



# EQUIPPING LEADERS FOR MISSIONAL OUTREACH

## Formulas for Missional Leadership

*“Where there is  
no vision,  
the people  
perish.”*

Proverbs 29.18

The temptation of the present day is to look for the simplified, easy answers to moving our ministries and our people to new places. The longing is to find a quick fix to the very complicated and difficult decisions we must make in relationship to the situations and issues we face.

The reality is that our ministries are incredibly complex places to live out our call as leaders and people in mission and there is no easy way through it all. Nonetheless, there are a variety of formulas that we can utilize to gain some insight and awareness of how we can move forward

in ministry with intention and purpose.

Take this formula, for example:

$$V + CA + D > C = T$$

In this formula, V is for Vision/Purpose; CA is for Concrete Action; D is for Dissatisfaction; C is for Costs; and T is Transformation.

The formula suggests that the transformational moment(s) occur when the Vision/Purpose of the ministry along with Concrete Actions coupled with the energy of Dissatisfaction is larger, in the mind’s eye, than the costs. Each of these components are es-

sential.

We’ve talked about vision and purpose in this place before. A people with concrete action and dissatisfaction but no vision is a people who are cranky with no place to go. Vision and purpose give the ministry direction and focus.

A ministry with vision and purpose but no concrete action that is taken to get to the destination is a ministry that drifts subject to the current “dissatisfaction of the day.”

And a ministry that has a high level of dissatisfaction with no vision and purpose or concrete action is a

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### So, Where Does Vision come from?

Vision is one of those things that is fundamental to all effective, healthy, vital, growing ministries. I know that, you know that. No big news here. But, in the realm of formulas, what constitutes a vision, where does it come from?

We already know that scripture and prayer are important parts of the process. But, how does it all fit together? Try this formula:

$$V = P + GP + T$$

In this formula, V is Vision; P is purpose, GP are Guiding Principles, and T

is time. The formula suggests that Vision is the result of work on a clear Purpose statement and Guiding Principles for a ministry. But, that can only come with time.

When we use scripture as a

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## Formulas, continued...

people who are in the crisis of anarchy.

As you can well imagine, any of these components out of balance with the others does not make for a ministry that is purposeful and intentional except in dysfunction.

Dissatisfaction is an equally important part of this formula as we anticipate this process. Dissatisfaction is the energy of the formula. When I took general and organic chemistry in high school and college, it was abundantly clear that in the mixture of any number of elements or compounds, without some kind of energy in the system, a reac-

tion would not occur. A system without dissatisfaction is a ministry in the throes of apathy and either subtle or rapid decline. One thing about conflict in congregational settings is that there is lots of energy present that can be harnessed for the sake of moving ministry in some direction.

The Costs of the movement to transformation is also an important consideration when we consider the change process. Any change process brings with it costs. Even things in life that we anticipate with joy and eagerness are things that require time for adjustment and cost

counting.

Two people who come together in love and great affection for each other and then make the decision to marry find themselves in a situation in which, if their new life together is going to succeed, they must give themselves permission to grieve what they leave behind as single persons. That is part of the process of courtship as well as living into the first few years of that newly married relationship.

As you think about the change process in your ministry, map it out with these "elements" in mind.



*Dissatisfaction  
is the energy  
that moves the  
Vision  
forward.*

## Vision, cont.

resource to understand this, what we see there tells us several things. First of all, sometimes Vision comes from the center, sometimes it comes from the fringe. When we read the evangelist Luke, we see there that for him this work that God was about was specifically mainstream. God came in an unusual way through Mary, granted, but Mary and Joseph were in the mainstream of the Jewish faith. Even more, the revelation about all this came through Zechariah in the Temple during his term of service that came to him by lot. And more, both Simeon and Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, were part of the religious mainstream finding their place in and near the Temple as well. When we go on to read about the work of the Spirit in Luke's Acts of the Apostles, he continues the theme that this is a main-

stream event that is happening and is happening in a way foretold in times past and now come to fullness. This is from the middle.

Other times Vision comes from the fringe. The Old Testament is filled with examples of this kind of activity of God. People come from the edge of society (Amos or Nahum) or from other societies (Naaman, the widow of Zarephath and Ruth).

Sometimes Vision comes relatively quickly, other times (most of the time) it comes only with patience and eager expectation that God is going to do something with you and already has that mapped out. It is a matter of discovering what that purpose is.

One thing is certain. There is no substitute for realizing that Vision can appear in an instant or take forever. But it doesn't come without doing

the kind of work that is needed to allow God to speak to us in ways that move us toward a new sense of hope and expectation.

I am aware of ministries with whom I work that have waited as long as two years for the substance of God's Vision for them to appear. In the meantime, they remained faithful to scripture study, prayer, and conversation about the work that they imagined God wanted them to be about. In every case, the Vision that emerged came to them from the community in which they lived as an opportunity to meet a need or to respond to a crisis. And that is the critical element. God meets us on the outside, comes down from above, and enters our world to create opportunities for us to reflect God's grace and hope to others.

## GP, Guiding Principles, What are they?

Guiding Principles, which has been some of the focus of some of the articles in this newsletter, may be a new thought for us. Perhaps this will help to put Guiding Principles in perspective.

It is enough to realize that a Vision/Purpose statement provides the destination for where it is that God is calling us to go. The Vision/Purpose is the distant point toward which God is calling us as faithful and hope-filled disciples.

If that is true, then Guiding Principles are the means by which we navigate to the destination. While Vision/Purpose gives us direction, the Guiding Principles equip us with the means for getting to that destination.

For example, if one of our Guiding Principles is simply, *Jesus is Lord*, then that has implications for our decision-making in the context of daily ministry, doesn't it. If Jesus really is Lord in this ministry then that means any of a number of other things can't be. The piano that dear Aunt Tootsie donated so long ago can't be Lord if Jesus is Lord. The offering plate can't be Lord if Jesus is Lord (finances are

very rarely ever an excuse to not be able to do the missional work that God is calling us to. We must need to think about how we can do that missional work differently.) Mr. or Mrs. "Get in your face" can't be Lord if Jesus is Lord. The liturgy can't be Lord if Jesus is Lord. A particular way of doing worship can't be Lord if Je-



sus is Lord.

Suppose we were to state *Everyone is welcome here* as a Guiding Principle. If that principle is to be followed as part of the Vision/Purpose of the ministry, then that means everyone. It doesn't mean just people like us, or people who make me feel good, or

people who share my values, or people who don't smell bad, and so on.

Every ministry has a large number of Guiding Principles that are at work beneath the surface of consciousness for them. Consider a GP I encounter a lot in my conversations with other ministries. That is, *It is important that everyone know everyone else*

*in this ministry.* Now think about this as a Guiding Principle. In and of itself, it will limit growth in a ministry and keep that worshipping community to the size of about 80 to 100 people in worship. This is the size of many family sized ministries and pastor sized ministries. That's because the number of relationships that any one person can track on some kind of effective and relational basis is about 150,

tops. As a Guiding Principle for ministry, I wonder if a more effective principle might be, *It is important that everyone in this ministry knows Jesus.* If that were true and that were the principle you followed, how would that change ministry for you in your context?



*"If Jesus is Lord, then nothing else can be!"*

## Finally: Va + Vi + G + N = M

Ok, ok, now what? One last formula. Va is for Values. Vi is for Vision. G is for Giftedness. N is for Needs. And M is for Mission. Another way to consider how to conceptualize Missional Outreach for some ministries might be like this. Mission

is the cumulative effect of a worshipping communities Values, Vision, Giftedness, and the Needs they see around them. In a very strong way, this formula is really not any different than the first one at the beginning of this newsletter. But it does help

to reshape a bit of the way in which we can understand what it is and how it is that God wants us to be at work in that part of the vineyard where we are planted. As always, use what makes sense for you, but use it!



EQUIPPING LEADERS  
FOR MISSIONAL  
OUTREACH

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Texas Center for Mission

Purpose statement:

*"...do justice...love kindness...walk humbly with your God."*

Micah 6.8

Solicitation is sought for additional articles to be included in this publication. Submissions to this newsletter will be considered when they follow the above purpose statement as well as the Great Commission and Great Commandment.

Please submit requests for inclusion in this publication to

Rev. Stephen C. Kanouse,

Mission Director for the Northern Texas/Northern Louisiana Synod  
and the Southwestern Texas Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in America.

## Upcoming events....

### Coaching for Excellence

Learn skills for coaching in your ministry to improve your effectiveness

March 24, evening and 25 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Dallas area, place TBA

### NCD Coaches Training

Training for people who want to become effective NCD coaches

March 23, 6 p.m., 24, all day, and 25, done at noon

For either event,

Contact: Rev. Nancy Fisher,

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### Third Annual Second-Site Conference

May 7 to 9

Santa Claritas, CA

For ministries seeking to understand ways in which they can become engaged in starting new ministries. You don't have to be big, you don't have to be rich, you don't even have to be really, really smart...all you need is a missional heart and a willingness to follow God into the mission field.

Come hear stories of how others have done it in surprising ways. Test the waters for yourself.

Contact:

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