VISION IMPAIRED: A MODEL TO MAKE VISION A REALITY FOR CHURCH PLANTS

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By
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acknowledgments

God has blessed me to be married to a woman who has taught me what true love is and has been such an encouragement to me since I met her. Michelle, thank you for believing in me, encouraging me and supporting me. I love you and am in love with you. This accomplish is for us because we did it together.

I also want to thank my daughter, Lyndsey, and my son, Grant. Both of them have understood, been patient and always check on my progress during this time. Lyndsey, you will always be my princess. Grant, you will always be my best bud. I love you both dearly.
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ABSTRACT
VISION IMPAIRED: A MODEL TO MAKE VISION A REALITY FOR CHURCH PLANTS
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Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2014
Mentor: Dr. Charles N. Davidson

Although begun with good intentions, not every church planting effort stays on course or continues to success. Church planting is uniquely birthed and has many areas that can become pitfalls, as well as, demands that challenge a church planter while trying to implement the vision; therefore this thesis project provides a biblical structure to help church plants successfully implement the vision for the church. This thesis project provides a staffing model for church plants to give life to the vision and to enhance the survival rate of the church plants. The staffing model in this thesis project consists of a visionary, implementor, manager and problem-solver, which are the key components to making vision a reality and overcoming the obstacles church planters face in implementing the vision. This thesis project will survey and report the findings of 150 church planters regarding the success and challenges in implementing the vision.

Abstract length: 144
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INTRODUCTION

Statement of Importance

The focus of this thesis project is to provide a staffing model for church plants to give life to the vision and to enhance the survival rate of the church. The survival rate for church starts surviving past four years is 68%.\(^1\) In fact, only 800 church plants survive each year.\(^2\) The staffing model that this thesis project will outline is comprised of four positions. The four positions consists of a visionary, implementor, manager and problem-solver, which are the key components to making vision a reality and overcoming the obstacles church planters face in implementing the vision. This thesis project will survey and report the findings of 150 church planters regarding the success and challenges in implementing the vision. This author will implement this model in the church he is currently planting and utilize this model in coaching other church planters.

This thesis project addresses the topic of vision implementation specifically for church plants and provides a vision team model that will help increase the probability of the church plant implementing the vision that God has given the pastor. In addition, this model will help increase the survival rate of the church plant, increase the effectiveness of reaching the unchurched, and impacting the community for the glory of God.

Within the current church culture, one of the trends that are taking place to advance the gospel in unchurched communities is church planting. Church planting networks have emerged and evolved over the last decade to train, fund and assist ministers in the church planting efforts. There are many books available that address different church planting topics, such as, church


planting essentials, milestones, pitfalls, mistakes and start up kits. The topic of vision is important to the church. Proverbs 29:18 reminds church leaders about the necessity of vision and the cause and effect that vision carries³.

It is one thing to have a vision but a totally different dynamic to implement the vision. There are many valuable books, articles and classes about vision that emphasize the importance of having a vision, talk about vision casting and explain how to develop a vision. Yet, there is little direction given on how to implement a vision. This thesis project will address the importance of the visionary (in this thesis project, the church planter) developing a vision implementation team that is built upon the necessary strengths and personality traits that need to be on the team in order to effectively implement the vision for the church plant. Using God-given strengths while understanding and valuing the strengths of others dramatically increases the commitment to the team and vision.⁴

There are four critical roles that a church planter must fill in order to increase the effectiveness of implementing vision. The four positions include the visionary, implementor, manager and consultant. Theses positions require different skills, personalities, abilities and perspectives and together, as a team, can create chemistry that is dynamic and results in seeing the vision being implemented and carried out.

When a church plant has to close the doors, not only does a church die but also a vision dies with it. With hundreds of church plants failing and having to close their doors, there are many questions that must be asked about what could have been done differently. This thesis project project brings awareness to the importance of having the right people in place that have

³ Proverbs 29:18. (NIV). Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced are in the New International Version.

the right skills, and personalities to come together as a team to implement the vision for the church plant.

**The Statement of the Problem**

The current population of the United States is 312 million people.\(^5\) In 2050, the population is projected to be 400 million. In 2005, 17.5% of Americans attended church regularly.\(^6\) This means that, in order, for the Protestant Churches to keep pace (roughly 20% in attendance) about 2500 new churches need to start annually over the next 40 years to handle the additional 20 million people in church. With 7000 churches a year closing their doors each year, then 9500 new churches need to be planted each year just to keep pace with the population growth.\(^7\) The importance of churches being planted and surviving are critical. Each church should effectively staff accordingly to implement the vision of the church so the church can reach the community effectively.

Vision is important to God yet there is a disconnection on the importance of vision and educating church planters on vision implementation. The lack of education for vision implementation for church planters results in churches closing, and pastors being frustrated because the vision has not be implemented or the vision that was implemented is different that the vision given to the pastor.

The model that is being presented will also address the importance of understanding how to form a vision team that is based on the skill set, personality traits and experience of each

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\(^6\) David T. Olson, *The American Church in Crisis* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 28.

person. The starting point for vision, for thinking about our church’s future, is not deciding where we want to go or exploring what is working for other churches, but understanding how we are unique.\(^8\) It is important for the lead pastor to protect the vision that God has given him for the church plant. The vision team will help get the vision on track, keep it moving forward and provide protection from the vision being hijacked, or taking a different direction that God has not directed.

The aim of this thesis project is to address these problems at a foundational level. There are four roles to the vision team that will be explained in this thesis project. The vision team consists of the following roles.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
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<tr>
<td>Visionary</td>
<td>This is the person who God has given the vision to which is typically the Lead Pastor. This person is the one who sets the direction for the church.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementor</td>
<td>This is the person who understands what systems and processes need to be implemented so the vision can be carried out effectively and efficiently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>This is the person who oversees the processes and systems that are being carried out within the church and ensures the steps are being followed to carry out the vision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultant</td>
<td>This is the person who identifies any problems or needs that should be addressed to ensure that the vision is being carried out and not being hijacked by others.</td>
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Listed below are some key terms that will be used throughout this thesis project project that the reader should be familiar with to better understand the proposed solution.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td>Church plant</td>
<td>This is a church that is new and starting in a new community for the purpose of reaching the unchurched in the area and/or providing a church for those who need a church home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church planter</td>
<td>This is the person who starts the church. This person is typically the Lead Pastor of the Church. Typically, God has placed the call and given the vision of the church to this person to carry out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead pastor</td>
<td>This is the person who leads and shepherds the church.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision</td>
<td>The purpose of the church. This is a God-given directive given to the church planter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gap</td>
<td>This is the area that is not currently being addressed within the church planting community. This is the area between the “vision” and “starting the church”</td>
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The goal of providing a solution to vision implementation is to help church plants increase the probability of a church fulfilling the vision God has given the lead pastor, increase the probability of the church surviving past four year, and increase the effectiveness of church plants in reaching the unchurched.

Other benefits that will be experienced through this solution is the lead pastor will be fulfilled in being faithful to carry out the vision God has given him because of the protection, care and intentionality that is in place for the vision.

When the vision is not being fulfilled, and the people on staff are unable to help achieve the vision, then the lead pastor finds himself fighting an uphill battle and spending time on things that he does not have time for and has not been called to do. This is something that could derail the vision and make the church plant unsuccessful. The solution of this thesis project project is to
help the lead pastor and church successfully implement the vision, which will result in seeing a greater result in people experiencing life change in Christ.

**Statement of Limitations**

The model that is presented in this thesis project will not be addressed the topics regarding if the staffing personal needs to change, how effective this staffing model is because this model has not been completely tested, the details of how a church plant will implement vision because this thesis project focuses on the framework of the vision team not the practical steps to carrying out the vision, why many church plants close their doors and how to make changes to the vision implementation process or problems that occur within the implementation process.

**Theoretical Basis for the Project**

Throughout the Bible, there is a biblical pattern in seeing that God is intentional in what He does to fulfill His purposes. God is intentional with vision, the way He created people and even brought people together to carry out His plan. Psalm 139:13 states, “For you formed my inmost parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb.”

God intentionally created each person uniquely. God gave people natural abilities and skills. Exodus 31:1-3 states, “Then the Lord said to Moses, “See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills.”

Also, when vision was carried out, in the Bible, it was through teamwork. For example, Jesus brought together 12 apostles to carry out the vision of God.

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10 Psalm 139:13.

11 Exodus 31:1-3.
the Apostle Paul was planting churches, he had a team with him (Acts 16)\textsuperscript{12} and when Nehemiah had the vision to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, he simply put together teams with different skills and tasks to fulfill the vision (Nehemiah 2).

God was intentional in putting people in the right position and according to their specific skills, gifts, and experience to carry out his vision and commands. 1 Corinthians 12:27-28 shows God’s intentionality. It states, “Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues.”\textsuperscript{13}

Since God is intentional about creating people with specific skills, abilities and intentionally put people in the right position to carry out the task He had given them, then the church planter should be intentional about recruiting the people with the right skills and abilities and put them in the right place to carry out the vision that God has given for the church plant.

The main passages in the Bible that address team implementation are Exodus 25-36, Nehemiah 3-6 and Acts 13-21. In these passages, there is a vision given and a team implemented to make the vision a reality. The one who was the visionary brought others alongside that had the skill set to implement the vision.

In Exodus, God had the desire to have a tabernacle built and He shared the vision of the tabernacle with Moses. Before the tabernacle was constructed, God had Moses put together a team of qualified and skilled people to carry out various tasks in order for the tabernacle to become a reality. God did not ask Moses to build the tabernacle by himself, God instructed

\textsuperscript{12} Acts 16.

\textsuperscript{13} 1 Corinthians 12:27-28.
Moses to incorporate others to implement the vision. God wanted skilled workers to help build the tabernacle.

Then the Lord said to Moses, “See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills— to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of crafts. Moreover, I have appointed Oholiab son of Ahisamak, of the tribe of Dan, to help him. Also I have given ability to all the skilled workers to make everything I have commanded you.”

Within the story of the tabernacle in Exodus 25-36, the vision team to build the tabernacle is assembled. The vision team consisted of the visionary, who is Moses. Moses is the leader, visionary and problem solver. The following Exodus 25:9 states “Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you.” Moses ensured that the vision was carried out. Exodus 39:43 states, “Moses inspected the work and saw that they had done it just as the Lord had commanded. So Moses blessed them.” Moses was also a problem solver. Moses had to tell the people, “not to make anything else as an offering for the sanctuary.”

Bezalel is the implementor. Exodus 31:1-5 states, “See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills— to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of crafts.” He had the skill, ability and knowledge of all crafts.

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16 Exodus 39:43.
18 Exodus 31:1-5.
Oholiab is the manager who was assigned to assist Bezalel. Exodus 31:6 states, “Moreover, I have appointed Oholiab son of Ahisamak, of the tribe of Dan, to help him.”\(^{19}\) He was a manager and was responsible for teaching others. Exodus 35:34 states, “And he has given both him and Oholiab son of Ahisamak, of the tribe of Dan, the ability to teach others.”\(^{20}\) This team approach and having the right people with the right skills and experience resulted in the vision for the tabernacle becoming a reality. Moses was the visionary leader, Bezalel was the implementer, Oholiab was the manager or supervisor and Moses was also the problem solver for this vision.

Another example of a team carrying out the vision is in the Book of Nehemiah. Nehemiah had a vision to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Nehemiah implemented a team approach to carrying out the vision. The teams were formed based on skill level and ability. The team approach allowed the vision to be fulfilled in an efficient way.

The Apostle Paul had a vision to plant churches. Acts 13-21 shares how Paul travels with a team of men. For example, Paul along with Barnabas and John went to Salamis, Cyprus to start a church.\(^{21}\) Even after Paul and Barnabas had a disagreement and parted ways, Paul teamed up with Silas and Timothy to start churches.\(^{22}\)

Not only is there the theological basis for a team approach to implementing and carrying out the vision but also there is a theological basis for utilizing people’s strengths and skills in specific positions. The Apostle Paul speaks of how God purposefully created people differently with the intention of working together as a body or team. 1 Corinthians 12, Paul explains how

\(^{19}\) Exodus 31:6.  
\(^{20}\) Exodus 35:34.  
\(^{21}\) Acts 13:5.  
\(^{22}\) Acts 16:1-5.
there is only one body but many parts. Then in verses 18-19, Paul writes, “But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body.”

Throughout Scripture, there is intentionality in the way God created people, how people are to function together and what is accomplished when people with the right skills and abilities are in the right position. The intentionality is a purposeful because the goal is to share the Gospel message to the world.

**Statement of Methodology**

The proposed solution that this thesis project addresses regarding a vision implementation staffing model for church plants is a culmination of biblical principles, business practices and personality profiles merged together to produce an effective means of assembling an successful vision implementation team.

There is a common denominator that exists with God creating people with specific strengths and skills, business practices that utilize people’s strengths and skills and personality profiles that bring to light people’s strengths. This thesis project will bring the value of each of these areas together to provide a solution to help church planters assemble a vision team.

Chapter 1 will focus on the need for a vision implementation team. Within this chapter the results of the survey will be summarized, statistics of church planting, the “gap” that is not being addressed within the church planting community and conclusions from the survey will be shared. Also, this chapter will draw attention to the ‘need’ for the staffing model that is being recommended.

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23 1 Corinthians 12:18-19.
Chapter 2 will focus on the function, personality and characteristics of each position on the vision team, which are the visionary, implementor, manager and consultant. This chapter will look in detail at the role of the visionary, the importance of this position and understanding how he is wired. It is vital to understand the personality, strengths, and tendencies of each position because this sets the foundation of the vision implementation team.

Chapter 3 will focus on how the team will function together to carry out the vision effectively and outline some potential concerns they will need to be aware of as they move forward as a team. This chapter will outline some initiatives and things to be considered and evaluated as the vision team moves through the implementation process.

Chapter 4 is the conclusion of the thesis project. It provides a summary of the main points of the thesis project will come together with the solution.

Review of the Literature

At the core of this staffing modeling for vision implementation for church planting, is a solution that brings together principles from the Bible, business community and personality profiles. Therefore, the literary works that will be resourced for this thesis project will either be a ministry related topic, business practice and/or characteristics from personality profiles. The purpose of merging these three practices together is to address the need of how to effectively build a team to implement vision. It appears that this approach has not been addressed within the church-planting world.

The following is a list of resources that will be used in this thesis project writing.
Books

*Leading from Your Strengths*\(^{24}\) shares the importance of understanding the personality and strengths of individuals. This book outlines the purpose of the Leading from Your Strengths profile and how this tool can be utilized to assemble an effective team.

*Strengths Based Leadership*\(^{25}\) gives insight to understanding the strengths of people. This book shares insights from top CEOs and how they have learned to capitalize on people’s strengths to achieve goals. This book incorporates a profile assessment so an individual can understand their top strengths.

*Church Unique*\(^{26}\) is about the vision process. Mancini provides advice on strategic planning, understanding the church’s DNA, and culture to carry out the vision to the full.

*Visioneering* takes the story of Nehemiah and the power of the vision he had to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Stanley shares the vision principles along with understanding of the power, characteristics and purpose of vision.

*Execution*\(^{27}\) is a successful and well-respected CEO who shares the importance of building the right team and implementing the processes in order to effectively carry out vision. This book is filled with the experience and wisdom from Bossidy’s leadership.

*Good idea. Now What: How to move ideas to Execution*\(^{28}\) focuses on the necessities and principles that help move an idea or vision to an implementation phase. Lee provides direction

\(^{24}\) Tooker, Trent, and Cox, *Leading*.


\(^{26}\) Mancini, *Church Unique*.


for developing a practical plan for implementation, dealing with the obstacles and providing clarity to communicate the idea or vision.

*Vertical Church* focuses on the impact when a church simply focuses on God, in other words, simply has a vertical focus. This book provides statistics on the decline of church survival and how the church universal has missed the mark because of the lack of focus on God.

*A Practical Guide for Successful Church Change* is about the how to lead a church through a change. Coutta outlines the reasons for change and the need for change. This book focuses on the purpose of vision and implementing vision while directing a change for the church. The topics of preparing for change, vision, implementing and momentum ministry are the main areas that are discussed in this book.

*Church Planting from the Ground Up* is more of a resource guide for church planters. Each chapter, written by a church planter, addresses the real-life issues that church planters face in their ministry, life and church planting efforts.

*StrengthFinder* outlines 34 strengths that people possess. This book is intended to help the reader understand the importance of understanding and utilizing a person’s strengths so he or she will be most productive.

*Now, Discover Your Strengths* focuses on how to develop a person’s strengths and talents, as well as, working with the strengths and talents of the people that are on the team. This

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29 MacDonald, *Vertical Church*.


33 Buckingham and Clifton, *Now, Discover*. 
book expounds on the 34 strengths covered in StrengthFinder and shows the reader how to capitalize and utilize the strengths of others to create a powerful, efficient and productive team.

*How Full Is Your Bucket?* gives insight on how to focus on employee or teammates strengths that would result in the person feeling valuable and staying engaged in his role on the team. This book focuses on five positive emotions for team development.

*A Vision of the Possible* is about church planting in teams. Sinclair discusses how the team should function, the importance of teams and how the church planting efforts in the Bible were team based. This book focuses on the impact church planting has when it uses a team format.

*Starting a New Church* is more of a guide on how to plant a church. This book takes the reader from the conception phase and the reason to plant a church, to the designing of the infrastructure of the church and what to do when the church is launched. This book provides checklist that the reader can use to ensure the foundational necessities are being accomplished.

*Church Planting Is for Wimps* shares McKinley personal story of church planting. Within this book, McKinley shares the successes and failures he experienced while planting a church. The focus of this book that is encouraged is to simply pour into God and not waver from His plan.

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The Power of Vision\textsuperscript{38} encourages pastors and leaders to discover God's vision for their ministry and then to develop and implement the vision. Barna lists the requirements for catching God's vision and describes the characteristics of a visionary. Vision requires knowing God, knowing self, and understanding circumstances such as needs, opportunities and barriers. Barna shares the benefits, barriers and cost to having and implementing vision.

The American Church in Crisis\textsuperscript{39} is a based upon the fact that the United States population is growing faster than churches are in America. This book shows the result of years of research and how the United States is in crisis because the lack of church effectiveness.

How to Solve the People Puzzle: Understanding Personality Patterns\textsuperscript{40} provides a description of the different types of personalities profiles that people fall under. Each personality profile summary provides the reader with insight on how the personality sees, thinks, responds, handles conflict, relates and communicates with others.

Internet

The American Church Project website found at http://www.theamericanchurch.org is a website that provides statistical information, demographical information and summaries of gathered research regarding the condition of the church in the United States of America.

New Churches website found at http://www.newchurches.com is a website by Ed Stetzer that is a resource outlet for church planters. This website contains research, statistical and resource information to help a church planter in his efforts to start a church.

\textsuperscript{38} George Barna, \textit{The Power of Vision} (Ventura, CA: Regal, 2009).

\textsuperscript{39} Olson, \textit{American Church}.

\textsuperscript{40} Mels Carbonell, \textit{How to Solve the People Puzzle} (Blue Ridge, GA: Uniquely You Resources, 2008).
Ministry Insights found at http://www.ministryinsights.com is an organization that helps people understand biblical truth about God’s divine design for differences and build healthy relationships. Ministry Insights focuses on discovering the unique personalities with ministry staff, help bring understanding and value to the unique personalities in others and blend the differences to develop unity within the ministry staff. Ministry Insights, which was founded by Rodney Cox, developed the Leading From Your Strengths Profile that will be referred to in this thesis project.

Church Planting website found at http://www.churchplanting.com is a resource tool for church planters. This website helps, equips and encourages church planters who are focused on reaching people and leading them into relationship with Christ.

Scripture

Exodus 31:1-11 is a passage that shares how God told Moses to utilize other people who were skilled in specific skills, abilities and knowledge to carry out a specific task to fulfill the vision of building the tabernacle. This passage shows the importance of having the right people with the right skill set on the team to carry out the vision.

Exodus 35:30-35 shows the importance of having people in different roles to carry out the vision. Moses was the visionary leader, Bezalel carried out the tasks and Oholiab taught others. These roles were important for the vision of the tabernacle to be accomplished.

Exodus 36:1-38 is a continuation of the story of the tabernacle being built and how people were utilized based on their skills and abilities and how others were incorporated to carry out the tasks. In Chapter 36, we find how the details of the vision were fulfilled. This shows the importance of communicating the vision.
Nehemiah 3-7 shares how Nehemiah had a vision to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Nehemiah provides a biblical example of the importance of incorporating other people, putting them in the right roles to carry out the tasks, the value of teamwork, overcoming obstacles and how the vision can be accomplished. Also, in this story, once the walls were rebuilt, Nehemiah has Hanniniah manage the system put in place to guard the wall.

Psalm 139:13 shows that God has created each person with a purpose, skill set, and abilities. This verse reflects the uniqueness of each person.

Proverbs 29:18 emphasize the importance and value of vision. People need vision, boundaries and expectations set for them to move forward in life. This verse also implies the purpose and necessity of vision for a church.

Acts 13:5 shares when Barnabas and Saul went to Cyprus and started a church, they also brought John Mark with them as a helper. This verse is a reminder of the importance of having a team to carry out the vision of church planting.

Acts 16:1-5 shares when Paul and Silas were traveling and starting a church, they also had Timothy with them as part of the team. The team approach to starting church is seen throughout the book of Acts. This biblical principle is vital to have in place when starting a church.

1 Corinthians 12:12-31 provides the foundation of how God intended people to work together for a common cause. In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul writes that God created people with certain abilities and skills and how a person is to function within the role God created them to function in. This chapter is a reminder of how people work together in different roles, with different functions but for the same purpose.
CHAPTER ONE

The Need for a Vision Implementation Team

In the book, *Church in the Making*, author and church planter Ben Arment, writes, “But new churches don’t offer fail in year one…or year two, for that matter. It is usually in year four or five when the church is out of the incubator and no longer being coddled by its sponsors.”\(^1\)

Over 100 church planters were surveyed regarding their experience in starting a church. The survey consisted of ten questions that addressed the topics of vision, vision implementation, staffing, and hiring considerations. The results of the survey validate the issues of vision implementation, the gap between vision casting and vision implementation, and vision not being fulfilled. Peter Ducker states, “Each of the more than one million non-profit organizations in the United States may have a different mission, but changing lives is always the starting point and ending point. A mission cannot be impersonal; it has to have deep meaning, be something you believe in – something you know is right and believe that God has placed on your heart personally. A fundamental responsibility of leadership is to make sure that everybody knows the mission, understands it and lives it.”\(^2\)

If it is the fundamental responsibility of leadership to know, understand and live the mission or vision then isn’t it vital for the church planter to take time to process through the necessities of having the right staff in place to implement the vision?

The gap that planters need to look at, is the space between vision and vision implementation. The church planter can easily fall victim to the excitement of starting a church, focusing on the high hopes of the church making a large impact in the community, then believe that if they put in everything they have that everything will fall into place. Unfortunately this is

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not the formula for success in church planting and when that is not enough then the planter is left thinking that he failed. One of the goals of this thesis project is to draw attention to the church planter and the importance of understanding their gap and what positions, roles, and systems need to be in place to increase the survivability of the church and increase the probability of the vision becoming real.

The church planter (visionary) is faced with so many obstacles from the start when called to plant a church. What if church planters would take some time before moving into the nuts and bolts of church planting and seriously look at who they are, understand their strengths and weaknesses, how they communicate with others, what intentional staff decisions need to be made and wait to move forward until the vision implementation team is in place? I believe the results of this decision will impact the staff spiritually, impact the community more wholly and impact the effectiveness of the local church that is being planted.

The reason for this thesis project is to help church planters effectively carry out the vision that God has asked them to carry out, to reduce frustrations of a church planter and increase the survivability of the church plant. With these reasons in place, the survey given to church planters reflect the frustrations, issues and opportunities that church planters need to address.

**Results of Church Planter Survey**

The survey that was given to church planters not only creates several questions and concerns but also validates the need for a vision implementation team to be formed. The survey questions given to church planters are located in Appendix A. In the research conducted for this thesis project by this author, the results showed that over 70% of the church planters surveyed categorized themselves as a visionary. A visionary church planter is one who knows what God is asking him to do, can picture what it looks like, knows the steps needed to fulfill the vision and
can lead others by the vision. The results of the research conducted also revealed that 94% of the visionary church planters stated that the most challenging area to implement the vision for the church was either implementing systems, managing the vision or identifying problems in carrying out the vision. On the other hand, casting vision to the church is what the visionary church planter considers his strength. What if church planters understood their role of implementing vision and what roles are needed to compliment his role in order to effectively carry out the vision? If church planters understood from the beginning what it would take to see the vision become real, then the church planter could understand the need to fill the gap.

If implementing systems, managing the vision and identifying problems are not the strength of the church planter, then the question that it creates is, “why do visionary church planters not hire the staff according to strengths of implementing the vision God has asked them to carry out?” Other results that were concluded in the survey that this author conducted shows that over 60% of church planters did not hire staff according to their vision needs. Of this 62% of church planters, 54% hired based on ministry positions needed, 7% hired staff with no particular objectives, and 1% hired anyone who wanted to plant a church.

There seems to be a correlation with the challenges of vision implementation, having the right staff on the vision team and being very intentional in the hiring process. Of the church planters surveyed, 73% admitted that the vision took a turn and got ‘off-course’. The church planters recognize the need to hire staff with experience in implementing vision, in fact, 67% of the church planters confirmed this would be their basis for hiring if they planted another church. These results raise the question, “do church planters fully understand the dynamic and impact of protecting the vision?” Do church planters understand how to protect the vision God has given
them and to have people in place that can play a role in protecting the vision God blessed the church planter with?

**Church Planting Concerns**

There are several areas of concern regarding the health of the church plant and the vision that should be carried out that were identified through this survey of church planters. One area of concern is the number of churches that close their doors each year versus the number of new churches that are starting. According to ChurchLeaders.com, each year 3,500 to 4,000 churches close their doors forever; yet only 1,100 to 1,500 new churches are started.\(^3\) With the church effectiveness decreasing, it is important that church plants carry out the vision that has been given to them so the impact to the local community will be greater and more effective.

Another area of concern that this survey shows is that 40% of church planters would not hire the same staff again. This shows the need for the church planter to understand the roles of vision implementation and how to staff accordingly. It raises the question of how to place the emphasis on hiring in a church plant on things other than the ministry position needed. The church planter needs to consider how to hire people that share the vision and bring different strengths to the table to help reach the goals of the vision. What qualifications does the church planter need to consider for the hiring process? Did the church planter run down the road of eagerness instead of intentionality in the hiring process? Did the church planter fully understand what is needed and what roles need to be filled in order to carry out the vision?

If a church planter would stop and simply process through their vision and create a process or flowchart of what the goals or milestones are to see the vision become real, is having

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the right staff from the start truly on the list of milestones? The results of this survey would argue that not much thought and intentionality is given to having a vision implementation team and having the right people in the right position.

One of the main emphases that are being stressed is the need for having a vision implementation team. Within ministry, it is almost a default to think that each position needed to start the church needs to be pastors such as a worship pastor, student pastor, children’s pastor or what the lead pastor deems as necessary pastoral positions. In regard to the vision implementation team, the team does not necessarily need to be pastors because the purpose of this team is to implement the vision. The church planter needs to think differently about hiring than an existing church thinks. When the church is starting out in its first couple of years, the majority of the staff acts as generalists versus specialists. This means that a person is not necessarily in his specific role at first because there are too many responsibilities that need to be carried out. As the church grows and more money becomes available then the staff can move into their specific roles because now the church, responsibilities and roles have changed.

What if the generalist that was hired to start the church were specialists in implementing vision such as an implementor, manager and consultant? In addition to their role on the vision implementation team, they would carry out various ministry roles as the church gets started? The default of church planters is to hire ministry positions and have each minister start building a specific area of ministry instead of focusing on the necessities of implementing the vision. This thesis project contends if the vision implementation team intentionally puts the processes in place to carry out the vision then clarity will result and the team will know exactly what ministries need to be implemented and when they are ready to implement them. This is referred to as closing the gap.
What if church planters took intentional time to identify and understand his strengths and weaknesses and the areas where he needs help? Identifying where the church planter will be strong and weak in vision implementation will help bring clarity to the need to hire people with specific strengths that are complimentary to the church planter.
CHAPTER TWO

The Vision Implementation Team Roles

It is vital to understand the personality, strengths, and tendencies of each position because this sets the foundation for the vision implementation team. “Interpersonal conflicts, clashing expectations, and opinions, unresolved offenses and irreconcilable differences with healthy leaders often brings healthy team life grinding to a halt.”

There are four positions that create the vision implementation team. The four positions are a visionary, an implementor, a manager and a consultant. It is recommended that four different people fill the four positions, and that one person isn’t filling two roles.

Visionary

The first position is the visionary. A visionary is one who leads the charge and is typically the Lead Pastor. The visionary is the person who God has given the vision to be carried out in the community. The visionary is the one who dreams, is futuristic and has the passion to see this vision become real.

Issachar is a person that came to help David at Hebron. This was a time when Saul’s kingdom was to be handed over to David. Issachar’s strength is summarized by this verse, “he understood the times and knew what Israel should do.” The visionary must understand the times, culture, process and how to move the church forward. When the visionary is effectively carrying out his role then more people will follow just as the men of Issachar had 200 chiefs and the chief’s relatives under their command.

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4 Sinclair, Vision, 32.
5 1 Chronicles 12:32.
6 Ibid.
The visionary is a person who is typically more task focused, thrives on the challenge and who looks at problems as just another hurdle to cross. The visionary is the driver or conductor on the team. He is the most passionate on the team because the Lord gave the vision to him and that passion becomes personal to Him because of the responsibility that comes with the Lord asking him to carry out the task. The visionary is someone who is results oriented because this allows seeing the vision become tangible moving forward.

The other team members will see this person as someone who is driven, forceful, competitive and demanding. God has wired visionaries to keep moving forward, to be motivated by the next challenge and the sense of accomplishing goals. For example, when God places the call on a man to start a church and graciously gives him the vision, there is a stirring that begins in the man’s heart and mind. The visionary will quickly dream, picture, make plans and become passionate for a community that God is calling him to minister to.

The visionary will constantly see the future. Strength Finders calls this characteristic Futuristic. This person sees the visions and cherishes those visions. On the other hand, if a visionary gets frustrated with the present situation, he will checkout and start thinking about the future because this is energizing to him. This is another supporting reason why it is important for the visionary to build a vision implementation team, to protect against frustration with the present that causes them to check out. When there are others that are engaged in the present and providing the results the visionary needs then this gives permission to the visionary to stay within his strength of looking to the next step or project.

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7 Rath, *Strengths Finder 2.0*, 105.
Andy Stanley writes, “vision is about what could be and what should be, but life is about right this minute.”

Stanley’s statement supports the idea of a vision implementation team. It is challenging for a visionary to stay present, yet the present is so crucial to the vision. It comes easy to the visionary to see where things are and what the next step is, but getting into the details of each step is like having the life sucked out of that person. The visionary can become frustrated by the details because he wants to think and dream.

In order for a visionary to have the freedom to dream and understand the next steps of fulfilling the vision, he cannot be caught in the details of the vision process. The visionary is a leader of leaders. His responsibility is to lead and not do the work of implementing. In the Bible there is a visionary named Nehemiah. He was given the vision to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. In the Book of Nehemiah, Nehemiah displays some leadership moments for the person leading the charge to fulfill the vision.

The first step Nehemiah took to fulfill the vision was to sit, fast and pray. Nehemiah 1:4 states, “When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven.”

In other words, Nehemiah did not get ahead of God and move outside of God’s timeline. This is such an important discipline to the visionary because of his driven, competitive and futuristic personality. The temptation will be to move at a speed where others cannot keep up or try to do things in one’s power and timing to get where God is asking you to go. Nehemiah constantly spent time with God in prayer.

Second, Nehemiah had to understand the dynamics and what was going to be needed to see the vision come to life. Nehemiah 2:11-12 states, “I went to Jerusalem, and after staying

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9 Nehemiah 1:4.
there three days I set out during the night with a few others. I had not told anyone what my God had put in my heart to do for Jerusalem. There were no mounts with me except the one I was riding on."¹⁰ During this time Nehemiah examined the walls of Jerusalem, this allowed him to get clarity on the obstacles, the needs, and develop passion to rebuild the walls.” A visionary’s passion increases for the vision when he understands the challenges and opportunities they will be faced with, because this brings out the burning desire of success.

Third, Nehemiah knew that he would need a team to see the vision come to life. He had a game plan, he knew he needed to get others involved to lead and some to do the rebuilding work. Nehemiah spoke and cast the vision to the teams. He challenged them to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem so that they would no longer be disgraced. Nehemiah cast the vision for the people and shared how there was a divine perspective on their labor as they rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem. In addition to casting vision, Nehemiah’s responsibility was to lead leaders.

Nehemiah illustrates the importance of having a team of leaders who can help carry out the vision. Each team that was assembled to carry out the work had a leader that they were responsible to and that leader was in communication with Nehemiah.

Fourth Nehemiah also shows the responsibility of the visionary to keep a pulse on the situation, understanding the moment and knowing what needs to be done. Not only did Nehemiah understand what needed to be in place to complete the task of rebuilding the walls, he also recognized the moments of opposition, fatigue and motivation. When the laborers were fatigued and the Israelites were coming under attack, Nehemiah moved people to different locations and positions. When Nehemiah made some changes, he also motivated and encouraged the people. In Nehemiah 4:14 it states, “After I (Nehemiah) looked things over, I stood up and

¹⁰ Nehemiah 2:11-12.
said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, “Don’t be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes.”\textsuperscript{11}

Fifth, Nehemiah fought to protect the vision. Nehemiah stayed true to who he was and his commitment to the vision. Nehemiah 5:15-16 states,

Moreover, from the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, until his thirty-second year—twelve years—neither I nor my brothers ate the food allotted to the governor. But the earlier governors—those preceding me—placed a heavy burden on the people and took forty shekels of silver from them in addition to food and wine. Their assistants also lorded it over the people. But out of reverence for God I did not act like that. Instead, I devoted myself to the work on this wall. All my men were assembled there for the work; we did not acquire any land.\textsuperscript{12}

He did not allow past traditions, right or wrong, to dictate what he was going to do. Nehemiah also had to face Sanballat’s assaults and challenges with integrity and with courage. He did not let the opposition get in the way of the objectives. Nehemiah simply stood up to him. Nehemiah faced several distractions but he never went off course nor did he let anyone hijack the vision God gave him. This is an example of protecting the vision.

Lastly, the visionary should celebrate victories. This could be a possible challenge for the visionary because he is usually off to the next task, dream or project. The walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt in 52 days. When the vision was completed Nehemiah gave credit to all those involved in carrying out the task, they worshipped, read the law, ate, drank and celebrated.

Nehemiah’s character traits enabled him to be a dynamic and charismatic leader. He was a respected leader, who feared the Lord in all he did. He was courageous, and humble in allowing others to lead, help and get credit for the job that was completed. Nehemiah provides a

\textsuperscript{11} Nehemiah 4:14.

\textsuperscript{12} Nehemiah 5:15-16.
great example of teamwork. This is what the vision implementation team is built upon. This team should come together, work as one to accomplish a great task for the glory of God. John Maxwell writes, “To collaborative team members, completing one another is more important than competing with one another.”\textsuperscript{13} As the rest of the positions are defined, it is important to remember that this is team model and not four individuals doing individual roles.

**Implementor**

The second position needed is the implementor. The implementor is the person who understands the vision and can implement the proper systems so the vision can be accomplished. Andy Stanley makes the statement, “Systems create behavior.”\textsuperscript{14} Systems are the processes that keep the vision on track. It is the roadmap for people to follow in order to bring life to the vision. Without systems, the vision will be on shaky ground because it is the systems that provide the infrastructure. Proverbs 21:5 states, “The plans of people who work hard succeed. You can be sure that those in a hurry will become poor.”\textsuperscript{15} It is the planning and implementing of systems and process that give the vision a foundation to stand strong and produce the results needed. Proverbs 8:22-31 states,

> The Lord brought me forth as the first of his works, before his deeds of old. I was formed long ages ago, at the very beginning, when the world came to be. When there were no watery depths, I was given birth, when there were no springs overflowing with water; before the mountains were settled in place, before the hills, I was given birth, before he made the world or its field or any of the dust of the earth. I was there when he set the heavens in place when he marked out the horizon on the face of the deep, when he established the clouds above and fixed securely the fountains of the deep, when he gave


\textsuperscript{15} Proverbs 21:5 (NIrV).
the sea its boundary so the waters would not overstep his command, and when he marked out the foundations of the earth. 16

What this means is that before God created the earth, how business, education, relationships, agriculture and other domains should function was weaved into His vision. This reflects God’s design for things to operate in a specific and orderly way. For example, there is a right system and process in place for marriage. There is a system in place for education, government, agriculture and business. When the systems and processes are correct then these structures function well and produce favorable results. The government implements laws, known as systems and processes, that when followed create behaviors that reflect on those who follow or do not follow the system. These unwritten systems and processes that God put into place shows there is value and consequences to our actions and to the way we do things. Whatever the organization, business or ministry, the fabric of the systems was weaved in before creation. This biblical principle shows the importance systems play in the reality of the vision being fulfilled. On the other hand, if systems are neglected and are not implemented, then the consequences will be an unfulfilled vision. A system is the way your organization operates. It is a series of steps that are repeated (or not repeated) as a way of accomplishing your goals. 17

So let’s take a look at the personality of the implementor. The implementor is a person who is detailed and sees necessary steps that need to be taken in order to get to the next level. The implementor is going to bring the visionary comfort because a visionary typically does not think in details but focuses more on the big picture. A visionary thinks that the organization just needs to go from Point A to Point B. The visionary sees this as one step where the implementor will see several steps that need to be taken in order to effectively arrive at the next level.

16 Proverbs 8:22.

17 Arment, Church, 169.
visionary simply needs to communicate to the implementor what results need to be achieved and give the implementor the freedom to implement the systems and processes.

The systems that the implementor is primarily focused on are strategic steps that combine communication, procedures, paths, relationships, and any necessary processes that will move the vision forward and to reality. Systems help communicate clarity, necessity and reduce major problems so the vision can move forward.

From the beginning of creation until today, order plays a critical role in the way things function and grows. When God created the heavens and the earth there was an order to it. Pastor Rick Warren reminds that the human body is made up of systems and functions in a particular order to produce healthiness. When the people is not function in the proper order then disease can form. Business, education and agriculture have system and order to them. For example, a farm in Texas, North Dakota, Europe, Fiji and any other place have this in common. The seeds and plants that are planted are planted in rows so the best fruit and/or crops can be produced. Business practices and laws are put into place so the best results can be achieved. In Education there is order and structure. People start at the elementary level, then middle school level, high school level, and then they can move on the college level.

In the book, *Execution: The Discipline of Getting Things Done*, it states, “Leaders who execute focus on a very few clear priorities that everyone can grasp.” In the context of ministry, this statement applies to being clear about the basic foundational steps that will not only lead to spiritual growth but also lead to the vision God has asked to be implemented within the church
you are leading. Systems and processes allow the execution of the vision to be carried out in a simple and efficient means that bring about dynamic results.

The role of the implementor is to put the steps in place to fulfill the vision and in a way that brings life to the culture of the church. When someone describes the experience at a particular church, it should reflect the culture and vision of the church because systems create behaviors and define culture. The implementor will think in terms of what needs to be done in order to achieve these specific results. “We don’t think ourselves into a new way of acting, we act ourselves into a new way of thinking.” 20 This statement reflects the teamwork of a visionary and implementor. For example, typically the visionary when thinking through an idea or solution, he will think in terms of what the results will be produced. The implementor typically thinks in terms of what needs to be done in particular order so the desired result is achieved.

The implementor is invaluable to the vision because when systems and processes are in place it is easier to identify the problems that arise and analyze what needs to be corrected to keep things moving forward. Typically, the value of the implementor is realized when results are met and problems are fixed because then there is a tangible barometer on what systems and processes are in place.

Manager

The third position is the manager. The manager is the one who oversees the processes, systems and people. Every aspect of the systems and processes need to be monitored and adjusted when necessary. This is not a micro management approach it is a value-focused approach for fulfilling the vision that God has asked to be carried out by the church. Managers are the closest to the people in the church, both staff and attenders, because the managers are the

20 Bossidy, Charan, and Burck, Execution, 69.
ones who ensure the systems are being followed and embraced by the church. The manager’s involvement in the vision implementation is critical to the advancement of the vision.

Genesis 41:34 states, “Let Pharaoh take action to appoint overseers in charge of the land, and let him exact a fifth of the produce of the land of Egypt in the seven years of abundance.”

In Genesis 41:39-40 it states, “Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you. You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people are to submit to your orders. Only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you.” Joseph was Pharaoh’s manager. Managers are required to deploy the systems, processes and projects that are put in place by the visionary and implementor. The manager has an important role because they are the ones who are responsible for overseeing the vision, goals, systems and processes given by the visionary (Lead Pastor) and ensuring that these are carried out.

The managers wear several hats because of how close they are to the people. The roles consist, but are not limited to, the following:

Table 3. Managerial Roles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Correspondent</td>
<td>The manager will be the one to ensure that the church understands the systems in place and the systems that are being carried out. In other words, the managers champion the “actual steps” of the vision. The manager will establish effective ways for people to know what is expected and how to move within the systems implemented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidant</td>
<td>The manager is to provide the Visionary (Lead Pastor) and the vision implementation team with feedback on how people are responding to the systems and processes, the changes that need to be made, what people are saying and doing and to be a sounding board for the church and staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach</td>
<td>Since managers are primarily involved in the week-to-week portion of the vision and systems being carried out, the manager will also take on the role of a coach. In this role, the manager will encourage, motivate, teach and evaluate where the church is as a whole in regard to meeting the goals of the vision. He will coach the members through the processes to ensure the results are met at the member level. This is a vital role because this is where the manager will be able to identify problems and successes of the systems in place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict manager</td>
<td>The manager is the closest to the people in the church because the manager is the one who is ensuring the systems and processes are being followed and that the church members are benefiting from what is in place. Since the manager is the closest to the people, the manager will most often be the first to hear of problems, resistance and frustrations. As a result of this dynamic, the manager will need to understand and know how to manage and resolve conflict, address resistance and minimize frustrations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The manager is a steady person who typically does not like change so this person will thrive managing the processes, systems and people.\(^\text{24}\) One of the characteristics of this person is that he is motivated to see the systems and processes carried out to completion and produce the results that are desired. The manager understands the goals that are to be achieved and in his mind the win is seeing the results fulfilled. Understanding this dynamic, the manager sees the value in his position and understands that vision, systems and processes as the daily game plan that drives the week to week activities of the church. The vision implementation manager understands the importance of leading people and managing the systems that are in place. This

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person understands how the systems define the boundaries and how things should be done in the church. One of the intangibles that an effective manager brings to the team is the ability to lead people and keep them on track to achieve the goals and vision. In addition, the manager will really define and create the culture for those that are doing the work.

The manager will actively protect the culture of the church. The manager has this built in mechanism that his thinking and behavior needs to reflect what it asked of the church as a whole. In other words, not only will the manager oversee the systems and processes but will also participate personally. This will bring to his attention anyone who is trying takeover the vision and push his or her own agenda. The manager has a sense of pride in protecting the vision and culture of the church.

Consultant

The fourth position is the consultant. Problems are part of life, business and even churches. Within the vision implementation process, it is crucial that there is an intentionality to identify, address and solve problems that will occur.

In the Bible, Paul had a vision to plant churches and see the churches thrive and be devoted followers of Christ. Paul had a consultant named Titus. Titus was called into action when there was a problem. For example, Titus was called into action in Crete. In Titus 1:5-16, Titus exercised his skill set to address the problems and provide a solution so the church would move forward in a healthy way. While there was disorder in Crete and problems within the leadership, Titus was the one who gives advice and instruction to correct the problems. Paul

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27 Titus 1:5-16.
utilized Titus many times to bring peace to the people and churches. In other words, Paul knew that he needed a consultant on his team to effectively carry out the vision.

Titus shows the characteristics of a good consultant. He was able to identify problems quickly and, at times, identify potential problems. For example, Titus averted the Church of Corinth from going through a church split because he identified potential problems and addressed them before any division took place. Titus is a problem solver and was straightforward with his leader, Paul, about the problems and reality of what was taking place. This is an invaluable asset to the visionary because when carrying out the vision God has given, it is vital that there are reality checks to ensure the vision is moving in the right direction and problems are being addressed. Titus also understood the big picture of what needed to be accomplished and how to problem solve in a way that moved the church in accordance to what Paul had envisioned.

Consultants excel at seeing the problem and finding a solution. They are wired to fix things and success is regarded as getting the organization or church back on track. This person will not be in on the day-to-day implementation of the vision but will serve as a sounding board and provide checks and balances on the progress of the vision. Consultants do not want to get involved in the details but identify what is working and not working. The consultant will give the instruction and advice about what needs to be changed or continued in order to achieve success within the vision.

Another important role of the consultant is to have a good relationship with the visionary just like Paul and Titus did through the New Testament. In Titus 1:4, Paul writes, “To Titus, my true son in our common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.”28 In 2 Corinthians 2:13, Paul writes, “I still had no peace of mind, because I did not

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28 Titus 1:4.
find my brother Titus there. So I said goodbye to them and went on to Macedonia.”

These are two examples of the good relationship that Paul and Titus had with each other. They had the same faith and served the Lord together in purpose. In addition, from a vision implementation point, Titus understood what Paul wanted to accomplish and achieved his part in carrying out the vision. 2 Corinthians 8:6, shows that Titus understood the objective. “So we urged Titus, since he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part.”

The visionary and consultant need to be on the same page or problems will arise about the steps that need to be taken to further the vision. Also, the visionary must trust the consultant on a personal and professional ministry level because there will be times when the visionary needs to adhere to the consultant’s advice and direction.

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29 2 Corinthians 2:13.

30 2 Corinthians 8:6.
CHAPTER THREE

Developing a Vision Implementation Team

Understanding the Vision Implementation Cycle

There are four main areas that are part of the vision implementation cycle. The four areas that are being suggested, in this thesis project, vision, implementing, managing and identifying. The vision part consists of casting the vision. The vision section is like painting a picture in people’s heads. This is where the visionary is asking for people to imagine something or to picture what something would look like and be like… and the visionary takes the people on the journey to see the potential opportunity and what can be accomplished.

The implementation part of the vision cycle is where the steps are put into place to make the vision a reality. The steps are the systems and details that need to be in place in order for the vision to move forward. This implementation section is like a set of step-by-step instructions so people can understand what needs to be done in order to see the vision become a reality.

The managing section of the vision cycle is where there is monitoring to ensure that the vision is moving forward. The managing section is where the “action” takes place and movement is occurring and following the system that has been put in place. Vision is now taking place and has moved from idea to action. The managing section is asking the manager to follow the set of instructions and begins to do what is being instructed in order to move forward. It is where people are moving from step 1 to step 2 to step 3 and so on.

The identifying part of the vision cycle is where evaluation of the vision implementation process takes place. The identifying section is where problems, solutions and confirmations are identified. The vision is moving forward but now there needs to be checks and balances in place to ensure that the vision is staying on track and is moving toward the
goals and objectives that have been set. The identifying section consists of trouble shooting and evaluating the things that are working and the things that need to be fixed so that everything is lining up with the vision and moving smoothly. This is where feedback on the progress or lack thereof is given and the effectiveness of the process and systems are evaluated.

Once the vision has gone through the implementation, managing and identifying process then the visionary will define the reality of the vision process and define what needs to be accomplished next so the vision stays protected. From this point, the vision cycle continues to navigate through the implementation, managing and identifying process. To illustrate the vision cycle, this author has put together a diagram of the vision cycle process.

![Figure 1. Vision cycle process](image-url)
Assemble a Vision Implementation Team

Within church planting ministry, having the right people in place is crucial to the success of the church. Proverbs 26:10 states, “Like an archer who wounds at random is one who hires a fool or any passer-by.”¹ The book, Church Planting Landmines, shares this wisdom, “getting the right people in your organization will determine the level of success that you will see.”²

God has always been intentional in putting people in the right positions according to their specific skills, gifts, and experiences to carry out His vision and commands. 1 Corinthians 12:27-28 shows God’s intentionality. It states, “Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues.”³

Since God is intentional about creating people with specific skills, personalities and abilities and is purposeful about putting people in the right position to carry out the task He has given them, then the church planter would benefit greatly by being intentional about recruiting the people with the right skills and personalities to help carry out the vision that God has given for the church plant.

Developing a vision implementation team is a purposeful and intentional process that will have a great impact. Building the team with the right people in place will dramatically impact the vision while not having the right people in place may stall or even hijack the

¹ Proverbs 26:10.
² Tom Nebel and Gary Rohrmayer, Church Planting Landmines (Saint Charles, IL: ChurchSmart Resources, 2005), 115.
The vision team will come together with specific duties, skills, and processes to implement the vision because the right people are in the right position. In the book Strengths Finder 2.0, it makes the following statement:

Over the past decade, Gallup has surveyed more than 10 million people worldwide on the topic of employee engagement, and only one-third agree with this statement: “At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day” and for those who do not get to focus on what they do best – their strengths – the costs are staggering.\(^4\)

Since God has created each person with strengths, abilities and talents then a visionary (Lead Pastor) should not only understand the dynamic of what God has done but also use people according to their strengths to fulfill the vision so the church is effective in reaching the community for Christ.

The other aspect that needs to be part of the incorporated plan is the personalities of each position. Roger Staubach, former Dallas Cowboy Quarterback stated, “In any team sport, the best teams have consistency and chemistry.”\(^5\) This quote does not only apply to sports but to any type of team whether in business, education or ministry.

The visionary leader needs to utilize some tools to compliment his discussion with people to see if that person is the right fit for the team. “Adequate leadership is a monstrous need in every church. For this reason, every church planter must become excellent recruiters and innovators, or their church will die. The results of their recruiting and training efforts generally spill over into the neighboring churches, missions, and parachurch ministries.”\(^6\)

One the tools that will effectively help build a team come from Ministry Insights International. Ministry Insights International was founded by Rodney Cox and John Trent,

\(^4\) Rath, *Strengths Finder 2.0*, ii.


\(^6\) Moore, *Starting*, 27.
Ph.D., whose mission is driven from a love and desire for pastors and stafFs to unify the Body of Christ by helping everyone understand and lead from their strengths. Cox and Trent developed a personality-based tool that shows the personality, strengths, and tendencies of people. The Leading from Your Strengths material comes from a study of predictable behavioral traits, that combines ministry and corporate team building experiences from Cox and Trent. The personality profile is called Leading from Your Strengths Assessment, which is a layer on John Trent’s personality profile. John Trent published a book titled, The Two Sides of Love, and has shared his personality profile for over 20 years in seminars and that is used in many organizations. Trent’s personality profile describes the behavioral styles of people in the form of animal characters. The animal characters are the Lion, Otter, Golden Retriever and Beaver. Each animal portrays specific personality traits, strengths, and tendencies that parallel human traits. The following table provides a snapshot of the word pictures of each animal that correlate to the strengths and tendencies of the individual personality.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Animal</th>
<th>Tendency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lion</td>
<td>Problems and challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Otter</td>
<td>People and information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golden retriever</td>
<td>Pace and change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beaver</td>
<td>Rules and procedures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8 Tooker, Trent, and Cox, Leading, 7.
9 Ibid., 57.
The Leading from Your Strengths assessment tool\textsuperscript{10} is based on three core principles, which are understanding your own God-given strengths, recognizing and respecting the God-given strengths of others on your team, and blending differences among team members and harnessing each person’s unique strengths.\textsuperscript{11} The reason the \textit{Leading from Your Strengths} is a valuable tool is it provides a snapshot of individuals responding to problem solving, processing information, managing change, and facing risk. In each of these categories, this assessment tool will show the individual’s natural response and how the individual responds to current situations in the specific categories.

This profile will provide a summary of how a person will naturally respond to the following categories: problem-solving, processing information, managing change and facing risk. Within each of the four different categories the individual will see what his tendency is, which is known as his energy. Each category is based on a 10-point scale that indicates the intensity of the individual’s strength. The natural strengths provide a benchmark of how the individual will consistently react or respond because this is how God has wired the individual.

The first category, problem solving, provides a benchmark of how the individual responds to solving problems. The assessment tool will show if the natural tendency of the individual is to be aggressive in solving problems or to be more reflective. The aggressiveness reflects one who is a quick problem solver and the one who is more reflective takes time to think through the problem before making a decision. This is important to

\textsuperscript{10} Tooker, Trent, and Cox, \textit{Leading}, 57.

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., 7.
knowing how to work together as a team and to understanding the pace that each person works at.

The second category, Processing Information, indicates if the individual is more optimistic or realistic in the way in which information is processed. An individual who scores on the optimistic side of the scale represents someone who is more trusting and accepting when processing new information that is given to them. On the other side of the scale is the realistic individual who is more skeptical and wants the information to be validated before trusting what he is processing.

The third category, Managing Change, reflects the natural tendency of the individual when it comes to change. The scale is divided into two sections: dynamic and predictable. If an individual is assessed on the dynamic side this means that the individual tends to be fast-paced. This reflects an individual who can handle many tasks at one time and change is not a deterrent to his plan. The other side of the scale is the predictable side, which indicates an individual who will handle change at a slower pace. If someone is on the predictable side then the individual’s preference is to work on one project at a time.

The fourth category, Facing Risk, reflects if an individual is more structured or pioneering in the way they address risk. This scale reflects the natural tendency of an individual to follow the established procedures and rules and see them as a source of protection versus the pioneering side of this scale, which view rules and established procedures as broad guidelines and tend to push the envelope of risk. A Pioneer will view obstacles as standing in the way of progress and will want to push past them.

The value this assessment tools brings to the table is the natural strengths and those of others in these predictable measures is crucial to building trust, closeness, commitment and
chemistry. In fact, by understanding where people differ in these areas, you may even discover a “great secret”, that the differences of others are actually designed to complement your strengths, enabling you to function in that relationship better and strengthen the implementation of the vision.

The *Leading from Your Strengths* assessment tool provides a summary of the general personality of an individual, how to communicate with this individual, how not to communicate with this individual and the ideal environment to excel. This personality tool provides a personality wheel with the core style of the individual.\(^\text{12}\)

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\(^\text{12}\) Tooker, Trent, and Cox, *Leading*, 89.
The purpose of the wheel is to plot where each person on the team is categorized. This will bring a visual that shows the makeup of the team and if the team is balanced or unbalanced. In addition, the wheel will show the pace at which people move and reveal if team members are more task oriented or people oriented. The core styles that are on the Leading From Your Strengths Wheel are shown in Table 5.\textsuperscript{13}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personality type</th>
<th>Core styles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Conductor        | Results-oriented  
Bold, aggressive actions  
Challenging assignments  
Expedites action  
Authority to carry out responsibilities  
Firm, quick decision making |
| Persuader        | Competition with others  
Change agent  
Enthusiasm  
Persuasive communicator.  
Results through people.  
Testing of new ideas.  
People contact |
| Promoter         | Solutions to “people problems”  
Optimistic outlook  
Verbalizes thoughts and ideas  
Varied activities  
Mobility  
Teamwork |
| Relater          | Coaching and counseling  
Service to others  
Harmonious work environment  
Security  
Assistance to customers |
| Supporter        | Logical thinking  
Systematic routine  
Closure  
Relaxed pace  
Team participation  
Security  
Task orientation. |
| Coordinator      | Adherence to standards.  
Routine work. |

\textsuperscript{13} Tooker, Trent, and Cox, \textit{Leading}, 89.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personality type</th>
<th>Core styles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Analyzer         | High quality standards  
|                  | Procedures to follow  
|                  | Clean, tidy workstation  
|                  | Safety and security  
|                  | Accuracy  
|                  | Analysis of facts and data |
| Implementor      | Creative and original thinking  
|                  | Logical decisions  
|                  | Studying and solving problems  
|                  | Efficient methodology  
|                  | Effective time management  
|                  | Fact-based solutions |

In addition, this author has added a layer on top of the Leading From Your Strengths Tool with the Vision Implementation Team category. The visionary personality is a combination of the Conductor and Persuader. The Implementor is a combination of the Analyzer and Implementor. The Manager is the combination of the Supporter and Coordinator. The Consultant is the combination of the Promoter and Relater. Here is an example of the Leading From Your Strengths Wheel and the Vision Implementation Positions.

To best illustrate and show the benefit of this test, this author has included test results from the Leading from Your Strengths assessment tool. The results of the assessment profile are actual results that this author received is included Appendix B.14

Leading from Your Strengths assessment tool provided this summary of Dwayne: He is aggressive in solving problems. Dwayne enjoys authority, independence and the freedom that goes with his aggressive approach to problem solving. He is a goal-oriented individual who believes in pulling in others to help him achieve his goals. He needs people with other

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strengths on his team. He exudes self-confidence and exemplifies an individual who is not afraid to state his case or present new and creative ideas. He has high confidence in himself and may be viewed by some as egotistical. Dwayne appreciates others who are team players and will reward those who are loyal. He embraces visions not always seen by others. Dwayne's creative mind allows him to see the "big picture." He can be aggressive and direct, but still be considerate of people. Other people realize that directness is one of his great strengths. He is forward-looking, aggressive and competitive. His vision for results is one of his positive strengths. Dwayne likes to be forceful and direct when dealing with others. His desire for results is readily apparent to the people with whom he works. He may be so self-confident that others see him as arrogant. This confidence may be something others wish they had.

Dwayne finds it easy to share his opinions on solving work-related problems. Many people see his decisions as high-risk decisions. However, after the decision is made, he tends to work hard for a successful outcome. When faced with a tough decision, he will try to sell you on his ideas. Sometimes he becomes emotionally involved in the decision-making process. Logic and people who have the facts and data to support this logic influence him. He admires the patience required to gather facts and data. He should realize that he needs to think a project through, beginning to end, before starting the project. He is a good problem solver and troubleshooter, always seeking new ways to solve old problems. He has the unique ability of tackling tough problems and following them through to a satisfactory conclusion.

Dwayne likes people who present their case effectively. When they do, he can then make a quicker assessment or decision. He tends to influence people by being direct, friendly
and results-oriented. He challenges people who volunteer their opinions. He has the ability to ask the right questions and dismiss a shallow idea. Some people may feel these questions are a personal attack upon their integrity; however, this is just his way of getting the appropriate facts. Dwayne is influenced by people who communicate with a logical presentation of the facts, impressed by the apparent efficiency involved. He may lose interest in what others are saying if they ramble or don't speak to the point. His active mind is already moving ahead. He may sometimes mask his feelings in friendly terms. If pressured, Dwayne's true feelings may emerge. He likes people who give him options as compared to their opinions. The options may help him make decisions, and he values his own opinion over that of others.\textsuperscript{15}

The other asset that the Leading from Your Strengths assessment tool provides is the Leading from Your Strengths Wheel. This wheel plots the natural and adapted tendencies and distills them into two plots point on the wheel. The dot represents the natural tendencies and the star represents the adapted style. This wheel allows for team building and implementing because it provides understanding of the teams or potential teams natural and adapted tendencies of behavior.\textsuperscript{16}

The wheel provides a snapshot of each individual on the team and shows if they are more people or task oriented and if they move at a faster or slower pace. Also, the wheel categorizes each person into one of the following descriptions: conductor, persuader, promoter, relater, supporter, coordinator, analyzer and implementor. Figure 3 shows a snapshot of where I placed on the Leading from Your Strengths Wheel:\textsuperscript{17}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[16] Tooker, Trent, and Cox, \textit{Leading}, 89.
\item[17] Leading from Your Strengths Assessment Tool, Dwayne Pedroza, February 25, 2013.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Figure 3. Author’s Leading from Your Strengths wheel

The Vision Implementation Layer

The vision implementation model and roles is a layer that goes on top of the Leading From Your Strengths Profile. The vision implementation model consists of four positions: visionary, implementor, manager and consultant. Each of these positions has personality, communication and work pace associated with each position that is unique and that the other positions do not possess. The vision implementation layer is to help church planters visually see what positions are needed to create the vision implementation team. This layer allows the church planter to see what personality traits, communicate patterns, work pace and strengths that each position possesses.
The vision implementation layer categorizes the visionary, implementor, manager, and consultant with the Leading From Your Strengths Profiles as follows:

Table 6. Layers of Vision Implementation and Leading from Your Strengths Profiles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vision implementation layer</th>
<th>Leading from Your Strengths layer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visionary</td>
<td>Conductor and Persuader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementor</td>
<td>Implementor and Analyzer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>Coordinator and Supporter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultant</td>
<td>Relator and Promoter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Visionary**

The visionary is the person who God has given the vision to which is typically the Lead Pastor in the church-planting environment. God has blessed and trusted this person to carry out His plan for a specific community. The personality of the visionary is the Lion/Conductor/Persuader. The visionary lives and is energized by the future. This person thinks in possibilities and what can happen. The visionary is a dreamer and lives life in the future. This person is the one who sets the direction for the church since the visionary understands and sees opportunities and can clearly see the future, opportunities and possibilities often times before anyone else. The visionary/persuader will dream dreams that inspire those around them that will motivate and cause action to fulfill the vision.

A visionary is not detailed oriented. Even though he can see the next step for the church and vision, his natural tendency is to overlook the details of necessary steps to bring the church to the next step. This person also moves at a higher speed than most people. Having people on the team that move at a slower pace will bring balance and caution to how fast things should move. A blind spot for visionaries is to move too fast for people and to
inadvertently lose them. One day the visionary looks back and sees that he left everyone behind, while he was busy pushing ahead. The different personalities on the team will bring a balance to pace, understanding and timing.

While the visionary may have some ability to organize people in the short term, he is not built towards paying attention to details and needs to bring in an implementor who is detailed and can help move the vision to the next step. The strength of a visionary is the instinctive wiring that God has equipped him with to be able see the ideas and if not careful, the visionary can get lost in the ideas and neglect what needs to be implemented in order to see dreams come true.

Another interesting characteristic of the visionary is his attention span. Since the visionary is futuristic, a dreamer and thinks in “the next step” mentality, this person needs a new adventure about every 90 days. What this means is that the visionary will get things started but will quickly lose interest in the details if he does not have an implementor next to him, then he will find himself getting frustrated because he will lose interest and then wonder why things are not moving forward.

In other words, a visionary is a leader of leaders. Additionally, visionaries inspire others to perform at optimal levels, and with a clearly defined goal process, the organization can track where they are in a quantifiable manner, reducing risk and increasing productivity, which results in growth which is vital to a visionary.

The Leading from Your Strengths provides a summary of a visionary. The Leading from Your Strengths assessment tool refers to this person as a conductor/persuader. The research that has been concluded by Cox and Trent find these qualities in a visionary:18

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18 Leading From Your Strengths Profile Wheel, Dwayne Pedroza, February 25, 2013.
Table 7. Qualities of a Visionary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Challenging assignments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expedites action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authority to carry out responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firm, quick decision making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results-oriented, Bold, aggressive actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change agent, Enthusiasm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persuasive communicator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results through people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Testing of new ideas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The visionary is the leader. God has called this person to carry out the vision because God has created this person with the characteristics to lead. God has equipped the called and He did it when He created each person. One important trait that is not listed within the visionary’s profile is protector. The visionary needs to be a protector of the vision God has asked him to carry out. The visionary will be the most passionate person about the vision because God gave it to Him, and that passion not only should flow to the team and church but also protect the vision when others may want the vision to take a different direction.

The visionary leader will also be the person who looks ahead to the trends of community and culture.\(^\text{19}\) The person will understand dynamics of change, how the vision

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\(^{19}\) Scott Ridout, interview by author, Gilbert, AZ, December 16, 2013.
will adjust to the change, and understand what the church should do during the time of change. To fully navigate the church through changes, it is important for the visionary leader to consult the vision implementation team. In Esther 1:13, it states,

> Since it was customary for the king to consult experts in matters of law and justice, he spoke with the wise men who understood the times and were closest to the king—Karshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena and Memukan, the seven nobles of Persia and Media who had special access to the king and were highest in the kingdom.\(^{20}\)

The king did not move on his own, he consulted those who were closest to him. The visionary leader will understand that the vision implementation team is made up of the people who are closest to him because they have a vested interest in what needs to be accomplished. In addition, any changes that will be made will affect the specific responsibilities of the team and it will be valuable to hear the advice, input and dynamics of the change.

Figure 4 shows a sample of the Natural Strengths of a Visionary/Conductor:\(^{21}\) Figure 5 represents the movement of the Visionary/Conductor when under pressure. This chart allows each person and the team to understand the tendencies of each team member. The strengths movement is what should be discussed among the team so there is an understanding of the personalities and dynamics that takes place. The figure shows the adaptive strengths:\(^{22}\)

\(^{20}\) Esther 1:13.


\(^{22}\) *Leading From Your Strengths Profile Wheel*, Dwayne Pedroza, February 25, 2013.
Figure 4. Natural strengths of a visionary/conductor

Figure 5. Adaptive strengths of visionary/conductor
Implementor

The Lead Pastor may consider the Implementor as the right-hand man. The reason that the implementor will be the right hand man is because he will be the one to apply the necessary steps in order for the vision to progress. The dialogue between the visionary and implementor will be on the level of “this is where the church needs to step” and “this is how the church will step”. This person’s motto is, systems create behavior.23

The Implementor will create the systems for the way the church will structure processes, activities and relationships in order to bring strength, sustainability and reproducibility to ministry and vision. The implementor sees systems as an all-encompassing spectrum of time, communication, administrative procedures, ministry steps, relationships and culture. The implementor understands that systems are those things that ensure that the results are being achieved from all angles of the church. The systems that are implemented will help the vision team see the rhythms, patterns and momentum cycles that take place and to some degree predict the behavior of the church members.

In the book, How to Solve the People Puzzle, it provides a good description of an implementor, which is:

This person is cautious and calculating, and feels that you should be more competent than others. They are uncomfortable when people are not compliant and they don’t go by the book or rules. They believe others want them to be precise and almost perfect. People expect this person to be the planner and organizer of projects. People see this person as a critical thinker, serious about details, task-oriented and expected to produce quality work.24

The personality of the implementor can be summarized in this way: He can be possessive and develop strong attachments for his work group, close friends and family. He

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24 Carbonell, How to Solve, 37.
can be open, patient and tolerant of differences.\textsuperscript{25} His core quality of being nonjudgmental is a great strength. Because he is receptive and listens well, he excels in gathering information. He strives to maintain the status quo, since he tends to resist change, particularly when it is unexpected or sudden. He is a good team member, but he will, if forced, go it alone.

Others see him as a good neighbor, since he is always willing to help those he considers to be his friends. He likes to succeed through persistence. He uses his strong, steady tendencies to accomplish his goals. He requires many good reasons, as well as the benefits involved, before agreeing to make changes. He is extremely conscientious, and is painstaking with work that requires attention to detail and accuracy.

He may want to think over major decisions before acting. He must be convinced that actions will produce the desired result. Making plans and following those plans is important to him. If he is shown the benefits, he will consider new procedures.

When challenged he can become objective, searching hard for facts and figures. This may be his way of defending his decisions. He finds making decisions easier when he knows that others he respects are doing the same thing; he then has a feeling of stability and family. He adheres to policy and doesn't break the rules just for the sake of breaking them. He needs to gather data and facts in a logical fashion. Basically introverted, he will engage in social conversation when the occasion warrants. He may guard some information unless he is asked specific questions. He will not willingly share unless he is comfortable with the knowledge he possesses about the topic. He is more motivated by logic than emotion. To him, logic represents tangible research. He feels he can succeed through patience and resolve.\textsuperscript{26}

\textsuperscript{25} Leading from Your Strengths Assessment, Ben Gores, September 2012.

\textsuperscript{26} Ibid.
Leading from Your Strengths summarizes an implementor with these descriptions and provides a natural strength chart of an implementor:

Table 8. Qualities of an Implementor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High quality standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedures to follow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean, tidy workstation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety and security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accuracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of facts and data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative and original thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logical decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying and solving problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficient methodology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective time management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fact-based solutions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6 shows a sample of the Natural Strengths of an Implementor/Analyzer:27

Figure 7 shows a sample of the Adaptive Strengths of an Implementor/Analyzer:28

The implementor plays a crucial role in the vision implementation process because without the systems and processes in place then the vision stalls and even stops. This person

27 Leading from Your Strengths Assessment, Ben Gores, September 2012.
28 Ibid.
will need to be in constant communication with the visionary leader. There may need to be some guidelines on how to communicate with each other because of the opposite personalities. Both the visionary and the implementor need to understand how each of them needs each other for success.

Figure 6. Natural strengths of an implementor/analyst
This is a good example of 1 Corinthians 12:12 which states, “Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ.” The visionary and implementor are more like the eyes and arm. The visionary can see what needs to be grasped but may not understand all that is needed to grasp the outcome. The implementor is the arm that consists of the shoulder, bicep, triceps, elbow and hands each one of these body parts represents a system that needs to be in place and functioning properly so the arm can reach and grasp what the eyes see.

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29 1 Corinthians 12:12.
The Manager

The manager is a person who likes to take existing systems and maximize them. They find great joy in bringing out the very best in people, systems and existing programs. They are loyal, hard working, steady and dependable. Managers will look for ways to streamline the process and to make the process function more efficiently which creates a great dynamic, in the fact, that they will look for opportunities and create ways to maximize efficiency with the process and systems they manage.

Without managers, life would be chaotic indeed. Managers have an unerring sense of order, clear thinking analytical skills, and the persistence to get the job done. Managers are thinkers, planners, and studiers. Every thought and fact is held up for careful consideration, it’s value weighed and measured, and then precisely cataloged in their orderly brain for future reference.30

Managers are the people who will provide insight to the daily life of the church. They are best at feedback, both positive and negative, because of the nature of their personality and role within the church. They are deep thinkers and less energetic than others on the team. Managers are opposites of the visionary. The managers are slower paced and tasked oriented compared to the visionary who is fast paced and people oriented. This creates a good dynamic and a necessary dynamic to ensure the church does not move too fast or too slowly.

Since managers are more tasked oriented, they will bring order to chaos and disorganized things within the systems and processes. On the other hand, managers may cause some frustration to the visionary because they operate at different paces. Visionaries

are usually more extroverted while managers tend to be more introverted which may create some communication struggles but again, they need each other to succeed.

The manager sometimes finds it difficult to relax until all the work is completed. Leisure time activities often include friends and family. He succeeds through hard work and persistence. He likes to stay with one task until it is completed. He is family-oriented. He may go to great lengths to ensure the "happiness" of his personal or work family. He is often seen as practical and objective. The Manager likes to succeed through persistence. He uses his strong, steady tendencies to accomplish his goals. Others see him as a good neighbor, since he is always willing to help those he considers to be his friends. He requires many good reasons, as well as the benefits involved, before agreeing to make changes. He usually develops strong attachments for his work group and family.

Relationships with others are warm, personal and lasting. When the time is right, The Manager can stand up aggressively for what he believes. The Manager finds making decisions easier when he knows that others he respects are doing the same thing; he then has a feeling of stability and "family." He is good at analyzing situations that can be felt, touched, seen, heard, personally observed or experienced. His motto is, "facts are facts." He is persistent and persevering in his approach to achieving goals. Once he has arrived at a decision, he can be tough-minded and unbending. He has made his decision after gathering much data, and he probably won't want to repeat the process. The Manager can be sensitive to the feelings of others and is able to display real empathy for those who are experiencing difficulties. He often thinks over major decisions before acting. He prefers to plan his work and work his plan. Others may find it refreshing to have him on their team.
The manager will be open with those he trusts; however, reaching the required trust level may take time. He likes to know what is expected of him in a working relationship and have the duties and responsibilities of others who will be involved explained. In order for communication to be effective, well-defined avenues for communication need to be implemented. The manager likes a friendly, open style of communication. He is quick to pick up on group dynamics and skilled in fitting in with a group. He brings both speaking and listening skills to the group. The Manager usually is considerate, compassionate and accepting of others; however, on some occasions can become stubborn. Stubbornness surfaces when his ideals and beliefs are confronted.\textsuperscript{31}

The Coordinator/Supporter is the Manager:

\textsuperscript{31} Leading From Your Strengths Assessment, John Williamson, January 29, 2014.
Table 9. Qualities of a Manager

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Logical thinking</td>
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<td>Systematic routine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Closure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relaxed pace</td>
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<td>Team participation</td>
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<td>Security</td>
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<td>Task orientation</td>
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<td>Adherence to standards</td>
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<td>Routine work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guidelines to follow</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facts and data to analyze</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diplomacy and cooperation</td>
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Figure 8 shows a sample of the natural strengths of a Manager/Coordinator. Figure 9 shows a sample of the adaptive strengths of the Manager/Coordinator.

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33 Ibid.
Figure 8. Natural strengths of a manager/coordinate
The manager’s natural and adaptive strengths are not different because managers do not like change and are steady which is reflective in the charts.

Consultant

The consultant is going to be a good sounding board to the team. The consultant is considered “the fixer” because this individual wants to identify and solve problems. Consultants bring a unique value to the team because they are looking to make the vision and processes work for a common good. Consultants understand the value they bring to the table. Proverbs 15:22 states, “Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.”\textsuperscript{34} The role of the consultant is an advisor to the church planter and the team.

\textsuperscript{34} Proverbs 15:22.
Church planting is filled with problems on a regular basis and obstacles arise in trying to implement the vision. The consultant sees problems as an opportunity to bring order and solutions to the disorder that problems create. The consultant brings an intangible asset to the team because this person can capture the vision and goals and is able to break the vision into smaller and manageable items where systems and processes can be implemented easier. In other words, the consultant can speak to the visionary, implementor and manager in their own language and ensure there is unity.

Consultants are able to anticipate problems, see the big picture and continue to move towards the vision and goals that are in place. Consultants are good listeners and have this uncanny ability to solve problems and overcome obstacles. The consultants have the mindset of if you never try, fail, and try again, you will never master the difficulty. The consultants have a way of identifying potential problems and trouble spots. Their energy increases when potential problems and trouble occurs because their mindset is to attack the problem and stop it from impeding forward progress. At the same time, the consultant is able to guide the visionary, implementor and manager to understand the potential problems and obstacles and bring the team together to move in unity with the solution.

The consultant prefers working for a participative leader. He does his best work in this kind of environment. He is gregarious and sociable. He will be seen as a good mixer both at work and in social settings. The consultant is approachable, affectionate and understanding. He is a supervisor or group leader, and can use his people skills to build group involvement and increase participation from the group. He likes to develop people and build organizations. The consultant can combine and balance enthusiasm and patience. He often will become friends with his customers or clients.
The consultant likes working for a leader who makes quick decisions. Because of his trust and willing acceptance of people, he may misjudge the abilities of others. He prefers not disciplining people. He may sidestep direct disciplinary action because he wants to maintain the friendly relationship. He likes to participate in decision-making. The consultant is good at giving verbal and nonverbal feedback that serves to encourage people to be open, to trust him and to see him as receptive and helpful. When he has strong feelings about a particular problem, you should expect to hear these feelings, and they will probably be expressed in an emotional manner. He will not be overlooked nor uninvolved. He will consistently try to inspire people to his point of view. He is good at solving problems that deal with people.

The consultant will optimistically interact with people in an assured, diplomatic and poised manner. He tends to influence people to his way of thinking by using verbiage as compared with others who like to use reports. He is optimistic about his ability to influence people to his way of thinking. It is important for the consultant to use his people skills to "facilitate" agreement between people. He tends to look at all the things the group has in common, rather than key in on the differences. He has the ability to sense what people want to hear. He then tends to tell people what he thinks they want to hear. He can get emotional about any subject in which he believes. He is positive in his approach to dealing with others.\(^{35}\) The Relator/Promoter is the consultant and have the following traits:

\(^{35}\) Leading From Your Strengths Assessment, Joshua Caballes, February 20, 2014.
Table 10. Qualities of a Consultant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Builds confidence in others</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creative problem solving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accomplishes goals through people</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-reliant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Negotiates conflicts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Optimistic and enthusiastic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People-oriented</td>
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<tr>
<td>Team player</td>
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<tr>
<td>Big thinker</td>
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</table>

Figure 10 shows a sample of the Natural Strengths of the Consultant/Relator. Figure 11 shows a sample of the adaptive strengths of the Consultant/Relator.

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36 Leading From Your Strengths Assessment, Joshua Caballes, February 20, 2014.

37 Ibid.
Figure 10. Natural strengths of a consultant/relator
Figure 11. Adaptive strengths of a consultant/relator

This author has constructed a visual diagram to provide a summary of the Vision Implementation Team and Roles to (see Figure 12).

**Vision Implementation Team Assimilation**

An effective vision links today with tomorrow, energizes and motivates towards the future and builds team commitment, gives meaning to proposed changes and sets a high Christian standard of excellence.\(^{38}\) Vision becomes reality through execution. “There are three processes of execution – people, strategy and operations.”\(^{39}\)

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\(^{39}\) Bossidy, Charan, and Burck, *Execution*, xiv.
begins with the visionary building the right team to implement the vision. Many people regard execution as detail work that is beneath the dignity of a leader. To the contrary, it is the leader’s most important job.\textsuperscript{40}

In the research for this thesis project (Appendix A), 71\% of church planters did not hire according to vision implementation and needs.\textsuperscript{41} It is crucial to choose the right people from the beginning to help execute the vision. It is people who make the difference in

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{vision_team_roles.png}
\caption{Summary of the vision implementation team and roles}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{40} Bossidy, Charan, and Burck, \textit{Execution}, 1.

execution so it is a must to spend time and ensure that the right implementor, manager and consultant are in place.

Typically, when a church planter knows he is called to start a church in a particular area the focus may turn to where to have the services, where funding will come from, who is needed to build a launch team and who is going to be on staff. All of these concerns are very valid but what if these questions were answered after the vision implementation team is in place? The dynamic that the church planter needs to be aware of is moving ahead too quickly and putting things in place that may or may not line up with the vision will cause problems that will have to be dealt with down the road. What if, the church planter builds the vision implementation, as the first step in order to ensure what is being decided and implemented is in-line with the vision? This crucial first step can prevent unnecessary frustrations, poor decisions and the vision getting off course.

Once the church planter has been called by God and given the vision, it is recommended that the first action item he does is to take the Leading from Your Strengths assessment profile. The Leading from Your Strengths assessment profile can be accessed at http://www.ministryinsights.com/leaders/leading-from-your-strengths-profile. The visionary needs to understand who he is, and his natural strengths, weaknesses and tendencies. This will help bring understanding of the need for a vision implementation team because he will see where he needs help. For example, since visionaries are generally not detail people, but are futuristic people who thrive on the next challenge, he needs the implementor to create the systems and processes to achieve the results the visionary is requiring.

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42 Ministry Insights.
In order for the church planter to build a vision implementation team, he needs to take time to bring the right people in place. Even though a person may have certain strengths and weaknesses that compliment the church planter, the church planter needs to ensure that there is chemistry with each person he brings on the team. Each church planter should have an interview process in place but it is strongly recommended that before serious conversations take place regarding positions, the person needs to be a fit.

Since I have spent 10 years as a church planter, here are some recommendations I would make to the church planter as he begins his search to find the right people for the vision implementation team:

Step 1 – The Exploratory Step – this is simply where the church planter spends time with the potential team member in a “get to know” time. It is crucial to understand where the person’s heart is, their relationship with God, personal life, theology and beliefs and how the person handles conflict, challenges and struggles.

There may be some church planters that already know who they want to be part of the team simply because they have known this person for years. The caution is not to skip this step or take it lightly as it pertains to ministry. People are messy. People have secrets. People have opinions. People have different perspectives. It is vital for the church planter to fully understand where this person is in life and know if they align in the vision and purpose of what God is asking.

There are many quality people called to ministry, but that does not mean they are a fit in terms of chemistry and alignment with the vision. A crucial error that occurs, which has been supported through the research for this thesis project, is a church planter brings someone on staff because the two get along, they fit a ministry position or they have good
character and want to help plant a church. Those are great qualities but if this person does not fit with the requirements for the vision implementation team then frustrations and possible conflict will arise. Many times, the ending is difficult, challenging and hurtful. A church planter can minimize these scenarios by simply taking time to ensure the person is the right fit before the decision is made for that person to be part of the team.

Step 2 – The Assessment Step - Leading From Your Strengths Assessment – if the church planter decides to move the potential team member to the next step then it is suggested that the potential team member take the Leading from Your Strengths assessment.

This will be a benefit for the church planter and the potential team member because much will be learned about the personality makeup, uniqueness of the individual, strengths and weaknesses. In addition, both the church planter and potential team member will be able to gain clarity and understanding as to how they will interact with each other, potential conflicts and effective ways to communicate with each other. The results also bring greater understanding of how the two personalities are wired by God, which should reduce the desire to ask the person to be different than who they are.

Also, the church planter will identify if the person fits the criteria for an implementor, manager or consultant. The visionary should not waste any time with those who do not fit the criteria. It will show respect to the individual, as well as, the seriousness and necessity of having the right person in each position.

Step 3 – The Chemistry Step – this is simply spending time together. It is recommended that the church planter spend time with the potential team member and include other team members that are in place. It is recommended to spend time doing an activity such as golf, team building course, or some other activity that will challenge the person(s). This
will allow the church planter to see how they interact in a different environment and see how
the person responds to challenges.

The church planter’s success with the vision implementation will be defined by those
he has closest to him, which is the vision implementation team. One of the responsibilities of
the church planter is to protect the chemistry. What chemistry brings to the table is that the
team believes that the greatest value is in the group and not the leader, but it is the leader
(church planter) who has to develop and protect the chemistry. This means the church planter
will need to consistently improve his leadership and relational skills, as well as, each team
members’ leadership and relational skills. It will be crucial for the leader to share goals,
celebrate as a team and show value to each member. Good chemistry will result in great
energy.

Step 4 – Trial Step – One of the most respectful steps the leader can take is to value
the potential team member, the vision and the church by simply having the person be part of
the team for a trial basis before any permanent decision is made. This will give the
opportunity for expectations, evaluation, and experimenting to take place. The leader will be
able to decide fairly quickly if the trial period leads to bringing a team member on or ending
the process. This step can minimize hurt, conflict and pain because both sides know the
purpose of the trial period and that it is in place out of respect for both sides. The outcome at
this point should be more of a celebration and confirmation regardless whether the decision is
to move forward or not. If the decision is to move forward then this is an answered prayer. If
the decision is not to move forward then this is also an answered prayer and confirmation that
God has something better for both the individual and the team, and that can be celebrated as
well. The suggested length of the trial period is 90 days. The church planter will know his
pace and speed but the advice is not to have a trial period less than 90 days. This may seem overly cautious, but it is very different when you are bringing someone onto your ministry team at an existing church as opposed to when you are bringing someone into a role that will become more clearly defined as you grow.

Step 5 – The Vision Team Step – this is simply the step of making it official that the person is fully joining the team and is being empowered to lead in his specific area of implementor, manager or consultant.

Vision Implementation Team Dynamics

One of the frustrations a church planter experiences in starting a church is the limited number of resources that are available whether it is people, finances, building or anything that constrains the process. “Limited resources force you to make due with what you have. There is no room for waste. And that forces you to be creative.”43 The vision implementation team is going to be the great resource the church planter needs to move the vision forward even through limited resources.

The team needs to know what the goal is and the action plan to move forward in implementing the vision. Having an action plan in place is crucial and necessary for effective execution. The action plan will lead to each of the team members knowing their role in the implementation; timeframes that will be used as targets or goals, and help define specific activities that need to take place. The church planter should design a solid action plan that focuses on managing the workload, the individual and team responsibilities, progress reports and lines of communication. They should communicate to the team the importance of the role for each person and the importance of implementing the vision.

When the church planter is being intentional with the process of developing a vision implementation team, outlining the individual roles and having a solid action plan in place, he will communicate to the team the expectation and value of each member carrying out their role in the vision process. Execution has to be part of the culture of the team, if the team is to function at full potential. It is the role of the church planter to set realistic and high expectations of the team. Having low expectation, for any reason, will hurt the chemistry, function and effectiveness of the team. Having high expectations and responsibility results in reaching for excellence. When the leader sets clear expectations, communicates regularly, and challenges the team to operate at a higher level of responsibility then the chemistry, confidence and consistency will increase.
CHAPTER FOUR

The Vision Implementation Team Within Church Planting

When God calls a person and gives them a vision to start a church, the church planter will go through a wave of emotions. These emotions will range from excitement and energized, to overwhelmed and panic. These feeling may also bring many questions. The tendency for the church planter is to have the mentality of go, go, go and every step and decision is based on the factor of if the church will make it or not. The church planter will deal with the tension of having a passion to do what God is asking of him while having to deal with the slow pace of starting a church. The church planter’s passion operates at a much higher speed compared to the speed that the church reaches grand opening day. What this means is that the tendency of the church planter (visionary) will be not to take things into consideration or minimize the importance of the building blocks because the church planter is seeing the church full of people from the start.

There are many great church planting networks, coaching and assessment centers like Converge, Exponential, Acts 29, Launch Network and Liberty Church Planting Network. Each of these networks brings their unique strengths, experience and structure to planting a church. Even though the church planting networks provide articles, books, seminars and steps for planting a church, the issue of how to implement vision are not addressed. For example, Converge provides the Six Stages for Planting a Church. The stages are1:

Step 1: Relating With God and Others – the focus is on the importance of being spiritually disciplined and having a growing relationship with the Lord. In addition, having an intercessory prayer team is needed for the journey.

Step 2: Networking and Gathering – this step focuses on connecting with people in the community where the church is going to be planted and understanding how to move contacts from introduction to attending small group.

Step 3: Building a Launch Team – this third step is moving people from small group to a launch group. The launch group is the group that is going to help start the church. This is typically a group of fifty people.

Step 4: Designing Services and Programs – The fourth step is focused on what the worship experience is going to offer for the people attending. For example, what is the worship style, what will people experience when they walk in the doors and what ministries will be offered, i.e. children’s ministry.

Step 4a: Designing Your Worship Service Part 2: Preaching in a New Church – This step focuses on understanding the style of preaching that will connect to the community and the necessity to be connected to the Holy Spirit

Step 5: Launching Your Public Worship Service – The fifth step is focused on the intentionality of having worship services that lead to a Grand Opening Service. The process includes beginning with small group and moving to preview services then to weekly services and finally Grand Opening.

Step 6: Establishing New Community and Ministries – the focus is the ministry process that will be in place to move people from visitors to disciples.

Another example of necessary steps needed for church planting comes from Ron Edmonson who is a pastor and church-planting consultant with over 20 years of experience and offers these 5 steps for planting a church:²

Vision – Get a clear, easy to understand, worthy vision that honors God and brings good to other people and for which people can get excited.

People – Recruit people who love the vision as much as you do. If you can’t find like-minded people, it will be very difficult to be successful in the new ministry. I always believe, and have witnessed it repeatedly, that if God is in this, He has already been shaping the vision in other people’s minds. We just need to find them.

Equip and assign – With people contributing, determine the tasks needed to accomplish the vision. Help people understand their unique role in accomplishing the vision and assign them to specific tasks. Give them the resources they need and make sure they are clear on their assigned role.

Energize – Keep people motivated towards the vision by continually reminding them of the overall purpose and their significant place in accomplishing it.

Release – Let people do their part to accomplish the vision. Give real ownership.

Delegate. Don’t control.

A third option for necessary steps for church planting comes from Exponential leadership. Exponential which is a ministry organization whose leadership initiative is to be sold out to church planting, multiplication, and seeing an acceleration of apostolic movements in our generation.³

Exponential provides the following steps that a church planter should take when planting a church:⁴


Check your heart – Are you sure planting is what you are being called to do…or is it a desire because everyone else is doing it? It’s fine if you are. We need church planters. But, we also need people willing to help established churches thrive. It’s hard work to change what’s established already…but so is church planting. Make sure you know what you’re getting into is what God’s drawing you into.

Check your spouse’s heart – Church planting is not a sole venture. No ministry is for that matter. If you are married, you will need to be on the same page with your spouse. No. Doubt. About. It. Trying to do this without complete buy in from both parties will destroy one or the other…the plant or the marriage.

Determine where you feel called to plant – That’s an important beginning step. Much of your future steps will depend on this one. Many times you already know this and I think God gives tremendous latitude in this. We need churches lots of places. But, this will be one of the most difficult decisions you make if you don’t know. I once thought I wanted to plant in New York City. I still might someday. But, when I spent time talking to God about this, I sensed Him releasing me from the desire and pointing me in another direction.

Find others interested – This is critical. If you tell me you can’t find anyone…and I hear it often…I’d seriously question how successful you are going to be. Just as with Elijah in 1 Kings 19, in my experience, God is always “reserving” (1 Kings 19:18) people who He plans to use in the vision He is shaping in you. To build a body you need those who are part of the body to start.

Find experienced help – It can be a denomination, another church, or an experienced pastor or mentor, but don’t do it alone. Too much has been learned about church planting to miss out on someone else’s experience.
All three of these valuable resources offer great insight and needed steps that a church planter should take while planting a church. Church planters will and have followed many of these steps and should follow them. In addition to these steps for church planting, there are many other viable resources that church planters can use in church planting. With the growing number of church planting books being published and with the numerous books about vision, the question still remains how does a church planter effectively implement the vision?

The church planter can go to the best coaches, follow the recommended steps to start a church and be spiritually healthy and still become frustrated because the vision implementation is struggling, stalled or non-existent. As a reminder, this thesis project is to help church planters develop a vision implementation to help effectively implement the vision, minimize frustration and burnout and protect the vision God has given him.

One of the truths of church planting is that there is constant change while starting a church and the church planter needs to be able to ensure focus on the vision and movement towards the vision. The church planter will come to find out that vision implementation does not stop. Vision implementation is about movement. Movement needs to take place in order for the vision to be implemented, to maintain momentum and to continue to reach new levels. Leading the vision implementation process is about having the people on the team operate in the areas where they can produce the best results. Dr. Henry Cloud states, “As a leader, you always get what you create and what you allow.”

5 This raises the question, as a leader, are you creating and allowing for your vision? What if, a church planter creates a vision implementation team where people with the right skill set, experience and personality are given specific roles to produce the

best results? What if the vision implementation team is operating with a vision cycle? This author has constructed a diagram that illustrates the vision cycle (see Figure 13).

![Diagram of vision cycle]

**Figure 13. Vision cycle**

This diagram gives a visual to the different elements that encompass the vision implementation process: People, personalities, roles, casting vision, systems, managing, identifying problems and solutions, chemistry, movement and teamwork are all a part of what makes up this team. With a number of different dynamics that effect vision implementation, it is vital that a vision implementation team is formed.

The main question this thesis project is addressing is how does a church planter staff to effectively implement the vision? How do all the pieces of vision implementation fit together? The following recommendation comes from research, experience, mistakes, successes and understanding the necessity to protect the vision. The following steps are recommended under
the assumption that God has called a person to start a church and has given that person a specific vision to carry out.

**Steps for Planting a Church**

**Step 1: Know Yourself**

It is so important for the church planter/visionary to know who he is and who he is not. The church planter/visionary needs to have a complete understanding of who he is and how God has wired him. When the church planter understands who he is, meaning his strengths and weaknesses, personality, communication style, tendencies under pressure, the pace at which he operates, and how he faces risks, this creates a valuable gift to himself, the team and church. It is critical for the church planter to know his leadership style and how he will foster unity within the team. “A unified and healthy leadership team doesn’t just happen. It has to be a priority.”6 The church planter will have to work to keep unity on a regular basis because unity and harmony can quickly diminish if ignored. It is important for the church planter to know who he is because then he can understand who he needs around him to compliment him. “Without an awareness of your strengths and weaknesses, its almost impossible to lead effectively.”7

The church planter/visionary needs to take the ‘Leading From Your Strengths’ assessment to gain an understanding of the way God has wired him. After receiving the results, the church planter/visionary should write a conclusion of the report that is valuable to him. For example, his communication style, what value he brings to the team, best environment in which to succeed, areas that he needs to improve and how the person sees himself compared to how

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6 Larry Osborne, *Sticky Teams: Keeping Your Leadership Team and Staff on the Same Page* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 24.

others see him. The reasons for writing the conclusion is for the person to take in and understand who he is and the way he operates.

When the church planter takes time to evaluate and understand how God has wired him, he should gain an appreciation of the way God has created him. It should foster a humble heart because the person sees he needs others to accomplish the vision and the tasks necessary for the vision to become a reality. In addition, it should result in the church planter having a heart of appreciation for the team members and in return the team members appreciate that the church planter is carrying out the task God has given him. The evaluation will help identify areas for improvement, self-awareness, and the sweet spot for effective leadership and ministry.

Step 2: Develop the Vision Implementation Team

The vision implementation team is created from four positions with overarching roles and responsibilities. The next step is to form the team by bringing on the right people into the right position. “Strong teams embrace diversity. Having a team composed of individuals who look at issues similarly, who have the product of comparable educational background, and who experiences with similar track records and approaches is not a sound basis for success.”8 The temptation for the church planter is to move at a fast pace to fill the position without ensuring they have the right people for the right position. There are some people who fit the criteria of the implementor, manager or consultant but just because they fall into those quadrants does not mean they are a fit for the team. It is recommended that not only does the potential candidate take the ‘Leading From Your Strengths Assessment’ but also takes some personality profile assessments.

8 Rath and Conchie, Strengths Based Leadership, 74.
Chemistry with the team will either energize or de-energize the effectiveness of the team. It is important that the person that is being considered for a role on the team is the right fit from a relationship standpoint and has the attitude that the team is in this together and not four individuals trying to make it happen.

Competency is another area that needs to be addressed to ensure that the person being considered is the right fit. Does this person have the experience and skill set to carry out the job? How does this person work and how well does this person work? Does this person have the ability to grow with the church, vision and leadership or will this person have a low leadership potential?

Character is also a crucial factor in determining if this candidate is a good fit for the team. Does this person have integrity? Will he support the decisions of the team? Can this person be trusted? Is the person the same person in front of the church as he in the team meetings?

Communication is the other area of importance. It is important that the team members can speak the truth in love and also understand how to communicate with each other. Communication is so crucial to all facets of making vision a reality.

Step 3: Mange the Expectations

Part of the responsibility of the church planter/visionary is to set the expectations for the team and the expectation for each member of the team. Managing the expectations of the team will establish responsibility, importance and cohesiveness within the team. This should foster the weight that team members carry and their value to the team and the vision that God has given the church planter. Managing the expectations involves casting the vision, ensuring each team member understands his role, goals, and deadlines. In addition, the church planter should set the
expectation of what needs to be done in order for some one to stay at the vision implementation table and what violates the integrity of the team that would result in being replaced.

**Step 4: Identify Potential Problems**

One of the dynamics that a leader can bring to the team is seeing potential issues, frustrations, and chemistry dynamics and addresses them before they become problems. One of the most vital elements to the vision implementation process is that the team is working together, supporting each other and understanding that everyone is equal. The leader (church planter) should continually invest in the team and team building methods to ensure the chemistry of the team. One of the values that the ‘Leading From Your Strengths Profile’ provides is describing how each person needs to be communicated with and potential problems that cause communication breakdowns. This tool can be instrumental in ensuring that each member on the team is valued. On the other hand, if conflict or communication breakdown takes place between two people, this profile can serve as a resource to understanding why there is conflict or a breakdown. In addition, the church planter should be proactive in addressing any potential problems or any problems that do arise. The church planter is not only responsible for bringing the right people to the vision implementation table but also investing in them to ensure the team is working as one.

**The Role of the Vision Implementation Team**

The role of the vision implementation team is to make the vision a reality and this means that the team is accountable to the Lord, the church and the vision. Peter Ducker states, “When developing and implementing a plan, the board is accountable for mission, goals and the
allocation of resources to results, and for appraising progress and achievements.”⁹ As the team carries out their roles with the vision process, the team will focus on 4 initiatives: Know – Develop – Manage - Identify

These are the same steps the church planter follows in implementing a vision implementation team. Here is the role of the vision implementation team:

**Role of the Vision Implementation Team**

**Know the Status**

The goal is to implement the vision that God has given within church planting. The church planter will cast the vision that God has asked him to implement. With that, it is important for the team to identify what needs to be done in order to effectively implement the vision. In order to effectively identify the reality and determine what systems and processes need to be developed, it will be important to answer the questions of has the church planter effectively cast the vision to the team and the church, where are we in the church planting process, what are the short-term goals, and what are the next steps?

**Develop the Systems**

Once the team knows the reality of where the vision is and what the next steps and initiatives are, the team needs to determine what systems and processes need to be implemented in order to achieve the initiatives and goals. The process part falls under the responsibility of the implementor and manager since they are the ones who implement and oversee the process and systems. This is the most challenging part of the vision implementation because the path that is decided upon to achieve the desired outcome is the biggest challenge. The team is wanting to move the vision from point A to point B and that is going to be the challenge because the hardest

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⁹ Drucker, *Five Most Important*, 68.
part of vision implementation is determining the right processes and systems to move from point A to point B effectively. There is a lot of pressure on the implementor and manager because the vision does not matter if nothing is accomplished. The process is not simply execution but also includes strategy. Even through the implementor will determine the steps that need to be in place for the goals to be reached, the team needs to develop the strategy for the vision. The team will determine what are the goals to be achieved, how is success defined, what elements are essential, and what is the timeframe?

Manage the Systems

This is when the systems are in place and the strategy is moving forward. The manager takes the lead to ensure that the systems and processes that have been implemented are functioning. This is the longest part of the vision implementation process. What needs to be determined is how often will feedback be given from the manager, how long will the systems and processes be implemented, what trends, problems, and successes does the manager identify, and are the ministry leaders effective in carrying out the initiatives?

Identify the Solutions to Problems

This evaluation part of the process is to ensure that the vision implementation process is effective. This is the responsibility of the consultant. The consultant will take the time to evaluate the goals of the vision that have been established with the results that are being produced and determine if what has been implemented is producing the results the vision implementation team had agreed upon. In order to know the next steps an evaluation needs to be surveyed to determine if the process and systems are effective in accomplishing the goals. Some questions that need to be asked are did we meet our goals, what did not go so well, can and/or should we fix it, is it systemic or skill issue, and is there anything that needs to start or stop?
Then the church planter/visionary defines reality, sets the goals and timeframe and the next steps of the vision implementation process begins. As the next steps of the vision implementation process starts, the visionary will have to communicate what progress has been made, is the vision implementation team moving too fast, slow or at the right speed for the church, are the goals being accomplishing within the timeframes, and how is the church responding to what has been implemented.

If the church planter and team can remember to live in the vision cycle of know, develop, manage and identify, then it will help bring a team together, make vision implementation smoother and more effective and will keep the vision moving because the leader (church planter) has put boundaries in place. Dr. Henry Cloud states, “the reason that leader’s boundaries work is that they actually make it possible for people’s brains to function as they were designed.”10

When a church planter defines the boundaries for each member of the vision implementation team then we also must lead each person to ensure they are operating within their sweet spot to produce the best results.

The church planter will need to understand when the challenge is too much for a person or when the task is below their ability. If the challenge or task is too much for a person’s ability then that person will feel staggered. If the challenge or task is too easy for a person’s ability then this person will be bored. When the challenge or task is in the execution area for the person to function then this person is energized, responds and produces the best result he can produce.

Here is a diagram to explain the execution area:11

10 Cloud, Boundaries, 25.
11 Ibid., 25.
At the end of it all, the church planter wants to see results in all areas. When the church planter leads a team to function within their execution area then he has increased his chances of reaching the results he desires.
CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion

This author is a church planter and has had the opportunity to plant two churches, one in Texas and another in Arizona. These were two very different types of church planting experiences, with one common denominator. The common denominator is that the vision implementation team was not addressed from the beginning.

The church plant in Texas still exists, but there was much frustration in moving the vision forward because the people at the vision table were not the right people. The pastoral staff was working to move the church forward and implement vision, but kept running into patterns that were hindering progress and causing frustration. In hindsight, the major challenge that was faced was asking people to do a job that was outside of their giftedness and skill set to effectively and intentionally implement the vision and mission of the church. Even though the pastoral staff understood what was trying to be accomplished, they were unknowingly paralyzed in implementing the vision because not all the pieces were in place to effectively put the systems in place to fulfill the vision. There were quality people at the table but with the same type of skills sets, personalities and strengths. There were many good ideas presented but very few ideas moved to implementation because there was not an implementor at the table. This experience caused this author to evaluate through the questions, processes and personnel in regards to vision implementation. The topics of evaluation included questioning what could have been done differently, analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of the staff, and asking what solution could have accomplished the vision that God had given the pastor. Realizing a common pitfall of many organizations regarding people’s strengths and weaknesses, is taking the employees’ strengths
for granted and focusing on minimizing their weaknesses.\footnote{Marcus Buckingham and Donald O. Clifton, \textit{Now, Discover Your Strengths} (New York: 2001), 8.} This process brought understanding about the importance of the intentionality of vision implementation by building on the strengths of people on the team.

Through these church planting experiences, this author has learned the importance of having the right people in place from the start to help implement the vision. These learning experiences have come through being at the ground level of church planting, making mistakes, right decisions, trials and errors and being involved with church planting networks.

Being a church planter, there is a passion to see new churches succeed and implement the vision God has given the pastor so communities will be impacted for the glory of God. This passion and experience in church planting has led this author to read several books, blogs and publications on church planting, leadership and vision.

Not only does this author have ministry experience but also eight years in Corporate America and running a multi million dollar business. This business experience brings an appreciation of the importance of implementing good business practices and understanding of the necessity of having a qualified team to carry out the vision of the company. Many pastors and even church planters have a wealth of experience in ministry related issues, but lack the business experience of implementing the right systems, strategies and teams, in order to move the vision forward in an effective and purposeful way. Merging the business and ministry experience creates a dynamic to implementing both business and ministry principals to help the church to be more effective. For example, the principle of capitalizing on the strengths of the team and
managing around the weaknesses to achieve success is a principle that relates to the business world and the church world alike.2

This thesis project was formulated through many lessons that were learned in the business world and in ministry. There were many days filled with questions, seeking, and praying and struggling to help understand the dynamics of vision implementation. Church planting is packaged with many challenges and church planters need to understand that there are people who can help them in implementing the vision. This author’s prayer, for any church planter that reads this thesis project, is that the church planter will experience the fruits of their labor and this vision implementation model will eliminate many unnecessary frustrations. In addition, another prayer is that this vision implementation model would be an instrument used by many church planters to play a part in reaching millions of people for Christ and seeing their vision become a reality.

This vision implementation model can benefit both the academic community and Christian ministry field because there is little education on vision implementation for church planters, and understanding how to identify the right skill set and strengths of the members on the team. Even though this thesis project focused on church plants, the principles can be applied to any educational, ministry, or business organization. Specifically within the Christian ministry field, this staffing solution will help new churches become more effective in reaching the community for Christ while moving the vision forward because of the vision team that is in place.

The vision team will come together will specific duties, skills, and processes to implement the vision because the right people are in the right position. This staffing model is intentional about living out 1 Corinthians 12:12 which states, “Just as a body, though one, has

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many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ.” The main reason for this thesis project is for people who do not have a relationship with Jesus Christ to come to know Him as their Lord and Savior because church plants are reaching unchurched people and those who do not know Christ. When a vision team is intentional about casting, implementing, and managing the system in place and solving problems related to the vision then the church will be more effective, have a greater impact and see more people come to Christ because the vision is being carried out and protected.

Even though there are many valuable resources on vision for church planters that are available through books, conferences, articles and church planting networks, the issue being addressed in this thesis project is how to effectively implement the vision within church planting. The overarching question being asked is, what if church planters were intentional in the vision implementation process?

God has created each person in His own image and has wired each person with abilities, skills, personalities and passions that can be used for His Glory. Maybe God intended for church planters to determine what people need to come along side them in ministry in order to be as effective as possible. Maybe God has asked the church planter to form teams to carry out ministry initiatives rather than an individual minister trying to do it all by themselves?

God created people with different thinking, perspective, personalities and skills, proving it is difficult for one person to try to make vision a reality. Throughout the Bible, God brought people together to make vision a reality. Joshua and the second Generation Israelites worked together as a team to conquer the Promise Land. Nehemiah and his people had to come together as a team and make vision a reality in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. Peter and the Apostles

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3 1 Corinthians 12:12.
started the New Testament Church and carried out the vision for being witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.\footnote{Acts 1:8.} Paul, Barnabas and John were a team that carried out the vision of church planting and spreading the gospel.

In addition, Jesus’ ministry focused much on relationships. Ministers want people to come into relationship with the Lord, to be groups to build relationships, so why should ministers try to carry out the vision by themselves? People have strengths and weaknesses. Having a team builds value, perseverance and character. Having a team with the right people will produce better results.

This vision implementation model is designed to help church planters fully implement the vision God has asked the planter to carry out, understand the strengths and weaknesses of the church planter and where other’s strengths can compliment him, minimize the vision being hijacked or stalled whether it is intentional or unintentional, and minimize the burnout rate of a church planter. The vision implementation model is a combination of personality traits, skill set, biblical principles and business practices to help the teamwork effectively to achieve the results efficiently. It is teamwork that will be a major factor in achieving the goals of the vision.

The church planter needs people. He needs people to help reach people. This thesis project and the model presented are to give insight to the church planter to bring in the right people from the start. When the church planter tries to implement the vision on his own it will make his ministry work harder and chances are the results he produces will frustrate him and others because he is only using his strengths or asking others to use strengths they do not have to compensate for his weaknesses. George Barna states, “In every case I have studied, the vision entrusted to the leader was not a simple manner of God paving the way to do what came
naturally or easily to the leader.”\textsuperscript{5} The church planter needs people around him. He needs a team to help carry out the vision.

The vision implementation model offers some other natural benefits. Working as a team where communication and feedback is vital, each team member will be in a constant state of learning. The members will learn within ministry, in their relationship with the Lord, they will learn things about the community and they will learn the dynamics of bringing together four different personality types and skills to function as a unit.

The vision implementation model provides accountability and motivation. Accountability is a powerful dynamic for a team especially when there is respect among the team members. Motivation energizes the team and will help the team succeed. It is the accountability and motivation that will help a team member press on when the difficult days come and when the obstacles to the vision keep coming.

“When it comes to helping people find fulfillment in their work, there is nothing more important than teamwork. It gives people a sense of connection and belonging, which ultimately makes them better parents, siblings, friends and neighbors.”\textsuperscript{6} The vision implementation team can be a great example to the church of four diverse individuals coming together, working together, talking together, deciding together in a way that fosters relationships and benefits the other aspects of each person’s life. The following diagram is a visual summary of what this thesis project is contending:

\textsuperscript{5} Barna, \textit{Power of Vision}, 22.

Figure 15. Thesis Project’s contentions

The prayer for any church planter, who reads this thesis project, is that the experiences, lessons, and advice stated in this thesis project will be embraced and help the church planter launch a successful church. Starting a church takes much work and everything has to be created. Before church plants have their first worship service, the church plant begins with no momentum and no stability. The church planter has to create momentum, stability, systems, processes, and draw people to come. The depth and width of these categories requires attention and intentionality on the church planter’s part. The church planter can effectively tackle these categories by creating a vision implementation team that comes together to create a dynamic that can lead to an incredible church plant that functions well from the start and stays on course to achieve their God given vision.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Towns, Elmer L. *Getting a Church Started*. Lynchburg, VA: School of Lifelong Learning, Liberty University, 1993.


APPENDIX A
RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND RESULTS

Vision Impaired: A model to make vision a reality for Church plants

1. Is the church you planted still in existence?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Unknown

   **Responses:**
   Yes: 67%
   No: 32%
   Unknown: 1%

2. If you have planted more than one church, is each of the churches still operating?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Unknown

   **Responses:**
   Yes: 58%
   No: 14%
   Unknown: 28%

3. In your first church plant, did you implement the vision you started with?
   a. Yes with no help
   b. Yes, with some help
   c. No

   **Responses:**
   Yes, with no help: 27%
   Yes, with some help: 62%
No: 11%

4. As a church planter, what was the most challenging area in implanting the vision?
   a. Casting,
   b. Creating systems to support the vision,
   c. Managing the vision,
   d. Identifying problems

   **Responses:**
   - Casting: 2%
   - Creating systems to support the system: 70%
   - Managing the vision: 24%
   - Identifying problems: 4%

5. When staffing for the church plant, what was your basis for hiring a person that planted the church with you?
   a. Hired based on ministry position
   b. Hired based on qualifications to implement the vision
   c. Hired anyone who wanted to plant a church
   d. No basis

   **Responses:**
   - Hired based on ministry position: 54%
   - Hired based on qualifications to implement the vision: 38%
   - Hired anyone who wanted to plant a church: 1%
   - No basis: 7%
6. After starting the church, did your vision for the church ever get off-course?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Sometimes
   d. Not sure
   **Responses:**
   Yes: 44%
   No: 27%
   Sometimes: 29%
   Not sure: 0%

7. Would you hire the same staff again if you were to start another church?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Some
   d. Not sure
   **Responses:**
   Yes: 34%
   No: 40%
   Some: 16%
   Not sure: 10%

8. If starting another church, what would be your hiring basis?
   a. Ministry Experience
   b. Experience with implementing vision
   c. No basis
   d. Unknown
   **Responses:**
   Ministry Experience: 25%
   Experience with implementing vision: 67%
9. What was the most challenging to implementing your vision for the church?
   a. Casting vision
   b. Implementing systems to support the vision
   c. Managing the processes and ministries of the vision
   d. Identifying problems of the vision

   **Responses:**
   Casting vision: 3%
   Implementing systems to support the vision: 52%
   Managing the processes and ministries of the vision: 43%
   Identifying problems of the vision: 2%

10. What identifies your style the best?
   a. Visionary
   b. Implementer
   c. Manager
   d. Consultant

   **Responses:**
   Visionary: 72%
   Implementer: 23%
   Manager: 3%
   Consultant: 2%
APPENDIX B
LEADING FROM YOUR STRENGTHS SUMMARY ASSESSMENT TOOL

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

• He is a goal-oriented individual who believes in pulling in others to help him achieve his goals.
• He needs people with other strengths on his team.
• Dwayne appreciates others who are team players and will reward those who are loyal.
• Dwayne’s creative mind allows him to see the “big picture.”
• He can be aggressive and direct, but still be considerate of people.
• He is forward-looking, aggressive and competitive.
• His vision for results is one of his positive strengths.
• Dwayne likes to be forceful and direct when dealing with others.
• His desire for results is readily apparent to the people with whom he works.
• Sometimes he becomes emotionally involved in the decision-making process.
• Logic and people who have the facts and data to support this logic influence him.

• He is a good problem solver and trouble shooter.
• He tends to influence people by being direct, friendly and results-oriented.
• He challenges people who volunteer their opinions.
• He has the ability to ask the right questions and dismiss a shallow idea.
• If pressured, Dwayne’s true feelings may emerge.

CHECKLIST FOR COMMUNICATING

• Support the results, not the person, if you agree.
• Present the facts logically: plan your presentation efficiently.
• Motivate and persuade by referring to objectives and results.
• Clarify any parameters in writing.

DON'TS FOR COMMUNICATING

• Try to convince by "personal" means.
• Be paternalistic
• Reinforce agreement with "I'm with you."
• Forget or lose things, be disorganized or messy, confuse or distract his mind from important tasks.
• Take credit for his accomplishments.

IDEAL ENVIRONMENT

• An innovative and futuristic-oriented environment.
• Needs difficult assignments.
• Evaluation based on results, not the process
• Work with a results-oriented team
APPENDIX C

CONSENT INFORMATION FORM

Vision Impaired: A model to make vision a reality for Church plants

Dwayne Pedroza
Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary
Doctor of Ministry Program

You are invited to be in a research study to help future church planters increase their probability of implementing the vision and increase the survival rate of church plants. The reason you are being asked to participate in this study is because you were or are a church planter. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Dwayne Pedroza is conducting this study and the conclusions will be included in his thesis project as part of his degree completion for a Doctorate of Ministry at Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary in Lynchburg, Virginia.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to provide a staffing model that will increase the effectiveness of implementing the vision and increase the survival rate of church plants. According to The Christian Post (November 15, 2007), 68% of church starts survive past four years. In the book, Vertical Church, only 800 church plants survive each year. God has given pastors a vision for a church plant yet so many church plants do not survive and the vision dies. This study will address the issue of staffing effectively so there is a team that helps implement the vision versus staffing for ministry position as the church begins.

Procedures:

If you agree to be part of this research, then please click on the Survey Monkey link. You will be asked ten multiple-choice questions. The survey should not take more than 10 minutes. This survey is anonymous and you will not enter your name or personal information. After completely the survey then results will be automatically sent to me and the results will be recorded.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study:

Risk: There is no risk to this study.

Benefits: The benefits of being in this study is investing in future church planters and being part of a solution that will allow their church to make an impact for Christ.
Compensation:

There is no compensation for your participation.

Confidentiality:

The records and results of this study will be kept in a password protected computer file. You name and identity will be kept confidential on this thesis project project and any future writings that I participate. Any personal information of each participant such as name, email address, or phone number will be kept in private in a password protected personal computer file until the study has been completed. This thesis project or any future writings will contain links to any information or responses.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

This study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is Dwayne Pedroza. If you have questions, contact me at dwayne@life180church.com, or 940-597-6929

You may also contact Dr. Charlie Davidson, Faculty Advisor, at cdavidson@liberty.edu, (434) 592-4241.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), contact the Institutional Review Board, Dr. Fernando Garzon, Chair, 1971 University Blvd, Suite 1837, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at fgarzon@liberty.edu

IRB Code Numbers: 1477.121912

IRB Expiration Date: December 19, 2013
APPENDIX D

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

April 11, 2013

Dwayne Pedroza
IRB Exemption 1575.04113: Vision Impaired: A Model to Make Vision a Reality for Church Plants

Dear Dwayne,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and that no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under exemption category 46.101 (d)(2), which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:

(2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless:
- (i) Information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects’ responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects’ financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and that any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by submitting a change in protocol form or a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Exemption number.

If you have any questions about this exemption, or need assistance in determining whether possible changes to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

Fernando Garzon, Psy.D.
Professor, IRB Chair
Counseling

(434) 592-4054

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APPENDIX E

Permission to Use

The following is the email conversation between Rodney Cox and Dwayne Pedroza regarding permission to use images. Rodney Cox is the founder of Ministry Insights. The images are on the following pages: 54, 59, 64, 68, 69, 74, 79, 80, and 118.

On Wed, May 21, 2014 at 8:14 PM, Rodney Cox <rcox@ministryinsights.com> wrote:

Leigh - please send Dwayne a link to the wheel download page.

Thanks in advance - RC

rodneycox | founder/president
(480) 951-9888 (7012) www.ministryinsights.com
Linkedin: http://www.linkedin.com/pub/rodney-cox/13/ab0/494 Facebook:
http://www.facebook.com/ministryinsights

On Wed, May 21, 2014 at 6:51 PM, <dwayne@life180church.com> wrote:

Rodney -

I hope all is well - I wanted to ask you if it would be possible to email a jpg, illustrator or pdf file of the LFYS wheel and strengths scale - I know this is a huge favor and the reason I am asking is for my thesis - I need to put the wheel diagram in my thesis...is this okay...

Thanks

Keep Taking the Next Step -

Dwayne Pedroza
Lead Pastor
LIFE180