

Growing the Servant Heart

Leading the Journey Encouraging Vision and Leading Change with a Servant Heart

Student Notes

*These notes accompany the **Leading the Journey – Encouraging Vision and Leading Change with a Servant Heart** on-line course module available at academy.christian-leadership.org*

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4th November 2014

OA-2781-01-141119 -Encouraging Vision Leading Change

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Objectives

These notes accompany the **Leading the Journey – Encouraging Vision and Leading Change with a Servant Heart** module in the **Growing the Servant Heart** on-line course. This course is available free of charge at academy.christian-leadership.org

One of the most significant tasks of a leader is to lead a group of people, whether they are a team or a whole organisation, on the journey to achieve their shared vision for the future. That is the thing to which they are committed because it will bring about a difference that is worth all the effort. The vision may be substantial or equally it may be limited and local in scope. In any event it is a view of a preferred and different future and achieving it, by definition means change. This is because the things in view will be made different than they are now. Thus that journey to bring about a vision is inherently one of change. It is the leader's responsibility to help all those on the journey to successfully negotiate that process and achieve the journey's end.

This lesson investigates how the Christ-centred servant leader can lead that important process of developing and communicating a vision that is in step with the Kingdom. It goes on to look at the issue of engaging and leading people on that journey of change as they seek to bring the vision to reality.

On the way, we examine the vision led journeys of change that were embarked upon by Abraham, Nehemiah and Moses and the Israelites. In this we seek to ground our learning in the Bible and so keep a Kingdom perspective as we look at the insights to be gained from secular leaders.

The **Growing the Servant Heart** programme is about providing practical tools to help the Christian leader function day-to-day. As such, the tools and approaches have been selected because they are supportive of the values and objectives of the Christ-centred servant leader.

At the end of this lesson, as the student, you will have:

- Considered Biblical perspectives on vision and the journey of change.
- Examined how to develop and communicate a vision that is consistent with Kingdom values.
- Reviewed the Exodus as a Biblical case study of change.
- Considered key leadership issues concerning the process of change.
- Investigated an 8 step model as a guide for leading change.

Prerequisites

This module of **Growing the Servant Heart** can stand alone but is best considered having completed **The Jesus Model, Leading Through Insight, Leading Through Others and Leading Through Relationships** modules. These can be found at academy.christian-leadership.org

The Journey

The Experiences of Abraham

Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonours you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." So Abram went, as the LORD had told him,

Genesis 12:1-4

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

Hebrews 11:8-10

Abraham – or Abram as we was named then, trusted God. He received God's promise of becoming a great nation in order to bless all the families of the earth. In keeping with this trust he obediently exercised faith and set out on a great journey to the place where he was to receive the fulfilment of God's promise. However, he did not know where that would be, so as the writer to the Hebrews' declares "He went out not knowing where he was going". Well geographically at least.

Why did Abraham have such trust and faith in God? Well, he knew God.

Jewish tradition (http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/112063/jewish/Abrahams-Early-Life.htm) has it that Terah, Abraham's father, was prime minister for Nimrod, King of Babylon, and his high priest. He also had a business manufacturing idols. It was Nimrod who invented and established pagan religion and idol worship and sought to diminish God with the Tower of Babel. When he was born, Abraham was sent into hiding with his mother because Nimrod wanted to kill him. Now Abraham knew both Noah and Shem because he was sent to live with them for a time. Abraham was 58 years old when Noah died, and 110 years old when Shem died. Noah knew Methuselah who knew Adam. Abraham, being taught by Noah and Shem grew to know God. At age 50 Abraham returned to Babylon determined to teach the people about the true God. Nimrod was none too happy about this and sought to kill Abraham who left Ur with some 300 followers.

Much is made of the fact that that Abraham did not know where he was going, which as we already observed was true geographically. However, from a spiritual perspective he did know what he was seeking. It was the fulfilment of God's promise; "*the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.*" Hebrews 11:10.

With his promise, God had envisioned Abraham so that he shared God's vision of the future. This vision kept Abraham motivated, albeit with some well documented lapses. But even the most significant of these – Ishmael – came about because Sarah and Abraham, whose faith had weakened, sought to help out.

So God's promise, which defined the destination was not seen, only envisaged, at the time God made that promise.

What Kind of Vision are we Talking About?

Why do we need a vision?

As we have seen from the story of Abraham a vision defines the destination of journey. In Abraham's case this journey had two elements, one had a place as its destination the other had a goal.

This module is about leading people on a journey. Not a physical journey across country but a journey to achieve some goal, a goal shared by all who choose to embark upon the journey.

The destination of the journey is defined by what is called the "vision". It's something that all on the journey want to bring about and it captures their imagination and heart. It becomes the thing that they want to achieve and it implies a process of change.

This begs a question; "Why do we need to embark on a journey in the first place?" "Why do we need that different future?"

Well there seem to be at least three good reasons:

Challenge

We can be challenged by changing circumstances and we have little if any say in the matter. We are affected by external change as a situation develops around us. We are left having to reactively respond and, whether we like it or not, we are forced to embark on the journey.

Opportunity

We see opportunities emerge and proactively decide that we should take advantage of them. So, we seize the opportunity, make our plans and engage in the journey of change that brings the plans to fruition

Leading

God calls us to be part of his plan and purpose, just like Abraham, and we must respond in faith and embrace the journey into which he leads us. Perhaps, like Abraham, we must in turn lead others on this journey.

Later in this lesson we will look at the issues surrounding the process of change that results from seeking to achieve the vision.

What is a Vision?

There are many definitions of the word "vision" but in our context we are going to be quite down to earth. Amongst the possible definitions the Oxford English Dictionary has two that aptly described the kinds of vision that we will be considering:

"The ability to think about or plan the future with imagination or wisdom."

and

"A mental image of what the future will or could be like."

Thus a vision is statement of a desired future condition, an outcome that requires some effort to bring about. By inference this is different to the outcome we expect if things remain the same and effort is not expended. By implication if the vision is realised then there is benefit to be enjoyed.

What we are not talking about here are mystical visions.

Normally we tend to think of a vision as being something grand:

Richard Branson, Business magnate, entrepreneur and founder of the Virgin Group, has a vision of “making space accessible to all”, led by space tourism but also of offering the lowest cost commercial satellite launch facilities. This vision led to the creation of VirginGalactic – the operating company - and The Spaceship Company which develops and builds the launch vehicles. A big, world changing vision which initiated the journey to bring it to realisation.

However, as we see from the definitions, a vision is simply about a different future than would otherwise have been. Visions are not necessarily “Grand Plans” which change the whole world. For instance: The other day my wife wanted my son to have cake on his birthday. That was as much a vision according to the definition. It led to a far simpler and less expensive journey than Branson’s VirginGalactic adventure, but none the less a journey that resulted in the baking of a Victoria Sponge cake. It was about an outcome that required effort to realise.

In summary a vision is a view of a possible and desirable future. That future may be some grand scale thing but equally if you have ever envisaged some simple thing that isn’t now but could be, such as baking a cake, decorating a room, growing vegetables, then you have had a vision. The goal is then to bring that vision about and that is the journey.

A vision is the starting point of the journey, it’s a description of the destination. Conveying that vision to others, so that they want to embark on that journey and reach the destination is the process of envisioning. Having envisioned people to join the journey the leader’s job is then to guide them to the destination.

The journey to realise a vision is inherently about change. Its goal is change and in the real world those on the journey will encounter change. So, a key part of the leader’s role is to help those whom they lead to achieve their full potential in an environment that is implicitly about change.

Biblical Perspectives

Who’s Vision?

Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labour in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain.

Psalms 127:1

Psalms 127 stands amongst the wisdom of Solomon but at first glance the question is: “What has this to do with establishing a vision?”

Dig a little deeper and we see there are two objectives in view: One is that the city remains safe and in order to realise this vision watchmen have been appointed. The other is for a house of some sort.

There are various interpretations of what this house is, but the bottom line is that someone has vision of a building, possibly a home. They see it in their mind's eye, they plan it and they build it.

We see in this verse the desire to change the situation and bring about something that is different. Making the city safe and creating the house. As we've just seen, a desire to achieve benefits that don't exist now is as good a definition of a vision as you will get. A vision is about bringing about a change. It is the goal that leads to action. The actions implied by this verse are the planning and building process on the one hand and on the other, the selection, training and deployment of watchmen.

Solomon is telling us, that as a general principle, unless our activities, and hence our visions, are aligned with God then they will be in vain. According to the Oxford English Dictionary "vain" means that they will produce no result. Activities which arise only from man's ambitions and are not aligned to God are worthless, they will come to nothing. Solomon is telling us that our efforts may be a good attempt, but in God's view they are worthless because, not being in accord with his plans and purposes, he does not exercise his sovereign power to bring it about.

As members of God's Kingdom family, seeking to bring honour and glory to him this has massive implications. When we set out in search of a vision we need to turn to God and seek his vision for the need that concerns us. And when we seek to realise his vision we need to bring it about in his way.

Living in Two Realities

When the servant of the man of God rose early in the morning and went out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was all around the city. And the servant said, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?" He said, "Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." Then Elisha prayed and said, "O LORD, please open his eyes that he may see." So the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

2 Kings 6:15-17

This passage raises interesting questions, although at first you may wonder what it has to do with vision. The Leadership Bible notes on this passage explain how Elisha's servant had his eyes opened to see the "Reality" behind the "reality".

Small "r" reality is about how we normally perceive the world. In this mode the servant saw the Aramean/Syrian raiders surrounding the town of Dothan. Their goal was to capture Elisha. As you might reasonably expect he was somewhat concerned.

Elisha asked God to show his servant the big "R" Reality. God opened his eyes so that he saw the angelic army that surrounded Elisha and he understood why Elisha had said "Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." More in number and in power.

It's a bit like a reflection in a lake. The image is accurate and sometimes it can be hard to tell the reflection from the reality. But it's only two dimensional and is distorted by the ripples on the surface; it lacks the full substance of the real thing. The servant didn't see the fullness of Reality until

his eyes were opened. The raiders were still there but now he had a perspective that included God and his potential to act.

There was no battle because God, at Elisha's request struck the Aramean army blind. Elisha then led them to Samaria where they were given a feast and then returned to the King of Aram.

- **Take a Moment:**
 - What do the two realities represent?
 - In which reality was Abraham operating when he set out for Canaan- Big "R" or little "r"?
 - As a Christian leader in which reality do you actually operate?
 - What does it take to operate in the Big "R" reality?

We live daily in the reflection of the visible little "r" reality, it's the world around us. It's what we see about us and so often we think it is the totality of reality. However, what this story of Elisha's servant tells us is that this is not the totality of reality. It is visible and it is real but there is much more that is normally hidden from our view.

The big "R" reality is the all-encompassing perspective which includes the invisible God, it includes the realm of his Kingdom. It is the aspect of reality that normally remains hidden from our view but it's the realm of faith in God. It is real and because it's the realm where the Kingdom operates in fullness, it is more real than that which is visible to us. May be this was in Paul's mind when he wrote "*We walk by faith and not by sight*" 2 Corinthians 5:7. It always seems to me that Paul is encouraging us to operate in this world by God's sight and not our own.

Nehemiah's Vision

- **Take a Moment:**
 - Review Nehemiah 1:1 to 7:3 - you can skip chapter 5 if you wish;
 - Considering the "two realities" what do you learn about vision and the journey to achieve the envisaged destination?

Now it happened in the month of Chislev, in the twentieth year, as I was in Susa the citadel, that Hanani, one of my brothers, came with certain men from Judah. And I asked them concerning the Jews who escaped, who had survived the exile, and concerning Jerusalem. And they said to me, "The remnant there in the province who had survived the exile is in great trouble and shame. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates are destroyed by fire." Nehemiah's Prayer As soon as I heard these words I sat down and wept and mourned for days, and I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven.

.....In the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was before him, I took up the wine and gave it to the king.Then the king said to me, "What are you requesting?" So I prayed to the God of heaven. And I said to the king, "If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favour in your sight, that you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' graves, that I may rebuild it."

Nehemiah 1:1 – 2:5

Nehemiah operated in the world in the light of the Big “R” realities. He received news concerning the situation in Jerusalem (small “r” realities) and it grieved him so he sought God and in so doing demonstrated his perception of the big “R” realities. Over a period of perhaps 4 or 5 months (Chisleu to Nissan) God set in place a vision for Jerusalem in Nehemiah’s heart and led him to develop his plan. Then came the day and God favoured him before the King. Those who served the King were required to keep a happy disposition but King Artaxerxes saw Nehemiah’s grief and gave the opening. This was more dangerous than it seems as it was this King who had stopped the walls of Jerusalem being rebuilt. Hence Nehemiah’s fear. But God blessed Nehemiah’s request.

Here we see the big “R” reality at work as God established his plan which would therefore not be in vain. The source of Nehemiah’s vision and plans was God, therefore the labour in returning to Judah and rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem would not be in vain.

We see also that Nehemiah passed on his vision, God’s vision, to the people. This is summarised in Nehemiah 2: 17&18. But we know he was effective in this because of the commitment we see from the people. They had bought in to the vision and were committed to re-establishing Jerusalem. They chose to embark on a journey that had its destination defined by Nehemiah’s vision.

In the commentary on Hebrews 11:24-26 contained in The Leadership Bible’s we read:

To be a people whose vision for this life is compatible with God’s purposes, we must develop a passion for the things God calls important. Our faith must be characterised by ‘confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see’ (Hebrews 11:1) A Biblical vision is informed by the person and promises of God, which give us stability and focus – a stable perspective and clear direction in an earthly context of uncertainty and changing circumstance”

Words exactly true of Nehemiah.

A Vision of God Leads to a Vision from God

..... I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord. I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows. And I know that this man was caught up into paradise—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows—and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter.

2 Corinthians 12:1-4

Paul knew God intimately and these verses tell us how. The words “*he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter*” indicate clearly that God showed much to Paul, which is evident from his teaching, the testimony of his walk and his legacy. Paul was given insight into God’s grand vision and entrusted with his part in its realisation; to share the gospel especially to the gentiles. This, if you like, was Paul’s vision of God’s big “R” reality that was to be worked out in the small “r” reality of the world.

Paul's intimate knowledge of God led him to know his Kingdom vision and how to work it out in the world. As Christian leaders, we too need to know God well and receive his envisioning that, like Paul and Nehemiah, we may not labour in vain.

As we read of Paul's journey as an Apostle, we see that he engaged many people in sharing the Gospel to the gentiles. He passed on his vision that was God's vision and infected others with the desire to bring about that different future.

The Way of Wisdom

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

James 1:5-8

The impression given by the experiences of Elisha and Paul is that our vision of a different future can only be received via spectacularly supernatural means.

The specific detail of how Nehemiah's vision for Jerusalem emerged is missing. However, the text suggests that it arose by ordinary, rather than extraordinary, spiritual means. It would seem that God convicted his heart such that he grieved over the current situation in Jerusalem. Then prayer was the key. In prayer Nehemiah's vision of a Jerusalem with walls bringing glory to God was forged. God answered Nehemiah with clarity. The account suggests it could have taken months for the vision and plans to be formulated before God. Thus, Nehemiah was assured that his vision as God's vision and his plans and effort would not be in vain.

We see Nehemiah's clarity and detail when he responded to Artaxerxes question "What do you want?" This is a well thought out and, therefore we can assume, a well-researched plan. Nehemiah displayed great wisdom both in his approach to the King, which could have been considered treasonable, and the execution of the plan in Jerusalem. Even if God did not provide extraordinary insight as he did with Paul, God revealed his purpose and allowed to Nehemiah to exercise great God-given wisdom in formulating the vision and plan. Nehemiah exercised great faith in God which requires a clear view of his big "R" realities.

James tells us that undivided faith is the only condition of receiving God's promise of wisdom. Such faith is not tossed on the waves, forever turning. But is firm and unwavering, prepared to follow through on the exercise of that wisdom.

Reflections

- **Take a Moment:**
 - Review the things we have learned from the Bible passages at which we have been looking. What have you learned about vision?
 - List 5 things that you find helpful
 - What questions do you have about vision?

Learning the Way

So, from the perspective of serving God in the Kingdom, what can we learn from these considerations?

- Vision describes the destination of a journey; one which brings about a different, preferable future.
- We need God to be the builder. When he's not then things go wrong and the labour will be in vain and by implication our vision will also be in vain.
- Therefore, our vision needs to be aligned with God's vision. It needs to be inspired by him. We need to be on the journey on which God wants us to embark.
- Frequently the vision will emerge from God given wisdom, if we seek it and choose to operate in faith.
- God may reveal the end goal quickly, creating a conviction of his desired outcome as we saw with both Abraham and Paul. He may also bring about that view of the desired outcome through the extended anvil of prayer as with Nehemiah.
- We may be called like Nehemiah to plan the realisation of the vision in detail or like Abraham to walk in simple faithful obedience; one step at a time.
- Underpinning it all, we need to know that while we live in the small "r" reality of this world, God operates in the big "R" Reality which is not necessarily visible to us, but which is material in bringing about His desired outcomes and is, for us, in the realm of faith.
- Essential to this is the need to know God well and have a close relationship with him. Therefore, we need to test all that we devise against his nature and his will.
- We, need to be sure that our vision and plans are honouring to God and in keeping with character of Christ.

Vision Building

Ensure there is a Vision

In the **Leading Through Others** module we looked at the practices of an exemplary, Christ-centred servant leader and the needs that must be fulfilled for a team to be highly effective. Teams need to be aligned behind a common and shared purpose. It's what gives them a unified direction. This purpose describes the goal of the team and it is the embodiment of the vision which defined the team's destination.

Without a purpose, a vision of the future, the team cannot achieve because it is the thing that defines what "success" means for the team. It is what gives the team its point, its rationale for existence, for expending effort.

We observed that it is the leader's responsibility to ensure that there is a vision and purpose. They do not have to be the originator of the vision and purpose but they must make sure that there is one. They must also help the team members to adopt that vision and align to the purpose; to each own the common and shared vision and so embark upon the journey to the destination it defines.

This raises the question, "How do visions come about?"

We'll investigate this now by looking in two ways. One is a secular perspective set out by Kouzes and Posner which is instructive and then we will take a more Kingdom perspective which includes God.

The definitions of vision use phrases like "a different future", which taken in their broadest sense can infer huge revolutionary outcomes with earth shattering impact. Don't be put off by such phrases. Remember the story of the cake that my wife made. That started with a vision just like Google, VirginGalactic, the United Nations and many other globally significant things. Visions don't have to be vast in scope they can be limited and constrained too.

Envisioning the Future

In the Leading Teams with a Servant Heart lesson we looked at the leadership practices that Kouzes and Posner set out in their book "**The Leadership Challenge**". One of the practices was Inspiring a Shared Vision. This required two actions: First, imagine the possibilities and second, find a common purpose. We'll look at the second one later.

In the research work that underpins **The Leadership Challenge** Kouzes and Posner discovered that it's hard to describe the process by which a vision is formed. Their interviews of people showed no consistent way by which visions come about. Kouzes and Posner set out 4 tips that can be helpful to conceiving a vision. Because the future is not here and now a vision relies upon imagination. These tips suggest ways in which we can stimulate and feed our imagination. So adding some alliteration to the titles that Kouzes and Posner use:

Perceive your passion

Visions require conviction and passion because they are about things that matter. They derive from a conviction that the world would be a better place if only such and such can happen. The conviction that this issue really matters is what drives one's passion. That passion drives the determination to do something about it. If the issue doesn't matter then the vision will fade away and get nowhere.

Because the most powerful visions that become realised emerge from one's convictions, it is important to get in touch, and stay in touch, with one's passions. This becomes a filter through which the world is viewed.

For the Christian one would expect our most significant passions to emerge from our faith, from growing in the character of Christ and the consequent transformation of our minds and our thinking.

Ponder the past

Seldom do the things that matter to someone emerge overnight. They result from lifelong themes that colour how one thinks, scope the nature of one's preferences and concerns and define ones pleasures and enjoyments. These are fruitful and productive fields in which one's visions of the future can germinate, be nurtured and grow to bear fruit.

Therefore, review your past, identify these lifelong themes; drawing out the things that matter and imagine the better future that could emerge. Answer the question: What would it look like?

Probe the present

As issues arise opportunities emerge; opportunities to resolve the issues. The place where these issues coincide with one's passions and lifelong themes is fertile ground for the formulation of vision.

Keep abreast of the times so that you are alert to current issues. Reflect upon them to see if they create the opportunity for a different future. One that fits your life long themes and passions, new or old.

Another approach to probing the present is to listen to people. Organisationally, it's good for a leader to get out amongst those whom they lead. It's possible to learn things, especially if you listen to what people have to say. One of the practices we were introduced to in **The Effective Practices of a Servant Leader** was to **Challenge the Process**. The goal is to be better at what we do so that both we and the team can achieve our full potential. Talk with the team and understand what hinders them from achieving their goal or what would release them to achieve even more. After all it's your goal too. This means that you need to enquire, listen and seek understanding. Put into practice what you learned from the last module: **Communications: A core Competence for Servant Leaders**. From what you hear and understand may emerge the seed of the vision for the next step in growth.

Prospect the future

For many years I was a product manager for a vendor in the telecommunications industry. Part of my job was to identify the features we needed in our products in the future. Without fail, there were always 'impossible features' on the list because they were not feasible today. They were not discarded because technology changes so fast that what is impossible today may become feasible in the very near future. Sometimes it was regulation that changed and released us to do new things. So, we kept an eye on the requirements, the potential technologies and the regulations because in the fullness of time we would be able to build the feature. This meant we had to have a vision for our products that we always worked towards.

Maintaining a broad view of what in marketing terms is called PEST is key to developing products. (PEST stands for the Political, Economic, Social and Technological environment.) Similarly watching the changes that emerge in our fast changing world in these kinds of areas can stimulate the identification of new possibilities. These possibilities may enable the resolution of previously unresolvable issues as well as opening new horizons to do new things. They are the stuff of which visions are made.

Reflections

- **Take a Moment** (make some notes)
 - What are you passionate about?
 - What concerns you about the world that you would like to see different?
 - Briefly reflect upon your past
 - What lifelong themes can you identify?
 - What current issues concern you?
 - How do they fit with your passions and lifelong themes?
 - What emerging trends are you are aware of?
 - What possibilities do they suggest?

- Do these considerations suggest a different future that you can envision?
 - What would it look like if that difference was made?

Tuning-in to the Vision

We've just considered some steps we can take to manufacture a vision. Whilst this gives us excellent insight into the process, which should not be dismissed, it is a secular approach. Consequently the underlying principles, and likely outcomes, are contrary to the things we considered when we looked at Psalm 127:1.

Manufacturing the vision makes it ours and then we have to question if it's aligned with God's plans and purposes and whether he or we would be the builders?

The premise of **Growing the Servant Heart** is that we are working for the Kingdom of God. Therefore, we need to be aligned with God as we seek to serve him and he must be the builder. Even so, we still need that vision and purpose around which the team may be aligned. So how does it come about?

Challenge the Heart

The root of a vision is a challenge of some kind. In our Kingdom context, if we consider Abraham, Paul and Nehemiah,

we can see two broad avenues by which a vision emerges.

A call or conviction from God

We see with Abraham and Paul, amongst others, that God impressed his vision upon them through a call to service and obedience. They were convicted by God's vision in some form of direct challenge from him.

We saw earlier two important factors for Abraham. The promise that he would become a great nation and that God would bring that about, and that he had to leave Babylon and go where God directed. This he did with faith.

Developing awareness and concern

This is somewhat similar to Kouzes and Posner's suggestions that we look to our passions and our life-themes for inspiration. However, we see with Nehemiah that he became aware of the situation of Jerusalem. This convicted his heart due to the disgrace and dishonour that had been brought upon God because of Israel's disobedience. Although the explicit detail is not there, it seems clear from the text that he sought God's grace and mercy over a period of months. In prayer God wrought the vision of a repaired Jerusalem in his heart.

Nehemiah became aware of a situation and in prayer sought God for its resolution, thus his vision was forged by God. So, when we become aware of needs we can follow Nehemiah's example and work them before God in prayer, seeking his wisdom and insight, allowing him to develop the vision in us.

Bear in mind that the challenge we see will not necessarily be an issue that must be corrected in some way, but it may be an opportunity for something new. To that end, probing the present and prospecting the future can also be done prayerfully.

Clarify the opportunity

Thinking now more along the lines of an emerging vision where we become aware of a need and God burns that into our hearts, inspiring our response. The next step must be to explore the situation; to learn more about it, to clarify our understanding of the situation and need, and wrestle it into a coherent shape before God through prayer.

Given the clear plans that Nehemiah had, it would seem that he did this between the months of Kislev & Nissan. So during a period of four to six months Nehemiah's vision and plan was forged.

As our thoughts are clarified and the vision emerges, write it down. This will act as record and reminder. More importantly, writing the scope of the need down will test and refine the clarity of your thoughts, helping you see what you still need to understand. Refine the wording until it captures the need effectively.

This answers the question "What is the issue, need or challenge?"

Consider the outcome

Having clarified and formulated the need we must envisage the desired outcome. "What will things look like when the need is addressed?" This too needs to be developed in prayer and results in the vision: the statement of the desired, better future with regard to the need. It requires Spirit-led imagination and, in terms of Psalm 127 defines the house that God will build so that your labour is not in vain. Plainly we need to be careful to apply Godly principles to this process.

As you consider the desired outcome before God and the vision settles out, write it down. It has the same benefits as we discussed above.

This answers the question "What is the desired, preferable outcome?"

Craft the means

Having defined the vision in terms of need and desired outcome we now need to consider how to bring it about. Once more, like Nehemiah, this must be a God honouring and prayerful process.

In this step we are crafting the means by which the vision will be fulfilled. There may be a number of approaches that can be taken. Identify them all and follow God's leading about which one to take. The chosen approach will in turn out to define the purpose of one or more teams who are assembled to bring about the desired outcome.

In the context of Christ-centred servant leadership, the vision forms the higher purpose that is to be served by all the teams. The purpose statement for each team is the point of alignment for the teams. You could say it's their own specific vision but they will all contribute to the realisation of the full vision, the higher purpose.

Build on Sound Foundations

To ensure that God is the builder of the house upon which we work, and thus our labours are not in vain, the vision needs to be built on sound foundations.

Prayerful enquiry

The way we stay in touch with God's plans and purposes is through prayer. As the need is determined, the vision formulated and the approach developed we must remain in tune with God through listening prayer so that we might follow his directions.

Godly wisdom

God has given us minds to use but to use them well we need to be wise. That wisdom needs to be of God and not of the world. We were reminded earlier, that through James (Chapter 1), God promises to give wisdom to those who ask, provided we operate in faith.

Biblical principles

Underlying everything we do as Christians are the principles that God has set out in the Bible. All we think and plan needs to pass the test of conformance with God's Word. Are we living out Biblical principles with Christ's servant heart?

Big "R" Realities

Earlier we saw the difference between two realities. The small "r" reality in which we live and the Big "R" reality of our sovereign God. As we serve God in the small "r" reality of this world we are to keep in mind God's big "R" reality power. It's this that underpins faith and enables us to work towards things that otherwise seem unachievable in human terms.

Warning

The end does not justify the means.

In some situations teams, especially those whose members are not necessarily diverse in nature, can fall into a disastrous trap. They feel that they are called by God to the task or perhaps that some great injustice is to be made right. This can lead to the wrong belief that the end is so vitally important that it justifies any and every means of achieving it, even the unholy ones which bring God in to disrepute. If that happens our work will be in vain.

Teams need to monitor themselves against Biblical principles and avoid justifying unrighteous and sinful practices.

Engaging Others in the Vision

As we have just observed a team's reason for existence, its purpose, is its vision. In **Leading Teams with a Servant Heart** we discussed the fact that team members need to own the purpose of the team. It needs to be their purpose and this only happens when they are fully committed to it.

We recognised that the best way to achieve this ownership was to engage the team members in the formulation of their common purpose, their shared vision.

We saw that even where the purpose was delegated it was best to have the team at least refine its wording. This promotes ownership by the team.

An existing team has head start as some of the hurdles to adopting the vision have already been addressed. The team, if it's aspiring to be a high performance team in a Christ-centred servant leadership environment, will already have ideals, passions and convictions which are in common. They already know how to develop ideas together. Therefore, the leader can start with a less

complete expression of the vision, perhaps only the problem statement. The team as a whole then formulates the vision.

Where the purpose is delegated it may only represent one step in the realisation of the vision and not the whole vision. Other teams are asked to address different aspects of the challenge. If this is the case each team still needs to be inspired by the whole vision, it becomes their collective higher purpose.

Consider again for a moment VirginGalactic's vision of making space accessible to all. The realisation of that vision requires many things to happen. There needs to be investors, someone must design and build the spacecraft, someone else must attend to the launch aeroplane. Another team must run the company, another market the excursion into space and so on. There are many things required to fulfil the vision. Each team has its own purpose, its specific local vision. But every team has the same grand vision towards which they are working. When the first tourist goes into space in the VirginGalactic craft everyone will have contributed to the fulfilment of the vision to make space accessible. It needs multiple teams each with an individual purpose but one vision; unified by a shared higher purpose.

Envisioning Others

Where there is no team to start with people will need to be inspired to join the cause and form the team. This means that the vision must inspire them to join the team, even if the plan is to have them develop the final formulation of that vision.

When the team is established and working towards realising the vision, it's likely that other people will need to become involved as it works out into practical reality. Many of these people will also need to be inspired by the vision.

Inspiring others means that we must share the vision. Here are some tips to help with this process:

Convey the vision with clarity

The vision needs to provide a clear image of the desired future and the improvement that can be achieved. The recipients need to see it in their mind's eye. A key step in achieving this is to write down the vision and have trusted people review it. Refine it until it is crystal clear. Your aim is that others will grasp this crystal clear vision and be able to imagine the benefit, the gain, the improvement that can be achieved.

A clear vision will guide and empower others to make decisions without the need to always refer back for confirmation.

The opposite of clarity is confusion. No one will sign up to a confused vision and it will impeded progress in implementing the vision.

Convey the rallying point for shared convictions

Share the underlying reasons for the vision, the heart that is behind it. These that will resonate with people of a similar convictions and will perhaps capture the imagination of others too. From these will emerge the people who desire to bring the vision into being. They will rally to the cause; to be the team members and the supporters who come along side to help.

Don't be afraid to reveal your emotions because conviction leads to not just action but an emotional response too. Emotion conveyed by speaking from the heart demonstrates authenticity, that is "it really matters to me". People look for authenticity in a leader. When we looked at Leadership myths and realities in **Reflections on Leadership** we also saw that the idea that leaders were rational and unemotional was a myth. The best leaders also interact with their people at an emotional level.

Convey concrete ideas

A vision is concrete when people can see that it is real and substantial. It's not left in the realm of fancy but is feasible and achievable and the gain is worth the effort and the pain that may be involved in bringing it into being.

This means that the vision needs to have been sufficiently thought through. Answers need to be worked out for key questions. The first stage of realising a vision may be a feasibility study to work out the details, so all the questions don't need to be answered in the first instance, but a plan for getting the answers is required.

The goal is to enable others to grasp the substance of the vision and the fact that it could be made into a reality. Therefore, don't over-spiritualise the vision but equally don't be afraid of using symbolic language, stories and analogies to convey the essential ideas. Build the vision in the listener's imagination.

Convey the vision concisely

When we looked at Professor Wiio's laws of communication in the last lesson – **Communications: a Core Competence for Servant Leaders** – we learned that "the more we communicate the worse our communication fails". If we are long-winded and digress we will lose people and we provide more opportunities for our communication to fail to achieve our objectives. So in this case, less really is more.

We need to be concise about what we say. This does not necessarily mean being overly brief because brevity focuses on time and not content. If we are too brief we will leave important things unsaid. The Oxford English dictionary describes concise as "*giving a lot of information clearly and in a few words; brief but comprehensive*". Dr John Kotter of the Harvard Business School suggests that if you need more than 5 minutes to convey the essence of the vision then it's too complicated it needs to be refined. Why 5 minutes? You have to convey understanding to the listener and the more we say the less likely we are to achieve that goal. Refer to Professor Wiio's laws of communication.

You will have to go into detail at some point, just as Nehemiah did, but you don't have to share it all at once because it will confuse. You can always take questions or have a follow-up meeting with people who show interest.

Convey a compelling vision

We are not simply seeking to engage people's heads in the vision but their hearts too. We are seeking to inspire people to embark on the journey and this requires both conviction and commitment. It is a heart-driven commitment and conviction that will generate the energy needed to complete the task, especially when the going gets tough. In English we have a saying "When the going gets tough the tough get going." It's a good saying but I am not certain it's true. When it gets

tough it's the people who have the heart commitment to the cause that will get going and keep going. If their heart is not in it, then even the tough will fall by the wayside.

The vision needs to be compelling enough for others to catch it, own it and enthuse about it.

Confirming God's call through his provision

This comes last in the list, not because it's the least important factor in envisioning others but, because it's the foundation of the process in Kingdom work

God promises to exercise his grace and provide all that we need to do his work.

And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.

2 Corinthians 9:8

Although written in the context of the Corinthian's collection for the Christians in Judea this is a much more general promise than just about money. God will provide "all sufficiency in all things" in order that his people "may abound in every good work". This not only refers to money but people too, and indeed anything else we may need to complete his work.

Besides seeking to be faithful and obedient to God this is a primary reason for seeking to be in line with God's will. If we are not, we will have to provide and it becomes hard labour carried out in vain (Ps 127:1)

A good example is when God shared his vision of the Tabernacle with Moses and instructed him to build it, he also provided the skilled workmen who had the ability to turn the vision into the practical reality.

The LORD said to Moses, "See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship, to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze, in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, to work in every craft.

Exodus 31:1-5

God specifically provided Bezalel and Oholiab, to lead and direct, and all the craftsmen that were necessary. (Exodus 31). As we shall see later he also provide the gold, silver and jewels that would be needed for the Tabernacle (Exodus 12:33)

Therefore, when it comes to enlisting others in the vision we need to turn to the Lord to seek his provision of people. He may choose to make the connection directly, but he may choose to do it through our telling out the vision. So we must both pray and talk when we seek to envision others in a Kingdom work.

Seeking God's provision is vitally important as it is one of the ways that we keep in line with Psalm 127:1 and allow God to build the house so our labours are not in vain. If God does not provide the resources he is not building it. If he is not building the building we should not be labouring on it. God's provision demonstrates that it is his work.

Planning the Fulfilment of the Vision

In the next topics we will look at the strategies available to bring about change.

Achieving the outcome of the vision requires practical action. This means that the more general statements of the vision need to be broken down into the activities that will bring about the desired goals. This may mean identifying the need for a number of teams and determining their specific purposes.

How to achieve some of these steps may be obvious and easy, others may be more problematic. In the next lesson **The Servant Leaders Guide to Creative Solutions** we will look at approaches that can be taken to devise novel, innovative and practical solutions to challenges of all kinds.

A programme of work of some kind will also be required to bring the vision to reality. We won't look further at this in **Growing the Servant Heart** but recommend that you refer to a Claybury International's eBook "**Project Management for Christian Leaders**" which you can download free of charge via the following link <http://christian-leadership.org/shop/#PMfCL>

Reflections

- **Take a Moment**
 - Building a vision is not an everyday task.
 - Review what we have been considering and develop your own "crib sheet" to remind you of the steps in the process.
 - Discuss with your team the obstacles to achieving their purpose.
 - Using your crib-sheet as a guide, engage with them to develop a vision focused on minimising the impact of those obstacles.

- **Take a Moment**
 - Take time to consider these two questions:
 - Has God been speaking to you about a need?
 - Is there a need or opportunity that you can see that could be addressed?
 - Clarify the opportunity and consider the desired outcome and write it down.
 - How can you move through the steps we have discussed.
 - What's your next step?

A Biblical Case Study of Change

Aside from Creation one of the biggest and most significant processes of change we see in the Bible is the Exodus, the birth of Israel as a nation. Israel was in slavery in Egypt and God called them out to become his chosen nation in fulfilment of his promise to Abraham.

This topic briefly reviews the first 15 or 16 chapters of Exodus up to Israel's crossing the Red Sea. The goal is to see what we can learn from how God led 600,000 men plus women and children through this most significant process of change.

Reflection

This reflection may take a little time to complete so I couldn't really label it "Take Moment" but it's well worth the effort to see how God brought about change.

Read Exodus chapters 1 to 16 and as you do so fire up your curiosity, look for answers to the following questions and note them down for future reference. You will probably need to read the chapters twice; once to get an overview of what is going on and then once to take specific notes. We are after the big picture so it will be best to do this in one sitting.

As we will see later, these questions reflect some of the factors which are important in leading people through the process of change. Of course, this is exactly what God did in the Exodus and the subsequent establishment of the nation. So, unsurprisingly, there are things we can learn about change from God. Because the record of the Exodus is focussed on the important aspects of the story which are relevant to God's plan of redemption. From the perspective of our study there is missing information, but given our understanding of human nature we can reasonably surmise some of the missing detail.

- Why was there a need for a change in Israel's situation?
- What did God do to prepare Moses to be the agent of change?
- How did God make Moses credible as a leader of change?
- One man cannot do it all so who did Moses engage to help bring about change?
- What were the characteristics of the vision and how did Moses gain the buy-in of the people?
- Who else did the change affect and why did they need to change too?
- How was an urgency to bring about the change established?
- What obstacles to change were removed and how might they have prevented Israel from making the change?
- How were the people of Israel empowered to act to help bring about the change?
- What "wins" were achieved and what effect did they, or might they have had?
- How was the momentum maintained?
- What did God do to establish this change in the culture of Israel and why might this have been important?

In the next section of this topic we will consider these questions further, so if you prefer to complete this unaided then stop this topic here and come back to it later.

How God brought about change in Exodus

These are brief notes addressing the issues raised in the questions. As noted above, the book of Exodus was not written to be a manual on change and so some aspects of the story of change are missing. However, given that we have an understanding of how people are and can imagine the kind of things that would have had to happen, with care we can fill in some of the gaps.

The need for change

When we reflected upon Abraham at the beginning of this lesson we saw the establishment of God's plan in his promise to make Abraham a great nation. In Exodus 2:24 we see God recalling his covenant with Abraham and that it applied to the Israelites who had been incubated in Egypt and now were being oppressed. God recognised that now was the time for the next step.

Preparing Moses, the agent of change

Reviewing Moses' story we can see that he had a great deal of preparation for being God's agent of change and leading Israel out of Egypt towards become a nation.

He had been brought up and educated in the court of the Pharaoh until he was "grown up" (Exodus 2:10&11). In Acts 7:23 Stephen tells us that Moses was forty years old when he fled Egypt.

After he fled Egypt for Midian, Moses became Jethro's son-in-law and was responsible for Jethro's flock. Jethro was obviously a significantly wealthy man and so his flock must have been large. Thus Moses would not have been the sole shepherd but would have led a reasonable number of people who took care of the flock, some would have been tasked with looking after the group. We can also presume that the families of the stock man may have travelled with them. Moses would therefore have been concerned about their welfare as well as ensuring that the flock was well looked. This would have been a nomadic life style in which Moses became expert in the wilderness. In short he was equipped to lead a body of people through the wilderness.

Moses was eighty (Exodus 7:7) when God engaged him to lead Israel, so he would have had the wisdom of years.

God specifically briefed, envisioned and equipped Moses for his mission at the burning bush (Exodus 3:2-4:6).

Building Moses credibility

Moses credibility was established in at least three ways.

Moses' lineage (Exodus 6:14-25) and age (80 years) would have been important in the Israelites' patriarchal society. It made him at least of equivalent rank to the elders of the people. The people listened to him.

His age and his Egyptian background and status as a member of the Court enabled him to freely gain access to the Pharaoh and speak with him on equal terms on behalf of Israel. Had that not been the case he would have been dealt with by the Egyptians. Pharaoh listened to him. (e.g. Exodus 7:10, 15, 8:1 etc.)

The powerful signs that God had given him and their execution causing the plagues underpinned his credibility. God says "*See I have made you like God to Pharaoh*" (Exodus 7:1).

The result of all this was that Moses was considered "*to be great in the land of Egypt in the sight of the Pharaoh's servants and in the sight of the people*". (Exodus 11:3)

Engaging others to help lead the change

Moses did not believe that he could do all that God was asking, especially when it came to speaking, and so God provided Aaron to help him (Exodus 4:10-17)

Large scale change cannot be brought about by one man, it is impossible. Moses engaged with elders (Exodus 3:16, 18; 4:28, 12:21) and recruited them to the cause. The Israelites would only have engaged in the change if the elders endorsed it and were prepared to propagate the vision amongst the people. Undoubtedly there would have been some who would adopt the vision easily,

some who would need convincing and some who would reject it completely. Some would probably have nothing to do with Moses as an outsider.

The organisation and management of the people for the Passover and the actual exodus would require the elders and others to enable it to happen. Organising 600,000 men, plus women children, large herds and flocks, possessions and provisions (Exodus 12:37 & 38) would not be a trivial task and would not happen magically.

Establishing the vision

As we have just seen God had declared his vision by making his covenant with Abraham around 450 years previously. Now he conveyed it to Moses at the burning bush (Exodus 3:8) whose task included conveying it to the Israelites and the Egyptians. In this case the vision was God's, Moses did not have to devise it.

Gaining buy-in to the vision

God made the vision compelling and used visual language and metaphors to convey ideas that would otherwise be difficult to explain. He made it concise and capturing years and years of change to come in just a few words. He conveyed the idea and the promise of a better future: *"I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey"...*(Exodus 3:8) and that the Israelites would have favour in the sight of the Egyptians so they could plunder them without fighting (Exodus 3:21&22).

Moses gathered the elders and the people together and shared the compelling vision. The vision was made feasible by telling all the words that "God had spoken to Moses" and demonstrating the signs of power (Exodus 4:29-31), which illustrated God's ability to bring the vision about. The people were so overwhelmed by God's care for them and his promise to take them out from under their oppression and their affliction that they worshipped God. They became emotionally engaged.

Aaron may have been eloquent but God promised that the elders and people would listen to Moses. (Exodus 3: 18)

Overcoming complacency and establishing urgency

One of the big issues in effecting change is overcoming the inertia to keep things as they are. Once the change is in process this becomes a desire to return things to how they were. This is a natural response of people. Later on in this lesson we will see that in general a population can be grouped according to their attitude to change, and many people, for whatever reason, simply do not want change.

The book of Exodus records various occasions when the people wanted to return to Egypt. God was well aware of this challenge to the realisation of the vision. Once Egypt had been physically left behind the Israelites looked back to Egypt (16:3; Deuteronomy 1:27).

God was concerned that the Israelites would want to return to Egypt so he chose the wilderness route rather than by the Philistines (Exodus 13:17). Under threat from the Egyptian army at the Red Sea Moses reveals that while in Egypt some had declared a preference to remain under affliction in Egypt (Exodus 14:12).

The change would also affect the Egyptians in that they would lose a huge workforce and so they were not particularly interested in change either.

God built the situation up to a crisis that caused the Israelites to be ready to go and the Egyptians to be *“urgent with the people to send them out of the land in haste.”* (Exodus 12:32, 39).

We know from Exodus 7:13; 11:10 and Romans 9:14-18 that God hardened Pharaoh’s heart against the Israelites. We are not told precisely why, but we can be certain that God is loving and righteous, just and merciful, and so that it was necessary. What we can see is the outcome of the process of confrontations between Moses and Pharaoh through the plagues (Exodus chapters 5 and 7-13).

The Egyptians increased the burden upon the Israelites by making them find the straw they needed to make bricks, while still producing the same volumes. Thus the burden of affliction and oppression on the Israelites was increased so that they were ready and eager to go.

The final plague, the Passover (Exodus 11:1-10; 12:29-31) created a crisis in which forced the Egyptians hand, they were only too eager to expel the Israelites (Exodus 12:33). The Passover set an expectation and prepared the Israelites to go, perhaps fearful of God who worked such a terror on Egypt and who had protected them. Their complacency had been completely replaced with urgency, there was now nothing to do but leave.

A final crisis arose which forced the Israelites to take the final step, which was as irrevocable as birth, there was no going back. The Egyptians changed their minds and chased after them and we witness in Exodus the awesome and fearful events of the Red Sea crossing and the destruction of the Egyptian army. Despite the grumbling the Israelites were left with no choice but flee and end up with the sea between them and Egypt. The Angel of the Lord stood between them and the advancing Egyptians holding them at bay. The only way for Israel to go was on the dry land across the Red Sea.

It was God’s purpose not simply to free the Israelites but to do it in such a way that he was indisputably attributed with their great salvation not simply Moses, and that the people would cleave to him. The actual Exodus showed him to be their saviour (Deuteronomy 4:34 and many other references).

Removing obstacles to change

Often there are obstacles which stop even the most willing from being able to make the change. We see God dealing with some of these in the story of exodus. Most obvious is the obstruction of the Egyptians.

Other examples are:

They were also able to leave with flocks and herds (Exodus 12:38), presumably the milk provided drink and sustenance. How this came about or whose they were we are not told. Also, God made provision for food in the form of the unleavened bread from dough which they had prepared for the Passover (Exodus 12:39).

Organising this massive movement of people and flocks took organisation and Moses had engaged the elders who would have been the natural choice to manage this.

There will have been many of these which are details not recorded.

Empowering people to facilitate change

According to the Oxford English Dictionary “empowerment” is when *‘authority or power is given to someone to do something’*.

In the process of change people need to be empowered to do the things that are necessary to bring about that change. An example is the empowering the people to request silver, gold, jewellery and clothing from the Egyptians. (Exodus 11:2&3; 12:33)

Because of the size of the task, the elders of the people had to have been empowered to fulfil their part of the vision under Moses’ guidance otherwise it would have been impossible to move all of the Israelites and their flocks and herds. (Exodus 12:21)

Securing the change and maintaining momentum

There were victories on the way which have the effect of helping secure support and continued commitment for the change.

Each showing of one of the signs of power and the plagues demonstrated that God was at work, underwriting the vision and the plan. When Moses and Aaron first told the people and showed these signs they believed (Exodus 4:31) Although they didn’t change Pharaoh’s mind, his servants seemed to understand what was going on and their attitude would have given confidence to the Israelites. (Exodus 11:3)

The Passover brought a victory because it caused the Egyptians to expel the Israelites.

The angel of God in the Pillar held the Egyptian army at bay while the Red Sea was opened up for the Israelites to cross. This formed a significant victory which enabled the people to look back on the mighty deeds of God for the centuries to come as well as during the immediate aftermath. As did the destruction of the Egyptian army (Exodus 14).

These intermediate victories helped secure the process of change that was underway, the formation of God’s people into a nation. They heartened the people and Moses, building trust in God and demonstrating that change was feasible and realistic. They enabled the people to carry on, thus maintaining the momentum, without which the change process would have ground to halt. Later we see the momentum die away when the Israelites refuse to enter the Promised Land.

However, we must recognise that the people were fickle and frequently in the future they looked at their circumstance (small ‘r’ reality) rather than this awesome God (big ‘R’ Reality) who cared for them, forgetting what he had done.

Embedding change in the Israelite culture

Huge victories having been won, they were celebrated. We have the Song of Moses (Exodus 15) and after that Miriam led the women in celebration of the victory over Egypt and the liberation from oppression (Exodus 15 20&21).

The big actions were over but as we know, the people were fickle and found it easy to forget the changes that had been made and the promises that were still to be fulfilled. Promises which God had proven himself able to fulfil. So God sought to embed the change by instituting the Passover as a

celebration of the Exodus and all that this would mean. Thus the change was embedded in the Israelites' culture.

Principles of Change

Shortly we will look at some principles of leading change set out by Dr John Kotter, and we will see them reflect all of the key things that God did, both directly and through Moses, to bring about this massive change. This story of the Exodus provides an excellent Biblical case study of change.

The reason why Kotter's principles reflect this Biblical story so well is because of the common factor: people. God was dealing with real people and knew them inside out. Kotter has researched how real people react to change and what it takes to successfully establish change. Even then, Kotter recognises it is a difficult thing to do on the large scale. I think we can see that God, who chose not to impose himself on the Israelites, wanting them to respond willingly, had to deal with the same kinds of difficulties that Kotter observed.

Reflection

- **Take a Moment:**
 - Reflect upon the story of the Exodus and how God brought about change.
 - What are the key things that you have learned about change?
 - How might you be able to apply them?

The Servant Leader and Change

The Roots of Change

Reflection

- **Take a Moment**
 - Reflect on your personal history and list ten significant changes that have happened in your life.
 - What were they and why did they happen?
 - Were they successful?
 - How did you feel about each when it was happening?
 - Why were your positive experiences positive?
 - Why were your negative experience negative?
 - What can you learn about change from your experiences?
- **Take a Moment**
 - Review Nehemiah's experience.
 - What steps did he take to bring about the necessary change in Judah/Jerusalem?
 - How does that compare to your experience of change?

Change Initiators

As we observed earlier there seem to be three key initiators of change.

Circumstances

One thing that is constant in the world in which we live is change. It happens all the time all around us. Some external changes have no effect upon us, some have massive impacts. Sometimes we can see what is going on but on other occasions it can be more difficult to understand.

When external change impacts us we usually have to respond in some way with our own journey of change. We can try to hold our ground but often, when we do, we get knocked down. This is true both personally and organisationally. The real danger comes when, for whatever reason, we refuse to change when change is absolutely necessary. Such inertia can have devastating consequences.

As Christ-centred servant leaders our role is to lead others through such times.

Opportunities

Whilst a change in external circumstances may force change upon us, like it or not, sometimes we are the initiators of change. We see an opportunity and decide to take it. But in order to reap the rewards of the opportunity we must engage in a journey of change. To achieve the goal, the servant leader must collaboratively take his team with him on this journey as willing, committed volunteers. Even when the team willingly volunteers, it does not mean that the journey will be any less of a challenge.

Leading

In the context of the Kingdom, God is working out his plans and purposes and frequently engages Christians in that process. When this happens we often refer to being “called” to a role or task. Often, whatever is to be achieved can only be achieved with the help of others who must choose to embark on the journey. This journey is also one of change and can be every bit as challenging as any other. Again, the role of the Christ-centred servant is to lead others on that journey of change.

The Servant Leader’s Goal

As Christ-centred servant leaders we must keep in sight our primary goals:

- To enable others to achieve their full potential in God’s service.
- To live out in grace the servant character of Christ as we do so.

So leading change is not about the leader’s position and status but it is at least as much about others as it is about achieving the objective.

The Collaborative Journey

The Christ-centred servant leader seeks to develop and maintain high levels of collaboration amongst those whom he leads. This requires high levels of trust and results in team members being prepared to defer their personal goals and objectives in favour of those of the whole team. They recognise that when the team succeeds together they also succeed individually. Such levels of collaboration are essential to successfully negotiate a journey of change.

Engaging and Empowering Others

Such levels of collaboration require that all those who have embarked on the journey be aligned and committed to the goals of the journey. Such alignment is only achieved when the voyagers own the journey because have been involved in defining its purpose and end point, and are empowered to contribute. The Christ-centred servant leader works hard to include the wisdom of those whom are led and foster their complete ownership of the goal.

Leadership and Management

In **Reflections on Leadership** (part two of the first module – **The Jesus Model**) we examined the difference between management and leadership. We saw that management and leadership are not the same. The paradox we saw is that they are almost complete opposites but are both absolutely essential to an organisation.

Management is about maintaining course in a consistent manner with consistent results. It's about maintaining stability. Whereas leadership is about moving from one place to another – a journey - and so it is inherently about new things, about vision and change. Whereas management is about process and repeatability.

The Christ-centred servant leader's goal is to enable those whom are led to grow, to develop and mature and achieve their full potential. When this happens the organisation also reaps the benefits; who wouldn't want all of their staff achieving their full potential. However, this is inherently a journey of change and therefore leadership.

If management techniques are used to bring about change it will never happen because they are not about a vision and the subsequent journey of change. They are about stability and consistency which minimises change. Thus, if the guidance of a change programme is handed over to management approaches part way through the change process will be stifled. This because management is essentially about stability and consistency.

Both leadership and management approaches are required in a change process but the management approaches are employed to achieve specific goals not maintain the vision and guide the journey.

Emotional Intelligence and Change

The problem with change is that individuals respond differently. Some people are inherently change-averse, it's their character, while others seem to thrive on change.

The Christ-centred servant leader focusses on others and must relate to each person as an individual. In **Leading with Insight** we examined emotional intelligence, the skill of being aware of one's self and others. With such an awareness people are able to relate to individuals as individuals, on a personal level. Consequently the relationships can also achieve their potential.

When it comes to change it is clear that individuals behave differently. Some are crushed while some thrive but, in most cases of change no one should be left behind.

In his book "Change Directions" Dr David Cormack provides some insight. He observes four attitudes to change:

- The Radical Attitude

The Radical Attitude loves change so much that they would change everything to make it better. They love to pioneer change. By definition, if it's new and different it must be better. They see people with a Traditional Attitude (see below) as being reactionaries; that is they oppose progress.

- The Progressive Attitude

The Progressive Attitude likes the idea of pioneering change but prefers a slower pace of change. It considers that most things could be improved but not everything must change. They find change exciting as long as the risks are low.

- The Conservative Attitude

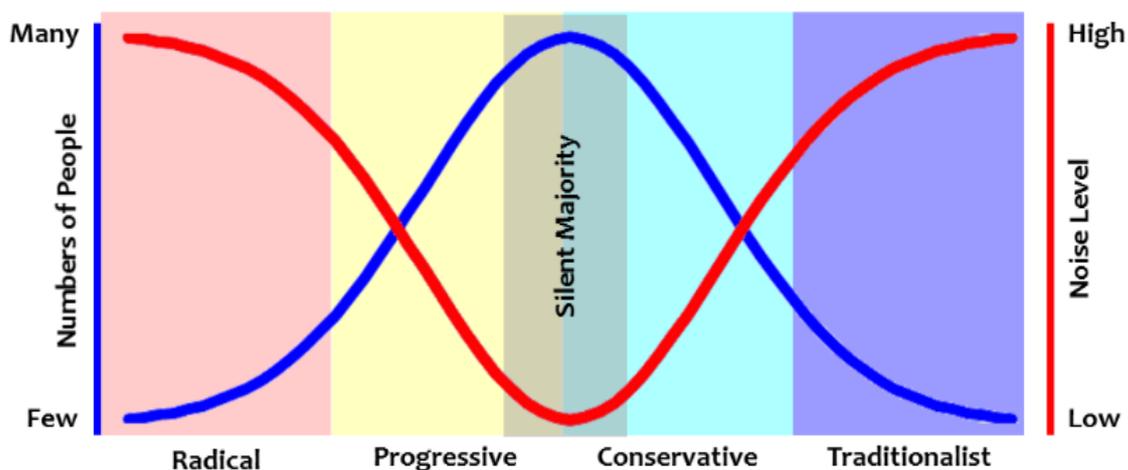
The Conservative Attitude is suspicious of the Radical and feels that most change is threatening. They concede that some things need some change to fine tune them.

- The Traditional Attitude

The Traditional Attitude sees all change as threatening and perceives the Radical as a dangerous revolutionary. Everything is OK apart from that which has just been changed. Let's go back to how it was before.

In any population there is a distribution of these attitudes as shown in the diagram. Cormack makes an interesting observation that the level of noise made by these groups, that is the volume of their support or complaint, seems to be inversely proportional to their numbers. There are fewer Radicals and Traditionalists, but they are the activists and make sure their voice is heard.

Figure: Distribution of Willingness to Change within a Population (David Cormack: Change Directions)



There is a silent majority whose attitudes are somewhere between the Progressive and the Conservative.

- The Progressive/Conservative Attitude (Silent Majority)

The people with this attitude understand the necessity for change and would encourage the Traditionalists to change and the Radicals to be cautious because not all change is good. Apart from this they are normally silent unlike the Radicals and Traditionalists.

The emotionally intelligent Christ-centred servant leader will be aware of the differences and will adopt an appropriate approach to each. After all it is quite obvious that treating individual Radicals and Traditionalists in the same way will not get very far.

The leader must recognise that the volume level from the Radicals and the Traditionalists is louder than that from the Progressive/Conservative silent majority. See the diagram. However, it is important that the silent majority are not overlooked and are enabled to buy-in to any change programme.

- **Take a Moment**
 - Which of the five types best describes your attitude to change?
 - Does it vary according to the issue?
 - Note down some specific examples.
 - How do you react to people of the other four attitude types?
 - Note down some specific examples.
 - As a Christ-centred servant leader, how do you think you should respond to each of the attitude types, including your own?

Eight Steps to Change

Introducing Kotter's Steps to Change

Dr John Kotter is considered to be one of most significant thought leaders regarding leadership and change in the world today. He is the Konosuke Matsushita Professor of Leadership, Emeritus at The Harvard Business School. His eight step model of leading change is well respected because it has proven to be effective in secular and Christian organisations. It provides significant insight into the process and issues that emerge when change is required.

As we work through Kotter's model you will see reflections of the things we discovered earlier in our consideration of Exodus. If you haven't completed that topic yet then it's worth doing.

The Eight Step Model

As we have been learning, change is both necessary and difficult to achieve. Many attempts at bringing about change fail. From practical experience Kotter has a deep understanding of the reasons for failure and thus has been able to identify how to address these pitfalls.

Although developed from a secular perspective, Kotter's eight step model is at the very least sympathetic to Christ-centred servant leadership. As such, Kotter's process for leading change concerns itself with people. Thus the basic issues are as true in Christian organisations as in the secular business world. As Christ-centred servant leaders, seeking to live out Christ's agape motivated servant heart, we will need to apply Godly Kingdom principles to Kotter's eight steps.

Kotter first described the eight step change model in his book **Leading Change** (Harvard Business School Press) which is recommended reading. You will find it very business orientated and focusing on major change. The principles can be easily extracted and applied appropriately to change in general. The examples provide good insight into people facing change.

Perhaps more helpful to us is “**Our Iceberg is Melting**” (Macmillan) co-written by Kotter and Holger Rathgeber. This is quick to read fable illustrating the eight steps. The fable involves a colony of penguins who discover that the iceberg, which has been their home for longer than penguin memory, is melting. They must find a new home before disaster strikes in the looming winter. It illustrates the issues that arise from the need to change and the application of Kotter’s eight steps. Because the purpose of a fable is to illustrate some principle it is perhaps easier for the Christian to start with this book and then fill out the detail from **Leading Change**.

The eight steps, which we look at in more detail are:

1. Create a sense of urgency
2. Build a guiding team
3. Develop the vision and strategy
4. Achieve buy-in
5. Empower action
6. Achieve quick wins
7. Don’t let Up
8. Make it secure in the Culture

Don’t Miss Out Any Steps

All the steps are vital. Experience shows that when steps are missed out, merged with other steps or left unfinished then the journey of change is seldom completed. This means that the vision and goals are never achieved. So, it is important to complete each step.

Complete the Process

Dependent upon the nature of the change it can take a long a time to complete and ensure that it will not unravel. Big changes can take years to accomplish. That requires considerable commitment, dedication, resilience and energy. The very rigours of the process can sap those qualities, fatigue sets in and everyone feels that being almost finished is near enough. Unless the change is completed and locked-in, experience shows that without exception it will always unravel.

In the middle of the 20th century Kurt Lewin proposed a 3 stage model of change:

Unfreeze

Lewin identified the need to mobilise people for change, overcoming our natural inertia and skilful procrastination. Kotter’s steps 1 to 3 map into this stage.

Transition

Having got people ready to move this is the stage where change happens. Lewin, like Kotter, recognised that change is not an event but a process that takes time and effort. Kotter’s steps 4 to 6, and possibly 7, map to this stage

Refreeze

Having achieved the adoption, or at least the initial adoption of the change, it is necessary to ensure that it becomes locked-in to “the way things are done around here”. You will recall from **Reflections on Leadership**, in the first module, that this is a definition of organisational culture.

When Lewin was working on change in the mid-20th century, change was slow and it was possible to refreeze the organisation so that the gains would not be lost. With the modern pace of change there may not be time to refreeze before the next change is needed. None-the-less, the change needs to be locked-in to make sure the gains are not lost. Unless compliance with the change is reinforced, the natural tendency of people is to relax back to “how things were”. This is why it is vitally important to complete all 8 steps of Kotter’s process.

Kotter’s steps 7 and 8 map into this stage.

Follow the Sequence

The sequence of Kotter’s steps is important because they track the way people react and respond to change as it is introduced and progresses. Experience has shown that when the steps are followed in sequence to the end, change can be successful. When steps are skipped more often than not the change programme fails.

It is worthy of note that people adopt change at different rates. Also wide reaching and multi-phase change programmes can be quite complex. Both factors mean that the steps are likely to overlap with one starting before another is finished. None-the-less maintaining the sequence with each constituency involved is important to success.

Step 1: Create a Sense of Urgency

Once the need for change has been identified the first task is to enable others to also see that change is necessary and that action needs to be taken straight away.

The deadly enemy of change is the icy grip of complacency, a myopic short sightedness that cannot, or will not, see the reality/Reality of the situation. A general acknowledgement that the change would be good may seem an excellent achievement. However, if it’s accompanied by the smothering embrace of a complacent attitude that says “Not now, tomorrow, next month next year will be fine.” Or, “It’s important but everything else I do is urgently needed.” Then it will never happen.

A sense of urgency is necessary to get it happening and a sense of urgency continues to be necessary to sustain the effort to completion. Without it, the process will never start and, if it does start, it will falter and any good work will be undone as the gains made so far unravel.

Change programmes normally need some people to make contributions beyond the call of duty and they also need significant levels of commitment and support from senior people. If it’s not perceived as urgent then neither will happen because normal business will take priority.

Causes of Complacency and how to address them

The causes of complacency include:

No obvious crisis

The lack of an obvious crisis suggest that things are going OK so there is no need to change anything.

The cynical approach is to create a crisis by allowing bad financial results to arise or problems to blow up instead of simply being fixed. There is an issue of integrity here and from the Christian perspective such an approach is highly dubious.

However, setting goals which cannot be achieved by a “business as usual” approach can have a similar effect, especially when they keep in sight the consequences of failure. For instance an aid organisation can focus on the impact of not achieving its aid targets.

Trappings of success

Long established and successful organisations frequently display the visible trappings of success. These tend to generate an “all-is-well-perspective” which breeds “happy talk” which reinforces complacency.

In charitable organisations, ostentatious trappings of success are unlikely but where there are things that generate a false sense of wellbeing they can be removed. This will give a message to executives and managers to look at things differently.

Low performance standards

The standards that are used to measure performance and define success are relatively low and easy to achieve. They give the illusion of success – but only an illusion.

Set challenging, change related goals that cascade through the organisations and cannot be met by “doing what we’ve always done.”

Focus on narrow functional goals

Personal goals and internal measurement systems are set on narrow functional targets not broad organisational performance. Consequently, no one’s work is seen to be directly related to the effectiveness of the whole organisation and only the Chief Exec is responsible for it. So everyone believes that things are OK.

Directly relate personal targets to organisational targets and share accountability.

Lack of external feedback on performance

Lack of comparative data with respect to the performance of other similar organisations or the need/opportunity in the sector in which the organisation operates. Thus, the organisation is unable to compare itself to the performance norms for its sector or best in class organisations. Thus everything seems to be going quite well.

Make everyone aware of the organisation’s performance against its key performance indicators. Especially include information comparing the organisation with others in the sector and best-in-class metrics.

Bad news not taken seriously

When “bad news” from outside is shared the messengers are not welcome because of the fear of hurting feelings, reducing morale or causing arguments. Thus honest discussion is suppressed.

Force management meetings to address real issues and bad news honestly. Potentially consultants can be helpful in forcing this.

Human nature

People are people and we don't like bad news, we like things as they are. We are not looking for more work and find life easier without problems. All of this generates inertia preventing us from getting excited about problems and opportunities.

Encourage more openness and honesty to enable discussion of issues and opportunities. Initiate activities to address some of the easy to fix issues to show what is possible.

“Happy talk”

When the awareness of problems and issues emerges “happy talk” lulls people back into a false sense of security: “We're doing well with the resources.” “Look at our achievements.”

Simply don't allow it.

Not Listening to God

Unlike the secular world, in the Kingdom context our goal is to serve God and conduct our efforts in accordance with his will. Christians can have a tendency to conservatism and traditionalism, which can blind us to the need to change even if it is urgent.

In Christian organisations we have one avenue that secular organisations do not. Prayerful reflection of situations and needs before God and the ability to listen to a God who speaks, enable us to gain insights and understandings not available to the world.

Remember:

Psalms 127:1 *“Unless the Lord build the house the builders labour in vain”* and;

James 1:5 *“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.”*

We have the ability to engage with God through listening prayer and seek his guidance in mobilising a genuine sense of urgency.

Reflection

In this section the “**Take a Moment**” exercises follow on with the intent of helping you think through the eight steps in a way that is relevant to your situation.

- **Take a Moment**
 - Take time to review your organisation against each of the issues listed
 - What observations can you make about your organisations?

- Is there anything that needs to be addressed?
- **Take a Moment**
 - Take time to review the situation of your organisation or team from the broader perspective of the sectors in which you are active.
 - Who are your external “best-in-class” models? How does your organisation compare?
 - Consider the full spectrum of needs in your sector or situation. How does the performance of your organisation stack up against them?
 - What do you learn about your organisation?
 - What do you learn about how your organisation measures its own performance?

Step 2: Build a Guiding Team

Complexity, speed and decision making

Consider for a moment the factors that affect decision making processes in today's environment and which force change to occur. They include:

- External change
- Global influences
- World events
- Legislation and regulation
- Organisation size and complexity
- Technology
- Social norms

The rate of change in each of these, and other, factors is accelerating and generating continuous waves of change; much like the waves of a stormy sea breaking on the shore.

When the pace of these factors was slow it was possible for a single person to make all the significant decisions in an organisation and drive the programmes which brought about change. For the last 3 or 4 decades we have seen an ever increasing rate of change. The pace and complexity is now such that, unless the organisation is small, it is not possible for one person to single-handedly bring about necessary organisational change.

As we have seen throughout the modules of **Growing the Servant Heart** that, even if it is possible for someone to monarch-like make all the decisions, this is not the best way to proceed. The Christ-centred servant leader will engage others in solving problems and planning the future. Such an approach benefits from collective wisdom and gains from increased levels of ownership.

Today, whichever way we look at things, change is best led by a team. In any organisation the gains made through participation are vital. In medium and larger organisations only a team can handle the volume, complexity and pace, and have the resilience to stay the course. No longer can one man succeed.

Assembling the Guiding Team

Quite simply, the role of the guiding team is to lead the process of bringing about the required change. Its purpose is to fulfil the vision, to bring about that preferred future. A successful guiding team needs certain attributes:

Management and Leadership

The team must fulfil both leadership and management roles.

The leaders in the team must guide the journey from start to finish empowering others to be able to fulfil their roles. They make mid-course corrections as necessary to overcome any obstacles and respond to new information and insight. Many change programmes take years to complete and in that time the forces of external change do not let up, therefore it is certain that mid-course corrections will be necessary.

The managers in the team keep the process under control. They make and monitor effective plans. Managers cannot lead a change process because they do not operate in the realm of vision. They are trained to maintain the process not change the process.

One of the ways that Kotter expresses the relationship between leaders and managers is as follows:

Leadership Produces	Vision	A feasible, appealing statement of the preferred future.
	which leads to Strategy	The manner in which the vision can be achieved.
Management Produces	which leads to Plans	The specifics of how strategies will be implemented.
	which leads to Budgets	The projected financial requirements and benefits.

Kotter (Leading Change)

Positional Power

Enough senior people and key players must be in the team in order to ensure that those who are not inclined to change cannot block progress.

Expertise and Diversity

In order to make good, informed decisions the team needs to include a sufficient diversity of people in terms of the factors involved e.g. disciplines, experience, expertise, nationality etc.

Credibility

The team requires enough people who have credibility within the organisation so that others will take note of the team's guidance.

Leadership

As already discussed leadership is essential to achieve change. Therefore the team must include enough proven leaders to lead the journey.

It may be necessary to bring in leaders from outside the organisation, promote people from within and encourage reluctant to leaders to fulfil their potential.

Building the Guiding Team

In the **Leading through Others** module we looked at the necessary characteristics of a leader and the leadership requirements of a team. You may wish to review these now.

Reflection

In this section the **“Take a Moment”** exercises follow on with the intent of helping you think through the eight steps in a way that is relevant to your situation. This exercise develops from the previous **“Take a Moment”**

- **Take a Moment**
 - Choose one of the issues you identified in the previous exercise that requires improvement of change in your team or organisation?
 - If you were to assemble a guiding team to bring about that change what specific qualities would need to be in evidence amongst the team members?
 - Who would you choose for the guiding team and why?

Step 3: Develop the Vision and Strategy

The earlier part of this lesson considered the nature of a vision and the process of its development and propagation.

Reflection

In this section the **“Take a Moment”** exercises follow on with the intent of helping you think through the eight steps in a way that is relevant to your situation. This exercise develops from the previous **“Take a Moment”**

- **Take a Moment**
 - What is your vision for the issue you previously identified? (Use your vision crib sheet to guide you.)
 - What steps would you take to refine that vision so that it met the criteria we previously discussed?

Step 4: Achieve Buy-In

Earlier in this lesson we considered the issue of sharing the vision so that others will catch it and buy-in. Additionally Kotter highlights the following when seeking to bring about change.

Frequent repetition - once is not enough

It is hard to grasp the implications of a vision that leads to significant change, even if it needs no more than 5 minutes to share. This is because change raises all sorts of questions at the personal level for each affected individual. They may react with concern or fear and hear only a negative message or they may be excited and not grasp the risks and the down sides.

People also forget. As memories become fuzzy the recollection of the vision itself changes, often into something sufficiently different to no longer be accurate.

Change programmes often take years to achieve and so time fades memories.

All of these reasons mean that the vision must be shared repeatedly and frequently. Once is not enough, half a dozen times is not enough nor twenty, nor one hundred. The vision needs to be continually repeated and reinforced throughout the duration of the change programme.

Many ways is better

We have seen in earlier modules that everyone has different preference when it comes to taking on new information. This is no less true for a vision. Similarly everyone has their own personal questions and concerns which need to be addressed before they can wholeheartedly sign up to the vision.

Also no single communication method is suitable for sharing the vision and the all of the consequent strategies, plans, implications and achievements. Nor will a single method reach everyone who is affected. Choose the communication method that is suited to each specific need.

Not every communication needs to be formal. There are many informal opportunities to talk about the vision. One suggestion made by Kotter is that each leader or manager commits to talk to four people each day about the vision and what it means in the context of their activities. This may only need a sentence or two. Asking a question such as “How does the vision affect what you need to do ...?” could be very effective. Such behaviour shows the vision is real, practical and to be applied; others will follow the lead.

These factors mean that a wide range of imaginative communication mechanisms need to be used to convey the vision and all that follows.

Walk the Talk

As we have discussed in **Reflections on Leadership** the loudest communication channel is behaviour. People do what their leaders do regardless of what they say. Therefore, the leader’s behaviour must change to match the declared vision and its strategies.

One way of achieving this is to deliberately include a consideration of the vision when solving problems and making decisions.

Where organisations have staff performance systems these need to be updated to be consistent with the vision and its goals, thus the vision will become embedded in performance reviews and associated guidance and coaching.

Sometimes operational inconsistencies arise where it is not feasible or financially sensible to align some things with the vision. This can be embarrassing and therefore may be swept under the carpet. This leads to behaviour that is perceived by others in the organisation as hypocritical and so undermines the objectives of the change programme. When such situations arise integrity demands that they are acknowledged and the reasons for the

situation be shared with the team and the organisation. E.g. explain what has happened, that it is not line with the vision and strategy but for this reason it is not feasible to address it at this time.

Listen lots

In **Communication: A Core Competency for Servant Leaders** we noted that effective listening was a key factor in enabling others to understand. Listening allows us to gain insight into the level of understanding that has been achieved by others. It also allows us to identify the blockages to understanding. Listening also enables us to understand the issues and concerns that block others' buy-in to a vision and strategy. Then they can be addressed.

Effective listening makes others partners in the enterprise and demonstrates that they are important and valued. All things which foster their voluntary buy-in.

Reflection

In this section the **"Take a Moment"** exercises follow on with the intent of helping you think through the eight steps in a way that is relevant to your situation. This exercise develops from the previous **"Take a Moment"**

- **Take a Moment**
 - As a Christ-centred servant leader, considering the vision that you outlined in the previous exercise, the guiding team that you would notionally assemble and the others who would be affected by the implied changes, how would you communicate the vision?
 - How would you express the vision in 5 minutes (remember the use of visual images, metaphors, analogies and examples)?
 - What would your communication strategy be?
 - What roles would the members of your notional guiding team take?

Step 5: Empower Action

Most change requires everyone who is on the journey to behave in ways that are different. In an organisation it's not just the guiding team who are on the journey but everyone who has a role in successfully reaching the destination. This broader base of people must be empowered to do the new things that are necessary to make the vision a reality.

Factors which impeded empowerment

There are various factors to consider:

The old way of working

In some cases of change the old way of working prevents the vision from being achieved. The organisation and its processes are structured in a way that prevents the necessary new way of working. Eventually, even the most enthusiastic advocate of the change will give it up

because it's just too hard if not impossible. The remedy? Organisational and process change. In such cases unless that happens the vision will be strangled at birth.

The old skills and behaviours

Change puts people into new situations and asks them to do new or different things. However. Unless they are equipped, old and inappropriate skills and behaviours will be applied remain. Jesus' comment about not putting new wine on old wine skins comes to mind. They split.

If change means that people need to behave differently and do new things they need to be appropriately and adequately trained and coached. If they don't know what is expected of them and they have not been shown how to do it then significant levels of conflict will emerge. The required change simply cannot and will not happen.

The training must be appropriate because it must address the transition from old to new. It must be adequate in that enough training must be provided at the right times. Training alone is insufficient, ongoing coaching is necessary to help people work out how to apply the training to the daily situations that they face.

The old systems and procedures

The new way of doing things will most likely NOT fit with the old ways and therefore the various old systems and procedures will strangle the change. They need to be changed to support the new way of doing things. This means that:

- Personal objectives and performance measurements need to reflect the vision not the old way.
- Remuneration and rewards must reflect the need for successful change not the old way of working
- Similarly promotion decisions and the hiring/firing process must reflect the new way and the process of transition.

Obstructive Supervisors

Obstructive supervisors have the ability to shut down all attempts to go with the vision on the part of their people. In larger organisations it's likely that some of the supervisors will fall into this category. A prayerful approach is necessary as is living out the Christ-centred servant character towards them. Honest dialogue is needed and often, because in many ways it is perceived to be confrontational it is avoided. However, the goal of the servant leaders is that others are enabled to achieve their full potential and obstructive supervisors are not living that out, nor are they achieving their own full potential.

Reflection

In this section the **"Take a Moment"** exercises follow on with the intent of helping you think through the eight steps in a way that is relevant to your situation. This exercise develops from the previous **"Take a Moment"**

- **Take a Moment**
 - For your team or organisation think through what systems, methods and processes would need to change.

- What are they?
- What changes are needed?
- How would an individual's personal objectives reflect the new vision and the need to change?

Step 6: Achieve Quick Wins

Big change programmes tend to work on long timescales. The longer the timescales the more external changes there are to knock the programme off course and make it seem less relevant. Also the longer the programme the more difficult it is to keep the journeys end, and its benefits in view. Fatigue sets in and people lose sight of the goals.

The benefits of quick wins

Therefore it is good practice to build in some short term wins on the way. They help keep people focused and encourage them to keep on the road. Because they:

- Demonstrate the effort is worth it, the change programme is showing results and the vision is realistic.
- Encourage the hearts of the leaders of the change and those who are working hard to bring it off. This in turn will revitalise them for the next stage.
- Provide feedback on the goals and the effectiveness of the changes allowing the vision and strategies to be fine-tuned.
- Make it difficult for vocal critics, and people resisting change, to block progress and it may even bring them round.
- Demonstrates progress which enables senior leaders and managers to have confidence in the process.
- Proves effectiveness of the programme by showing that it is on course and being successful, which builds up momentum for the next stage. It also enables those who are less favourably disposed to the change process to come on board and join the journey.

Making short term wins happen

Simply put, short term wins need to be planned into the change programme. Their value is too great for them to be left as a nice to have because they will become vain hopes. Planning them also enables them to provide feedback on the change process. If they are not planned it becomes hard to convincingly argue that they prove the validity of the vision and the process.

Having decided what the short term wins will be, making them happen becomes the remit of the managers included in the guiding team.

The number of short term wins needed is dependent upon the size and duration of the programme. The longer it is, the more the number of wins that should be planned, bearing in mind they need to make a real contribution to the end goal. In longer programme, seeing a first win in 6 to 18 months is a good target.

Reflection

In this section the “**Take a Moment**” exercises follow on with the intent of helping you think through the eight steps in a way that is relevant to your situation. This exercise develops from the previous “**Take a Moment**”

- **Take a Moment**
 - Given the vision that you have developed in this exercise:
 - What would be a good, progressive set of short term wins
 - Identify their goals.
 - What would they demonstrate?
 - How would you use them to encourage others?

Step 7: Don't Let Up

The down side of quick wins

Once the programme is running and quick wins begin, it is easy to think that the hardest part of the job is done and complacency can creep back in. Complacency results in less focus and effort and soon the programme stalls. It also provides opportunity for those who resist change to renew their efforts; they are now pushing something that is moving in their preferred direction. Beware of losing urgency by forgetting the vision and the challenges it is designed to address as the wins are celebrated. Repeat the message and maintain the pace.

The impact of organisational interdependence

Change programmes bump into real life. The issues that arise may seem insurmountable, like one of those number puzzles where the tiles are slid around the square in the hope of getting them in the right sequence. It becomes clear that issues are interdependent. So, just like moving one tile into place destroys the sequence of the rest, changing one area may affect several others.

Sometimes the desired change can only happen if a number of other changes are made at the same time, but each of those also affects even more parts of the organisation. Such problems can seem to bring the whole programme to a halt. The secret is to eliminate unnecessary interdependencies and so create more degrees of freedom. It's a bit like cracking open the number puzzle and reassembling it with the numbers in the right order. Bring good problem analysis and creative thinking to bear – see the next lesson.

Maintain the pace

At this stage it becomes important to keep up the pace, continue to reiterate the vision and celebrate the successes, work towards the next win and look at problems from a different perspective. In large change programmes bring the changes to more parts of the organisation. It is important to maintain the pace of change to consolidate the gains and avoid the organisation drifting back into old ways.

How can the increasing volume of work needed be sustained? This is where approaches proven by the quick wins can be rolled out and entrusted to the project management skills of others in the organisation.

Maintain the urgency

Senior people need to “keep their foot on the gas pedal” and maintain the necessary levels of urgency in the organisation and keep everyone’s common and shared purpose clearly visible.

Reflection

In this section the “**Take a Moment**” exercises follow on with the intent of helping you think through the eight steps in a way that is relevant to your situation. This exercise develops from the previous “**Take a Moment**”

- **Take a Moment**
 - Reflect upon the change programme that is emerging in this exercise.
 - Identify areas outside the scope of the change that may share some interdependencies forcing them to change too.
 - What are they?
 - How might you decouple their interdependence?

Step 8: Make it Secure in the Culture

You will recall that in **Reflections on Leadership** in **The Jesus Model** module we defined organisational culture as “How things are done around here”. We looked the nature of the culture with its visible and invisible elements and also at six leadership behaviours that embedded culture.

We observed that to bring about lasting change the invisible elements of culture need to change, but this is difficult to achieve because they are invisible. This means few people are aware of them and know what they are. However, new team members may well be able to identify them. This is considered in the book **Culture Craft** by Rick Sessoms and Colin Buckland.

A change programme may bring about visible change, but unless it results in changed culture it will not last. Once the formal change programme has been completed and the urgency is seemingly no longer necessary, the invisible elements of the culture will inexorably draw things back to how they were. This has been seen time and time again.

Sometimes it is necessary to replace the old culture entirely. Other times, where the old culture is not incompatible with the vision, new elements will be grafted into the existing culture.

So the last stage of change is to anchor the changes in the culture. This can be done by considering the six leadership practices we just referred to:

What the leader measures.

The leader needs to identify the measurable things that will highlight the way the changed organisation needs to work and make those measures visible. They need to explain why these are important and report on them regularly, taking action to keep them in the sweet spot. These messages need to cascade through the organisation.

How the leader responds to critical incidents

When critical incidents arise, crisis and the like, the leadership needs to respond in keeping with the desired cultural values. This will be visible and reinforces these values. If it is not possible for some reason then the leader needs to come clean. They need to explain to the whole organisation that

they are aware of the new values and why, on this occasion they regrettably cannot comply with them just now for such and such a reason. Provided of course, that the reasons are legitimate.

Such an approach shows that values are still in place the action will reinforce them.

What the leader models and teaches

Simply put, the leaders must visibly model the new way and not fall back into old habits. In this way they will personally show integrity and reinforce the message to everyone. Remember that those we lead do what we do not what we say. It is therefore, incumbent on leaders to teach others what it means to live in the new order and to demonstrate that with how they behave. They have to “walk the talk” of the new way.

The behaviours the leader rewards

Recognition, celebration and reward show what is truly valued. If the leaders continue to recognise, reward and celebrate the old behaviour it tells everyone that the old ways are how to behave. This undermines the new ways that emerged from the change programme; changes that have been hard won.

So recognition programmes and personal performance metrics and rewards must reinforce the new culture. This recognition is needed to embed the new ways brought about by the change into the culture.

How the leader allocates scarce resources

Simply put, the norm becomes to give resource priority to the change programme and maintaining its results. Sometimes this may not be possible, in which case the leader needs to come clean and explain why to everyone not just other leaders. This is because how resources are expended declares visibly what is important. Resources expended in a way that reinforces the old ways undermine the change and encourages its demise.

Who the leader hires, fires, promotes and retires

What is the message if the people who are hired and promoted exemplify the old way and those who are fired and retired are proponents of the new away? The old way is best, let’s go back to the old way.

Personnel movements must reinforce the new way of doing things otherwise the changes will unravel and the vision will be undermined.

What the leader communicates

Additionally, the leaders must carefully consider what and how they communicate regarding the change in culture. Frequent communication is essential to initiate and encourage the adoption of the new or revised culture. If the leadership remains silent at this stage they will allow the old culture to resume its dominance and the vision will be lost.

Reflection

In this section the “**Take a Moment**” exercises follow on with the intent of helping you think through the eight steps in a way that is relevant to your situation. This exercise develops from the previous “**Take a Moment**”

- **Take a Moment**

- Consider the culture of your organisation (you may want to refer to notes you made earlier in the programme)
- What elements of this current culture work against the vision for change you have devised for this exercise?
- What differences in culture would be needed to maintain the vision?
- What might you do to maintain that cultural change?

Summary and Conclusions

In this lesson we have been examining that kind of vision which defines the destination of journey, the achievement of something that is not yet, a more desirable future. The vision defines it and the journey brings it about. This kind of journey is implicitly about change because the vision is about bring about a change to the current situation. Establishing the vision, envisioning others to embark on the journey which brings it about what leadership is about.

When we talk about visions of this kind we normally assume that it's about something big, something grand but it need not be. A vision simply describes a different future and that can be as simple as making a cake.

From the Christian perspective any vision we develop needs to be firmly anchored in God's plans and purposes. It needs to keep his perspective of reality which, while it includes what we normally see, is far greater and broader because his work is normally invisible to us. We must be careful to make sure our work is not in vain because it must be God who builds the house.

Visions are important because from them the purpose of team is derived. Each associated team may have its own specific purpose but its higher purpose, held in common with the other teams, is the vision.

By understanding our passions and life-long themes, looking at present issues and discerning future developments we can define a vision for ourselves, without reference to God. But, in the Kingdom it's God's leading and call that is important. It's his vision for us, or our team that we need. We can work this through with God through prayerful enquiry, listening for his leading – his challenge to our hearts and seeking to deploy godly wisdom.

But the best, most effective visions will emerge when the team is included in their development and expression. This maximises ownership as well as benefiting from the collective wisdom arising from the team's diversity. The vision then needs to be conveyed to and caught by others so that they buy in and choose to embark upon the journey. This must be done with sensitivity because in any group of people there will be a range of reactions to any proposed vision, from enthusiastic agreement to the exact opposite - vehement disagreement.

It's important to lead all those who will be affected by the change programme to buy in to the vision. Because they cannot avoid the change that the vision implies it's important that they volunteer for the journey. Organisationally they will be required to participate in making it happen. That can be a long process and eight key steps have been identified. Examining the story of the Israelite Exodus from Egypt shows these factors at work. They are:

- Create a sense of urgency
- Build a guiding team
- Develop the vision and strategy
- Achieve buy-in
- Empower action
- Achieve quick wins
- Don't let Up
- Make it secure in the Culture

Bringing about the change necessary to bring about a vision is a challenging task for any leader. Success will not simply be measured by the outcome but also the degree to which the Christ-centred servant leader has, in the process, managed to live out a character conformed to Christ's sacrificial servant heart.

Action Plan

Review the exercises in which you considered the needs of your organisation or team. Can you identify a genuine need for change? If you can, determine your vision and plot out how you would bring it about. Remember visions can be about something relatively small, they don't have to be grand plans.

Prayerfully consider whether this vision is in line with God's plan and, if it is take it forward.

Further Study

Having completed the lesson take time to review the Exodus story and your findings about change. Do you now find more insights? What are they? If you have not completed that exercise for the first time it would be good to that now.

Review the rest of the book of Exodus looking for how God continues to lead the Israelites on their journey of change. Can you identify the characteristics of the change process?

If you have not yet read John Kotter's books do so. Especially the fable "Our Iceberg is Melting".

Next

Next comes the final lesson in this module and in the programme. **The Servant Leaders Guide to Creative Solutions.** God has made our minds marvellously. They work on patterns but in this the fallen world our minds get stuck in patterns of thought. We keep to the familiar and force fit new challenges to old ways of thinking. When it comes to developing visions, solving problems or grasping opportunities, we try the old ways again and again. When we do this the solutions we devise often fail to deliver the outcomes we desire. The next lesson will look at a range of thinking tools to help us identify new, original and innovative solutions so that we can find better visions, better solutions to problems and innovative approaches to opportunities.

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