

The Christian's Goal

A Christian leader ought to have a goal like that of the Apostle Paul:

"Therefore, we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be welling pleasing to Him" Corinthian 5:9.

Leroy Eims [Be a Motivational Leader, 80-81] shares three important reasons for setting goals:

1. The goal becomes the destination for pursuing direction in reaching it.
2. A goal ensures that it's not just a lot of feverish activity but purposeful movement toward a goal.
3. Accomplishment. How can you know whether you've accomplished if you have no real goal? "The goal gives you a measure of what you have done in achieving success.

The leader should not set goals arbitrarily. Goals must be:

- *Relevant* - they relate to church and community needs; their accomplishment makes a difference.
- *Reachable* - they can be accomplished. Unrealistic pipe dreams and setting of ridiculous goals are counterproductive and produce much frustration setting ridiculous goals might hinder folks from ever setting goals again.
- *Measurable* - there is time to accomplish them. Vague goals with no specific time frames have little effect. A system of accountability is necessary.

Visionary Planning

Visionary leaders understand the importance of planning. Leaders who fail to plan are planning to fail. "Proper prior planning prevents pitifully poor performance."

The right kind of planning helps to put feet to the vision that has been shared (and adopted).

God has a plan for His people: "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future" (Jer. 29:11 NIV).

If we will seek first God's kingdom, then all that we need to live and build His kingdom will be provided" (Matthew 6:33).

Peter Wagner [Strategies for Church Growth, 32-34] cites six advantages to planning:

1. It increases efficiency. God's resources of time, energy, and money are best used for good stewardship.
2. It permits midcourse corrections.
3. It unites the team with a singular plan and vision. Each member of the team understands his or her role in the vision.
4. It helps measure effectiveness. Progress is measured according to the plans.
5. It makes accountability natural.
6. It can become a model to help others.

Planning is important but one must always recognize God's sovereign leading in any plans one makes in this life: "In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps" (proverbs 16:9 NIV).

Once we know God's plan for us, we are then free to pursue His plan for action as we seek to accomplish His purpose. Practically applied, we follow the adage "Plan your work; work your plan. "

It can be frustrating to follow someone who makes elaborate plans but never gets beyond the planning stage. We want to follow a man or woman of action. It is idle to spend time in making and altering plans, and doing nothing else; the best plan for doing God's work is to do it

Managing and Leading

A difference exists between managing and leading. Managers provide the tools, methods, and personnel for a task. Leaders give vision, strategy, and inspiration

Putting a plan into action is costly. Questions to be asked include the full owing: Are you willing to pay the price? Are you willing to do whatever is necessary? Are you willing to sacrifice?

The key to a plan for action is seeking to grow God's church His way, not ours. It will take much discernment, much prayer, great discipline, and patience. But, in due time, we will reap the harvest if we faint not (do not lose heart).