

ALONGSIDER BRIEFINGS

Building disciplemaking cultures by Bill Mowry

Volume 3

Cast Vision

My name is Bill and I have a secret addiction. I'm an audiophile. I love collecting and listening to music. While my tastes run towards rock and roll, I have included folk, blues, jazz, and even some Tony Bennett into that mix.

Like any collector, I have favorite songs and albums that I play over and over again but I do this with caution. Repetition sucks the pleasure out of a song, turning something special into the common place. This same attitude can happen when I talk with a pastor or leader about vision. Vision becomes that favorite recording played over and over again.

As leaders, we've read books, listened to messages, and sat through multiple seminars on the importance of leading from vision. This constant repetition saps vision of its punch and pleasure. Even though we may tire of vision it doesn't diminish its importance. Disciplemaking cultures must have a laser-like vision for disciplemaking or another vision will fill the vision vacuum in people's lives.

Here's why vision was important to the prophet Habakkuk.

I will take my stand at my watchpost and station myself on the tower, and look out to see what he will say to me . . . And the Lord answered me: "Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so he may run who reads it." Habakkuk 2:1-2.

Old Testament prophets often compared themselves to watchmen (Hosea 9:8), the solitary soldier who stood the night watch in towers or along a city's walls. Habakkuk was like this watchman, waiting and watching, expecting a word from the Lord. His passion for God drove him to solitude and silence to hear His voice.

God responded to Habakkuk's watchful heart and gave him a vision. He commanded Habakkuk to write this vision on a tablet, pieces of wood engraved with the vision that would be posted throughout a city. The Lord's vision was plain, understandable, and ordered to be publicly posted. After all, if the vision was not understood then it couldn't be passed-on by the runners whose task was to communicate the vision.

Vision starts with a God-given **passion**. God has etched a vision for disciplemaking on our hearts. This vision is simple, **plainly understood** by everyone. A simple vision is **posted** for everyone to see. Vision is meant to be **passed-on** to others. Let's assess how we're doing at vision casting.

SUGGESTED READING

Making Vision Stick
by Andy Stanley

Made to Stick: Why some ideas survive and others die
by Chip and Dan Heath

Spiritual Leadership
by Henry and Richard Blackaby

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People
by Stephen Covey

Building a disciplemaking culture starts with vision. Here's a Ten Question Checklist to assess your ministry of vision.

- Do I speak passionately about our vision for disciplemaking?
- Do I regularly bring up this vision in my conversations and public teaching?
- Is the vision shared by many in our church or ministry or is it the special possession of a few?
- Does our disciplemaking vision use everyday words?
- Is our disciplemaking vision simple enough and memorable enough that the majority of people in our congregation or ministry can explain it to others?
- What new analogies, real-life stories, or visual images am I using to clarify and illustrate our disciplemaking vision?
- Do I know whether other ministry leaders are repeating the vision?
- Am I practicing the vision tithe, using 10% of every meeting to talk about our disciplemaking vision?
- Is the vision personal — are people motivated and equipped to disciple their children, spouses, husbands, or wives?
- Does our vision of disciplemaking naturally include life outside the church, where people live, work, or play?

If we fail to passionately communicate a vision for disciplemaking, another vision will fill the hearts and minds of people. Without a focused vision for disciplemaking, a church or ministry will end up with competing agendas for the allegiance of people's hearts. The man or woman attending Sunday worship or a small group during the week has limited exposure to vision. Life's demands quickly crowd out ill-conceived, poorly communicated, and seldom-heard vision statements.

We're fighting for the hearts and souls of our people, hearts and souls that are daily drawn away from a vision for disciplemaking. We will lose the vision battle unless we communicate a disciplemaking vision with passion, in public and plain ways, and able to be passed on to others.

You can order *The Ways of the Alongsider* at navpress.com.

You can contact Bill Mowry at www.alongsider.com. Check out other disciplemaking resources and alongsider training on his website.

The Navigators Church Discipleship Ministry has a proven process for creating intentional disciplemaking cultures. You can find out more by visiting navigatorchurchministries.org.

