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ABSTRACT

DEVELOPING A VISION STATEMENT FOR THE LUZO
BRAZILIAN SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST
CHURCH IN NEW JERSEY

by

Paulo Macena

Adviser: Stanley Patterson

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Project Document

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: DEVELOPING A VISION STATEMENT FOR THE LUZO BRAZILIAN
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH IN NEW JERSEY

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Date completed: March 2014

Problem

The Luzo-Brazilian Seventh-day Adventist Church in New Jersey had been working without a vision statement since its inception in the 1980s. As a result, the current departments of the church were not aligned with one another. Officials had spent money, time, and energy on programs and activities that would promote the departments individually, but they lacked a unified direction. The building needed to be demolished and rebuilt, the growth of the church was stagnated, and there were no intentional church growth planning.

Methodology

The Luzo-Brazilian church worked toward the development of a shared vision. Shared vision is the result of a collaborative effort between the pastor, church leaders, and church members to find, through closeness with the Lord, His vision for the future of the church.

Results

The development of a shared vision was effectively implemented. The shared vision proved to have a positive impact in the life of the church members and in the community as well. A five-year vision period was created, the church grew compared to the previous years without a vision and a new church was built.

Conclusion

The shared vision for the church works because the members are seeking God's guidance for the church that already belongs to God. God cares for the church more than anybody in this world; therefore, if the church members are committed to seek the Lord in prayer, confession, and obedience, God will reveal His will for the church and a vision will be born that will guide its future and it will bring Glory to the Author of the vision. It is a combined effort; all the church members should be involved in this process.

Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

DEVELOPING A VISION STATEMENT FOR THE LUZO
BRAZILIAN SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST
CHURCH IN NEW JERSEY

A Project Document
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
Paulo Macena
March 2014

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Vision: My Personal Journey

When I started in the ministry, the lack of vision among my churches contributed to frustration and disappointment for me and for the church members. Although I was always busy preparing sermons, visiting, creating new programs, evangelizing, and so on, I was accomplishing very little. In fact, despite completing the everyday work of the church, in the larger sense of guiding the church and its membership forward in growth, often I accomplished nothing at all.

I had not devoted time to help the church to develop a vision, and in that vacuum of leadership the members had created their own visions for their ministries. The number of visions sometimes would equal the number of departments in the local church. Each officer had his or her own ideas about ministry and the direction the church should take or not take. The multiple perspectives coupled with a lack of guiding vision resulted in work that would be inconsistent or unnecessarily overlapping. Without a vision, many members of the church inadvertently undermined each other's work and good intentions.

To learn how to foster a better more fulfilling ministry, I started reading books about successful churches and business organizations and I found that every successful organization had developed a clear vision. As Blanchard and Stoner wrote,

Vision creates focus. Vision identifies direction. Vision unleashes power. Vision allows you to move Full Steam Ahead . . . in order for organizations to be fully

powered, the leaders need to know how to create a compelling vision that resonates with the hopes and dreams of those in the organization. Leadership is about going somewhere. If not in service of a shared vision, leadership can become self-serving. (Blanchard & Stoner, 2003, p. ix)

I learned that if I was going to be busy—and even in my earliest days in the ministry, I knew I would be—then I should be busy working toward a purpose and a vision. I should help the church to develop a unique vision and guide the body toward it with a final destination in mind.

A clearly developed vision benefits not only the pastor of the church but all of the church's members. White reminded readers of the importance of purposeful leadership to church progress:

There is need of Nehemiahs in the church today, not men who can pray and preach only, but men whose prayers and sermons are braced with firm and eager purpose. The course pursued by this Hebrew patriot in the accomplishment of his plans is one that should still be adopted by ministers and leading men. When they have laid their plans, they should present them to the church in such a manner as to win their interest and cooperation. Let the people understand the plans and share in the work, and they will have a personal interest in its prosperity. (White, 1995, p. 122)

When I entered the Doctor of Ministry program, I decided to learn more about vision for the local church. I realized that developing a vision properly is essential for a striving, successful, motivated church.

Statement of the Problem

The Luzo-Brazilian Seventh-day Adventist Church in New Jersey had been working without a vision statement since its inception in the 1980s. As a result, the current departments of the church were not aligned with one another. Officials had spent money, time, and energy on programs and activities that would promote the departments individually, but they lacked a unified direction. This dispersed developmental structure

and function was a potential contributing factor to the low baptismal rate. The church building is in bad condition and the facility needs to be demolished and rebuilt.

Statement of the Task

The task of this project is to develop and communicate an integrated vision statement for the Luzo-Brazilian Seventh-day Adventist Church that will define the church's direction for the next five years. The vision will be implemented and evaluated to determine (a) if a vision can contribute to church growth and (b) how, specifically, a vision can contribute to growth in terms of baptism and discipleship development.

Justification for the Project

Since 2002, the annual number of new members baptized every year into the church has not increased. Every year the church has created programs, and the department officers have worked harder to devote money, time, and energy in different activities, and yet the number of people being baptized or disciplined has remained low. These low rates pose challenges to the church's ongoing growth and vitality.

Although this problem confronts all parts of the church, its departments are not united in responding to it. To the contrary, each department prepares its own programs designed to promote that specific department. Despite these multiple programs and approaches, no group has demonstrated efficacy in bringing newcomers to the church.

The members of the church are drained physically and financially. They feel obligated to give their time and money for multiple activities. Without a unified vision to guide the church membership, however, these activities result in less efficient or productive outcomes than they otherwise might provide. As of the time of this study, these programs are not bringing about developmental growth through discipleship or

numerical growth through accession to the church. The church building is literally falling apart, a section of the building is not safe to be used, and the whole building needs to be demolished and rebuilt again. Developing a vision will help the church members and leaders understand how, why, and where they are headed. It will help them to identify where they are and where God intends them to be.

Description of the Project Process

Theological reflection in this study will be centered on three biblical themes. First, God's vision is present in everything He has done, from creation to redemption; second, the specific vision given by God to biblical characters such as Moses and Nehemiah from the Old Testament, and Jesus from the New Testament; third, the pastor as an instrument chosen by God is responsible for guiding the members to discover God's shared vision for the church.

Current literature will be reviewed in Chapter 3. This review will include books and articles from both secular and religious sources. Researchers, scholars, and theologians have different options and opinions concerning how and why a vision should be developed. I will study and evaluate these differences, define which one I will use, and clarify the reasons for my choice.

Strategies for developing a shared vision within the core group of the church will be facilitated. Likewise, plans will be developed to better know my church's community and its members. These plans include making an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, obstacles, and barriers (SWOB) of the local congregation and its departments. A strategy will also be created to implement, communicate, and evaluate the vision. The insights and

lessons on the vision as derived from this study will be shared with other Seventh-day Adventist churches in New Jersey for better pastoral management.

Expectations of This Project

This project is expected to assist the quantitative growth of the Luzo-Brazilian church. This project will help bring the church a common sense of direction and purpose. It will also assist with interpersonal relations, helping the church departments in working together as a team with the same vision, goal, and purpose. The project will aid in planning programs and activities according to a shared vision. Moreover, this project will help the members understand why it is vital to continue to be generous with their resources and finally a new church building will be completed.

Beyond the local context, this project will provide a tool for other pastors to lead their churches to be more effective in their communities. Finally, I intend for this project to help me develop skills that will be useful in any church in which I may serve.

Limitation of the Project

The project focuses on the Luzo-Brazilian Church in Newark, New Jersey. It does not include other churches in the New Jersey conference nor any conference department. It is intended that the positive influence of developing a shared vision will be a tool to help other leaders who are looking for direction on how to better lead their ministries.

Definitions of Terms

Mission: A mission is action oriented and defines what an organization is doing. As Barna (2001) wrote, "Mission describes your overall purpose for existence. When you describe your mission to someone, you define the most fundamental element of what you

are striving to accomplish” (p. 72). Likewise, Clawson (2012) commented, “The mission statement comes first because it defines what the organization will and will not do: the organization’s reason for existence” (p. 113). Abrahams (1999), who studied the mission statements of 301 top corporations in America, defined a mission statement as “an enduring statement of purpose for an organization that identifies the scope of its operations in product and market terms, and reflects its values and priorities” (1999, p. 14). In short, a mission statement answers the question, Why do we exist? “Leaders must accept the notion that all organizations exist to make people’s lives better” (Lencioni, 2012, p. 82).

Vision: According to Barna, vision is “the concept of what does not exist but could, what motivates us to continue to strive toward the fulfillment of that outcome” (2001, p. 38). Vision is the ability to see a future that does not exist yet but can be created. Vision has also been defined as “an ideal and unique image of the future” (Kouzes & Posner, 2012, p. 95). Malphurs discussed vision in the context of the church, describing it as “a clear and challenging picture of the future of a ministry as you believe that it can and must be” (1999, p. 32).

Conference: The local conference/mission is an organization of churches within a state, province, or territory (or part thereof), which appoints ministers, owns church properties, and organizes the distribution of tithes and payments to ministers.

CHAPTER 2

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR THE
VISION FOR THE LOCAL CHURCH

Introduction

The Bible is God’s book; it contains God’s message, and it shows His intentions for the world. This chapter will focus on the Bible to discover God’s actions, visions, and plans, as well as how He executes those plans. To have vision is to have the ability to see beyond the present; it is the ability to see the world. Vision can help to see the world in the future as a better place. Before a vision, life can seem chaotic and lack perspective. People may seem busy and yet accomplish nothing. Like a carousel, life without vision goes around and around with no end in sight. Without vision, life can become exhausting, stressful, and frustrating. Having a vision brings organization, structure, objectives, dreams, written plans, timelines, and strategies of work, teamwork, accountability, results, fulfillment, and hope for the future. Vision also brings the certainty that individuals or groups are heading in the right direction and accomplishing a goal.

The Bible tells about the greatest visionary of all—God. Before God started his creation, He envisioned the universe and every detail in it. He saw the future, and His vision showed a perfect world inhabited by perfect creatures created in His own perfect and holy image. God created man and shared His vision with him. He wanted the human race to develop a close relationship with Him and become part of His heavenly family:

“God created man for His own glory, that after test and trial the human family might become one with the heavenly family” (White, 1973, p. 344).

This chapter will present the following topics: God as a visionary being, Old and New Testament Bible visionaries, and a biblical view of a pastor as a visionary leader.

God: A Visionary Being

The Bible indicates that before creating man and woman, God created the universe and the planet earth. God, through his vision, brought life, structure, and organization into the chaos, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters” (Gen 1:1-2). Before the creation of the world, God envisioned the existence of this planet, including all of its living creatures and human beings, but above all God envisioned the relationship He would have with them:

The story of the creation at the beginning of Genesis, one of the best known chapters in the Bible, tells how God created heaven and earth in six days. It described the relationship between God, heaven and earth, the visible world of material things and living creature, and above all, human beings. (Barker, 2010, p. 34)

God foresaw the fall and sin entering the world, but He kept his plan and followed His vision. God made the decision to create the world even though He knew that His vision of perfection would be shattered.

God created the world because it was His will. He had a vision, and He had a plan to accomplish it:

There is nothing outside God or within Him that obliges Him to create...the world exists because God wills it to exist. He could have not willed it. He could have willed this world or another, different, world. Creation is a free gift of God, and a free expression of his goodness and love. (Morales, 2001, p. 103)

The Bible begins without any explanation saying that God is the creator of everything. Human beings also have the ability to create, but they do so by using materials that already exist. People cannot create something from nothing. Humanity's limitations dictate that people will always use materials that already exist. Such is not the case for the visionary God. He created the heavens and earth from nothing. Nothing was there, and from nothing He created this planet: "By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth" (Ps 33:6).

God envisioned the world, and then He spoke, and what did not exist before came into existence:

God created it, that is, made it out of nothing. There was not any pre-existent matter out of which the world was produced. The fish and fowl were indeed produced out of the waters and the beasts and man out of the earth; but that earth and those waters were made out of nothing. By the ordinary power of nature, it is impossible that anything should be made out of nothing; no artificer can work, unless he has something to work on. (Matthew, 1996, p. 76)

As Lindsay noted:

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). "The word 'bara' is the Hebrew word translated in Genesis 1:1 as 'created.' It is a word meaning 'to call into being something that never previously existed.' God simply spoke, and nothing became something. 'Bara' means 'created out of no existing matter.'" (Lindsay, 1999, p. 20)

God dreamed about this world. He envisioned everything that He created. His creation has a meaning and a reason for its existence. The earth "exists only by the will of the Creator and the creative Word of almighty God. . . . As a creature, the earth is God's possession" (Kittel, 1964, p. 1093).

When houses are being built, one of the first things done is the hiring of an architect to design the blueprint. The contractor will then use that blueprint to build the

house. In order for something to be created, it needs to be planned. There needs to be a vision of what it will become.

Hoehn mentioned that “He not only is the Designer, the Architect, and the Fabricator of infinitely more objects than those of human art, but He is also the Source, the Originator, and the Creator of the materials themselves intricate and marvelous” (1951, p. 6). Philo and Younge completed the above thought:

Now we must form a somewhat similar opinion of God, who, having determined to found a mighty state, first of all conceived its form in his mind, according to which form he made a world perceptible only by the intellect, and then completed one visible to the external senses, using the first one as a model. (1996, p. 4)

God, as a great visionary, envisioned in His mind the creation of the world and everything that is in it. This vision encompassed not only what can be seen and touched on this earth but also things that are out of humans’ reach, such as galaxies and the universe, “The heavens are Yours, the earth also is Yours; the world and all its fullness, You have founded them” (Ps 89:11).

God’s vision was not simply to create everything and leave it be, He would be the caretaker: “You alone are the LORD; You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and everything on it, the seas and all that is in them, and You preserve them all” (Neh 9:6).

Human Beings

In Genesis 1 God is filling the earth and the seas with all kinds of animals, birds, and creatures. Like a loving father, God was preparing the planet to receive His special guest: “The creation of man is the fulfillment of God’s purpose in describing the six days of ordering God’s creation” (Godfrey, 2003, p. 55). Stories in the Bible indicate that the human race is above all else in God’s eyes. Humankind was created in His glory:

“Everyone who is called by My name, Whom I have created for My glory; I have formed him, yes, I have made him” (Isa 43:7). Likewise, John said, “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being” (Rev 4:11). In the book of Hebrews, the author is amazed that God takes humans into consideration. One testified in a certain place, saying:

What is man that You are mindful of him, Or the son of man that You take care of him? You have made him a little lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, And set him over the works of Your hands. You have put all things in subjection under his feet. (Heb 2:6-9)

Adam and Eve were the most important piece of God’s vision. After the earth was created and ready to be inhabited, God formed man with His own hands. The Bible describes in detail the creation of mankind:

Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness. . . . So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. . . . And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. (Gen 1:27; 28:2:7)

The creation of the human race is the reason God had a vision for this planet. Studying the creation of Adam reveals special elements that were not present during the previous five days of the creation. God said that His next creation would be according to His likeness (Gen 1:26).

God used dust of the ground to create Adam. He kneeled down and gathered dust with His own hands and from this He formed man. David said, “I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well” (Ps 139:14). It was God’s vision, even before He created the world, to populate this planet with people with whom He could have a close relationship:

“Yahweh’s intention (vision) is that there be an on-going relationship with his people”
(Enns, 1997, p. 33).

The earth and all its beauty without the human race would be a very beautiful Garden, but it would be lifeless and without purpose. The reason God created the Garden was to fulfill His ultimate vision: the creation of humankind. God did not create the world in vain; He prepared a home for Adam and Eve. He had an intention, a purpose and a vision:

For thus says the LORD, Who created the heavens, Who is God, Who formed the earth and made it, Who has established it, Who did not create it in vain, Who formed it to be inhabited: “I am the LORD, and there is no other.” (Isa 45:18)

God envisioned, planned, and executed His plan. God’s vision was not just to create a garden and put people to live there, His vision was that the human race would be the caretakers of His creation. His vision saw beyond simply creating human beings. He had a vision for their lives:

Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.” (Gen 1:26-28)

God did a special preparation to create humans,

There is clearly no other creatures like the human they are set apart from the rest of the created order. This locates humans in some measure on the side of God. Humans reach beyond the immediate horizon to which the other creatures are confined.
(Fisher, 2010, p. 35)

God had a vision for mankind, and as soon as man became a living creature, God shared His vision with him. God showed Adam His creation and asked him to name the

animals. He walked with Adam, gave him a partner, and commanded them to procreate in the earth. God told Adam to be ruler of His creation:

You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen - even the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea that pass through the paths of the seas. (Ps 8:6-8)

Zuck wrote:

The key words in this statement of purpose are the verbs ‘rule’ (1:26, 28) and ‘subdue’ (v. 28). The first verb appears in the jussive (‘let them rule’) and imperative (‘rule ye’) of the Hebrew *rādāh* (‘have dominion, rule, dominate’). The second occurs also in the plural, the Hebrew verb being *kābaš* (‘subdue, bring into bondage’). Both verbs carry the idea of dominion. Hence, man is created to reign in a manner that demonstrates his lordship, his domination over all creation. (1991, pp. 14, 15)

The human race was not created to be slaves but to rule over and subdue the earth.

Mankind was created to have dominion over all creation. God shared with Adam and Eve His vision for the world He had created. God’s vision was accomplished. The earth and human race were created.

Memorial Day

A vision brings organization and structure to chaos. God followed a sequence when creating the world. God is a God of order and organization (1 Cor 14:33). God could have created everything in one day, but instead he decided to take seven days,

not because the Creator stood in need of a length of time (for it is natural that God should do everything at once, not merely by uttering a command, but by even thinking of it); but because the things created required arrangement; and number is akin to arrangement. (Philo, 1996, pp. 14, 15)

In the creation there is a pattern, a sequence, an order. Vision is required to create a world and everything that is in it. The prophet Isaiah said, “LORD, you are my God; I will exalt you and praise your name, for in perfect faithfulness you have done wonderful things, things planned long ago” (Isa 25:1). The prophet recognizes that the Lord does not

do things randomly. He carefully plans His activities in the world. He envisions them, He plans them, and He acts upon them. “The origin and organization of the universe was no chance affair. Every detail was planned in advanced, for ‘the Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath He established the heavens” (Hoen, 1951, p. 7).

When His work was complete, God established a day of Sabbath. The Sabbath day is a mark of God’s vision as the creator of heavens and earth. “For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: why the LORD blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it” (Exod 20:11). God’s intention was to give humankind a day that would serve as a memorial of His vision—the creation of the world and the beginning of a relationship with human race.

The book of Revelation, the last book of the Bible, reminds readers that God is the creator of everything and that worship should be the response to the Creator: “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being” (Rev 4:11). God’s vision was not just to create a world full of living things and human beings. God also had a vision to separate a special day so that He could spend time developing a relationship with His creation. That is the essence of God’s vision—to spend time with humankind.

The Fall

The Bible says that when God created the world, everything was good and perfect, and “God gave man a free will, which allowed him the opportunity to change his nature from innocence to sinfulness through disobedience” (Lindsay, 1998, p. 24). God’s vision was that the human race could experience abundant life, a life with no regrets, no crying, no hurts, pain, or difficulties. But they should be tested to see if they could

receive what was being offered: “God gave Adam and Eve a test, they could eat any tree but one; should he do so, death would result” (Enns, 1997, pp. 40, 41).

In Genesis 3, the Bible notes that Adam and Eve could not keep the covenant they made with God. Eve ate the fruit and gave it to Adam, who also ate, and at that moment both could understand that they had done something terrible that was contrary to God’s vision for their lives (Gen 3). Their sin affected not only the vision for their own lives but also God’s vision for all of creation:

The effects of the Fall extend to the physical cosmos. “Cursed is the ground because of you” (Gen. 3:17; cf. Rom. 8:20). Sin entered in the world and it affected not only the mankind but also the whole creation “which he (man) was given dominion.” (Wood, 1996, p. 116)

God’s vision for the universe was affected. His vision was still the same—a perfect world, inhabited by perfect beings, having a close relationship with their Creator—but the way He would accomplish His vision had to be changed.

God’s Vision to Restore Humankind

The fall was a deviation in God’s vision; however, it did not stop Him from working to bring about His vision. “He created humanity for fellowship with him, and when sin destroyed that fellowship, God acted to save and preserve a people with whom that original purpose (vision) of creation would be fulfilled” (Godfrey, 2003, p. 17).

Adam and Eve sinned, and they had to leave the Garden, but God, in His everlasting love for humankind, left the Garden as well. “God initiates His redemptive program by promising a Savior to Adam and Eve. The promise anticipates Messiah’s ultimate triumph over Satan, providing the basis for the restored kingdom” (Enns, 1997, p. 42).

God not only had a vision of creating a perfect world; in his wisdom, He also created a provision to save a fallen world. His vision of having humankind inheriting the

kingdom was not over. The Bible says, “Come you blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matt 25:34). God, even before the foundation of the world, knew that humankind would fail. Nevertheless, He was still willing to continue with His vision. God’s vision encompassed creation, restoration, and reconnection between creature and Creator.

God spoke of the enmity that would come between Satan and humankind. “And I will cause hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel” (Gen 3:15). “This is the *protevangelium*, the first announcement of the gospel in Scripture” (Enns, 1997, p. 42). God was not only willing to save the human race; He was willing to share His vision of saving the world with humankind. God is not only the Creator; He is the One who restores the world. The plan of redemption proves that God’s vision went beyond creation. He had a plan to restore everything and bring humankind back to Him. Immediately after sin entered the world, God started the process of restoration. Referencing God’s vision on restoration, the Apostle Paul said, “Heaven must receive Him until the time comes for God to restore everything, as He promised long ago through His holy prophets” (Acts 3:21). In Revelation, the last book of the Bible, John talks about making everything anew (Rev 21:1-4).

Jesus as a Visionary

Jesus, who is the son of God and God himself, was involved in the vision process of creation and restoration (John 1:1). When Jesus was walking on earth, He was following a vision that was established before the creation of the world:

To build His kingdom Jesus developed the greatest, the most comprehensive, and most meaningful plan in the universe. The plan of redemption was developed with

great care before sin entered. The Godhead took into consideration all the costs and risks involved. This was no afterthought. The plan included all the essentials for the happiness and well-being of mankind. (Bietz, 1980, pp. 117, 118)

As White wrote, “The plan of salvation had its place in the counsels of the Infinite from all eternity” (White, 1913, p. 83).

God’s vision to save the world came at a very high cost, the life of His only Son, Jesus Christ (John 3:16). Because God is an Omniscient God, He knew that His Son would have to die to accomplish His vision. Jesus shared the same vision as the Father, and He planned with His father to come to this world and die in order to rescue the fallen race (John 1:1-5). Jesus is the mediator and “never has the Mediator been promised without the shedding of blood, and all the Apostles unanimously agreed about the purpose of his coming” (Berkouwer, 1965, p. 28).

The idea of the Son of Man leaving heaven to incarnate among people on earth to save them is the story of redemption. Berkouwer complemented it by writing, “The message of incarnation is never a thing by itself; it preaches not the elevation of human nature but its deliverance and restoration by Him whom the Father had sent” (p. 29).

His vision was first shared with humankind through prophets. Jesus’ life is portrayed throughout scripture. He would come as an infant (Isa 7:14), He would be born in Bethlehem (Mic 5:2), He would live in Egypt (Hos 11:1), He had a mission (Gen 12:3; Ps 21:1), He would perform miracles (Isa 35:5-6; 42:7; 53:4), He would suffer (Isa 53:4-6), He would die on the cross (Ps 22:14, 17), He would resurrect (Ps 16:8-10; 30:3; 41:10; Hos 6:2), He would ascend to heaven (Ps 16:11; 24:7; 68:18; 110:1), He would come again (Ps 50:3-6; Isa 9:6-7; Dan 7:13-14).

We learn from the message of Scripture that Christ came to give His soul, His life, a ransom for many (Matt: 20:28; cf. John 12:27); not to be ministered unto, but to minister (Mark 10:45); to destroy the works of the devil (I John 3:8, cf. Ps. 40). He

came to save sinners (I Tim 1:15), to seek that which was lost (Luke 19:10), to call sinners to repentance (Mark 2:17), and to bear witness unto the truth (John 18:37). His being sent and His coming are unto salvation and deliverance. (Berkouwer, 1965, p. 30)

It was Jesus' vision to create, to save, and to restore humankind. "He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time" (1 Tim 1:9).

Jesus' vision is not only to come one day and restore everything. His vision goes beyond that. Jesus had the vision of offering His power to those who are willing to restore their lives here and now:

Access to such power is a result of grace and results in a fundamental new goal for believers, as well as a new identity. They have become God's new creation (Timothy 2:10). The phrase describing the new creation (*autou gar esmen poiēma*, 'for we are His creation,' author's trans.), is emphatic since the pronoun 'His' begins the clause. We are, indeed, His creation! And that creation has a purpose. . . . The power Paul has in mind here is one that directs and transforms a person who has experienced God's gracious renewal into new life. The good news of God's grace is not only that it saves but that it also transforms. (Zuck, 1994, p. 312)

Jesus' life in this world fulfilled His vision for the lives of those who were around Him.

He sent the disciples to preach that the kingdom of God was here:

Their message was to be that the kingdom of God had arrived: the signs of its presence were the mighty works which they would perform. When the gospel is proclaimed, the blessings of God's rule are near or within the grasp of all who will accept them. (Carson, 1994, p. 1455)

The performance of so many miracles in the lives of those who were around Him was a way to show humankind that He wanted people to be restored in the here and now.

Jesus' concern extended beyond the spiritual reality: "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (John 10:10):

The abundant life is a life of wide interests. It has come true, even with reference to ordinary secular affairs, that the effect of Christianity has been, not to deaden men to

the interests of this life, with its common joys and sorrows, but, on the contrary, to make their experience larger and more intense. (Hastings, 1958, p. 443)

Jesus' vision includes all areas of human lives. He wants people to live abundantly. He is concerned about daily life. He knows that humans cannot control tomorrow; He had the vision of a fearless life for humankind (Matt 6:34). When He visited Lazarus's sister, Martha, He said to her, "You are worried and upset about many things" (John 10:41). Jesus was telling her to not just live her life but live it abundantly.

Jesus's vision for humanity includes not only a new life in heaven where all things will be restored; it also includes the enjoyment of living an abundant life while here on earth. An abundant life does not mean that people should value things that are not important. Instead, they should value and enjoy their lives here with families, friends, churches, and most of all, their relationship with Him.

God's Vision: Salvation Only in Christ

God's vision goes beyond creation. Jesus' vision was perfect in all its details. The Bible tells that salvation comes only through Christ: "Neither is their salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Throughout the Bible Christ is spoken of as the Leader who offers salvation to mankind – the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. The one objective of the Bible is to help us understand that salvation is found only in Christ. (Bietz, 1980, p. 10)

White stated, "Every act of Christ's life on earth was in fulfillment of the plan that had existed from the days of eternity. Before He came to earth, the plan lay out before Him, perfect in all its details" (White, 1898, p. 147). White used the word plan to explain that Jesus' vision existed before the creation of the world. Bietz (1980) commented that:

Every act of Christ's life was in fulfillment of the plan that had existed from the beginning. Christ's goal in life is clearly and succinctly stated: "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Luke 19:10. Everything He did contributed to the achievement of that goal. His exemplary life, His teaching, His preaching, His healing, His death, and His resurrection – all served to save that which was lost. (Bietz, 1980, p. 10)

Jesus lived according to His vision. His life was dedicated to fulfilling His ministry:

Christ was always ahead of the crowd but never lost touch with them. He always stood above the crowd, not in arrogance and pride, but in vision, understanding, and purpose. Christ knew where He wanted to go, and His life was dedicated to getting there. . . . He took time to think without becoming just a mere dreamer. (p. 13)

Christ knew what he wanted to accomplish and never set aside His vision of the world and salvation of the human race. He did not waste time on things that were not important or that would distract Him from His vision.

Many times the Pharisees tried to stop Jesus' work (Matt 12:14; 23:1-5), but he paid them little attention because He was busy fulfilling His vision on earth:

After announcing His ministry strategy of service to the Kingdom of God, he immediately launched into teaching and healing. The general populace, other than his skeptical hometown acquaintances, wanted him to settle down in their territory and establish God's kingdom on their doorsteps. But, always clear about who he was and about the scope of what he was called to do, Jesus repeated his vision and his strategy of service: "I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other cities also; for I was sent for this purpose" (Luke 4:43). To us God's kingdom may sometimes seem mysterious; to Jesus it was his mission. It was the rule by which he actually lived his life. (Dale, 1996, p. 33)

Jesus was motivated by the love that He has for humankind. He lived with authenticity, submitting to His father and following His plan to die for the human race. Jesus was a visionary, His vision—to save the human race.

The Promise

God kept working on His vision throughout the years. He never took His eyes from His vision. He accompanied His people in every chapter of history, and He always

had someone leading His people. God was in control of all the details, and He consistently provided guidance through prophets, patriarchs, and even angels. To better understand this requires a reading through the Bible and review of the story.

A promise was made to Abraham, the promise that he would be a father of a great nation (Gen 12). It took years for the promise to be fulfilled, but Abraham finally had a son called Isaac (Gen 21). Isaac had two sons: Jacob and Esau (Gen 25). Jacob had 12 sons, the youngest of whom was Joseph (Gen 30).

Joseph's brothers sold him to Egypt (Gen 37), and after many years, a famine struck the earth (Gen 41, 42). Joseph's brother went to Egypt for food; by this time Joseph was the Governor of Egypt (Gen 41). After Joseph told his brother who he was, he decided to bring his family to live in Egypt.

Many years later, a new Pharaoh was governing Egypt. The Pharaoh "didn't know Joseph," and he started noticing that the people of Israel growing in number. He became afraid that they would rebel against him (Exod 1):

In the period when, for Israel, the completed process of developing into a nation becomes historically visible, the destiny of homelessness of these people is also increasingly revealed. Egypt had been a friendly foreign land when one of their own, Joseph, had occupied high offices of Egyptian government. Now, the land of the Pharaohs had become hostile, alien territory; the might of the tyrants had turned the Israelites into a despised, subjugated class of slaves. (Bock, 1986, p. 15)

Moses

Egypt enslaved the Israelites for more than 400 years, and God chose a man—Moses—to deliver the people from slavery and lead them to the Promised Land. The book of Genesis is followed by what may properly be called "the book of redemption" (Purkiser, Taylor, & Taylor, 1977, p. 93).

God always used people to accomplish His vision, and He called Moses to deliver the Israelites from slavery. Moses was born in slavery, and at the time of his birth, Pharaoh ordered that all newborn males should be put to death. His mother protected him as best she could, but as he grew older, she feared that the soldiers would find him. She decided to put him in a basket and place him in a river (Exod 2). God was behind every detail so her plan was successful. The Pharaoh's own daughter found him and raised him as her own child (Exod 2).

Wrong Timing to Pursue God's Vision

When Moses learned of his humble beginnings, it became difficult for him to see his own people forced into slavery:

Under a regime of slavery, subjects become objects; the Hebrew people lose their identity. Pharaoh thinks he is a god, and the Hebrew people do not think at all. To the great cultural questions of identity - Who am I? To what group do I belong? - they can only give a negative nonanswer - they are slaves of Pharaoh, which is to say they are not themselves. The other overriding question of life-What should I do?-does not arise because the people can only answer, "What we are told!" The rules of life are made by others, and slaves cannot change them. They are nonentities-bodies without brains-because they are idolaters, bowing down to men like themselves. The Hebrew are followers without leaders of their own; whether they will or not - the point is they have no will - Pharaoh and his overseers are their leaders. (Wildavsky, 1984, p. 29)

Moses was a visionary leader: "In common use, 'visionary leadership', refers to any leader with an explicit image of the future, whatever the content of that vision or the means chosen to accomplish it" (Keren, 1988, p. 51). Moses attempted to encourage his people, saying that God would fulfill His promise of deliverance:

Moses remained at court until he was forty years of age. His thoughts often turned upon the abject condition of his people, and he visited his brethren in their servitude, and encouraged them with the assurance that God would work for their deliverance. (White, 1890, p. 247)

As an adult Moses saw an Egyptian beating an Israelite; in a fit of rage, he killed the Egyptian and had to escape to Midian to save his life (Exod 2:11-15). By killing an Egyptian to save an Israelite, Moses was subconsciously acting upon his own vision to liberate his people. Moses knew in his heart the assurance that God would use him to deliver the Israelites, but the Israelites were not yet ready for deliverance: “Moses thought that his own people would realize that God was using him to rescue them, but they did not” (Acts 7:20-29).

At 40 years of age, Moses knew that he would liberate God’s people. He understood the privilege that had been afforded to him by being raised as a prince, and he was willing to use this privilege to deliver his own people from slavery. Beegle commented, “This story implies a good deal about Moses. Not only did he have a deep sense of loyalty to his own people, but he had a burning sense of justice” (1972, p. 56).

Moses was a visionary, and his heart burned for God’s desires, but he needed to learn to work in God’s own time. Because he killed an Egyptian, Moses had to flee to Midian. In this new place, without realizing it, Moses was being prepared to fulfill God’s vision to deliver God’s people. God had His eyes on His people and heard their cries. He had not forgotten the covenant He had made with Adam and the vision He had for the human race:

The next state of Moses’ preparation is in Midian where, as an adult, he takes refuge after killing an Egyptian. Back in Egypt the Israelites are crying out for help. God hears them and remembers his covenant with their forefathers (Ex 2:23-25). This does not imply that he could ever forget his promises, but rather that he is about to act on the basis of those promises. The theology of Exodus is primarily the theology of the covenant in action. (Goldsworthy, 2002, p. 132)

God appeared to Moses in a burning bush and told him to join in His vision to liberate His people.

However, the Bible says that 40 years before that event, “he was approaching the age of forty, and it entered his mind to visit his brethren, the sons of Israel” (Acts 7:23). It was Moses’ idea to visit the Israelites. Now, 40 years later, God appeared to Moses and now it was God’s idea that Moses must go and visit His people:

I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt. (Exod 7-10)

Moses was a visionary not because the vision was born in his heart but because he accepted God’s vision for himself and for his own people. God always shares His vision with those who are concerned with the things that concern Him. In Moses’ life he displayed discontent with the situation his people were in. God was the one who would share His vision with Moses and give him the tools to accomplish it. Moses was an instrument that allowed God to use him:

Moses’ ministry is to be the human instrument through which God will act to redeem his people. It is vital that we understand the place given to certain key figures, such as Moses, in Old Testament revelation. Their significance for us is not primarily in the way they stand as examples of godliness and faith, but rather in the role they play in revealing and foreshadowing the nature of the work of Christ. Moses is the divinely appointed man to whom God reveals his purposes (vision) and will for his people. (Goldsworthy, 2002, p. 132)

God told him to go and deliver His people. It was God’s plan, God’s vision, and God’s timing. Moses allowed God’s vision to become his own vision.

At 40, he had the assurance that God called him to deliver his people, but he did not have God’s blessings to act at that time. It was not until Moses was 80, when he no longer had the assurance, that he finally had God’s blessings to act.

Moses–Visionary Realism

Moses was a visionary realist. Visionary realists “combine vision and a sense of reality” (Keren, 1988, p. 51). At 40 years of age, Moses was not a visionary realist, but at 80, he was. Moses checked his reality: He was a shepherd in the desert; he was not the person to do this kind of job. He was afraid and felt he was not ready for such a task. “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?” (Exod 3:11).

The text stresses again and again the modesty, hesitation, humility, and possibly also the fear of the leader in the face responsibility: “Moses said to the LORD, ‘Pardon your servant, Lord. I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue’.” (Keren, 1988)

If God had told Moses 40 years earlier to deliver the Israelites, he would have said yes, thinking he was ready for the task. Now, after spending 40 years in the desert, Moses assessed his leadership abilities and felt that he was no longer up to the task.

God explained to Moses that he was not the one who would deliver the Israelites from slavery; instead, God would use him to perform signs and miracles to deliver his people. When Moses finally understood what was expected of him, he accepted the divine call:

When the divine call came to assume a crucial role in the destiny of men and nations, Moses stepped into the gap. He may have been reluctant. He may have been frightened. He may have been filled with regret and self-doubt. But in the end, he yielded . . . and became God’s instrument in his own generation. (Swindoll, 1999, p. 2)

God’s vision was embedded in him, and God’s vision became Moses’ vision. Moody said, “Moses spent his first forty years thinking he was somebody. He spent his second forty years learning he was nobody. He spent his third forty years discovering what God

can do with a nobody” (as cited in Swindoll, 1999, p. 20). God shared His vision with Moses, and he lived accordingly.

The Pastor as a Visionary

Throughout the ages, God has called upon humankind, and “the plan was laid for man to save man” (Bietz, 1980, p. 123). Humanity was invited to be part of God’s great vision. God could have done the work by Himself, or He could have called the angels to proclaim the gospel message. Instead He decided to include us into His vision:

We today are commissioned to help this same Leader, Christ, achieve His goal of bringing salvation to the world. He has delegated responsibilities to us. “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” Matt 28:19, 20. (Bietz, 1980, p. 11)

The pastor has a work to do. He has a mission to perform and a vision to follow and “every administrative activity should be permeated with the idea of finishing the gospel in all the world” (Barker, 2010, p. 13). That is the reason pastors are called to preach the gospel and motivate the church to do the same.

Pastors should be visionaries. They should dream about the success of the church. They should spend countless hours thinking about how to evangelize and how to spread God’s message to their community. Pastors who dream about the future of the church ask the most important questions: What is God’s will for this church? What is God’s vision for this community? After all, God knows what is best for the local church. Even the thought of thinking about the future of the local church comes from the Lord; He is the One that put in our minds the desire to dream about the future of the church:

The kingdom of God describes a spiritual common-wealth embracing all who do the Father’s will. The God movement calls us into a dynamic reign, not a static rule. God,

in his sovereign activity, dares us, stretches us, surprises us, and keeps us dreaming. (Dale, 1986, p. 95)

Pastors are called by God to lead His people; scripture presents pastors as spiritual

leaders:

In 2 Timothy 2, Paul uses seven different metaphors to describe the rigors of leadership. He pictures the minister as a teacher (v. 2), a soldier (v. 3), an athlete (v. 5), a farmer (v. 6), a workman (v. 15), a vessel (vv. 20, 21), and a slave (v. 24). All such images evoke ideas of sacrifice, labor, service, and hardship. (MacArthur, 2005, p. xii)

It is a tremendous responsibility to guide God's people, but one day pastors will be asked how faithfully and how diligently they fulfilled their calling. Christ will judge them:

This, then, is how you ought to regard us: as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the mysteries God has revealed. Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful. I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me. Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of the heart. At that time each will receive their praise from God. (1 Cor 4:1-5)

Pastors are called to do the will of God. The apostle Paul in his two letters to the Thessalonians tells about the work of the ministry: praying (1 Thess 1:2-3; 3:9-13), evangelizing (1:4-5, 9-10), equipping (1:6-8), defending (2:1-6), loving (2:7-8), laboring (2:9), modeling (2:10), leading (2:10-12), feeding (2:13), watching (1:3-18), warning (4:1-8), teaching (4:9-5:11), exhorting (5:12-14), encouraging (2 Thess 1:3-12), correcting (2:1-12), confronting (3:6,14), and rescuing (3:15).

Paul also says that the pastor's wisdom comes from the Lord. Each pastor has different talents, but each is a leader, and God is the One who gives them capacity to do and to be everything that Paul described. Paul notes that God chooses the foolish things of the world to accomplish His vision:

Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him. It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord. (1 Cor 1:26-31)

Pastors are vessels (2 Cor 4:7); they carry God's message, they carry God's vision and live to fulfill God's mission to His church. They must love what they do. They must care and love God's sheep not because they have to but because of the willingness of their hearts. They accepted God's invitation to work for Him.

Peter said:

To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. (2 Pet 5:1-3)

When pastors agree to follow God's commission, they are not suddenly made more special than others. There is no reason to boast for being preachers of the gospel:

For when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, since I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! If I preach voluntarily, I have a reward; if not voluntarily, I am simply discharging the trust committed to me. (2 Cor 9:16-17)

The knowledge that we did not earn the right to preach through our own efforts or abilities should humble us. God called to do the ministry, God trusted us to proclaim His word, and God chose us to lead His flock. To forget that is to take the first step toward disqualification from the ministry. (MacArthur, 2005, p. 21)

Paul was aware of his calling, as he said:

On the contrary, we speak as those approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts. You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed—God is our witness. (1 Thess 2:4-5)

MacArthur says that pastors work for the glory of God (2 Cor 3:7-11), not for the glory of the ministry (2 Cor 4:7):

In God's gracious sovereignty, He chose to reconcile believers to Himself through Christ. In His marvelous plan He has committed to them the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:18), based upon His Word of reconciliation (v. 19). The office and function of the pastor has a key role in this ministry to proclaim the mystery of godliness. His functions are associated with the church, the pillar and support of the truth. (1 Tim. 3:15-16). (MacArthur, 2005, p. 27)

Pastors are called to carry God's vision of salvation to the world.

A Pre-existent Vision

When the pastor is invited to work with a church that already has a vision, his/her primary job would be to access the church vision, to access the reality, and to support it, regardless of its stage. When a church develops a vision, it has a time frame. If the vision is for 5 years, the pastor has to access it: how long was it implemented? Was the vision implemented two or three years ago? The pastor now has the responsibility, as the new leader, to help the church to honor and fulfill the vision that has already been developed in the past.

Unfortunately, some pastors start working in a new church that already has a vision, and they ignore what has been happening in the church, and want to start from 'zero', as if the church didn't exist before his/her arrival. This is not a good approach, because the members might get offended that all their work was in vain, and most likely they will not support the pastor's initiative to start developing a new church vision.

The new pastor should wait for a time frame that allows adjusting the vision in a manner that communicates respect for the existing vision, or at an appropriate time start the process all over again to develop a new vision for the church.

The Call

In the Old Testament, the people of Israel are sometimes portrayed as sheep without a shepherd (Ps 100:3, 44:22, 119:176, Jer 23:1; 50:6). God intervenes, calling his servants to deliver a message to the people (Exod 6:6; Isa 1:6-8; Jer 1; Jonah 21:15-17). Being called by God is an honor and a privilege (Heb 5:4; Phil 3:14). The purpose of the calling is to edify God's people (Eph 4:11-12). It is not a call for status or recognition but to serve and to enlighten God's church:

The spirit of the true shepherd is one of self-forgetfulness. He loses sight of self in order that he may work the works of God. By the preaching of the word and by personal ministry in the homes of the people, he learns their needs, their sorrows, their trials; and, co-operating with the great Burden Bearer, he shares their afflictions, comforts their distresses, relieves their soul hunger, and wins their hearts to God. (White, 1911, p. 527)

God, an all-powerful being, is willing to call imperfect people to deliver His perfect and urgent message:

The call of a pastor is an awesome experience. When God lays His burden on the heart of a man, He intends to lead the church through that under shepherd. The fact that the call is awesome in its source and ultimate intention necessitates faithful and honest reflection on its meaning and cost. Such signal honor is not handed out carelessly by the Great Shepherd. He chooses whom He wills to do that which is will. (Cothen & Barlow, 2002, p. 3)

The experience of receiving God's call is different from one person to another. When God called Isaiah, He gave him a vision from the throne of God:

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. . . . Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!" (Isa 1:6-8)

Isaiah's call is a reminder that God, sitting on His throne with all his power and glory, is looking throughout the earth to find someone whom He can use for His service. Isaiah answered positively to God's call. Sometimes people are not eager to accept such

challenges. Moses, for example, at first said no, and then after God insisted, he finally obeyed God's call.

God is the One who takes the initiative to call men and women to share His vision. Since the fall, God has been doing everything He can to ensure that humanity understands the message that saves. God called Noah to preach about the flood. He called Abraham to be a father of a great nation. God promised to bless Abraham so he could bless others. God called Moses for a special task: to deliver His people from bondage. He called Joshua to guide the people of Israel into the Promise Land. He called Gideon to deliver the Israelites from the hands of the Midianites. He called Nehemiah to rebuild the temple that had been destroyed. He called David to be the king of Israel. He called the Apostles to be fishermen, and He has called many others throughout the history of the world.

God always takes initiative to call people to fulfill His vision to save humanity. God always tells them what to do. The call to fulfill God's vision never comes from men telling God, but always from God telling men. It is a simple matter of listening to hear God's call:

A call has no maps, no itinerary to follow, no destination to envision. Rather, a call depends upon hearing a Voice. The organ of faith is the ear, not the eye. First and last, it is something one listens for. Everything depends upon the relationship of the listener to One who calls. (Cedar, Hughes, & Patterson, 1991, p. 27)

Answering God's call is a great honor and privilege; if people listen to Him and follow His lead, then they will be part of His grand plan to save humanity.

The Message

Not only did God initiate each call, but the message to be delivered was also given by God. God did not send out people without a specific task. The message was

always clear. When God called Noah he was given a specific task to perform—build an Ark—and a specific message to preach—the earth will be destroyed by flood. The same happened when God called Abraham, Jacob, Gideon, David, and so many others. Each received a clear vision from God regarding what God wanted them to do. When Jesus chose disciples, he trained them and then sent them away with a clear message (Luke 9:1-6; Matt 10). Throughout the ages the message has been the same: Preaching the Gospel will lead to the restoration of the human race.

The word originates with the Father (John 17:7-8). He gives it to the Son (John 14:10). The Son speaks only Father's words and gives it to the Holy Spirit, who shares the word with us (John 16:13-14). Consequently, the word is made effective in the disciples of Christ by the joining of the word with the power of the Holy Spirit. It is in this union that the restoration of fallen man finds its solution.

God is a visionary God. He created the world and everything in it. He shared His vision with Adam and Eve. Sin entered in the world, and God created a vision to save the human race. Jesus and the Holy Spirit, who are God in one, also shared God's vision. Together, they created a plan to save humankind. Their vision was shared with the human race through pastors called to spread the message that brings peace and eternal life.

Conclusion

Throughout the Scriptures we observe that God is a visionary God. Even before the creation He planned everything He made. Nothing is by chance. Like an architect, He does not act before the blue print is already formed in His mind.

As the architect of the creation of the universe, He was also the One who planned and provided through the sacrificial death of His only Son to save the human race from

eternal death. And as the Creator-leader, He is the One who shares the vision with the human race and invites us to participate in the salvific plan to restore humankind.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

A review of literature relating to the subjects of vision will serve as a knowledge base for better understanding of the role of vision in the local church. Material from scholars and church pastors will be reviewed to present some advantages of developing vision in organizational and church contexts. I will also examine business literature, as the concept of vision in business is relevant to this study. This chapter will include (a) an overview of the benefits of vision on the local church, (b) an analysis of the detrimental effects of a lack of vision, (c) opposing views on developing a vision for a local church, and (d) a discussion of developing a culture to promote vision in the local church.

How Vision Benefits the Work of the Church

To open this literature review, an anecdote can illustrate the importance of vision to any endeavor. Lee (1989) described the Christopher Columbus Award, a dubious distinction, given in jest to the person who is responsible for fouling up a project or plan. It is explained like this: “When Columbus set out to discover the new world; he didn’t know where he was going. When he got to America he didn’t know where he was. And when he returned home he didn’t know where he had been” (p. 125).

Developing a vision is essential for the success of any organization; “It shows the direction where it is heading” (Snyder, Dowd, & Houghton, 1994, pp. 73, 74). Since

1990, there has been an explosion of materials concerning vision both in the secular context as well as in the church setting. This section of the literature review will explore the advantages of developing a vision for the local churches.

Vision Helps to Create a Better Future

According to Lee (1989), not having a vision or not working to create a vision will undermine an organization. It is just a matter of time. Kotter stated that

vision refers to a picture of the future with some implicit or explicit commentary on why people should strive to create that future. In a change process, a good vision serves three important purposes. First, by clarifying the general direction for change, by saying the corporate equivalent of 'we need to be south of here in a few years instead where we are today,' it simplifies hundreds or thousands of more detailed decisions. Second, it motivates people to take action in the right direction, even if the initial steps are personally painful. Third, it helps coordinate the actions of different people, even thousands and thousands of individuals, in a remarkably fast and efficient way. (2012, pp. 68,69)

Vision is especially necessary for the church. The church as an organization needs to know where, how and why its constituents are taking a specific direction or why they do what they do. Some churches do not want to state a formal vision because, in some instances, they do not want to change or they do not see a need for change. A feeling of complacency sets in that the church body and organization are not doing so poorly, or leaders make excuses for bad performance.

Leaders and scholars who study leadership, however, have indicated that vision benefits an organization. Many authors emphasized the value of a vision for an organization. As Nanus (1992) wrote:

Vision is a realistic, credible, attractive future for your organization. It is your articulation of a destination toward which your organization should aim, a future that in important ways is better, more successful, or more desirable for your organization than is the present. (p. 8)

Vision Brings Clarity About the Future

It shows where the organization is heading, and sharing a glimpse of that direction can be more attractive to some constituents than the present situation. Vision is always aiming for a better tomorrow. Wofford believed that “transforming visions are those that capture the imagination of members and inspire them to devotion and action” (1999, p. 55). When the organization has a clear image for the future, and this image is widely shared, individuals will find their own way in the organization. They will feel that what they are doing has a great meaning not only for them and the organization but also for society. Wofford concluded, “Thus, in a very real sense, individual behavior can be shaped, directed, and coordinated by a shared and empowering vision of the future” (p. 85). Helping to bring clarity about the future to the church members through vision should be important for every church.

Vision Motivates People

Barna (2001) noted that this focus on the future would motivate people to work for an organization toward a desired future that does not yet exist but can be visualized. Vision is picturing a better future, “vision leads to a deep, courageous, rewarding journey” (Lasley, 2004, p. 13). Sometimes a journey can seem monotonous. Doing the same thing over and over again can be exhausting and uninspiring. At the end of the journey, there is sometimes little to celebrate because no one knows why they were on the journey in the first place. Creating a vision is essential for any organization, for “without a good vision, you can choose a wrong direction and never realize that you’ve done so” (Kotter & Cohen, 2012, p. 69). Lasley (2004) explained that a journey with a vision leads to a worthwhile destination and a rewarding journey for those involved.

Vision Encourages Excellence

“There is no more powerful engine driving an organization toward excellence and long-range success than an attractive, worthwhile, and achievable vision of the future, widely shared” (Nanus, 1992, p. 3). Vision not only gives direction, but it also can bring excellence. Every organization looks for success, and in order to achieve it; a vision of the future is essential. It has been argued that a leader needs to dream about the future of the organization:

To choose a direction, a leader must first have developed a mental image of a possible and desirable future state of the organization. This image, which we call a vision, may be as vague as a dream or as precise as a goal or mission statement. The critical point is that a vision articulates a view of a realistic, credible, attractive future of the organization, a condition that is better in some important ways than what now exists. (Bennis & Nanus, 1997, p. 82)

These authors have stated that the vision will bring better results than those in play at the present moment. It will not only bring direction to but will also create a future for the organization. What exists now is different from what will be three or five years from now. What does not exist in the organization now can be implemented to make it better, and what is there but no longer significant can be eliminated. As Kouzes and Posner (2012) have noted:

The overwhelming consensus was that, without vision, little could happen. All enterprises or projects, big or small, begin in the mind’s eye; they begin with imagination and with the belief that what’s merely an image can one day be made real. (p. 95)

Vision Encourages the Fulfillment of God's Commission

Developing vision for the church will not only give purpose to its members but will also provide an opportunity to invite people from the community to join their efforts. Communities are searching for ways to make positive changes.

It is not unusual for church leaders to continue to do things as they have always done without even bothering to ask, Why are we doing it? Too often, the programs are dry, without effort or direction, and without a clear reason for why they exist. Worse yet, a church leader might put great time and effort into a program or activity that does nothing to advance the Kingdom of God. As Drucker said, "There is nothing so useless as doing efficiently that which should not be done at all."

Vision Creates Opportunities for Serving

Fulfilling God's commission means not only teaching the doctrines and a list of dos and don'ts but creating opportunities to be the hands and feet of Jesus in a world that no longer sees acts of kindness around them. Preaching the Gospel is not just inviting people from the community and giving them lectures about our 28 doctrines. It is developing a vision that will provide tools to aid people to serve in their community: feeding the hungry, giving water to the thirsty, clothing the naked, visiting orphanages, hospitals, or prisons, fighting against injustice, helping single moms, mentoring young people, and protecting the children. Doing so will surround church leaders with people who have established relationships and are already working by their side and more likely willing to then listen to what they have to say about our beliefs and values.

Vision Gives the Church a Public Identity

When Jesus said that we should serve people around us (Matt 25), He was not

thinking about a special program or an isolated event. He was giving a clear mandate to what Christians should be doing until His return. A well-defined vision statement will show the community what a church believes and the values they cherish. The community will understand who the church is, where it is going, and what is guiding its actions.

Vision Provides Support for Individuals

Individually, many people are longing to be part of something bigger. They want to find a purpose in their lives, and to be part of something that has significance for them. Developing a vision for the local church is not only good for the organization, but it also brings support for the constituents:

When the organization has a clear sense of its purpose, direction, and desired future state and when this image is widely shared, individuals are able to find their roles both in the organization and in the larger society of which they are part. This empowers individuals and confers status upon them because they see themselves as part of a worth-while enterprise. They gain a sense of importance, as they are transformed from robots blindly following instructions to human beings engaged in a creative and purposeful venture. When individuals feel that they can make a difference and that they will bring vigor and enthusiasm to their tasks and that the results of their work will be mutually reinforcing. Under these conditions, the human energies of the organization are aligned toward a common end, and a major precondition for success has been satisfied. (Bennis & Nanus, 1997, pp. 83, 84)

In other words, people are inspired to work because they understand that what they are doing contributes to valuable ends.

Vision Brings a Sense of Uniqueness

People do not necessarily want to work with us if we do what everybody else is doing. This sense of uniqueness boosts the self-respect and self-esteem of everyone associated with the organization.

Senge wrote, "Vision is a calling rather than simply a good idea" (2006, p. 142). Calling is the sense of being born to do a specific thing in life. One cannot rest till that

calling has been fulfilled. A calling differs from simply having ideas. People can have ideas today and change them tomorrow, but they will do everything in their power to answer a calling.

Vision Inspires People to Reach for the Impossible

Vision inspires people to reach for the impossible and make it a reality. Instead of focusing on what can go wrong, they will focus on what can go right, bringing with that focus a new level of commitment (Oakley & Krug, 1994, p. 172). According to Wall, Solum, and Sobol, “a vision includes the broader sense of mission: who we are, why we are doing this work, why it’s important” (1992, p. 24). Vision brings a shared purpose: People work together, and they share a mutual commitment to the goal (p. 32).

Wall, Solum and Sobol shared a survey in their book from the *Psychology Today* magazine, which indicated that 90% of American workers surveyed want to produce high-quality outcomes. However, 50% said that they work only hard enough to keep their jobs. They no longer have passion for what they are doing because they are frustrated by the top-down bureaucracy attitude that deadens motivation (p. 24). Malphurs rightly stated that

the right vision provides meaning to people’s lives. It gives them a sense of divine purpose in life—of being part of something great—something bigger than themselves that God is accomplishing at this time and place in history. With a shared vision, people see themselves not just as congregants or pew warmers but as a vital part of a church that is exerting a powerful impact on a lost and dying world. They are not simply in a church; they are on a crusade. They are part of a revolution that has the potential to change this world—to have a wonderful impact for Christ. (1999, p. 26)

Analysis of the Lack of Vision and its Impact on the Local Church

There are always people trying to keep the future from coming. Finzel shared a

letter from Martin Van Buren, then governor of New York, to President Jackson in 1829.

Van Buren was concerned that a vision for creating “railroads” was being developed, and he wrote:

The canal system of this country is being threatened by the spread of a new form of transportation known as “railroads.” The federal government must preserve the canals for the following reasons: One: If canal boats are supplanted by “railroads,” serious unemployment will result. Captains, cooks, drivers, hostlers, repairmen and lock tenders will be left without means of livelihood, not to mention the numerous farmers now employed in growing hay for horses. Two: Boat builders would suffer and towline, whip and harness makers would be left destitute. Three: Canal boats are absolutely essential to the defense of the United States. In the event of the expected trouble with England, the Erie Canal would be the only means by which we could ever move the supplies so vital to waging modern war. As you may well know, Mr. President, “railroad” carriages are pulled at the enormous speed of 15 miles per hour by “engines” which, in addition to endangering life and limb of passengers, roar and snort their way through the countryside, setting fire crops, scaring the livestock and frightening women and children. The almighty certainly never intended that people should travel at such breakneck speed. (Finzel, 1994, pp. 180, 181)

The President had a vision for a railroad system. The New York governor could not see beyond his comfort zone. At that time 15 miles per hour was an incredible speed, but someone had a vision to make transportation more efficient and faster. The vision of a railroad system was born.

A Church Without Vision has no Sense of Direction

It is not much different within the church. People are used to routine. They do not want or like change, but in order for churches to grow, a vision needs to be created.

Blanchard worked as a coach and a mentor for churches and business organizations, and he wrote:

Less than 10 percent of the organizations we visited had a clear purpose, a set of operating values, or a picture of the future. In other words, they didn’t have a clear sense of where they were trying to lead people. (Blanchard & Stoner, 2003, p. x)

No Vision, no Sense of Purpose

Vision is essential for an organization; without it, the sense of purpose and the reason things are done are lost. Without a clear and compelling vision for the future, people will spend their resources on things, programs, and activities that are not important for the church. The Bible says, “Where there is no vision, the people perish” (Prov 29:18). Commenting on this Bible verse, Lee (1989) noted:

The statement from Proverbs 29:18 is a reminder of the significance of the future orientation, of plans, expectations, and hope. A vision gives life. And if there is no vision, the seeds of death are being sown and it is just a matter of time until death will prevail. (p. 125)

He added, “This is true in our personal lives as we experience the listlessness that comes from having no goals or plans for the future, and it is true in the life of organizations” (p. 33).

Lack of Vision Affects the Daily Church Activities

Many churches are dying because they do not have a vision to direct them. When a church does not have a vision, it does nothing intentionally, and when we do not work intentionally, we spend our time putting out fires or creating mediocre programs. As Malphurs (1999) wrote:

Vision is crucial to any ministry. Ministry without vision is like a surgeon without a scalpel, a cowboy who has lost his horse, a carpenter with a broken hammer. To attempt a ministry without a clear, well-articulated vision is to invite a stillbirth. Church and para-church ministries may grow at the very beginning, but without God’s vision they are destined to plateau and eventually die. (p. 17)

Lacking a vision is like lacking the correct tools to perform a job. As an artist can do nothing without his brush and canvas, a leader can do nothing significant without a

vision. It will not only affect the future of the church but also the daily activities of the church. Likewise, Lee mentioned:

If there is no vision – no dream, plan, or captivating intention – the congregation will be in the doldrums; they will not be the vital people that the spirit calls them to be. On the other hand, if the congregation has a clear sense about the vision for the future, you can expect the people to exhibit courage and vitality. (1989, p. 126)

Lack of Vision Affects the Unity of the Church

The Bible teaches that unity is very important among God’s people (Ps 133:1; Rom 15:5; Eph 4:3). According to Malphurs, lack of vision will affect at least two areas of the organizational unity. First, it affects the recruitment of ministry personnel. Without a vision, people do not know how to use their talents in the church and they will not approach the pastor to offer help if there is not a clear direction to where the church is heading. Second, Malphurs says that lack of vision “affects the retention of ministry personnel” (p. 20). Staff and volunteers are very different from each other. They have different personalities and temperaments, and when the conflicts arise, what makes them stick together is having a common vision, “they realize that they all need each other if anything significant is going to take place” (p. 21).

Lack of Vision Encourages Members to Search for a Different Church

Many churches emphasize different ministries instead of focusing on God’s vision. When a church lacks vision, members tend to look elsewhere to meet unfulfilled needs. Increasing numbers of people will instead select between two to five local churches and consider these to be their group of home churches. On any given weekend, they will determine which church to attend according to their most keenly felt needs and

the programs each of their favored churches has to offer (Lee, 1989).

Malphurs argued that when Jesus established the Great Commission, making disciples of all nations (Matt 28:18-20), he predetermined what the mission of the church should be; therefore, the vision for the local church should reflect the Great Commission. There are many churches around, but most of them are not able to successfully engage the community in their ministries. The main reason for this situation is because the community is not aware of the purpose of the church in their area and what the church believes. In other words, if the churches do not have a vision statement, most of the programming they offer or actions they do have no sense of reason or purpose.

A Church Without a Vision Works Inward Instead of Outward

Lee (1989) stated that the church has two overall goals: (a) one that directs to the inner life of the church and (b) another that focuses on the church's outer life. The first goal is to nurture people in the faith, and the second goal is to be the light of the world to serve the community. A church with a vision is serving its community, being a light to the community, fulfilling Jesus' commission who came to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10). According to Lee, we must know and understand our church members as well the community where the church is located. We should ask questions such as: What is it like? What are its needs? What are their dreams? Who are the un-churched? (p. 32). The church cannot focus its attention inward and forget about the community. The church that has a vision that comes from God will ultimately be involved in outreach to save the lost. Some churches are waiting for the right moment to start outreach or are waiting to fix internal problems before they start the outreach.

One of the primary lessons Jesus taught His disciples, though, was that health is a result of demonstrating love for one's neighbor. When a congregation cannot shift its

eye off its own needs and onto the needs of others, it is fatally diseased and of limited use to God. (Barna, 1997, p. 95)

Barna also noted that people are not only lost, but they want to be found. This desire for recognition explains why some television shows and movies that express New Age philosophies, such as the movie *Twilight* gain such publicity: People are longing for spiritual things.

The church is called to go out to do evangelism and, as Malphurs (1999) wrote, “A church that does not reach the unconverted has lost its way” (p. 86). Preaching the gospel is not an option; it is a mandate. God equipped His church to empower His people to be the light and salt of the world. Callahan (2010) reminded us that:

It is no longer that we invite Christ in to our lives. Now, Christ invites us out into His life. Where is Christ? In mission. Where does Christ live and die and is risen again and again? Among the human hurts and hopes God has planted all around us. Christ is in the world. When we are in the world, we are with Christ. It is not that we discover Christ, then go and serve in mission. It is in the sharing of mission that we discover Christ. In this new day, Christ invites out . . . to live and serve with him in mission. (p. 54)

The mission of the church is joining Jesus. He is already fulfilling His mission, and all are invited to go where He is. His passion is people, and a vision will bring the church back to the reason of its existence, to ‘seek and to save the lost.’

Christ is in mission with the poor, the suffering, the sick, with people who are hurt. He sends us to be among those people to join His mission. Barna explained,

Turnaround pastors intentionally define the types of outreach the church will emphasize. It quickly became apparent that, in many of the declining churches, outreach was perceived to be of value, at least psychologically and philosophically. Unfortunately, however, ministry was more of a theoretical construct than a practical reality in these dissipating bodies. Ministry became an every-man-for-himself adventure with little supervision or aggregate guidance over the outreach process. In turnaround situations, we found that the new leadership instituted a simple plan for specific forms of outreach. Rather than turn everyone loose to do whatever he or she felt was a comfortable ministry to perform, structure, purpose and guidelines were applied to the ministries the church sanctioned and supported. People’s energy for

ministry was channeled into specific directions; the church's resources were allocated with greater care and precision. The selection of ministry thrusts was tied to the larger vision of the church, and people were assisted in their efforts to comprehend how all these elements fit into a unified ministry. (Barna, 1997, pp. 48, 49)

Developing a vision for the local church will bring focus and direction into the outreach programs.

Two Opposing Views on Developing a Vision for a Local Church

There are different views as to how a vision comes about. In this study, we are going to analyze two of them. Some authors like Clawson, Stanley, and Barna have argued that a vision comes from one leader. In the church setting, the senior pastor would be the one to develop a vision for the local church. He simply shares his vision with his church. In this model, God gives a vision to the leader, and the leader shares it with the local church. There is no church member or church leader involvement. They simply accept that God gave a vision to the pastor, and they either embrace it or reject that the vision came from God to the pastor.

There is another group of authors like Varghese, Pearce, the Blackabys, and Rodin who have a different opinion; the vision must be a shared vision. In other words, the development of a vision is a process in which the church and its leaders are engaged to find out God's vision for their local church. Leaders do not come up with a vision; they create a process and then join the church leaders and members to find out what God's vision is for the congregation.

According to these two camps, either the leader has a vision, or the leader works with others to create a vision. In the following pages, I will review and analyze these two models.

The Leader as a Source for the Vision

Ford (2000) argued that many books focus on the Moses leadership style to create a vision. According to this model, Moses went to the mountain and came down holding God's vision for His people. Moses' job was to articulate a vision that God gave to him. Ford does not agree that this approach should be the only way to find a vision, but he explained that, as in 'Moses leadership style,' the senior pastor would be the one to seek the Lord to discover God's vision for his church.

People will always follow someone, and many times they will not move in any direction if the leader does not move first. Most of the time, the one showing them the direction to go, for better or worse, is their leader. "Most people rely on someone else to tell them what needs to be done" (Clawson, 2012, p. 56).

In a church setting, if the pastor does not initiate the process, it is rare that a lay leader will generate a vision. If the pastor works to have a shared vision, the simple fact of his having a vision, of developing a shared vision, will make of him the visionary of the entire process.

Usually Churches Rely on the Pastor for Future Guidance

Many times people are passive regarding the future; they heavily rely on the pastor for the direction. Church organizations do not promote much personal initiative, unless it comes from the pastor. If someone has a direction to go, the endless meetings and subcommittees are tiresome, and people give up even before sharing their idea.

Bandy wrote, "The Biblical visions come only to individuals. They do not come to committees, task groups, or official boards on retreat. They come to individuals in the

clarity of core values and bedrock beliefs” (Bandy, 2004, p. 2). Bandy argued that though a vision comes to an individual, that person would need a team to make the vision succeed. The team will help to shape and refine the vision after God first plants it in the heart of a leader.

Hybels, pastor of Willow Creek Community Church in South Barrington, Illinois, also shared the same idea that vision comes from God to the heart of the pastor. He mentioned great leaders such as John Adams, William Wilberforce, the Wright brothers, and Billy Graham, people who had vision to change the nation and sometimes even the world. He summarized his thoughts as follows:

When you have eyes to see the vision that God has given to you, you’ll know it because your heart will feel it so deeply that, over time, any lingering uncertainty will vanish. Leaders, don’t ever apologize for the strength of feeling you have for the vision that God has put into your life. Don’t hide your feelings about it. God meant for you to feel as deeply about his vision for you as you do about anything. I mean that! Anything. Paint your God-given vision for family, friends, colleagues, and total strangers, if they will listen. Paint it as color- fully and passionately as you can! Just get it painted so that people’s hearts are stirred enough to shout, “Count me in!” (Hybels, 2008, p. 31)

According to Hybels, after God has given a vision to the pastor, then the pastor must communicate it passionately to everyone. It is not so much a matter of getting support for the vision but of getting support to accomplish the vision that God put in the leader’s heart.

Visionary Goal Setter

In another study with hundreds of successful pastors and church leaders, Wofford concluded,

“Dreamers” and “visionary goal setters” were highly effective leaders in terms of two criteria: the church’s outreach to its community and the satisfaction of its members. So we have research evidence that visionary leadership is effective in churches today.

The visionary leader is able to mobilize action to reach the lost and also to build an atmosphere that supports a satisfying church life. (Wofford, 1999, p. 56)

Wofford asked, “Who develops the vision of the church?” He answered that his research showed the person who takes responsibility for the development of visions are the pastors. Wofford does not want to give the credit exclusively to the leader because a vision can emerge from meeting and informal discussion. Nevertheless, he wrote, “Visions rarely, if ever, came from meetings in which these leaders were absent or from individual contemplation of leaders other than these transforming leaders” (p. 57). The leader must assume responsibility in the development of the vision for the church: “The staff and lay leaders should be engaged as sources for ideas, information, mutual stimulation, and evaluation” (p. 58).

The Leader Acknowledges That the Vision Comes From God

Andy Stanley, another mega church pastor in Atlanta, shared the same idea about vision. For him, vision is something that God puts in one person’s heart individually, and that person must share it with others:

Visions are born in the soul of a man or woman who is consumed with the tension between what is and what could be. Anyone who is emotionally involved—frustrated, brokenhearted, maybe even angry—about the way things are in light of the way they believe things could be, is a candidate for a vision. Visions form in the hearts of those who are dissatisfied with the status quo. (Stanley, 1999, p. 243)

Stanley’s understanding of vision is based on the book of Nehemiah. God put in Nehemiah’s heart the vision to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Stanley calls Nehemiah a visionary, someone who was willing to follow the vision that God had put in his heart. In this case, Nehemiah as a leader felt uncomfortable about the walls of Jerusalem being destroyed. Nehemiah could no longer hold it to himself, and he started working to fulfill

a vision that he had received from the Lord. When Nehemiah went to Jerusalem, the Bible says, “And I arose in the night, I and a few men with me. I did not tell anyone what my God was putting into my mind to do for Jerusalem” (Neh 2:12).

The leaders in this model, just like Nehemiah, should have a great conviction that their vision came from the Lord; therefore, the support of the whole church or even of the majority is irrelevant. These leaders understand that if God gives them a vision, it may not be a popular one, and not everybody will be on their side. Bennis stated:

People in authority must develop the vision and authority to call the shots . . . they must have an entrepreneurial vision, a sense of perspective, along with the time and inclination to raise the fundamental questions and identify the forces that are at work on both specific organizations and society in general. (1989, p. 154)

The leaders call the shots, because they recognize that God gave them a vision, therefore, in this model, it is believed that they are able to see the future better than anyone else.

Discerning God’s Vision

God chooses His leaders and communicates His vision to them. Vision, “is a compelling mental portrait of a preferable future communicated by God to His chosen leaders. . . . He relies upon His chosen leaders to seek, grasp, communicate, and pursue His vision with vigor and diligence” (Barna, 2001, p. 43). Barna believed that God gives the vision to a leader, and the leader has to follow certain steps in order to discern God’s vision. First, leaders need to know themselves inside and out. Barna argued that God would not give a vision to a leader if the leader is not honest about whom he or she is. Second, leaders need to know their ministry environments and the related opportunities. Barna pointed out that a leader should know the church, its members, the community, and everything related to the church and its surrounding areas. Third, a leader needs to know God. Leaders need to take time with God, meditate in His word, and study God’s

character and how He interacted with leaders in the past. Fourth, a leader has to test the vision. Barna wrote that the leader should seek a handful of intimate counselors to give feedback and to see if God has revealed a vision.

Barna stated that it is not a matter of seeking consensus. God is not seeking a majority vote. As leaders we must be prepared, because sometimes God's vision does not make sense. Barna boldly said that "committees, study commissions, denominational entities, and congregations are not the means through which God delivers His vision to a leader" (2001, pp. 47-48). He also clarified his position by saying that sometimes leaders evaluate their resources and create a vision based on available talent and the things that can be offered to create a vision. However, a vision that comes from God is something that a leader cannot fulfill without God's involvement in the process. The vision has to come from God, not man, because man's vision is ego-driven (p. 50).

He concluded that pastors should not impose their visions on the church; instead, they must listen to God and discern what He has in mind for the congregation. Therefore, the leadership team is responsible for communicating and "selling" the vision. "Perhaps comprised of the senior pastor and a handful of elders or other key lay leaders, is responsible for making sure that the vision is known, understood, owned, and pursued by the congregation" (pp. 52-53).

The Sole Leadership Role

The idea of a leader embodying special characteristics is not a new one. Pearce indicated that "four hundred years before the birth of Christ, Plato wrote that leadership is a rare trait typically possessed by only one person in any society, an individual who has a unique lock on wisdom and truth" (Pearce & Conger, 2003, p. 251). Not only in Christian

organizations but also in secular organizations, the sole leader is commended in business magazines, media outlets, and business schools:

Business schools dutifully conform to the common wisdom: Leadership is studied and taught in the singular. Corporations are assumed to have one leader who is clearly in charge—the CEO; MBA students are schooled to behave as solo operators in that role (over the last decade, the dominant model has been Jack Welch). If team concepts are taught at all, it is not generally in the leadership course. (Pearce & Conger, 2003, p. 251)

The idea here is that a leader has innate leadership qualities that allow him or her to become a special leader, with special attributes. Names like Gandhi or Martin Luther King Jr. evoke admiration and inspiration, proof that a “sole” leader can move the world.

Some may argue that Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. did not act alone, that they had a group of people and a team to help them accomplish their visions. However, this argument is undone by another argument: Their teams accepted and supported the vision from their leaders. The teams played a very small part, if any, in the creation of the vision. The shared vision in this case, is not the creation of a vision but rather participation in the process of polishing the leader’s vision, giving advice and promoting the vision:

In most other organizations, people feel they have more to gain by following a visionary leader. But in a church, people seem to think vision will make things harder. Church leaders need a critical mass of people to become advocates. I think there's a simple two-step path to that. First, everybody has to understand what the vision is. Second, they need to accept it. At that second step, we can fall into a trap: we think we need to have agreement for the vision. We don't. What we need is acceptance. We adults do many things we don't agree with but do accept. Leaders need to recognize that. (De Pree, 2004, p.52)

Shared Vision

Shared vision is another model on how a vision is developed. In this model, the pastor is not the sole creator or God’s sole receptor for the vision. He is, like everybody

else, part of the church body who is willing to work together to discover God's vision for the local church. The vision development is a team effort. The church studies the Bible together, prays together, and finds God's vision for them together.

“Shared visions are simply about common caring” (Kouzes & Posner, 2012, p. 132). One of the reasons people seek to develop a shared vision is because they want to be connected in a relevant way. It is an opportunity to work in community, to share not only ideas, but also the heart. It is not only to be able to express your own dreams, but also, to listen to other's dreams and expectations in life.

Shared vision is having a common goal, and at the same time to be able to fulfill the longing for being relevant in an individualistic world. Jesus taught the disciples that to be relevant is to serve, not to be served (Bible), and one of His main teachings was about caring for one another (Bible).

Shared vision in the church setting is about seeking God's heart for the church, however, His dreams are not only for the church as a whole, but for every member in the congregation. He created us as persons, not as churches, therefore, when the members partner with God and with one another to find His vision for the local church, the members can rest assured that He will fulfill their hearts desires with peace and a sense that they are accomplishing an important mission in life.

Open Source Leader

The idea of the book *Open Source Leader* was taken from the concept of open source software. Open Source software is developed by many people on the Internet and made available for widespread free use. Its developers and supporters, to make it better,

continually change it. In Open Source software there are no top-down decisions; it is a collective effort to make better software. Varghese says:

Alex Haslam, professor of social and organizational psychology at the University of Exeter, suggests that though management books initially harped on a ‘great man idea’ (about a great man qualified to lead, by virtue of some special qualities which set him apart from the other people), several problems showed up when academics and theoreticians started studying these distinguishing attributes. None of them could come up with any convincing answers about any extraordinary powers which these leaders possessed compared to other. They increasingly came to the conclusion that the people they studied were not great leaders because of any special qualities, but because of the greatness of the groups that they led. Leadership effectively became not an individual trait, but a group trait. And this shift in perspective forced the world to see leadership not as a process that revolved around individuals acting and thinking in isolation, but as a group process in which a leader and his people are joined in a shared endeavor. (2010, p. 6)

In the idea of open source leadership “leaders lead and leaders also follow. Followers follow and they also lead sometimes” (p. 8).

Last Word Leader

Another interesting concept borrowed from Open Source community software is ‘last word leader, instead of first’:

Traditional leaders thrive on first word—where every idea originates from the leader and flows down from there. Unfortunately, this sends in two messages for the organization—the leader has better skills than everyone else, and he is the only one who has the authority to push ideas down. However, in order to transition from ‘Power over’ to ‘Power to’, leaders have to give up their right as the originator of ideas. A leader indeed might have superior skills; nevertheless, ‘as a last word, instead of first’, he takes on a self-imposed restraint to step in only when his presence is required. He gives up his right to speak so that the rest of them can find their voice. (Varghese, 2010, p. 30)

He advocated that it is easy to talk about sharing vision while sitting in an office to whoever passes your corner. However, if you are serious about it, you have to go where the “smallest employee is based. A leader has to go to him, rather than expecting

him to come to the leader” (p. 108). The leader’s job is to help all the employees to realize the importance of understanding their role in the organization (p. 115).

Shared Vision in the Church Setting

In the church setting, the shared vision model is the theory that a vision comes not from God to an individual but from God to a group of people who get together and, through prayer and Bible study, discover God’s vision for the church. After they discover God’s vision for the church, they analyze the community, create a strategy, and develop a plan with church involvement to fulfill the vision. Some authors, scholars, and leaders think that a shared vision is the way a vision should be developed not only in church settings but also in any organization, profit or nonprofit:

Traditionally, leadership research has focused on individual leaders and, by extension, on vertical approaches to organizing work tasks. The work of leadership in this view is to make strategic decisions and then to influence and align the rest of the organization to implement these decisions effectively. In contrast, shared leadership offers a concept of leadership practice as a group-level phenomenon. (Pearce & Conger, 2003, p. 22)

In a shared vision developing process, a group is consulted to create and to implement the vision. There is participation not only in the execution but also in the creation: “Shared leadership relies on a dynamic exchange of lateral influence among peers rather than simply relying on vertical, downward influence by an appointed leader” (Pearce & Conger, 2003, p. 48).

Team Influence

Maxwell (2007) wrote, “Leadership is influence, nothing more, nothing less.”

According to Pearce, there are at least two sources of leadership influence in a team: One

is the team leader who has been appointed and has been growing in the organization; the other powerful influencer is the team itself:

Shared leadership is a collaborative, emergent process of group interaction in which members engage in peer leadership while working together. Shared leadership might emerge as a sort of behavioral mechanism through an unfolding series of fluid, situationally appropriate exchanges of lateral influence. In parallel, shared leadership might also emerge as team members negotiate shared understandings about how to navigate decisions and exercise authority. (Pearce & Conger, 2003, p. 53)

The concept is that leaders need support, need to hear opinions, and need to allow themselves to be influenced by their coworkers. As Greenleaf wrote, “None of us are perfect by ourselves, and all of us need the help in correcting the influence of close colleagues” (1977, p. 63).

The Source of Vision

Bennis (1989) defined an organization as a group of people engaged in a common enterprise. Explaining his view on vision for an organization, he wrote that leaders derive their visions not from themselves but usually from others. Sometimes the board of an organization has a vision, sometimes a leader learns new ideas from great thinkers from the past; some leaders find their inspiration in their studies, including Martin Luther King Jr., who developed his vision studying theology and ethical ideologies.

There are always communities around people who are shaping their thinking, inspiring them, and helping them create a vision for their churches or organizations.

Past, Present, and the Future

There are three sources from which to seek guidance when developing a vision—the past, the present, and alternative images of future possibilities.

A leader's past includes personal and professional experience. What the leader has learned in a previous job will influence a new one. Studying the history of other organizations can help one learn from other leaders; what they have done, how they have done it, what has worked well, what has not. Looking to the past brings confidence to the present. The present means identifying the signs around the leader: What is changing around the team that will affect the organization now and in the near future? Another idea is developing a pilot project for the organization, something internal to test before going public.

Although no one can see the future, a vision is about the future. After all, people want to land tomorrow in a better place than they are in today. If people look around to see what needs to be changed to reach their final destination, what would they need? Whatever that missing factor might be, they must plan to have the tools that they will need to accomplish their goals (Bennis & Nanus, 1955, pp. 88-91).

The Eight Sources of Vision

In the book *Spiritual Leadership* the authors mentioned that there are eight sources of vision:

1. Because it is there—the leader value action over reflection. Not much thought is put in it. They impulsively charge forward.

2. Duplicating Success—repeating the past success. The assumption is that if something worked before, it is because God blessed it; therefore, people should keep doing it. But for the authors, “God rarely works the same way twice” (p. 94).

3. Vanity—the leader is seeking for the most personal reward and visibility. It is all about the leader, not the organization.

4. Need—the community is surveyed to find out what its needs are and sets a vision based on the survey results. However, “people who are not born again cannot fully understand their spiritual needs” (p. 95).

5. Available Resources—the church has money, talent, equipment, and other resources and uses it to create a vision, but “resources should undergird vision, not steer it” (p. 97).

6. Leader Driven—the leader ‘sees’ the future and creates a vision for it, then, he or she sells the vision to the entire church. That is a personal vision, not God’s vision for the church.

7. Values/Purposes—“the organizations determine their core values and then choose a direction that aligns with the” (p. 101). Values and purposes are good, but it “can become a substitute for God. It is fine to be value driven, but it is better to be God driven.”

8. God’s Revelation—vision comes from God (H. Blackaby & Blackaby, 2011, pp. 94-97).

God as the Author of the Vision

God is a Visionary God, he knows the future better than anybody else; therefore, His vision will always be the best vision for our church or organization. “Life is too complex to comprehend apart from God’s revelation and guidance” (H. Blackaby & Blackaby, 2011, p. 103). The church is God’s idea, therefore, it is God’s responsibility to make it grow and be successful. If someone comes up with a human created vision, he is taking a responsibility that belongs to God (p. 104). Usually, people ask God to bless their plans, instead of seeking Him to find out His plans about their church or

organization. “The role of the spiritual leader is not to dream up dreams for God but to be the vanguard of their people in understanding God’s revelation” (p. 105). Vision that comes from God is always going to be a successful one, because “God will support what he authors” (p. 109).

God is at work, and we are invited to join his journey, not to map out a new one:

Everywhere we go, God is at work. This is his redeemed world, and we are his redeemed people in this redeemed world. As such, we are all on this journey together. We are all moving from the old to the new, the broken to the restored, the lost to the found. It is a process based not in our action but on the work that has been completed for us in Jesus Christ. Therefore, our calling is one of participation in his work, already inaugurated and commenced. (Rodin, 2010, p. 9)

God is on a mission, and we are simply invited to join Him in whatever He is already doing in our church and community.

Recommendation for Discovering God’s vision

God did not expect us to follow His vision without giving us the direction to find out His vision for the local church. Jesus did not follow His own plans, but He followed God’s will for his life (John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38; 8:28-29). Following this principle, all the pressure is taken from the pastor. Spiritual leaders need to impress no one, but simply be connected with Christ and be able to hear his voice and follow His plan for their ministry (Ps 16:11; Col 1:9; Jer 29:11); and their ministry will bear fruits (Matt 13; Jer 17:7-10; John 15:2-8, 16). There are three important ways to discover God’s vision for the church: reading the bible, praying, and asking the Holy Spirit direction.

Reading the Bible

In order to find out God’s vision for the local Church, the Bible has to be the guide for the Christian leader. The word of God is the lamp for our feet (Ps 119:105), it is

also a tool that will help us to identify the true reason we are developing a vision for the local church (Heb. 4:12-13), and it will help us to put our heart in tune with Him (I Peter 1:23).

When Satan came to tempt Christ, he presented Him another vision to recover fallen man and the world without the cross, but Jesus answered him that His life was being led by the word of God, (Matt 4:1-10). Also, by reading the Bible we learn how God worked in the past, and He will never reveal a vision that will be contrary to His word.

Prayer Life

God has a plan for his people, (Jer 29:11), and if asked, He will reveal the vision for the local church (Matt 7:7-8). The prayer is not to ask God to bless our vision and plans, (Isa 55:8-9), but to reveal His visions and plans for the church. He will answer the desire of our hearts (Ps 37:4), if we are honestly seeking His vision, not ours.

This prayer life is not only for and by the pastor or the church leader, but also an open invitation to all the church members to seek God's face, and the church that prays fervently seeking God's vision, will find it, (John 14:13; Matt 21:22; John 15:7).

Holy Spirit's Guidance

In the last meeting that Jesus had with the disciples, He told them not to go, because something was missing in their lives necessary to being effective as disciples, and without 'it', they would not be able to accomplish the mission before them.

At their last meeting together, He told them to wait in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit whom the Father would send, and whom He Himself had promised... You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere - in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. (Acts 1:5, 8)

Jesus's promised the Holy Spirit to guide the disciples to fulfill the mission, and in the book of Acts, the Holy Spirit was leading the disciples not only telling them what to do, and pray, (Acts 13:2-4; Rom 8:26); but also, being the one responsible for the receiver to surrender their lives to God, (John 16:7-11).

The vision that comes from God will go beyond our talents and resources; it has to be a vision that we need the Holy Spirit's guidance to discover it and to accomplish it (Ps 40:5; Job 5:9).

The Leader's Involvement in the Developing of the Vision

The leader is not the creator of the vision; in fact, the leader is the synthesizer of the vision, the articulator of an appropriate vision of the future:

The task of synthesizing an appropriate direction for the organization is complicated by the many dimensions of vision that may be required. Leaders require foresight, so that they can judge how the vision fits in the way the environment of the organization may evolve; hindsight, so that the vision does not violate the traditions and culture of the organization; a worldview, within which to interpret the impact of possible new developments and trends, depth perception, so that the whole picture can be seen in appropriate detail and perspective; peripheral vision, so that the possible responses of competitors and other stakeholders to the new direction can be comprehended; and a process of revision, so that all visions previously synthesized are constantly reviewed as the environment changes. (Bennis & Nanus, 1997, pp. 94, 95)

The authors concluded that the genius in the leadership function is the ability to articulate the vision, making it simple, desirable, and energizing.

As Kotter (2012) suggested, "The idea of one hero who figures it all out himself is increasingly a myth. A team is needed that has the right people, a commitment to the hard task, and the capacity to work together well" (p. 26).

In this model of leadership, the leader fills the role of facilitator in the process of creating a vision for the local church. For De Pree, creating a vision together brings better

results; the organization is more effective, and it will change the ways things are done (1987, p. 35).

Kotter (2012) wrote:

Only leadership can blast through the many sources of corporate inertia. Only leadership can motivate the actions needed to alter behavior in any significant way. Only leadership can get change to stick by anchoring it in the very culture of an organization . . . this leadership often begins with just one or two people. But in anything but the very smallest of organizations, that number needs to grow and grow over time. The solution to the change problem is not one larger-than-life individual who charms thousands into being obedient followers. Modern organizations are far too complex to be transformed by a single giant. (p. 30)

Although they emphasized the value of a great leader, Kotter and Cohen acknowledged that a single leader cannot create a great vision. A leader needs a great team around him or her to make the necessary changes (p. 55).

The Leader as the Articulator of the Vision

Kouzes (2012) mentioned a study that found “the personal behavior trait expected in a CEO by 1,500 senior leaders from twenty different countries was a ‘strong sense of vision of the future’” (Kouzes, 2012, p. 94). They compared a leader’s job to the jobs of architects and engineers, in these professions “build models, leaders find ways of giving expression to their hopes for the future” (p. 102). The authors do not downplay the importance of working with a team. “Leadership isn’t about imposing the leader’s solo dream; it’s about developing a shared sense of destiny” (p. 124). Many people in the organization have “different pieces of the organizational puzzle” (p. 125). Each constituent has a part in the process; however,

No matter how much involvement other people have in shaping the vision, we expect that the leader will be able to articulate it. What we refer to as the jigsaw puzzle principle helps illustrate the need for leadership around vision issues: it’s easier to put a jigsaw puzzle together if you can see the picture on the box cover. In any organization, people have different pieces of the organizational puzzle. Members

may have detailed descriptions of their roles and responsibilities, but very often they lack information about the “big picture” – about the overall purpose or vision of the organization . . . the leader’s job is to paint the big picture, to convey the vision, giving people a clear sense of what the puzzle will look like when everyone has put the pieces in place. (pp. 110, 111)

The authors believe that the leader’s job is to articulate the vision, and enlist others in the process, “so they can see how their own interests and aspirations are aligned with the vision and can thereby become mobilized to commit their individual energies to its realization” (p. 124).

Inspiring Others About the Future

The leader cannot come to a meeting without spending some time seeking God through prayer and having an idea of what the future should look like. To become a visionary leader, an individual needs to develop the habit of thinking about the future. What will it look like? What are the trends? What changes are coming? What changes are needed? Where is the organization heading? How do we get there? A leader is not passive in the process; the leader is not only a chairman, but someone who knows where the group should be heading (Clawson, 2009, p 123; Kouzes & Posner, 2012, p. 100).

However, leaders need to invite the constituents into the process: “As a leader, you must create a vision for your organization—one based on ideal and unique images of a common future” (Kouzes & Posner, 2012, p. 111). What are the aspirations of the people who work for the organization? They will not follow if they do not see their own dreams and aspirations being fulfilled. They need to see how they will be served and how their needs will be met (p. 129). Human beings are longing for purpose. People want to work with someone who has the same values and dreams and cares about them and their families:

The best organizational leaders are able to bring out and make use of this human longing for meaning and fulfillment by communicating the meaning and significance of the organization's work so that the individual understands his or her own important role in creating it. When leaders clearly communicate a shared vision of an organization, they enable those who work on its behalf. They elevate the human spirit (p. 132).

Lasley (2004) wrote that in dynamic organizations, everyone recognizes the leadership capacity in everyone else. Everyone is inspired, from top to bottom and from bottom to top. Oftentimes in a dynamic organization, the CEO creates the vision and communicates it enticingly, or the vision is created with a participation of the whole organization. The leader realizes that engaging everyone can be a difficult task; however, people want to shape and guide the realization of the vision (pp. 17-18).

Developing a Culture of Vision for the Local Church

Developing a vision for the local church is always difficult. Sometimes leaders do not see the value of developing a vision. However, if they see that their expectation about the future of the church and about their own future can be met, they will be more likely to buy into the vision development process. Expectation leads to action. People move, because they want to achieve what they are hoping for.

We need to create tools that will facilitate the development of a culture that embraces the process of visioning for the local church. A vision of a better reality motivates the church toward mission accomplishment.

Developing a Sense of Urgency

The sense of urgency is necessary to make changes and create a compelling vision; however, "with urgency low, it's difficult to put together a group with enough

power and credibility to guide the effort or to convince key individuals to spend the time necessary to create and communicate a change vision” (Kotter, 2012, p. 36). The church needs to understand that leaders and followers have to make changes and create opportunities to fulfill God’s call for them.

Developing a Team

Kotter (2012) wrote that usually there are three ways to develop a team. First, the lone ranger is an individual who has an idea and brushes it up with two to three people before presenting it to the rest of the group. Usually, this approach works well in very small organizations where drastic changes may not be necessary. In these organizations the leader typically stays in power for many years.

The second way to develop a team is with the low-credibility committee. “Usually someone in the leadership position talks the boss into putting the staff officer in charge of a task force that includes people from a number of departments and an outside consultant” (Kotter, 2012). Because of the power struggle, only a few key leaders are invited to be part of the vision process. The result is failure. The group may try to come up with something new but will not have the support to make the necessary changes.

Finally, Kotter wrote that the ideal is “The Team,” a group that has the key players, expertise, and credibility. The team works together to develop a vision for the organization that will guide them through a successful future. Change occurs when needs are so great that they can no longer maintain the same course of actions.

Status quo is not an option. Leaders and other stakeholders start thinking about the future, and they do not want to do the same over and over again without results. They see possibilities in front of them, they imagine progress that does not exist yet, but they

have already visualized it in their minds. And it is envisioning the future that will sustain them in the difficult times.

For the team to buy in to the vision concept, they need to be trained about the importance of having a vision. Kouzes and Posner interviewed ordinary people to describe extraordinary experiences, and in their research they found hundreds of ordinary leaders who have demonstrated amazing leadership skills. What makes great leaders is the capacity to see the future:

The leaders we interviewed echoed the perspective that making life better in the long run is a key element in getting extraordinary things done. The overwhelming consensus was that, without vision, little could happen. All enterprises or projects, big or small, begin in the mind's eye; they begin with imagination and with the belief that what's merely an image can one day be made real. (2012, p. 93)

Investing time and resources in the team will help to develop a culture in the local church of visualizing the future and developing a vision.

Finzel (1994) assigned even more value to the concept of team, saying that the team needs to be involved in shaping the vision and making plans. Creating a vision is “one of the primary tasks of the leader. The leader is responsible to take the lead in planning the future. He or she must lead the team in planning the future” (p. 191).

Past and Future Experiences

Kouzes and Posner (2007) cited research by El Sawy to understand the relevance of past experience in planning for the future. The exercise was simple: One group of CEOs was asked to envision the future first, then to think about the past. Another group was asked to think about the past first, and then envision the future. The researcher found the group that meditated on their past first had longer future time horizons. In fact, it was over four years longer than the CEOs who listed future events first. The conclusion is that

“we make sense of our world retrospectively, and all understanding originates in reflection and looking backward . . . we construct the future by some kind of extrapolation, in which the past is prologue, and the approach to future is backward-looking” (p. 106). In other words, reflecting upon our past may enhance our ability to be forward-looking.

Looking to the past will help people to raise the proper questions on growth, excellence, relevance, discipleship, and other issues that help them decide how to create a better future. To create a vision, the church members need help to focus.

Without a vision—an image of the way we want it to be—many of us tend to focus most of our attention on what’s not working. By directing the energy toward correcting what is wrong with the present and focusing only on problems to be solved, we often lose sight of the ultimate objective in the process. In contrast, having a vision inspires people to look at the possibilities of going beyond what is wrong and what, in the past, have been limitations. It pulls us to look at what is working and where we can go. (Oakley & Krug, 1994, p. 174)

Vision helps people to focus on what the organization can become, not on what it is at the moment. For Kouzes and Posner (2007), leaders have to dream about the future, they have to be realistic about the present, but they have to envision what the organization can become in the future.

Conclusion

Reading different books on vision was very frustrating at first, because of the diverse models of vision creation and implementation. Some authors say that the vision comes from God to the pastor, and it has nothing to do with the church members, church board, or teamwork. Many leaders in the pastoral field believe that vision comes from God to an individual, like in the story of Moses, who goes up to the mountain and receives God’s instruction for His people. At the beginning of my literature review, I was

inclined to accept and adopt this model, it sounded biblically correct, and after all, God called only one man many times in the scriptures, not only Moses, but also Nehemiah, Jonah, and many others with a specific vision for them to accomplish.

As a pastor, this model makes sense to me, after all, why should I ask for the members participation in developing the vision? I am the one who studied to become a pastor and I am the one who learned how to have a successful church, and at the end of the day, I am in the church to be the spiritual leader, so, I should be able to develop a vision without the church members' collaboration. If I have a relationship with God, if I seek His face and ask for His guidance, why should I ask the church members to participate in this process? As a pastor, I know that some of them are not spiritual members; their lives show that they are not bearing the Holy Spirit fruits, so why should I invite them to be part of the development of the vision for the local church? It did make sense for me, but I kept reading books about it.

The second model presented in the literature review was the Shared Vision, which is a collaborative effort between the pastor, the leaders, and the church members to find, develop, and implement a God-revealed vision in the church.

After analyzing the two models I finally accepted the Shared Vision model because it took away the leadership complex that I had of being the only spiritual leader in the church. My job would be to guide my church to have a spiritual connection with God in order to better understand God's will for the whole church, instead of being the Moses figure on the mountain.

In the Old Testament, when the leader was unfaithful, God would bring another leader to guide the people of Israel. However, when the whole nation was unfaithful

calamities were brought to them. My primary task was to guide my church to God, and not try to be the Moses leader type (H. Blackaby & Blackaby, 2011).

Developing a shared vision together with the church would bring us all to our knees, not only the pastor. The whole church was invited to enter into a relationship with God, to listen to His guidance, and to ask for forgiveness of sins in order to be able to truly understand God's will for His people.

The literature review also showed the importance of developing a vision, not only for the church, but for the members as well. They are engaged in creating something that will last for generations to come. In our case, a new building was built, and 50 years from now, my daughters, as many other children, will look back and will say proudly that their fathers and mothers were part of the vision to rebuild the church building.

In my conclusion I found that developing God's vision for the church together, brings not only fulfillment for the church members and the pastor, but it pleases God who rejoices with us when we seek His guidance to lead a church that does not belong to us, but is His.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY FOR DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING THE VISION

Introduction

We have seen in the previous chapters that a vision is essential to the success of a church. The churches that want to succeed and grow need to develop a vision to better fulfill Jesus' commission.

In order to develop a vision, the leader needs to guide the process of creating it for the organization. It will not be created by chance and involves teamwork. The members need to have a role in the decision about the future of the organization. They need to feel that they are part of something great, something bigger than themselves. They need to know that their lives are counting for something useful and long lasting.

The Newark Luzo-Brazilian Church had been operating without a vision since it started in the 1980s, and it was essential to have a plan for its future. The church could not operate effectively as it lacked direction. In order to develop a vision to the Newark Luzo-Brazilian Church I decided to follow the shared-vision model, because, "when the organizational culture promotes a shared vision, then teamwork, effectiveness, and a renewal consciousness can flourish. People are eager to make that vision a reality" (Oakley & Krug, 1994, p. 173). Blanchard and Stoner (2003), said, "Leadership is about going somewhere. If not in service of a shared vision, leadership can become self-

serving.” In this model the leader engages the church in the whole process, from creation to implementation of the vision for the local church.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the process of developing and implementing a vision for the Luzo-Brazilian Church in Newark, New Jersey. This chapter will include (a) the church background and an analysis of its past evangelistic strategy, (b) the intervention strategy that was used to educate the church about visioning, (c) a strategy to develop and implement the vision for the Luzo-Brazilian church, (d) the alignment between the church departments and how they can collaborate with each other, (e) the tools for communicating the vision will be identified, and (f) the challenges that the church faced to develop the vision for the Luzo-Brazilian church will be stated.

The Church Background

Before I moved to the United States of America six years ago, I had worked with immigrant churches in Canada for 10 years—Brazilian, Hispanic, and multicultural churches. After I moved to the United States in 2007, I continued working with immigrant churches as well.

The Newark Luzo-Brazilian Church was founded in the 1980, in Newark, New Jersey. As an immigrant church, there were two challenges that were more visible in this church than in any other immigrant church that I had worked. First, it lacked financial resources. Second, it lacked commitment to God’s work. These two challenges were impacted by the fact that the majority of its members were without documents required to live and work in this country. They are hesitant to commit because they are unsure about their future in the country. Most of the immigrant churches in North America have illegal immigrants as members. In Canada, about 10% of the members of my churches were

illegal immigrants, however in the Newark Luzo-Brazilian Church about 70% of the adult members were illegal immigrants, and most of them live with an expectation of returning to Brazil or of moving to a warmer place such as Florida or Texas.

Some members call the Newark Luzo-Brazilian church “the station church,” where people arrive and stay for a few years, and then move on to another place. Since they are not committed to staying in Newark; therefore, they do not commit to the church work. They tend to utilize their time to earn money and move to another place.

The creation and implementation of a vision helped the members to realize that they are called to support the church they are attending and that it does not matter where they live, or how long they stay. It also helped them to realize that the opportunity that they have in America is not only connected to financial matters or to the American dream, but they have an unique opportunity to share Jesus in another country, with another community, and reach out to other people with similar culture and language, who would not have been reached if it was not for their personal involvement with the local church.

Building Condemned

When I came to work at the Newark Luzo-Brazilian church in New Jersey in 2007, I was committed to helping the church develop a vision in order to grow but I never thought that the church’s physical building would be an important part in this process. The building was built in the year 1886, and for more than 15 years, the church did not have the resources to maintain the building properly. It was a very old building in really bad shape. Part of the building was not in use due to safety issues. Developing a vision became a necessity, as we needed to build a new building. Developing a vision helped the

members to keep focused on God's work, to find a purpose, and to effectively use their time and scarce resources more effectively.

Evangelistic Strategy Used in the Past

I started pastoring the Luzo-Brazilian church in 2007 and in talking with the elders, church leaders, and board meeting members, we concluded that the evangelistic strategy employed from 2002-2006 was not an intentional strategy for church growth, but simply activities that resulted in some growth to the church. The church had baptisms and had been growing during that period of time, but it was not an intentional church growth. Intentional growth is when the future is envisioned, a plan of action is set up, dates are stipulated in the calendar to achieve goals and there is an expectation of growth for the work that has been done (Pope, 2006, pp. 34, 35).

Special Events

The church had four main events to attract new visitors: Easter and Christmas programs, an evangelism campaign in the church, and week of prayer. Talking to different members and church leaders, I found out that if a visitor was attending with a church member and became interested in the church, sometimes the church member would talk to the pastor and ask him to give Bible studies to that visitor, instead of taking the responsibility of inviting the visitor to study the Bible. Some members might not be able to give Bible studies themselves, but they can invite another church leader to do so, instead of waiting for the pastor to share the gospel and do what is also the member's responsibility as well

However, some visitors who learned about the event from the advertisement in the newspapers or from fliers, would come by themselves, but usually no one would

follow up with them. While visiting some members who attended church, I discovered that about eight of them were regularly attending church, but they were not baptized and were not receiving Bible studies. I found out that they first came to one of these special programs in the church, but that nobody followed up with them. It is interesting to note that some church leaders thought that some of these people were already baptized members, because they were attending church every Sabbath.

Church Choir

The Luzo-Brazilian Church in Newark is a musically talented church. Many members are good singers or play musical instruments. The church had a choir that was used as an evangelistic tool during special programs such as Christmas and Easter. Church members and choir participants would bring their friends and visitors to watch the choir performance. Bible studies would follow for those who came with a church member, and others were baptized because of the music ministry in the church. The church developed the vision that included the choir as an evangelistic tool to reach the Brazilian community. Musical programs were performed in public places and the choir became well known in the community. Not only non-profit organizations invited us to sing at their events, but also non-Adventist churches. At the beginning, we did not have the support of some leaders because they thought that we should not sing in non-Adventist churches, but as they saw the positive impact inside and outside the church they changed their minds.

Small Groups

The Luzo-Brazilian church had a small group program implemented. However, the way it was functioning was more for socialization of the members than for

evangelistic or discipleship reasons. Out of five small groups, just two small groups had visitors; baptisms happened through the small group ministry. We continued to work with the small groups, helping them to be more intentional in seeking the lost and a small group only for children from 7-12 years old was also created.

The Departments' Strategies and Benefits

The church had a few intentional outreach programs as a whole. I had a meeting with the church officers and asked them about the evangelistic initiatives they had in the previous years with their departments. With the exception of the Personal Ministries department, no other church department leader had an intentional outreach program for their ministries nor had a discipleship plan. Most of the leaders were thinking that it was the pastor's job or the personal ministries director's responsibility. Although they were officers of the local church, they did not understand that every department should be involved in outreach. It became clear that in the vision development process the importance of all leaders being involved in outreach should be emphasized.

Intervention Strategy

After working with the Luzo-Brazilian church for more than a year, I was more informed and prepared to help the church in developing a shared vision. As I started talking about it, I realized that most of the church officers were unfamiliar with the vision concept, but they were willing to start the process.

Meeting With Leaders

I had several meetings with the elders and leaders and together we studied the vision concept. A book about vision or church growth was selected every month, and

after reading the book, we would dialogue and share what we learned about these subjects. However, some leaders could not see the value in it. Some of them said that reading books about vision and church growth was a waste of time, and they stopped attending the meetings. But most of the leaders liked the idea of studying the subjects to better understand where the church should go and how it would get there.

Vigil

We scheduled Saturday night vigils every other month with the intent to be closer to God and be able to understand His direction for our church. God's vision for the church cannot be understood without seeking His face. Every time after a vigil when members would spend the night in prayer, Bible study and fellowship, the church would have a positive response toward the vision process. They seemed to have been opened to listen to God's direction and accept it.

The members came with their children, bringing pillows and blankets, and during the night the kids would stay sleeping while we were singing, praying and listening to God's word. Every 2 hours we would have a break, to drink some tea, and enjoy the fellowship with each other. I remember about these times with a great nostalgia, it was for me one of the most precious times we had in our church.

Sermon

A series of five sermons were prepared for the entire congregation showing the importance of creating a vision for the local church. Biblical principles and the importance of having a vision for the local church were shared. The sermons were based on Nehemiah's story. It was a very relevant subject, since we also wanted to rebuild our own temple.

The first sermon was about Nehemiah feeling uncomfortable about the situation of the people of Israel and his decision to do something about it. The second sermon was about Nehemiah's trust in the Lord, he knew what needed to be done, however, he needed to wait on the Lord for the right time to pursue the vision that God put in his heart. The third sermon was about sharing the vision. He went to the city and called the elders and walked around the city and he wanted to know if they had the same-shared vision of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. The fourth sermon was about preparing the people to understand that they would face opposition and trials, as they tried to follow a God ordained vision. Nehemiah's supporters worked with a sword in one hand and with a construction tool in another hand. And the fifth and final sermon was about celebrating the results—there is a reward at the end of every journey. We would look back many years down the road, and would feel proud that we had done our best in order to fulfill God's vision for our church in Newark, New Jersey.

I emphasized that God already had a vision for the Newark Luzo-Brazilian Church, and that He wanted them to be involved, to pray and to commit themselves to find out what He had in mind for them, for their church and for their community (H. Blackaby & Blackaby, 2011).

Seminar on Vision

A seminar was presented on a Sabbath afternoon to start the process of creating the shared vision for the Luzo-Brazilian church. This seminar showed the leaders and core group that God is a visionary God. Nothing that He does is by chance, but everything is planned out. He is not only a visionary God, but He also shares His vision with us and expects us to follow His plan for His church.

The seminar had a good amount of theological foundation about vision, and many Bible verses were presented about God as a visionary Being. It was interesting to see that some members that were skeptical about the vision concept became supporters after the seminar.

Lunch Meetings

We had several potluck lunch meetings in my home with the leaders to talk about the future of the church. These meetings were an open invitation and everybody who came were encouraged to feel comfortable to participate and express their ideas for the vision in a friendly environment. We also instituted a monthly church fellowship meal, and all the members were invited to stay for Sabbath lunch. Our main objective for having lunch together was to foster fellowship and camaraderie. We wanted our members to be friends and get along with each other well.

The results were great. Sharing a meal has a special effect in people's lives. As we were moving toward the development of the vision for the church, they became more comfortable and willing to listen and to share to one another.

An Integrated Vision and Mission for the Local Church

Traditionally, Brazilian churches are not used to the pastor asking the congregation for feedback about the future of the church. In Brazilian culture, the pastors are the ones who tell the members the whats, the whys, and the hows. Most of the members want to know the pastor's vision for the future; they do not expect to be asked to be part of the process of creating the future for the church. The members think that because God called the pastor, he should be the one that will come with the vision for the church, and there is no need to ask the church's opinion about its future.

In my series, I showed them that the creation of a vision is a process, where the church members need to be involved. Leaders and members need to dream together, plan together, work together, and find out together, through prayer and Bible studies, the vision of God for the local church.

Reflective Thinking Practices

A S.W.O.B. (Jasper, 2003, p. 33) Analysis—Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Barriers—was implemented in the church. The church body was invited to participate in this analysis. The intention of using this tool was to make the church aware of the things around them. The S.W.O.B. analysis involves four areas:

S—Strengths—Internal factor—strengths inside the church.

W—Weaknesses—Internal factor—weakness inside the church.

O—Opportunities—External factor—opportunities outside the church.

B—Barriers—External factor—barriers outside the church.

To facilitate participation on the S.W.O.B. analysis they had time and opportunity to evaluate the state of the church answering some questions (Appendix A).

Through the S.W.O.B. analysis the leaders and members of the Luzo-Brazilian church realized the obstacles and barriers that were keeping them from having healthy spiritual and numerical growth, but they also realized that they had strengths that they were not aware of and they learned about the opportunities to share the gospel around them.

Identifying Values of the Local Church

In order to develop a vision, it is very important to have specific values that will guide the church through the process. Barna says that “values provide the behavioral

parameters that limit what you may and may not do in the process of pursuing the vision” (Barna, 2001, p. 42).

For Clawson, a values statement addresses the question:

What principles will guide us as we strive to accomplish our mission and realize our vision? Values statements are the declaration of the principles by which an organization will work on fulfilling its mission and realizing its vision. Values are arbitrary in that they may not be based purely on effectiveness; the ways to go about creating a future are unlimited. (Clawson, 2012, p. 124)

According to Lencioni, the importance of value cannot be overstated; it provides a blue print even for how the employer should behave. The organization should not only identify these values but also protect them:

Once an organization successfully identifies and describes its core values and separates them from the other kinds, it must then do its best to be intolerant of violations of those values. It must ensure that every activity it undertakes, every employee it hires, and every policy it enacts reflects those core values. Few organizations actually take this important step, instead allowing their values to be minimized as mere idealism rather than real building blocks of operations and culture. (2012, p. 101)

After a session of seminars and meetings the Newark Luzo-Brazilian Church defined six values: spiritual family, servant attitude, biblical teaching, experiential worship, intentional outreach, and loving relationships.

Creating a Core Group to Share

There is an old African proverb that says: “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.” It is true that it is easier to create a vision without the involvement of many, but it is also true that church involvement will make it easier to accomplish the vision,

Dreaming calls for broad involvement on the part of the membership. A “Town meeting” approach to gathering information and reaching consensus opens the process to maximum participation. Although this philosophy slows down the pace of

the process, congregations-wide participation builds ownership in advance for implementing the dream. (Dale, 1986, p. 97)

The intention was not to have a core group; the intention was, from the beginning, to start the process involving the entire church in developing the vision for the church. However, many people did not have an interest in participating, especially because it was the first time that the Newark Luzo-Brazilian Church was attempting to develop a vision. About 40% of the church members showed up for the meetings, seminars, and decision-making gatherings. They were the “Core Group,” because they were interested in working together for the creation of the shared vision.

The Planning Session

We invited God to be present in our planning session, asking for direction, as we would try to discover His vision for us. The core group was excited to participate and with expectation to find out what the end results would be.

Groups of 5-6 were formed; we chose a small number of people per group to foster participation for everyone present. Some questions were provided to serve as a discussion guide, and I could see the people involved and discussing the questions that would help us to develop the vision for the church during the next five years.

One or two people dominated some of the groups during the discussion, but others had full involvement from almost all participants in the group. It is interesting to see that when the church members have the opportunity to participate regarding the development of the future of the church they feel valued and they want to share their input.

In a process like that, we have dreamers, but also we have people that are more realistic, and it is important to have both people during this process. It is good to dream,

but also it is very important to know how to accomplish the dream. Both people are needed, and both also needed each other.

After they shared ideas and envisioned the future of the church in groups, they would get all together to discuss and vote what they would think was the most important aspect for the future of the church. During this time was interesting to note that the groups had many things in common, but also they had things that would differ from each other. Most of the people showed respect and were supportive for the most voted item, and the group was mostly pleased about the final results.

To foster total participation and involvement, I used a tool called “The Planning Session,” a tool that was shared with me in a DMin class in 2007 by a classmate. However I found it to be an excellent tool for developing the vision process. I remember this classmate saying that he obtained this tool from a friend of his, but the author of this tool is unknown to me.

Step 1: Answer the Question

In light of the Gospel Commission (Matt 28:19, 20), what do you believe should be given special consideration and emphasis in the Newark Luzo-Brazilian Church in the next five years? Make a group of 5-6 people and assign a secretary to record the session for your group.

Step 2: Writing Your Ideas

In a group setting, share the ideas you have for your church with other members of the group. Get one idea from each member in a brief phrase or in a few words. Do not discuss, clarify, and dispute the ideas. Do not repeat the same idea. If, in your judgment, your idea contains a different emphasis, then list it.

Step 3: Clarify and Discuss Your Ideas

Discuss the meaning of each item on the chart to clarify it. Express your understanding of the idea. Feel free to express different points of view or disagree—but do not argue over them. Make sure each item on the chart receives some attention. Begin with your questions and comments at number one.

Step 4: Eliminating Repetition and Combining Common Points of View

Remove duplications and combine highly similar items that clearly cluster together (10 min.). Are there items that are clearly duplicated so we might remove them? If there is not a quick and clear consensus about the duplication or common theme, do not combine items. Do not “squeeze” any item to make it fit with another. Do you see any items that are clear duplications?

Step 5: Preliminary Vote on Item of Importance

Select the most important ideas on the list. Take five 3x5 cards. Select the five most important items. As you look over the list, find an item you think is important, record that item on a card in a few words and write the number of the item in the upper, left-hand corner of the card (one item per card).

Step 5a—Preliminary Vote on Item of Importance—Then choose the most important. Write a 5 in the lower right hand corner of that card.

Step 5b—Choose the least important of the four remaining and write a #1 in the lower right hand corner of the card.

Step 5c—Of the three remaining choose the most important and write a #4 in the lower right hand corner of the card.

Step 5d—Chose the least important of the two remaining and write a #2 in the lower right hand corner of the card.

Step 5e—Write a three on the lower right hand corner of the last card.

Step 6: Count and Record

Count and record most important items voted on by group. Select an individual to record items voted on. Write the items on a board that received the most votes in the group.

Step 7: Vote on Item of Importance of the Whole Group

The secretary for the group brings a board with the ideas that received more votes by the group. Select the most important ideas on the list. Take five 3x5 cards. Select the five most important items. As you look over the list, find an item you think is important, record that item on a card in a few words and write the number of the item in the upper, left-hand corner of the card.

Step 7a—Vote on Item of Importance of the Whole Group. Choose the most important. Write a #5 in the lower right hand corner of that card. Then choose the least important of the four remaining and write a #1 in the lower right hand corner of the card. Of the three remaining choose the most important and write a #4 in the lower right hand corner of the card.

Step 7b—Preliminary Vote on Item of Importance of the Whole Group. Choose the least important of the two remaining and write a #2 in the lower right hand corner of the card. Write a three on the lower right hand corner of the remaining card.

Step 8: Count and Record the Results of the Whole Group

Select an individual(s) from your group to find the results. The 4-5 ideas most voted is what the church wants to focus for the next five years.

Every church is different and has different needs and objectives. A planning session brings direction to the process of developing a vision and mission to the church. The most voted ideas for the next five years in the Newark Luzo-Brazilian Church were:

1. Starting and finishing the demolition, and rebuilding of the church building.
2. Strengthening families in the church and in the community.
3. Having a children/youth centered church.
4. Creating an outreach and discipleship program.
5. Having the church involved in the community.

The Luzo-Brazilian Church in the Next Five Years

After a few months of evaluation, researching, analysis, and preparation of the church in the process of developing a vision and a mission, we finally came to a consensus that seemed to fit our church perfectly. The final statements are:

Vision

Short Version: Rebuilding the temple, empowering the followers, reaching the lost.

Long Version: The vision of the Newark Luzo-Brazilian Church is to use our talents and resources to rebuild a spacious, modern, family friendly temple in the heart of Ironbound. Our vision is to empower the families, the children, and the youth in the church to grow spiritually, emotionally, in service, in unity, and to become committed

disciples of Jesus Christ. Our vision is to reach the families, the youth, and the children in the community through relevant programs, activities, and fellowship, bringing them to the feet of our Lord Jesus. Our vision is to be the salt and the light to the Brazilian community in Newark, New Jersey.

Mission

The Luzo-Brazilian Church mission is making disciples of Jesus Christ.

Explanation: Based on Matthew 28:18-20, Jesus gave a mission to his disciples.

The Luzo-Brazilian church will follow Jesus' commandment of making disciples.

Strategies to Align the Church Departments With the Vision

Every church officer leads his or her department according to who that person is.

The department is not a separate entity from its leaders. When leaders assume the departments in the local church, they bring with them their ideas, background, dreams, frustrations, resources, and influence. They will use all that they have and who they are to lead the department in the local church. In reality, we may say that we are not aligning departments but we are aligning leaders (people) to the vision and mission of the local church. In order to create alignment among the leaders, we also have to help people to see how their individual goals fit into the church's vision and mission. Alignment needs to be created between individuals and the church. They will support the church if their personal goals can be reached as well:

More than anything else, alignment through shared purpose and shared vision enables and empowers people and organizations to grow from the inside out. This kind of growth goes far beyond reducing resistance to change; it promotes renewal and builds a tenacious, vibrant spirit within individuals, teams, and organizations. (Kouzes & Posner, 2012, p. 187)

The officers of the church want to succeed, they want to look back and see that their lives count and that their department is thriving. However, the Luzo-Brazilian church had so many departments that it was impossible to handle them efficiently.

Church Department

In the Newark Luzo-Brazilian church many leaders were working with different departments at the same time. The leader of the Youth Department was also one of the elders of the church and one of the worship leaders. This was common in the Newark Luzo-Brazilian church; a leader could be in charge of two or three departments. Acts 6:1-7 shows that the deacon department was created because they have a need to take care of the widows. The departments of the church exist to take care of specific needs for the local church, like women's ministry, youth ministry, deacons, deaconesses, etc.

The Newark Luzo-Brazilian church had many departments, but no one knew why the church needed so many departments. The most common answer was: "It is in the Church Manual." The *Church Manual* (Seventh-day, 2010, p. 45), comes with more than 50 ministry suggestions for the local church, and some leaders thought that they had to have most of them implemented in the church.

The leaders were multi-tasking -- leading more than one department at the same time. The result was frustration and burn out. The leaders did not have the time or even the resources to lead more than one ministry effectively.

Choosing the Right Ministries

Since we already had our vision and mission developed, the questions were: which departments would help us to fulfill the vision and the mission for the Luzo-Brazilian church? Which of the departments did the church not need at the moment?

Which ones should the church eliminate and which ones should the church keep? And finally which ones should the church introduce that did not exist before?

Alignment Through Ministries

One of the issues we had in the church was that every department would create their own ministry plan, and would seek diligently for time and resources in order to accomplish what they would think was important for the department. However, after the church had a shared vision in place which was developed and accepted by the church, the leaders should not work individually anymore without a common purpose.

How could the leaders work for the success of their department and at the same time be supportive to the church's vision as a whole? We wanted to have a system that would help the pastor to have more time to focus in the church building construction and in the church growth, and at the same time a system that would be easy for the church members to follow that would be effectively helpful to accomplish the church vision. So we decided to work through ministries (see Appendix B). We created five ministry areas and each of the departments would fall under one of those areas. The five ministry areas were:

- Administration ministry: Elders, deacons, deaconess, treasure, secretary, reception, and communication.
- Discipleship ministry: Sabbath School, Outreach, Prayer, Health, Community Services.
- Family ministry: family, children, youth, adventurers, pathfinders.
- Worship Ministry: worship team, adult choir, children's choir, musical group, teen's group, preaching.
- Resources Ministry: patrimony, stewardship, sound system, media, and literature.

Every department would fall under one ministry or another, and the elders would be the leader support for that specific ministry. Instead of the elders being all over the church and at the same time not being really involved in anything, now, they would concentrate their time and efforts in one ministry area. The elders would have more results working in one specific area of the church, than trying to be involved in every aspect of the church.

Based in the elder talent, knowledge and passion, he/she was automatically chosen to be in the area where they could use their gifts more efficiently.

Resolving Conflicts

During a long process like this and with so many changes happening, it was normal to have conflicts among the leaders. If a leader had an issue with another leader regarding the department, they would try to solve the issue among themselves. However, if the issue was not solved, they would take the issue to the elders of their respective department, and the elders would talk to each other to find a way to solve the problem in hand. If they could not solve it, they would call a meeting with the first elder and try to find a solution for the conflict. Finally, if they still could not solve it, the pastor would intervene.

It is important that leaders know that they are not alone, that they have a mission to accomplish and a vision to follow and that when things get difficult they have a system in place to help them to solve whatever issue they might have in their ministries.

Collaborative Effort Among the Leaders

In order to achieve the vision, the members, and especially the leaders, understood that they had to collaborate with each other. Sometimes for personal reasons,

they would not want to help the other department's project or activity, but because of the vision, they would put aside their differences and work together.

Communication Tools

Good communication is very important in order to share the vision with the church. It is necessary to use all communication tools available to keep them actual, alive, and fresh at the same time. O'Toole wrote:

The task of leadership is to communicate clearly and repeatedly the organization's vision . . . all with the intent of helping every person involved understand what work needs to be done and why, and what part the individual plays in the overall effort. (O'Toole, 1996, p. 32)

Communication tools were used to assist the process of sharing and promoting the vision and mission of the local church. Some of these tools were:

- Weekly emails—an account and a group lists with www.constantcontact.com were created. There was one list for each specific group: elders list, church board members list, youth list, pathfinder list, adventurer list, and a general list. Every message was designed for the specific groups accordingly to their needs.
- Weekly phone calls—an account with www.simpleblast.com was created. Besides the individual phone calls, this software was used to communicate general information about church activities and to motivate leaders and members during the process. With one phone call, the entire church would get the same information.
- Elder visitation—the elders were assigned to a specific number of families, who they were supposed to call, and visit constantly, and to keep them informed about the church vision, mission and its programs and activities.

- Officer visitation—the church officers were motivated to visit the members and ministry to their needs and at the same time to keep them informed about the church vision, mission and its programs and activities.
- Weekly report—during the announcements on Saturday morning, the church members were informed about the direction the church was taking and its progress.

Communication is a key for the success of vision implementation. The leaders of the church need not only to know well the vision and exactly where they are going, but they also need to be able to communicate it clearly to the other members of the church. Even though we had a shared vision process, it is important to keep communication open and constantly that we do not lose track of our final destination. I noticed that even people that were very close in the vision development process needed constant communication about the direction we were taking.

Celebrating the Results

The process of creating and implementing a vision for the Newark Luzo-Brazilian Church was long and took us months to get to the final result. Many challenges were presented, but at the end we had more things to celebrate that made our vision worth of pursuing it.

Children's Ministries

An effective and dynamic Children's Ministries team was chosen to direct the children in the church and the children from the community. The Sabbath School teachers were trained by the Children's Ministries Conference leaders on how to be relevant in their teaching for the children. Programs for children were changed from Portuguese to

English since most of the children were born in United States and English is their first language. It also brought the opportunity to the children to bring their friends to the church. A weekly Bible Club was held at the church focusing exclusively on teaching the Bible to the kids using a creative and dynamic method. An annual Children's Festival was created to bring families with young children to the church. Young families started coming to the church because of the strong program the church had to offer for their sons and daughters.

Youth Department

The Youth Department created two programs in the church with two specific yet different goals. The "Who You Are on Saturday Night" was focused on the teens and it was specifically designed as an opportunity to bring teens from the community to the church. The second program was specifically designed for young adults. The "Fire Moments" was a monthly program with a deep and relevant spiritual content. Its format was not different from the teen's program; however, it was deeper and more young adult friendly. These two programs were especially designed for the youth to feel comfortable in bringing their friends to the church.

Family Ministries

The Family Ministries Department developed and implemented programs and seminars that would strengthen the couple's relationship with each other, with their kids, and especially with their Creator. A project called "Connected Families" was created and implemented with the families in the church to reconnect them with each other and with God. The project was a 90-day commitment. Every family that wanted to participate had

to sign contracts and commit themselves to follow the project requirements for 90 days, (See Appendix C).

Music and Art Ministries

In order to use all the talents and resources to the glory of God, artistic productions were created for specific dates. Christmas and Easter were some of the opportunities the church found to testify about Jesus. The Drama ministries and the Music ministries worked together to create beautiful productions and to invite the community to come and to know our church. Because of these events, the Newark Luzo-Brazilian became well known among the community and the city's newspapers often promoted its programs free of charge. After the presentations, refreshments were served in order to have an opportunity for an informal contact with the visitors from the community. Many came back and started attending the church afterwards.

Community Services

With the intuition of reaching the lost, members and leaders of the church searched for opportunities to serve in the community. The church developed a partnership with Mantena Global Care, an organization established in Newark that helps immigrants in need in the United States. Many members volunteered in this organization as helpers or as instructors. We had members that led a support group for breast cancer survivors, there were members that led a support group for abused women, some members taught Portuguese for kids, or presented seminars for Special Kids' parents. We had members who would organizer their Bazaar, or would collect food to donate to them. And I as the pastor was a member of the Board of Directors for Mantena Global Care. Because our church was heavily involved with them, all of the churches programs had the support of

this organization. They would come and also invite as many people as they could to be present.

This partnership was a huge success and led us to know many people from the community. Because of this healthy relationship between the church and the organization, the Mantena Global Care had their tenth anniversary at our church and allowed us to organize the entire event. Important people from the Brazilian Consulate in New York were present including the Vice Consul and the Culture Secretary. People came to this anniversary celebration who would not have come to the church if it were not for the church's involvement with the community.

Mingle With the Community

Having the vision and the mission in mind, the Newark Luzo-Brazilian Church decided to hold many of its programs and activities out of the church at a public place where people would feel more comfortable to attend. Seminars, artistic productions, musical concerts were held at "Palacio Europa," a rented facility well known by the Brazilian and Portuguese communities with the objective to make friends and share Jesus with them.

The Adventurers and Pathfinder Club of the church promoted another program that was developed to reach the community. It was a health fair called "Life for Lifes." After a parade through the city's streets, people from the community would come and have their blood pressure checked; their glucose tested, and would know more about our health message. The end of the parade was at the church building where the Red Cross and the Icla da Silva Institute were prepared to collect blood and mucus for medulla transplants. For one day the church building would be transformed in a huge center of

donation. Thousands of people knew the church because of this program.

In order to reach more people in the community, especially young families with children and teens, the Adventurers and Pathfinder Club started having their weekly meeting at a public school two blocks away from the church. Many children from the community joined the club. All the ceremonies, investitures, and inductions would happen in the church, so it was a great opportunity to know people and to invite them for future programs and activities of the church.

Building Construction

Although the time we spent building the temple was a difficult journey, on the other side it also can be considered a blessing. The Newark Luzo-Brazilian Church rented space from five different churches of other denominations. For one reason or another we had to move many times, but in all the places the church let its light shine and became well known in the community.

It took us five years to finish the construction of the temple, but every little detail was celebrated with great joy. It took more than one year just to start the construction due to city building permits and other bureaucratic things.

When the floor was first lifted, it was a reason for great celebration. One of the most memorable days was soon before the carpet was placed. That Sabbath morning more than 200 people armed with their Bibles and chairs entered through the church doors for the first time after five years. Together they sang and prayed to God that soon they would be able to worship Him in that temple. Permanent markers were distributed to the families and each one of them wrote down their names on the hard floor. It was a milestone that will be treasured forever for its members, because they knew they were

being part of something big, they were being part of God's vision to that church.

Seven months later, on October 2011, the Newark Luzo-Brazilian was able to return to its temple, and on April 2012 it was inauguration day, a day to celebrate the successful results that a vision and a mission implementation can bring to a church. Every little milestone, program, activity, and people who had passed in the church was remembered and celebrated with great joy and excitement. Songs of praise were sung, words of thanksgiving were spoken, members and leaders celebrated together with more than 300 people who packed the church that morning in celebration of God's vision to the church.

Baptism Growth

The Newark Luzo-Brazilian church is located in the most populated Brazilian area in the United States. In Newark, New Jersey, the Brazilians do not worry about learning English, as they do not see the need. They can buy, sell, and work using only the Portuguese language. It is indeed one of the best "Brazilian missionary fields" outside Brazil.

Following is a record of the baptisms of the Luzo-Brazilian church from 2002-2012. Two different pastors served the church from January 2002 to December 2006. The Luzo-Brazilian church had a part-time pastor till 2003, and from 2004-2006 it was part of a pastoral district with two churches. There were 43 baptisms reported during that period. (New Jersey Conference, 2013)

I served from January 2007 to March 2012. When I came to work with the Brazilian church I was the first pastor to have three churches in the district, reducing the amount of time that a pastor with two churches would have to spend with them. Although

I had less time to work with the Brazilian church, we were able to increase the baptism growth to a total of 71 due to the enhanced vision for the church.

The Challenges

Challenges are part of every ministry and there are those who regret them; however, challenges provide opportunity for the growth of the church and for the development of better plans for the next opportunity that arises.

Church Leaders

Some key leaders did not want to see the changes that were occurring in the church and my patience with them was not great, as a result they became alienated from the church and its activities. I think if I could have given them more time to assimilate the church vision creation and implementation they would have been more enthused about the program. In my zeal of protecting the vision, I stepped on people. During this process, sometimes the vision became more important than people, and it should not be like that. People should always be more important than the vision. I know that developing a vision is not something that everybody will agree on, but perhaps more time should be given for the people to really understand the direction the church was taking.

Financially

Demolishing and rebuilding a building can be more expensive than building a new one. At the last years of the construction, we had the rent and the mortgage to pay at the same time. Because of the vision that we had implemented, the members sacrificed to a great degree financially to finish the church construction.

New Structure

It was decided that every leader would hold only one church position. If they had held two or three positions in the past, they would no longer do that. If we did not have enough people to fill a position, that position would be eliminated until we would find someone to fill it. We would have one or two elders who would be in charge of each ministry area and one elder would be specifically in charge of the Youth Department. These plans brought clarification to the members about the function and the reasons for the different departments in the church. It also brought clarity to the leaders regarding where to focus. For instance, the elder from the Administration Ministries could not have any negative comment to the Youth Department without first talking to the elder of the Youth Department, and vice-versa. Before the alignment, any elder would intervene in whatever department he/she wanted to just because he/she was an elder. After the alignment, there were different elders in charge of every department, and they were the primary contact for other elders and leaders.

Monthly elders' meetings were initiated, and during the meetings, the elders were able to bring their concerns about other ministries and departments, but before they could bring their concerns to the board of elders, they had to talk to the elder in charge of that specific department.

This new structure brought some discontentment with some leaders. First, they did not want to give up other ministries, they wanted to hold more than one church position. Second, some elders did not feel comfortable that they could no longer tell things to all the ministries. They thought that because they were elder they had the right to say anything they wanted to any departmental leader. I explained that the departmental

leaders should have someone constantly to help in their needs, not only elders that only go to reprimand them for something that they have done. It took us all a lot of time to apply the new structure.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have examined how the vision was implemented at the Luzo-Brazilian church and its results. In general, it was a positive experience. It was the first time that I implemented such a concept and it was the first time that the church was part of developing a vision. Sometimes it seemed that it would be easier to run a church without a vision and a mission. Working in the church and not doing much change is more acceptable, however, when a vision is created, lots of changes need to be done and challenges or conflicts appear. In the long run, a vision brings fulfillment to the ministry, because not only the leader, but also the church members can see things happening. Besides, having a vision after genuinely seeking the Lord brings the assurance that God is in control and the church is following His plan and His will.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATION, EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to share my conclusions about developing a vision for the Luzo-Brazilian Church. I will summarize the findings and benefits of developing a division for the local church, I will give my recommendations about how this project might be employed, and I will offer some recommendations for future studies on this subject.

Summary

In Chapter 2, the Bible was examined for principles related to visioning. In the Bible God appears as a Visionary God. The world was chaos and God, as an architect, designed the earth and brought life into it. Nothing is random in God's creation; everything has a purpose and reason for coming into existence. God's creation became complete when God created Adam and Eve. His vision was to have a relationship with the human race and he even separated a day in order to have this special connection with His creation. However, Adam and Eve sinned, and chaos entered into the world, but God provided a vision to save the human race. In God's vision, His only son (John 3:16) was promised to save the human race. Jesus came to fulfill that promise; He lived in this world and never lost sight of His vision to save us. He was faithful and obedient to the

Father and He died on the cross fulfilling the vision to give the human race the opportunity to be connected with the Father once again.

In God's vision for restoration He shared His plan with the human race to tell the world about His vision to save the world, and throughout history men and women have been used by God to play a part in His plan to rescue the fallen human race. He not only invited us to be part of His plan, but He equips us with the message and with the power of the Holy Spirit to be able to accomplish this task.

In Chapter 3 a literature review was done which drew from both secular and religious sources and revealed that the vision concept is necessary for achieving success. The literature review showed how a vision benefits the work of the church by bringing clarity, motivating leaders, and encouraging people to be actively involved in fulfilling God's commission. The literature review showed that a vision is not only good for the church, but it is also good for the church members as well, helping them to use their talents to serve the Lord and achieve the purpose of the community.

One thing that I found in the literature review was that the various authors are not in accord in regard to the development of the vision. Two primary models on how to develop the vision were presented in the literature review. For some authors, the vision comes from God directly to the pastor. In this case, the pastor is portrayed as the Moses figure that goes up to the mountain to hear from God what the people should do. The second model is the shared vision model, where pastors, leaders, church board members, and church members, all seek God together to find out what God's vision is for their church. After reading carefully these books, the approach that was used in this project was the 'shared vision model'. This method of developing the vision for the local church

is not based on the wisdom and discernment of one man, but it is a result of a group of people that gather together to seek the Holy Spirit guidance for the future of the church.

Finally, Chapter 4 documented how the shared vision was implemented in the Luzo-Brazilian church in Newark, New Jersey. The church background and the evangelistic tools that the church was using to share the gospel with the community were analyzed. The A S.W.O.B. Analysis (Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Barriers), was implemented in the church. The intention in using this tool was to make the church aware of the things around them. The S.W.O.B. analysis involved four areas:

S—Strengths—Internal factor: strengths inside the church.

W—Weaknesses—Internal factor: weakness inside the church.

O—Opportunities—External factor: opportunities outside the church.

B—Barriers—External factor: barriers outside the church.

To facilitate participation in the S.W.O.B. analysis, leaders and members had time and opportunity to evaluate the state of the church and answer related questions.

The entire church was invited to participate in the development of the vision, but only a few persisted throughout the process. We formed a Core Group to plan and to be part of the development of the vision for the Luzo-Brazilian church. A planning session was schedule and again all the church was invited to participate. At the end of this planning session the vision for the Luzo-Brazilian church for the next five years was born.

The abbreviated version of the vision: “Rebuilding the church, empowering the followers, reaching the lost” was used as a snapshot of the general vision that was embraced. The long version of the vision of the Newark Luzo-Brazilian church:

is to use our talents and resources to rebuild a spacious, modern, family friendly temple in the heart of Ironbound, an area in Newark, New Jersey, where the Brazilian

community is located. Our vision is to empower the families, the children, and the youth in the church to grow spiritually, emotionally, in service, in unity, and to become committed disciples of Jesus Christ. Our vision is to reach the families, the youth, and the children in the community through relevant programs, activities, and fellowship, bringing them to the feet of our Lord Jesus. Our vision is to be the salt and the light to the Brazilian community in Newark, New Jersey.

The Luzo-Brazilian church mission is “making disciples for Jesus Christ.”

This mission is based upon Matt 28:18-20, wherein Jesus gave a mission to his disciples.

The Luzo-Brazilian church will follow Jesus’ commandment of making disciples.

By God’s grace, we were able to fulfill our vision, a new building was erected and the numbers of baptisms grew in comparison with the previous years.

Recommendations

As pastors we have the same goal, but we travel through different roads. I had the opportunity to travel this specific road of developing a shared vision for a local church in Newark, New Jersey. This project is intended to be a tool to help fellow church leaders to develop a vision and as result be more effective in the work for the Lord. The following are some recommendations resulting from this project:

1. Pastors should learn the process of developing the vision and apply the method in their local churches.
2. The elders and other departmental leaders should be educated about vision and mission statements, their creation and implementation. Sometimes the pastor knows what needs to be done, because he has been educated about it, but if the local leaders are not receiving the same information as the pastor, they will not be able to understand, and therefore, will not support the development of the vision. Material about the development of the vision for the local church should be created in order to facilitate the process.

3. Financial resources are a must for the credibility of the vision. If the vision is to support the youth, then, the budget should reflect that priority; otherwise it will be only words, with no real support for the ministry. In other words, our pocketbooks should follow our words.

4. Implementation of the participation method aimed at getting more people involved in the process. I drew in a core group of members to develop the vision, but I failed to get the majority of the church to be part of the process of developing the vision for the Luzo-Brazilian church.

5. A further study on how a shared vision is accepted in different cultures should be realized. We know that in most Adventist institutions around the world a more autocratic style of leadership is applied, where the main leader brings the vision and the rest are just followers, without much say in the development of the vision for the organization.

6. Developing a vision is a hard long process. The leader should not take personally the opposition that he/she will get.

Evaluation

Working on developing a vision and mission was harder than I expected. People are not willing to change, they do not see the need for changing and sometimes they are against anything that is new. However, the end result is worth it, because we do the work with a sense of purpose and achievement.

Accomplishment

Some of the things that were envisioned by the church in this project were achieved: a new building was erected, and people were baptized. However, throughout

the process of working on the development of the vision some members developed animosity towards the leaders. This is a situation difficult to understand, because the work that has been done is for the good of the church and the community.

I thought that this process would bring unity for the whole church, but it did not happen during the first three years. The church was divided in different issues for the way it was heading. In order to accomplish some of the goals, some of us—leaders—ignored the voices of the members and did what we thought it was the right thing to do. Doing that, I ran over some people in order to accomplish the vision. I should have spent more time with people and helped them to better understand the process.

Leadership Training

Next time, I would spend more time training the leaders and the church before starting the development of a vision. I did train them, however, I learned that not because people positively nod their heads in response to an explanation or discussion that does not necessarily mean that they fully understood a concept. It takes more than a few seminars and a well-done PowerPoint to really help people grasp the concept of where the church is heading. I realized throughout this process that people might even get excited at the beginning, but they soon change their minds in how they will relate to you and to your leadership if they disagree with the church's new direction. People need to be trained not only about what a vision and its importance is, but how a vision can benefit their own lives. My leadership training failed to bring the personal aspect—how this new vision will help me as a member of this church, how it will help my family and the issues that we are facing. People will support more, when they see that the vision will be beneficial to them as well.

Personal Contact

Because I was really busy with this process, I immersed my mind in the things that we wanted to accomplish that I forgot about the people during this process. If I had spent more time in visiting and training some key leaders, I believe I would have avoided some conflicts that we had during the first years. Rebuilding the building was time consuming, and I did not have much time for personal contacts. However, I should have spent more time training some of the leaders to carry some of the important loads that a building construction entails. Church members are like sons and daughters, it does not matter what the pastor is trying to bring to the table, what they really want is time spent with them.

Spiritual Development

We wrongly assume that most of the church members are walking with God; therefore, we do not spend much time mentoring the members to develop their spiritual life. During this process, I spent more time in leading the church to develop and accomplish the vision than guiding them to a close connection with the Holy Spirit. Personally, for me it was a time of spiritual development that I never experienced before. The conflicts, problems, and issues that I faced brought me to my knees, but I missed the opportunity to invite the church to do the same. I realized, later on, that my job is to create a venue to bring people to God and He will help the members to understand and to grasp the vision, not me.

Since we formed a Core group, I was spending most of my time as a pastor trying to convince people about the vision and working toward the accomplishment of it. I should have not spent so much time in convincing people about the vision, but spending

time in helping people to get closer to God and He would convince them. After all, it is supposed to be God's vision for the church, not the Core group vision for the church. I do not have doubt in my mind that God helped and guided us during this process. Without Him we would not have been able to fulfill the vision, however, the spiritual growth that I experienced during that time, was not the same spiritual growth for most of the members of the church, and this I regret.

Conclusion

This study sought to develop a shared vision for the Luzo-Brazilian Church in Newark, New Jersey. Theological analysis provided a strong foundation for this project. The Bible clearly teaches that God does nothing by chance, but He envisions everything from the beginning to the end of His creation.

The results of developing a shared vision for the local church has showed that the members are more willing to get involved in the life of the church, and that the leaders get more engaged with each other as they share the same vision for the advancement of God's kingdom in the community.

After researching and applying my studies in the Luzo-Brazilian Church I also came to the following conclusions:

Challenge of Developing a Shared Vision

Even little things that require change become a challenge. A Shared Vision has these two elements: for most of the church members it is a new concept and it will require lots of change in order to develop and follow up the vision—new concepts and change to implement them are often met with resistance.

Developing a Vision Brings Opposition

When Moses went to deliver the people of Israel from Egyptian slavery he faced opposition, when Nehemiah wanted to rebuild the temple, he faced opposition, when Jesus came to save the world, He faced opposition. Developing a shared vision that comes from God will bring opposition. Leaders have to be strong to carry it through.

A Core Group is Necessary

A Core group is necessary to encourage the main leader in times of difficulty and opposition. The pastor needs to hear from the Core group that the church is heading in the right direction. The vision that comes from God will influence other people to support it. A Core group is a support group that will assist in accomplishing the vision that God gave to the church.

A Multifaceted Leader is Necessary

Developing a vision requires lots of communication skills, patience, and the determination to finish the task. Sometimes the leader needs to be firm and at the same time caring. He cannot put the vision above the people; after all, it is the people who are more important than the vision and not the vision which is more important than the people. The leader cannot see people as tools to accomplish a task, but as human beings who are in the journey together, to enter into a relationship with God and discover His will for the local church. Those who begin by praising the leader for the initiative will sometimes condemn the leader when they see that the church members are resisting and unhappy with the changes. A leader needs to be patient and kind enough to explain over and over again what they are doing and why they are doing it.

Communication is not Enough

Never assume that people have already understood your seminar about vision. They listen to it, but most likely, the majority will have little understanding regarding the real reason a vision should be pursued together for the local church. After the vision is implemented, the leader has to communicate it constantly; it is easy to lose track about the direction the church should be taking. Remind the church members frequently about the vision, where the church is heading, why the church is heading in that direction, and how the church will get there.

Celebrate Every Milestone

Every milestone accomplished is a reason to celebrate; it is important to remind the members that the church is on the right track. Things that never happened before are now happening and it is time to celebrate. It will encourage the disheartened during the journey and it will recruit others who are still on the sidelines.

Discouragement Will Happen

After the vision is in place, it should be easier to do the work, but it is not. The vision is in place, but the plans and strategies to achieve the vision sometimes are not the best ones. Wrong decisions are made and poor choices are made which affect the budget, the activities, and the programs, which were initially thought to be the right ones in the direction of the fulfillment of the vision. When these mistakes are made, some will criticize the process instead of acknowledging that it was the plan that failed, and they will say that the church should never have spent its time with the vision concept.

Developing a Vision is a Humbling Experience

Without God in this endeavor it will be impossible to continue. The vision that comes from God will be a humbling experience, the things that are being accomplished are happening only because God is willing to bless our weak effort.

Prayer is Essential to Develop a Vision

The shared vision comes from God; therefore to spend time with God is a must in that endeavor. God is willing to listen to our prayers and to help us to understand the vision He already authored. Prayer is the channel to receive and understand His vision for the local church.

Caring

And finally, developing a shared vision is not enough to bring church success. It cannot be just another plan to try to grow the church, but having a caring attitude toward the members, and be respectful with their individuality, dreams, expectations and gifts is what makes it successful. It is not only about the future of church as an organization, but it is about the member's future as well. It is a vision for God's people.

APPENDIX A

S.W.O.B

REFLECTIVE THINKING PRACTICES

A S.W.O.B. (Jasper, 2003, p. 33) Analysis – Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Barriers - was implemented in the church. The church body was invited to participate in this analysis. The intention of using this tool was to make the church aware of the things around them. The S.W.O.B. analysis involves four areas:

S – Strengths – Internal factor: strengths inside the church.

W – Weaknesses – Internal factor: weakness inside the church.

O – Opportunities – External factor: opportunities outside the church.

B – Barriers – External factor: barriers outside the church.

To facilitate participation on the S.W.O.B. analysis they had time and opportunity to evaluate the state of the church by answering some questions.

Through the S.W.O.B. analysis the leaders and members of the Luzo-Brazilian church came to a realization of obstacles and barriers that were keeping them from having healthy spiritual and numerical growth, but they also realized that they had strengths that they were not previously aware of, and they learned about the opportunities to share the gospel around them.

Five Phases:

1. Analyzing the Church. Understanding the church's strengths and weaknesses, the opportunities and the barriers.
2. Understanding the community – knowing the needs, values, background, religion, etc.
3. Defining the direction of the Church – Mission, vision, values, and the foundation for the church's plan.

4. Developing Strategies – developing goals, objectives, and areas of ministries to move the church to the defined direction.
5. Alignment – All the church’s departments and members should be aligned to walk to the same direction and fulfill the vision and mission of the church.

SWOB

Performance Gap – where the church is and where it would like to go.

This involves four areas:

S – Strengths – strengths inside the church, internal

W – weakness – weakness inside the church, internal

O – Opportunities – opportunities outside the church, external.

B – Barriers – barriers outside the church, external.

Strengths: Internal origin

What type of special resources does our church have that can be used?

Which areas of our church are effectively growing?

Which other people or churches think we do well?

What are the unique qualities the church has that can be used to help the needs of community around them?

Weakness: Internal origin

Which aspects of the church have to improve?

What are the resources that the church lacks compared to other churches?

What do other people see in the church as a weakness?

Which aspects of the church are not effective?

What are the limitations of the church that keep it from growing?

Opportunities: external origin

What are the external opportunities that can be easily identified?

What are the secular tendencies that can be used to reach people outside?

What are the opportunities in the future that the church has to be prepared to serve better.

Barriers: External origin

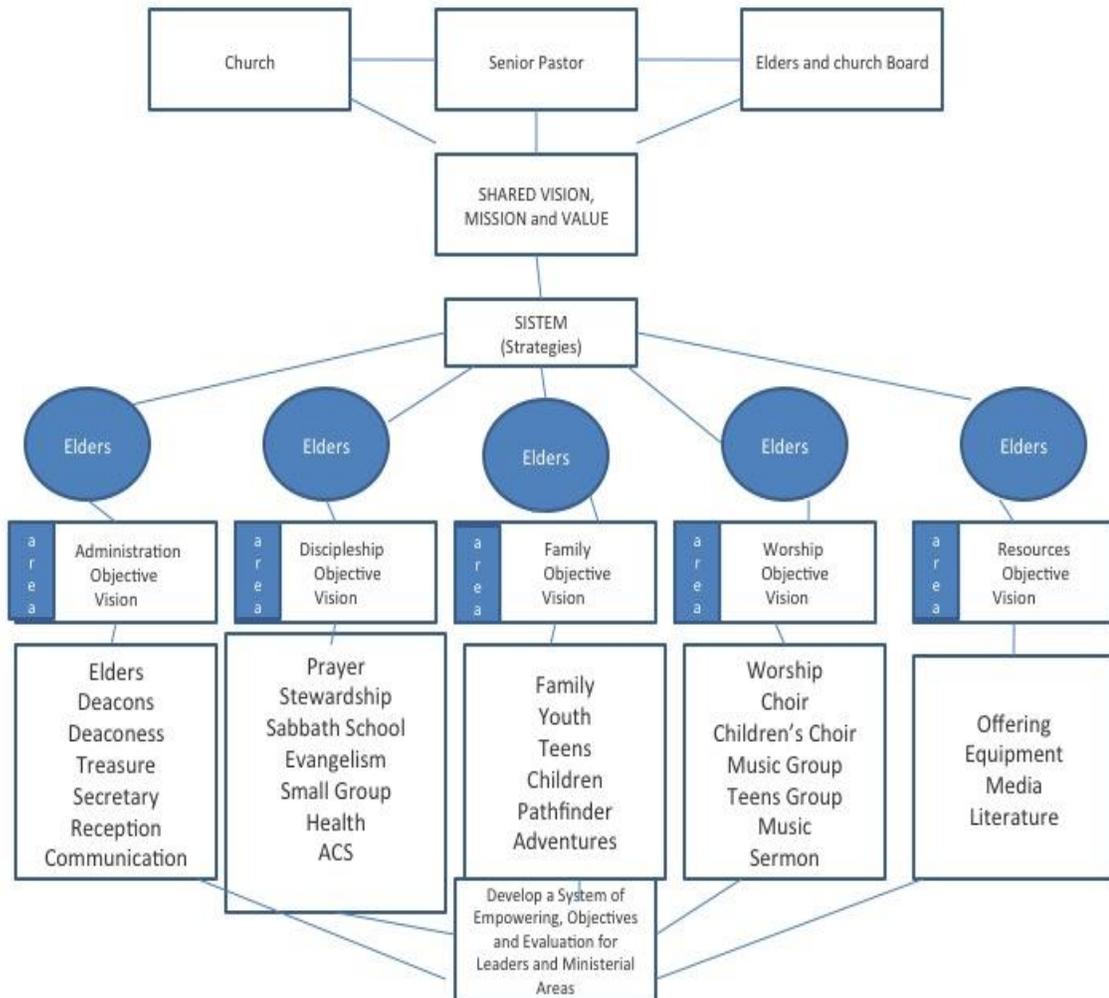
What are the threat (laws, polices) that can harm the church growth?

What are the barriers that the church might have in the future in order to fulfill the vision of the church?

APPENDIX B

DEVELOPING A WORKING SYSTEM

System Work for the Luzo-Brazilian Church



APPENDIX C

CONNECTED FAMILY

CONNECTED FAMILY MINISTRY

The Family Ministries Department developed and implemented programs and seminars that would strengthen the couple's relationship, one with the other, with their kids, and especially with their Creator. A project called Connected Families was created and implemented with the families in the church to reconnect them with each other and with God. The project was a ninety days commitment. Every family that wanted to participate had to sign a contract and commit themselves to follow the project requirements for the ninety days.

The Connected Family Project was divided into four parts:

- Evaluation of the actual state of families of the local church through a survey.

- Ninety days commitment.

- Participation of a Family Spiritual Formation 101 Seminar.

- Follow up through Connecting Meetings and "Drops of Connection" newsletter.

The requirements for the 90 days are:

- Connecting with God

- Morning and Evening Family Worship

- Personal Worship

- Friday Evening (Sunset) Worship

Family Mission Plan:

Church – attendance, punctuality, and reverence

Planned Spiritual Instruction

Unplanned Spiritual Instruction

Connecting with my Family

Family Day

Nature Walks

Dad + daughter/son dates

Mom + daughter/son dates

No TV/computer week (once a month)

Family Talks/meetings

Every Sabbath morning a family would come up to give their testimony on how their family was becoming reconnected through the project, and every three months new families would start the program. Participants would get together monthly to celebrate and to have fellowship with each other.

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Education:

1996 - BA on Theology - Adventist University - Brazil

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Work Experience:

1991-1996 – SDA Student Publishing Evangelist - (Colporteur)

1997-2007 – British Columbia Conference – Canada

2007-2011 – Senior Pastor Brazilian Church, Wayne SDA Church and
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