

## Q & A

### Will Mancini talks about the Vision Pathway

#### **What is the Vision Pathway Process and how is it different from others who talk about vision?**

The process is new on at least three counts. First, we are revolting against vision that is stuck on paper only. Too many church leaders have endured a process that left a void in the heart of the individual and the church at large. Second it is new because it is focusing on features of clarity that most visioning processes don't touch. Third, Church Unique paints a picture of visionary leadership from a missional reorientation rather than the assumptions of the church growth movement.

#### **What's the unique model of ministry you're advocating?**

We are not advocating a model of ministry but a process that enables each church to develop its own unique model. Personally, I am heartbroken that so many leaders traffic in photocopied vision. I firmly believe that churches would be stronger if they stopped duplicating ministry models and started incarnating their own.

#### **Are many pastors and churches doing the work of visioning?**

I never met a church or a pastor that didn't want to have vision, but that does not translate to many churches taking vision seriously. Vision itself is a slippery idea and leaves a lot open to interpretation as to when you have it. I would boil the playing field down to two types of churches. First are those that have a nifty statement or two but have never experienced a healthy visioning process (even though they think they have.) The second are those that have intuitive visionary leaders who don't think they need a process. Unfortunately they miss out on tremendous value of a process to sharpen the vision and deepen the ownership.

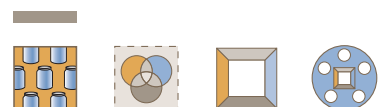
#### **What barriers to visioning exist in churches today?**

The ones I see the most today are 1) churches conferences that sell you another church's vision, 2) the competency trap which keeps leaders emotionally connected to what worked yesterday, and 3) poor visioning and strategic planning models that have left a bad taste in a leaders mouth.

#### **How do you distinguish between visioning and strategic planning?**

The best way to distinguish the two is the product you have when you are done. Typically, a strategic plan leaves you with a hierarchy of objectives and goals in the form of a notebook. Visioning, however, leaves with a cascading sense of clarity and enthusiasm about what God is doing in the congregation and community. Similar to how Paul's validated his ministry by referring to his followers as "living epistles," the validation of visioning is seen by the conversations down the hall not the mission on the wall.

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## Q & A (cont'd.)

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#### **You say some forms of strategic planning are outdated. How so?**

There are some assumptions of corporate strategic planning dating back to the 1960's that don't hold true for the church today. Strategic planning works well in large, top-down structures where accountability and control mechanisms are important. That doesn't necessarily work well in the church. There was a time when having more information was important and a strategic plan brought value through details and analysis. Most church folks need more clarity, not more information. They need a synthesis, or big picture, that provides meaning and inspiration that strategic plans don't inherently provide. Also strategic planning assumes that the near future is predictable. That is not as true now as it was 30 years ago. It is more important now to think and adapt strategically than to do a 10-year plan.

#### **What "better way" is there to making a church unique?**

I would suggest that we don't make the church unique because God already has. So our role is to "lean into" our strengths and do more of what we do best; that is to do more of what God has equipped us and motivated us to do in our little corner of the world. In the end the principle of focus comes into play because we are freed from trying to be all things to all people.

#### **What does the title of your first chapter, "Unoriginal Sin" refer to?**

Unoriginal sin is the common habit of neglecting what makes your congregation unique in favor of adopting programs and mindsets that worked somewhere else.

#### **What do you want readers to take away with them in having read Church Unique?**

I hope that readers gain a confidence that God is doing something cosmically significant and locally specific in their church. From this confidence my prayer is that they see both their congregation and community through fresh eyes as they engage a deeper discovery process.

