cause and Effect as described above and the process through which we bring those ideas into expression is found in the creation story in Genesis 1 & 2.

Vision—what's the point

(Source: Association of Unity Churches, International - “Just in Time”)

Ministries that are transforming lives are clear about their DNA and are on fire with the mission and vision. We wrote about mission in the last issue. As with a mission, the purpose of a vision statement is to create an aligned ministry where clergy, staff, lay leaders and volunteers are working toward the same desired future—a future that is bigger than simply maintaining the current course of the ministry, or taking care of our members Ken Blanchard and Jesse Stoner (“The Vision Thing: Without It You’ll Never Be a World-Class Organization,” *Leader to Leader*, Winter 2004) list the characteristics of a compelling vision—adapted with our thoughts

1. It is used daily, with the mission, to make decisions.
2. It focuses on what we want long term—it is proactive.
3. The more you focus on your vision, the clearer it will become and the more deeply you will understand it.
4. Significant purpose—the business we are in. We call this “mission”—it inspires excitement and commitment. If people are on “fire” with the mission of a ministry their productivity and creativity rise to new levels.
5. A picture of the future—what it will look like when we are living according to our purpose. The end result Spirit is guiding you toward—not the process for getting there.
6. Clear values—how we want people to behave when working according to our purpose and on our picture of the future. Three or four clear values in rank order and consistently acted on.
7. Goals flow from clarity of a ministry’s DNA. Meaningful goals ensure the day-to-day activity is directed toward the shared vision. The ultimate responsibility for implementing goals lies with the leadership.
8. The vision should be large enough that it is outward-looking, beyond the walls of the church. If it can be done without God’s partnership, it is not big enough.
9. It will never be fully accomplished—i.e., the transformation of the community around you will never be completed.

Creating a vision is a journey that requires giving stakeholders the opportunity for input. Some ideas about how this is (or is not) accomplished:

- Some schools of thought subscribe to the idea the “leader” has the vision and “inspires” (sells) others to get on board with his/her vision.
- The hierarchy of the organization going away on retreat to create a vision so others will adopt it rarely works.
- We have had good experiences creating the DNA by using future searches, focus groups and congregational meetings.
- The dialogue between the various stakeholders is critical to success. We tap into the hopes and dreams of those we are serving; we want to hear from them where and how they can be part of our collective success in realizing our shared vision through serving on ministry teams, task forces and the board of trustees.

Creating the DNA (including a compelling vision) taps into all our spiritual resources: prayer, meditation, people and the commitment of their gifts, talents and time, prosperity consciousness to fund the process and realize this is truly an investment in the future of the ministry. The return on this investment will be 10-fold. According to Blanchard and Stoner – a vision is the difference between “business as usual and a world-class organization.”

Vision & Mission Statements

“A church that does not have a good program for children is not likely to thrive.”
(Robert & Janet Ellsworth – *“Congregations As Healing Communities: 7 Characteristics of Life-Enhancing Churches.”*)

The Vision Statement

- Is the basic, bottom-line reason that your ministry exists. It is what keeps you on purpose. You can constantly refer back to this statement as you make decisions regarding your ministry.
- It is important that your vision aligns with the vision of your church and is supported by your minister and board.
- A vision statement should be no longer than one or two sentences long. It should be easily understood and it should be easy to remember. You can continuously adjust your vision statement based on what you want to create in your life. It also should be large enough for you to move around in.

The Mission

- The mission tells you how you will bring your vision into being. It is your plan of action and the ultimate desire for your ministry. “You must hold in consciousness a faithful belief that God is All-good, and the Good is awaiting our thoughts to shape God-substance into the resources we desire. This means that your mission must not be limited by your consciousness. It needs a sense of grandness.”
- The mission is longer and more specific. Some key elements are:
 - ◊ It is written down in the present tense.
 - ◊ It covers a variety of activities and time frames.
 - ◊ It is filled with descriptive details that anchor it to reality. (“The Path”)
 - ◊
- The mission encompasses but is not limited to:
 - ◊ Sunday lessons for the children
 - ◊ Special events for youth
 - ◊ Intergenerational family activities

Visioning Activity

Supplies: Large poster board, markers, stickers, scissors, construction paper, and glitter glue.

Directions

You have been given, free of charge, a full-page ad in the local newspaper.

- This is about creating the ideal program. There are no limitations in anything so dream big.
- The questions below are to help you get started. In a group discussion, answer them as if your ideal program is already happening. (Not all of the questions have to be answered.)

The overall program:

- Why is it necessary to teach children/teens?
- What is the overall vision of your youth ministry program?
- What is your greatest desire for your youth ministry program?
- What logo or symbols could you use to represent the essence of the program?
- What parts of your program are working well, what do you want to keep?

A Safe & Supportive Program for all:

- How will your team keep its connection to Spirit active?
- What rituals and routines will you use to create a safe and sacred space for all participants?

The curriculum:

- What do you want your children/teens to learn or experience?
- How will children/teens be spiritually enriched?
- What does your program have to offer that can't be found anywhere else?
- What skills do you want the children/teens demonstrate?
- What teachings will you use?
- What is the content of your curriculum?

Activities:

- What do the children/teens do in your program?
- What kind of activities do you provide?

The church community:

- What would you like families to know about your program?
- What benefits will the children/teens and families receive by attending?
- What are the benefits to the entire congregation?
- Why should people join you in this vision?
- How can we involve the congregation in our visioning process?

The church leadership:

- What are the qualities you would like to have in your Youth Director? In your teachers? In your Minister/Board?
- How can the Spiritual leader/Minister help the congregation connect with the Youth Ministry program?
- Design an ad publicizing your youth ministry program.