

LEADING CHURCH THROUGH CHANGE AND TRANSITION¹

Introduction

There is a growing hunger among church leaders to understand change and transition, and to be able to lead it in the local church.

Questions:

- How do we lead the church back to the biblical principle of being culturally relevant without being culturally compromised?
- How do we reform the way we do church to a contemporary and purpose driven model so that the timeless message of salvation in Christ can be received and understood by those we so desperately want to reach?

The dilemma faced by many church leaders is not so much why they want change in the local church, but how do they lead change in the local church.

Step 1: Preparing for Vision

Vision is a journey, not just a destination. Vision is not just a product; it is a process. It is not just the finish line, but the whole race.

For our eyes to see God's vision, for our ears to hear God's voice, and for our minds to conceive God's plan, we must spend time in major preparations.

Our plans vs. God's vision – read Prov. 19:21.

1. What is vision?

1.1 Rather than asking God to bless our plan and vision, we must see what God is doing around us and join Him in His plan and vision.

1.2 Vision is a picture of what God wants to do, what He will do in His church if we work with Him.

- The process of vision is the process of joining God in what He is doing and wants to do in His church.
- Vision is an active, ongoing process—it is the continual search for what God is doing and wants to do.

¹ Reference: Southerland, Dan. *Transitioning: Leading Your Church through Change*. GR, Michigan: Zondervan, 1999.

2. Nehemiah: A visionary leader

2.1 Collect information

- Read Neh. 1:1-3.
- Vision is best birthed out of thorough knowledge.
- It is not unspiritual to think or to study or to research.
- If good preaching alone would win the world to Christ, we would have finished the job long ago.
- We need to understand the people we are trying to reach—i.e. the unreached and the unchurched.
- Paul and his co-workers customized their ministry to meet the needs of the people they were trying to reach—1 Cor. 9:19-23.

2.2 Holy discontent with the status quo

- Read Neh. 1:4a.
- As long as we are content with the status quo, we will not discover God's vision.
- God speaks to us when our whole heart, mind and soul are set on Him—i.e. when we are really hungry and thirsty for God.
- Vision is usually birthed out of a serious search for God's direction.
- You don't find vision when you search for vision, but you find God's vision when you search for God.

2.3 Prayer

- Read Neh. 1:5-7.
- Nehemiah bathed his search for God's vision in prayer.
- We must first be still enough to hear God, and then we will be able to know God and what he wants us to do (Psalm 46:10).
- The number one hindrance to answered prayer for many church leaders today seems to be prayerlessness.
- We must pray if we want to know God's vision for His church—see Jeremiah 29:11-13.

2.4 Waiting

- Vision is usually given to those who patiently wait for it.
- Often, church leaders want to go from asking God for vision one day to having every detail worked out the next.
- But waiting is very much related to God's will because it is ...
- doing the right thing; in the right way; for the right motive; at the right time.
- You must go slow if you want to stay long—rushed preparation results in sloppy vision; rushed transition results in trauma and shock for the church.
- Don't make any changes if you are on your way to another ministry—don't lead the church to make transitions if you are not willing to stay.
- Also, if you are not willing to go slow, don't change.
- Taking time to build a solid foundation is crucial—if you rush the preparation process, you will end up with a shaky foundation.

Step 2: Defining the Vision

1. God gives a church very specific leadership in the area of vision.

- What He wants us to do.
- When He wants us to do it.
- How He wants us to do it.

2. Three steps to define vision

2.1 Discover your purpose

- The major question: What does God want us to do?
 - preaching the gospel?
 - evangelizing the lost?
 - discipling the Christian?
 - caring for fellowship?
 - providing for the widows and orphans?
 - helping the hurting?
 - educating the young?
 - keeping the traditions of the church?
- Discovering the purpose is like completing the border of a jigsaw puzzle.
 - It will provide the frame of reference for the rest of the vision.
 - Doing programmes and ministries without first discovering what it is that God wants you to do as a church can lead to frustration and little fruit.
- A good purpose statement is ...
 - biblical—should fit within the parameters of the Great Commission
 - practical—simple, understandable and in everyday terms
 - transferable—easily and naturally passed from one person to another
 - short—easy to remember

2.2 Define your target

- Jeremiah to the king and people of Judah (Jer. 1:18); Jonah to the Ninevites (Jonah 1:2); Paul to Gentiles (Rom. 11:13); Peter to Jews (Gal. 2:7); James to Jews facing persecution (James 1:1)
- The major question: Who is our primary “customer”?
 - who is our Jerusalem (i.e. our immediate community)? [most churches are called to be neighbourhood churches reaching out to their immediate community, and not regional churches]
 - who is our primary target? [identify who is in the centre of the bull’s eye on the target]
 - who in this community are the people we are best equipped to reach? [you tend to draw people like the ones you already have]
- Three realities of targeting:
 - When we aim at nothing, we hit nothing every time.
 - When we aim at everything, we hit nothing most of the time.
 - When we try to reach everyone, we reach no one most of the time.
 - THE reality is this—no one church reaches everyone.

- If our goal is to reach those who are already in church, then other churches become our competitors.
- But if our goal is to reach the unchurched, then other churches become our teammates—“Whoever is not against you is for you” (Luke 9:50).
- There is no room for being territorial in the kingdom of God.
- Define your target ...
 - geographically
 - demographically (describe the community around you)
 - culturally
 - spiritually—lost who are unchurched? Christians who are unchurched? New Christians? Mature Christians?
 - welcome and celebrate anyone who walks into your church, but know who the centre of your bull’s eye is

2.3 Decide your strategy

- The common mistake is to work with strategy before deciding on purpose and target because we want to continue some programmes that are already running in church.
 - We keep these programmes on the church calendar year after year without evaluating if they are accomplishing the purpose or reaching the target.
 - A purpose driven church will reaffirm, revise, or remove these programmes according to how they meet the purpose and target of the vision.
- Some questions related to deciding on the strategy:
 - What process will accomplish our purpose and reach our target? [mere programmes and events will not get the job done]
 - How do we move from where we are to where we want to go?
 - What must change?
 - What must not change?
 - What is the best order of change?

3. The hook is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

- This never changes for it is central if we are to be fishers of men.
- But the bait we put on the hook depends on where we are fishing and the kind of fish we are trying to catch.

Step 3: Planting the Vision

1. Vision is not a full grown fruit-producing tree.

- It is a seed that must be planted in the proper soil in order to grow and bear fruit.
- The proper soil is that of the hearts and minds of your church leaders.
- We must take time to plant the vision with key leaders before sharing it with the whole church.

2. Four reasons why vision often dies before it gets planted.

2.1 Tendency to be excited about implementing the vision causes us to rush ahead without taking time to get others on board.

2.2 The traditional “top down” approach adopted by many senior pastors doesn’t see the need to get others on board.

2.3 The difficulty of getting leaders on board tempts us to seek forgiveness rather than permission from them.

2.4 The fear of letting go and letting others own the vision.

3. The key leaders

3.1 The power brokers—they are the opinion makers and influencers in your church—e.g. Mr. Charter Member, Mr. Been Here Forever, Mr. Big Bucks.

- Dealing with power brokers is a biblical idea—Nehemiah had to deal with the Persian king and secure his approval for several issues:
 - The overall plan (Neh. 2:5)
 - The timing of the plan (Neh. 2:6)
 - The details of the plan (Neh. 2:7-8)
 - The resources for the plan (Neh. 2:9b)
- Securing the support of the power brokers is a better and wiser choice than fighting them

3.2 Those whose assistance you will need

- For Nehemiah, he needed:
 - The governors of the surrounding lands (Neh. 2:7)
 - The keeper of the forest (Neh. 2:8)
- Secure the support of the leaders whose territory you are going through.
- Secure the support of the providers whose resources you are going to need (time, talents, ideas, money).

4. Four things will happen if you fail to secure the support of key leaders:

4.1 The church will be confused – when a recognized leader does not know what is going on, it will result in confusion in the church.

4.2 People will be entrenched—when people are not included in the change process, they may feel that you are taking their church away from them, resulting in them digging in and waiting for you to change or leave.

4.3 Leaders will leave the church—a leader who is uninformed will feel unwanted, and will leave to find a church that will keep them in the loop.

4.4 You can hurt yourself—the confusion and exodus of leaders as well as the doubt that is cast on your vision will bring you much pain (even if you are tough enough to bear the hurt, a wounded leader often do not make good decisions).

5. Principles for working with vision team

5.1 Choose them carefully.

- Mature believers—the church will never rises above the level of its leadership.
- Dreamers rather than detail people—people who love to think big, reach high, and optimistic (detail people like to figure out policies and procedures, and focus on limitations).
- Big picture people—to present a vision big enough for others to say, “I will give my life to this.”
- Trustworthy people—able to keep the vision confidential till it is ready to be shared with the larger church.
- Staff priority—get staff who can dream; add staff who can dream; bypass staff who cannot dream and choose those who can within the congregation.
- Keep the team small—three to seven is a good size for the purpose of effective dreaming and planning.
- Seek the advice of your vision team
 - Effective visionaries have a small group of their sharpest leaders as a vision team—for feedback, balance, accountability and fellowship.

5.2 Work quietly behind the scenes.

- Neh. 2:16—the point is to be strategic, not to be secretive.
- There is a right time and place for everyone in the church to be involved in the vision, but that time is not when the vision is still being formed.

5.3 Survey the current conditions.

- Neh. 2:13—you must take an honest and objective look at your present conditions.
- Make a list of what is working and what is not working in your church.

5.4 Share your vision and your heart with your vision team.

- Neh. 2:17-18—tell them your dream and heartache.
- They need to know how you get to this point—what God is doing in your heart and in your life.

- Keep your vision team (including pastors on staff) on the same page—meetings, lunches, home gatherings.
 - “You guys fit together so well that you can finish each other’s sentences.”
 - Get together for training and vision casting.
6. Expose your key leaders to model churches
- 1 Thess. 1:6-8—use insights and ideas that are helpful as you make your transitions.
 - Avoid being carbon copies of other churches.
 - Learning everything from personal experiences calls for many years in the school of hard knocks.
 - Learning from the experiences of others can save yourself and your church much time and even heartache (though we cannot transfer exact applications, but we can always transfer principles into our own context).
 - We need to learn from both ways.

Step 4: Sharing the Vision

1. Sharing with the remaining leaders

1.1 These include teachers and other helpers in the various ministries.

- Before the vision is shared with the church from the pulpit, it must be shared with the entire leadership.
- Leaders need to know what is coming before the rank and file know it.
- Leaders who are kept in the dark will find it very difficult to support the vision wholeheartedly (they have a built-in need to know).
- Neh. 2:16—"the priests and nobles or officials or any others who would be doing the work" did not yet know the vision.
- The next chapter finds these people heading the work on different sections of the wall—Nehemiah shared with them and got them to buy into the vision.

1.2 Leaders who are on board before you share the vision with the whole church will be your allies and supporters.

- They will help with those who struggle with the changes to get on board.
- If they are not on board before you share with the whole church, they can lead others to resist the changes.

1.3 Use a vision retreat to do this.

- Build unity, give time for Q & A, and letting leadership team become owners and carriers of the vision.

2. Sharing with the remainder of the church

2.1 The success of the vision comes down this—will the majority of the people get behind it?

- Neh. 3—majority of people are working on the wall.
- Baton is successfully passed from the visionary to the leaders and to the people.

2.2 How to share the vision in multiple ways:

- Preaching. Do a vision series once a year to revisit the purpose, target, and strategy.
- Small group vision studies.
- Purpose statement. Condense it into one sentence, and refer and repeat it regularly.
- Vision phrases. Use short and catchy phrases to communicate small pieces of the vision.
- Vision verses. These will become the heart and soul of the church.
- Faith stories. These are testimonies that support the vision—"God at work" moments in the lives of people.
- Exemplifying. Live out the vision in your own life—live and talk about it from firsthand experience for the vision to catch on.

- Vision capturing.
 - Conferences—attend some that are in line with your need
 - Tapes and books
 - One-on-one—hang out with visionaries

Step 5: Implementing the Vision

1. Principles

1.1 One change at a time

- When you try to change too many things at any one time, you and your church will be frustrated.
- You need to focus on one change at a time.
- Nehemiah started with one change—the gates (3:1, 3, 6, 13-15, 28).

1.2 Change in strategic order

- If you have God's vision, He will also show you the right order to implement the changes (Nehemiah started with the gates, the walls, and then the finishing touches).
- The order of change is different in every church because God has a unique purpose and plan for each.
- The right order will generally follow that of purpose, target and strategy.
- E.g. if you believe God is calling you to reach out to seekers (purpose), then changing the worship style from traditional to contemporary (strategy) may be crucial if you want to be connected with young seekers (target). Otherwise, change for change sake is futile and meaningless.

1.3 Key leaders in visible places

- Nehemiah put his best leaders to work first on the gates (3:1, 3, 6, 13-15, 28).
- When you do like Nehemiah, people will see and join in.
- This is one reason why a staff member should not do what others can do—when people see a staff member doing a job, they are often not impressed because they view the staff as doing what he is paid to do.
- But when they see a lay person like themselves doing the job, they are often challenged to join in.

1.4 People to work where they are vested

- When Nehemiah put people to rebuild the wall, he assigned them to the section closest to their house (3:23-30).
- Put people to work where they are vested—e.g. in areas that match their interests, their passion, or ongoing commitment.
- Don't put square pegs into round holes, or they will be forced to fit into something not part of their God-given uniqueness.
- Put people to work in areas where they are already proven—promote them to a bigger role in that area before transferring them to something else outside their area of expertise.

2. Build on strengths and not on weaknesses

2.1 In a hurry to grow, a church often adds programmes and ministries that are working in other churches, but for which it still does not have the leadership or capability to pull off.

- If you blindly copy what works in another church, you may end up with programmes and events that do not really fit your church at that point in time.

2.2 Doing too many things can lead the church to be a mile wide but an inch deep.

- Determine your main emphases, and do everything else to support and complement these emphases.

3. Go slow when implementing changes related to vision

3.1 Factors that determine speed of transition:

- Distance you must go
 - The farther you are going, the slower you must go.
 - Small course corrections can be quickly made, while complete turnarounds require more time (e.g. change of worship time vs. change of church culture).
- Size of the church
 - The bigger the church, the slower you must go.
- Age of the church
 - The older the church, the slower you must go.
 - Younger churches usually have less tradition and more flexibility.
- Toughness of the leaders
 - The tougher the leaders are in leading change, the faster you can go.
 - The key is to be tough enough to lead the charge but gentle enough to care for the people who go up the hill with you (i.e. able to take the heat and not always wanting to please others).

3.2 A change schedule

- Year 1: Prepare and define vision.
- Year 2: Plant vision with leaders and then share it with the whole church.
- Year 3: Implement small changes.
- Year 4: Implement major changes.

Step 6: Dealing with Opposition

1. How change affects people

1.1 People can only handle so much change.

- After making some changes, they can become tired of change.

1.2 People feel uncomfortable when asked to do something new.

- Most feel awkward and self-conscious (e.g. raising hands in worship).

1.3 People think first about what they must give up.

- Change causes people to focus first on what they are losing.

1.5 People feel isolated when they are asked to change.

- Change tends to isolate a person because he thinks he is the only one going through it.

1.6 People are at different levels of readiness for change.

- Some can adapt and adjust easily to change while others may struggle.

1.7 People tend to revert back to old behaviour once the reason to change is removed.

2. The reality of opposition

2.1 Anyone who's doing God's work will face some opposition, like leading the church through change and transition.

- Nehemiah was trying to do a good (even godly) thing—to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem so that it would be a safe place for the people, and regain Jerusalem's dignity as a city.
 - People could live, work and worship without fear of their enemies.
 - Everyone should be happy with what Nehemiah was doing, but the reality is—they were not!
 - Some did not understand the change.
 - Even some of those who understood the change also opposed simply because they didn't like it.
- Opposition will come from those whose territory you are messing with; those controlled by the evil one, and those who just like to be contrary.

3. Two steps to deal with opposition

3.1 *Expect opposition*

- If you expect, you will be prepared, not allowing it to discourage you and doubt your vision.
- Expect apathy
 - Some people just won't care about the vision (Neh. 3:5b)—some leaders who are control freaks will be apathetic because they view your vision as lessening their control.
- Expect anger—e.g. hate mails

- See Neh. 4:1a.
- Expect ridicule
 - This comes from the “Sanballats” in our churches—they just oppose whatever we do (Neh. 4:1b).
 - A common form of ridicule is name calling—e.g. liberal, heretic, false teacher.
- Expect criticism
 - See Neh. 4:2-3.
 - Don’t take criticism personally, especially if there is no truth in it.
 - This is often hard for those who want to make people happy all the time.
 - But the reality is that you will be criticized regardless of what you do—so might as well be criticized for doing what God wants you to do (Gal. 1:10).
 - You cannot please everyone (not even Jesus can do that); you cannot please anyone all the time; you can please God (sometimes it is easier to please God than man).
- Expect a fight
 - There will be a showdown along the way (Neh. 4:8, 11).
 - But we must stand our ground.

3.2 *Keep on track*

- Opposition can draw you away from the main thing to side issues (i.e. the urgent things that may not be the important things).
 - Once sidetracked, you become a fire fighter rather than a church builder.
- Five things to keep on track:
 - Praying—Neh. 4:4-5 reminds us to respond to opposition not with personal action, but with prayer. Let opposition drive us closer to God and become better, not away from God and become bitter.
 - Working—Keep going and not let the opposition slow you down or grind you to a halt (Neh. 4:6). Choose to be workers through the storm, and not riders on the storm.
 - Encouraging—Nehemiah kept encouraging the people in the face of opposition to their work (4:14). When battling with discouragement, don’t be afraid of your critics (you cannot control what they say or do, but you can control your own response to them—and you will answer to God for how you respond); remember that God is with you (Rom. 8:31b); remember your purpose—it is to complete God’s visions and not your vision.
 - Leading—You can be sidetracked to give your attention to those who do not want to be led, and neglect those who are looking to you for leadership. In the face of opposition, Nehemiah placed his leaders out from their work behind the scenes and put them with the people who were working on the wall (4:16b). People need to see that their leaders were there with them and still leading in times of opposition. Let the workers and not the whiners have your time and attention.
 - Watching—If you are doing something for God, the “wolves in sheep’s clothing” will be gathering to prey on the youngest and weakest lambs

in your flock (Matt. 7:15). You need to stay alert and be watchful like “guards by night” and “workmen by day” (Neh. 4:22b).

4. Be willing to let people leave the church

4.1 Some people will leave no matter what you do.

4.2 But when you set the vision and stay the course, you determine who leaves.

- Those who stay are those willing to look up to your leadership and work with you.

Step 7: Making Course Corrections

1. Three ways to make corrections along the way

1.1 Care for the neglected.

- Halfway through the rebuilding of the wall, Nehemiah had to deal with the complainers from within his group—i.e. from fellow workers, not outsiders.
 - Some will complain that it is too hard. Those who had larger families complained to Nehemiah that they were struggling to feed their own families (5:2).
 - Some will complain that the price is too high. It was hard enough for these families to balance working on the wall and caring for their families. To make matters worse, there was a famine. What a high price!
 - Some will complain that it is not fair. Some had to sell their children off as labourers just to make ends meet (Neh. 5:5a). Any transition will be harder on some than on others—e.g. how the young and old regard a change of worship style.
- Responses to complainers:
 - Dismiss them as troublemakers. They are only happy if they can upset others. This is a right response if the complainant has no legitimate cause and is divisive (Titus 3:10). You must slow down to discern the nature and legitimacy of the complaint so that you can respond appropriately (Nehemiah “pondered them in my mind” when he heard the outcry and charges – 5:6-7a).
 - Discount them as those who do not understanding your vision. Some may not want to understand, some cannot understand, and some just cannot think in visionary terms. Don’t shoot your wounded people when they complain. Otherwise, you will end up with no one to work with you.
 - Demonstrate your care for them and provide for their needs. Nehemiah took time to listen to and care for those with legitimate concerns (5:7-13). This does not mean you must do all the caring. But it means you must ensure that the caring gets done.

1.2 Negotiate peace.

- Groups that may need you to negotiate peace are:
 - Those who like the changes and those who don’t.
 - Those who are involved and those who feel left out. Those who are doing the work will be the quickest to buy in. Those who prefer to sit and talk will be the slowest. However, the sitters will be the quickest to feel neglected.
 - Those who are old guards resisting the change and the new guards who are supporting it. God raises new leadership when He wants to do a new thing. The road-block for these new leaders is often the old guards who have been there for a long time, even longer than you. Nehemiah had to deal with all kinds of leaders—nobles who would not work (3:5), leaders who took advantage of workers (5:7), leaders who

were dead against him (Sanballat and Tobiah – 4:1-3), and leaders who were fully supporting him (the priests working on the gates – 3:1).

1.3 Stay among the people.

- Nehemiah came to Jerusalem as governor; all the previous governors were placing a heavy burden on the people (5:15a).
- But Nehemiah was a different leader than all those governors before him.
 - He refused the royal food allowance, especially since there was a famine in the land when he was there (5:1-3, 14c).
 - He shared his table with his leaders, visitors, and even hungry commoners (5:17).
 - He treated people with dignity and respect—he did not treat them as slaves but as people of value in God’s sight (5:15).
 - He cared for his people—other governors saw people as property to be used, he saw them as persons to be loved (5:17b).
 - He worked on the wall beside the people—he stayed among his people and did not lord over them (5:16). If he had to lead them, he must be one of them.
- Ways we separate ourselves from people:
 - Titles—“Elijah was a man just like us” (James 5:17a)—Elijah was an ordinary man like us but he had an extraordinary faith in God.
 - Dress—leaders do not need to out-dress their people; they just need to dress appropriately before God! (1 Sam. 16:7b).
 - Language—leaders need not have to speak in fancy, spiritual language that is of Shakespearean English.
- Be a leader and not a martyr to your people.
 - A martyr is ten steps ahead of his people—they become so frustrated in catching up with him that they shoot him behind his back!
 - A leader is just about one step ahead of his people—he is close enough to them to still be one of them, and in front of them to still be their leader.

2. Two things to do as you lead along the way

2.1 Remind your people continually why you are all changing.

- People tend to drift away from the purpose, target and strategy with the passage of time.
- They need to hear the vision again and again until it becomes a part of their soul.

2.2 Affirm and appreciate your people for the changes they are making.

- When you catch people doing something right and brag on them, they will go the second mile to do it again.

Step 8: Evaluating the Results

1. Key evidences that the vision has caught on

1.1 Completion of vision

- Nehemiah completed the rebuilding of the wall in 52 days (6:15).
- The second half is often the harder part, but don't stop half-way home!

1.2 Obvious demonstration of God's work

- When God works, even the enemies cannot stop and must acknowledge the hand of God at work (Neh. 6:16).

1.3 Continued opposition and criticism

- Nehemiah met with opposition before, during and even after the project (Neh. 6:6b, 12-13).
- The person who faces no opposition is often the person doing nothing worth opposing.
- The most blessed ministries are also the most criticized.
- Being criticized does not mean you will be blessed, but being blessed does mean you will be criticized—the enemy always opposes and criticizes what God is blessing.

1.4 Emergence of new leaders

- None of the leaders for worship had been available when Nehemiah began his project, but they all stepped forward when the vision is complete (7:1).
- If you wait till you have adequate resources for the task, you will never complete the vision.
- But if you get on the task that God has for you, He will supply the leaders because He provides what He plans.
- God often waits for us to take the first step of faith before He unleashes His power—He parts the waters only when we step away from the safety of the shore into the river of vision (Joshua 3:14-17).
- If He gives us all the resources upfront, we would not exercise faith; but He provides along the way as and when we need them.

1.5 Major contributions by the people

- When vision catches on, people will contribute (see Neh. 7 and 12).
- Those who complained to Nehemiah in Chapter 5 that they did not have food to eat or money to pay their taxes were giving in record-setting ways in Neh. 12:47. In fact, the entire nation was giving and not just those in Jerusalem (13:12).
- What people will give to:
 - They will give to a vision.
 - They will give to a need that is well expressed.
 People will rarely give to a budget.

1.6 Vision produces new commitment and its completion renews commitment.

- The people read the book of the law together (Neh. 8:1b, 3a, 18a).
- The people practiced public confession (Neh. 9:1-3).
- The people made a covenant with God (Neh. 9:38)—this may be a renewed commitment to mature in faith and faithfulness to God, and not to remain as “spiritual infants and consumers”—these are disciple-making churches and not just seeker-friendly ones.
- Programme driven churches tend to make methods sacred and rarely evaluate people—this can confuse the sacred message (gospel) with the temporal method (the way in which the gospel is delivered); when programmes, methods, and traditions cannot be evaluated and challenged, legalism is birthed.
- Purpose-driven churches are a balance between the two as they continue to reinvent and redefine themselves by the constant pursuit of God in order to become biblically functioning communities.

1.7 New people joining in

- People will be attracted to churches where God is obviously working, and where the people are passionate about what they are doing and know where they are going.
- Neh. 11:1—new people settled into the newly walled city of Jerusalem.

1.8 Openness to further change

- Cutting edge churches are always in change mode.
- Change is a normal part of healthy living—every living organism grows through change.
- A completed vision will lead to openness to further change because a proven track record leads to trust—Nehemiah introduced many other changes and reforms at the end of the Book of Nehemiah (i.e. Chapter 13).

2. A purpose-driven church will not be afraid to make further changes as and when necessary.

- As long as we are impressed with God and unimpressed with ourselves, He will continue to do impressive things in our midst.
- Give God all the credit and the glory for what has taken place.

Conclusion

1. The process of vision is cyclical.
 - Becoming purpose driven is not a one-time event, but a way of doing church.
 - The process of vision must cycle and recycle.
 - Make one change at a time and take it all the way through the 8-step cycle.
 - Then restart the cycle with the next change.
2. The process of vision is continual.
 - One of the dangers in seeing God's vision take root in the church is that we again settle in and get content.
 - We must always keep seeking and visioning for God is always doing something new (Isa. 43:18-19; Philippians 3:12-14).
3. The process of vision is personal.
 - The greatest change will be in you.
 - You will never be the same—you become a transformed leader who is transformational in your leadership.
4. The process of vision is contagious.
 - When God captures your heart with His vision, He will use you to capture the hearts of others as well.
5. The process of vision is universal.
 - The process can be applied in the church, corporation, family, and personal life.
 - God's principles work in any setting—put them to work in your context and watch Him bless.