



W.o.W. -- Word Of the Week

Vision-Casting
February 23, 2022

During my tenure in the university, I regularly taught the “Introduction to Ministry” class. For me, reflecting on my ministry experiences and sharing God’s vision for effective ministry has always been a blessing and encouragement for me. I especially enjoyed teaching the section on vision-casting because I was able to watch students catch a new vision of their potential in ministry and God’s possibilities in the local church.

Few aspects of leadership are more important than vision-casting. Parents, teachers, preachers, church leaders, missionaries – all are vision-casters. It is one thing to have a vision, it is another thing to be able to vision-cast.

As a preacher, evangelist, missionary—one of the most important things I do is vision-casting. My job is to see clearly and to help others see clearly. Preachers cast a vision for church growth—what could happen in the local church and the lives of members. Evangelists cast a vision for faithful discipleship. Missionaries cast a vision for bringing people to Jesus and planting more and more churches. Vision-casting involves three things: visioning, talking about the vision consistently, and moving toward the vision in specific, focused actions.

When leaders have not clearly grasped the possibilities, they struggle to bring the vision into clear focus so that others can see. Leaders without a clear vision tend to do the same things over and over while expecting different outcomes. Churches fail to see and reach their potential. Church members do not connect the vision to their personal lives. The beauty of life in Christ is not made visible when the gospel is shared.

Why is vision-casting so important? Unless the vision is shared and clearly seen by all, only a select group will buy in. Moving forward is stymied because the church as a whole cannot run with the vision. Too much is top-down, too little is bottom-up. Vision-casting takes the work of the church to the grassroots level.

When I served in local church ministry, one of my roles was to help the elders define the vision for the local church. Once the elders had reached a consensus and had shared their views of the possibilities, we involved the church in visioning. Remember that visioning is the first step.

Visioning. Each elder was responsible for several small groups and for a “family circle.” The elders met with all of the members to encourage visioning and to listen to what was said. Vision boards were posted throughout the building and members were encouraged to think about and share the possibilities they could see. Then the elders and deacons worked together to put the shared vision to paper.

Talking. Talking about the vision guided the annual theme and was mentioned consistently in worship, classes, small groups, and media. An important part of vision-casting is keeping the vision vibrant and visible. A good goal is that each member be reminded of the vision every week. We posted a world-map in the auditorium to help with mission-visioning. We posted a participative historical timeline to give the vision foundations.

Action. Identifying, defining, casting, sharing a vision is important. Talking about it and clarifying is important. But the vision will not become reality without action, accountability and encouragement.

Vision-casting is not a once-for-all event. In most cases, the vision must be adjusted regularly. And the process of visioning (revisioning), generating new excitement and new involvement must be repeated periodically.

This week, pick some area of your life – parenting, marriage, work, being a neighbor, evangelism, church, missions. Get a piece of paper and practice visioning. How can you help others learn visioning? How can you help others see the possibilities, define and refine the vision, and act to bring the vision to reality?