

## Casting a Vision and Creating a Culture Within your Local Church

*8 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was **called** to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. **And he went out, not knowing where he was going.** 9 By **faith** he went to live in the land of **promise**, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same **promise.** 10 For he was **looking forward** to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God. (Heb. 11:8-10, ESV)*

1. Years ago, a trend was initiated where churches were encouraged to create a \_\_\_\_\_ and possibly a mission statement as well. Many churches followed through on that.
2. Interestingly, many churches crafted excellent vision statements, but in quite a few contexts, very little seemed to improve. The church seemed to continue progressing in the \_\_\_\_\_ it had already been going in.
3. \_\_\_\_\_? In many respects, the missing element or the area that had never been addressed, was the \_\_\_\_\_ of that local church.
4. One of the saddest things to do is to do an autopsy on a local church after it dies. I have been involved in doing that very thing several times, and there are common themes present in dead churches. In some respects, it can be embarrassing to look at it all closely. You usually see....
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_ in both the pulpit and the pew
  - b. Weird things on the exterior \_\_\_\_\_.
  - c. Clutter / hoarding
  - d. \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. Clear evidence of lack of community connection
  - f. No \_\_\_\_\_
  - g. The "no trespassing" vibe
5. For a local church to make the most of the opportunities the Lord is giving us, it is wise counsel to take a close look at both the \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_ of the church. Both matter.
6. Author and former pastor, John Maxwell shared a few interesting thoughts about vision and culture....
  - a. "If you articulate a great vision to an organization without the appropriate

culture, you'll never achieve the vision."

- b. "If your organization has a wonderful culture, but no vision, then you might really enjoy your time together, but you'll never go anywhere."
- c. Vision is "I have a dream", and Culture is "This is how we march"
- d. Vision is about "one day" and Culture is about "every day"
- e. Vision is "described" and Culture is "modeled"
- f. Vision aligns with "values" and Culture "demonstrates them"

7. Among the ways the Lord gifts people, the gift of " \_\_\_\_\_ " stands out when you're talking about vision. People who are particularly gifted with faith can often be good at casting a vision. They can see things in their \_\_\_\_\_ before they can see things with their \_\_\_\_\_, and they try to help others see those things as well.

**(Heb. 11)**

8. It's helpful to start with a vision when you're trying to lead your local church. Is your vision in line with \_\_\_\_\_? Can you see your local church being used by Jesus to help your \_\_\_\_\_ meet Him, worship Him, and live as His disciples? *\*(Seeing the full parking lot before it was full)*

9. Too often, however, a vision just remains a statement or a \_\_\_\_\_ unless it's accompanied by a \_\_\_\_\_. What examples does Scripture give to us regarding the culture of the church?

- a. **Acts 4:32-37**. What do these verses say about the culture of the early church?
- b. **1 John 3:11-18**. What kind of culture did the Apostle John attempt to foster within the church?

10. The culture of your local church is going to be highly influenced by your \_\_\_\_\_. I know a pastor who used to complain that his church wasn't evangelistic, even though he regularly preached on evangelism. I would contend that a major reason evangelism didn't become part of their church culture is because he didn't take the time to model it. Sometimes important things need to be both " \_\_\_\_\_ " and " \_\_\_\_\_."

11. I recently visited an area church that provided a great example of a vision being lived out through the culture that had been created. The \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ all contributed to a healthy culture.

12. The culture of the \_\_\_\_\_ involved the display of sincere love, genuine faith, unity, generosity, demonstration of the Lord's power, open testifying to Christ's resurrection, grace, intentional meeting of needs, and encouragement. If someone chose to visit your worship service or get plugged into your local church, which of these aspects of the early church culture would they experience? Which might they realize are lacking?

13. The culture we foster in our local churches should be \_\_\_\_\_ and should be a \_\_\_\_\_ in the Lord's arsenal to draw people unto Himself. Since our Sunday morning worship services are typically the first way people interact with our congregations, are there a few ways we might be able to infuse some of these aspects into the culture of what they experience?

14. As I said earlier, I believe the culture of the local church will typically \_\_\_\_\_ its most visible and influential leaders. Are we conveying the love and hospitality of Christ, or do we hang up the no-trespassing sign? What could others learn about the gospel just by observing the way we interacted with them, even before we preach the details?

15. Some thoughts to consider regarding the culture of our local church. The gospel needs to shape our answers.

1. How is a person treated from the moment they set foot on your property?
2. What age groups are your programs and events catering to?
3. Can they see Jesus in how you react to a broken window?
4. Are most of the events you organize geared toward socialization?
5. Do you have a culture of discipleship? Leadership development?
6. Do you leave room for the Lord's power to be displayed?
7. Do you joyfully testify to the power of Christ's resurrection?

16. The culture of your church is displayed in what you \_\_\_\_\_, what you \_\_\_\_\_, and how you \_\_\_\_\_ the people Christ sends you. The culture of your church will be reflected in your \_\_\_\_\_, in your \_\_\_\_\_, and in your \_\_\_\_\_.

17. \_\_\_\_\_ is a glimpse of where the Lord is leading us. \_\_\_\_\_ is the day-to-day environment we foster that will either help or hinder that vision from coming to fruition.