

Vision Building by Peter Brierley, Hodder & Stoughton Publishers, Hachette, UK: 1989 (58 Quotes selected by Doug Nichols)

1. Imagination Extremely Important

A recent business report on the electronic industry in Britain said it was rapidly losing out to foreign competition. Why? 'It lacked visionary leadership.' Albert Einstein once wrote, 'Imagination is more important than knowledge.' (Roland Gribben, Business Editor, Daily Telegraph, July 21, 1988) [Page 16]

2. Follow a Vision for the Future

Speaking at a Labour Party Conference in Chesterfield, Neil Kinnock said, 'We have to choose between striving for a dream or only being a dreamer. Let us follow a vision for the future rather than a mirage of a past.' (BBC Television Report of Conference, June 11, 1988) [Page 17, 18]

3. Without Plans No Future

The future requires plans. Robert Schuller once wrote, 'If we do not plan for the future, we plan for no future.' (Robert Schuller, *Your Church has a Fantastic Future*, Regal, 1986) [Page 19]

4. God is Sovereign In Spite of Our Plans

The Will, Word and Work of God thus reflect the 'Trinity of God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit, whose key purpose is to further the Kingdom of God. Such overriding control and sovereignty is above all our searchings for vision, and desires for service. [Page 20]

5. Following God's Purpose

What is the reason for your organisation's existence? Ray Anderson put it like this: 'While each Christian organisation has a discrete purpose and mission of its own, it does not have a will of its own. Rather, these organisations exist to fulfill God's purpose in the world and to embody this Will in their own purposes and actions. (Tyne and Wear Christian Directory, edited David Longley & Mervyn Spearing, MARC Europe, 1986) [Pages 20, 21]

6. The End of Planning Is the Beginning of Doing

'Vision building is not dealing with future decisions,' says Peter Drucker, the guru of modern management thinking, 'but with the futurity of present decisions,' Dr. John R.

Mott, the visionary leader who, a hundred years ago, coined the phrase ‘Evangelise the world in this generation,’ once said, ‘The end of the planning is the beginning of the doing.’ [Page 25]

7. Vision Must Be Shareable

John Naisbitt, the author of *Megatrends*, writes, ‘Followers create leaders. Period.’ For leaders to be followed, their vision must be shareable. [Page 29]

8. Worldwide Visions

We must move from a narrow, individualistic vision to, if necessary, a world-wide vision. ‘For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son,’ John (3:16, NIV) tells us this. Michael Harper, founder of Sharing of Ministries Abroad, says ‘to be real (the vision) must be global!’ [Page 29 or 30]

9. Our God Is the God of the Impossible

Preaching at a European Christian service recently the Archbishop of Canterbury said, ‘As we need local loyalties so we also need to look beyond them to a wider world and a different future. Vision is a confidence of the infinite possibilities for the people of God - it is a refusal to be locked into fatalism and despair. A preacher in our islands at the beginning of the last century cried out in one of his sermons: “If anyone says war is inevitable, disease is inevitable, poverty is inevitable, I shout out: thank God that’s a lie; Jesus Christ lives and His Kingdom will come”. [Page 30]

10. Enthusiasm Needed

Where our vision is, our energy will follow. John Haggai in his book *Lead On* gives twelve characteristics of leadership and spends a whole chapter on energy. The American poet, Ralph Waldo Emerson, once wrote ‘Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm’. John Haggai would endorse this and go further. Nothing significant for God can ever be accomplished by a man or woman with a lackadaisical attitude. [Pages 30, 31]

11. We Trust God to Enable Us to Do His Bidding

A vision statement looks to the future, and will stretch us to do what we are not strong enough to do alone. We trust in God for guidance, help, endurance and His Spirit to empower us. [Page 32]

12. Visionaries Take Risks

Every visionary takes a risk. If you don't take risks, you won't be an influence upon the world. You can analyse your position, determine your strengths and weaknesses, your opportunities and tasks, but you cannot predict where all the threats will come from. [Page 33]

13. Move Forward in Faith Believing

The French novelist and dramatist, Andre Gide, once wrote, 'One doesn't discover new lands without consenting to lose sight of the shore for a very long time.' When Christopher Columbus sailed in his Santa Maria to search for a passage to the East Indies by sailing west, he went hoping to discover something new. He did - but not what he expected. Fancy finding a whole continent over there! Essentially he sailed in faith, and so must we in terms of our vision. [Pages 33, 34]

14. Vision Involves Faith

Bob Dunnett, Vice-Principal of Birmingham Bible Institute, put it this way, 'Vision is that pulsating of heart which believes in what we know and pursues eagerly its fulfillment. Vision involves faith. (*Redemption* magazine, September 1988, Page 9) [Page 34]

15. MLK's Speech, *I Have a Dream*

Martin Luther King's famous Washington speech concluded:

And so today I still have a dream. I have a dream that one day men will rise up and come to see that they are made to live together as brothers. I still have a dream this morning that one day every Negro in this country, every colored person in the world, will be judged on the basis of the content of his character rather than the color of his skin, and every man will respect the dignity and worth of human personality. [Pages 34, 35]

16. Long-term Strategies Help in Fulfilling Vision

Despite the pressures of short-term work, you also need to pursue long-term strategies and those who are so bound up with the present need to be released so that they can contemplate the future. Building a bit of the future into one's present-day work may add to your 'busy-ness' but it will also help to fulfill your vision. As John Naisbitt states in *Megatrends*, 'Long-range plans must replace short-term profit or our decline will be steeper still'. [Page 36]

17. Change Is Required to Have Vision

The computer giant IBM is known world-wide. The corporation is founded on three basic business beliefs: respect for the individual, service to the customer and the pursuit of excellence. In 1914, the founder of IBM, Thomas J. Watson Sr. said: 'We will change everything about our corporation. We will alter our terms and conditions, we will change our organisation and its products. We will change our policies. We will do whatever is necessary to keep our people challenged and motivated, to ensure that we have the money to invest in people, research and development, and to give our customers the best possible value. We will change everything except our beliefs.' Likewise our vision may require us to change almost everything in our personal lives, our church or our organisation if it is to be fulfilled. That is how Lee Iacocca turned around Chrysler, and Sir Michael Edwardes British Leyland. It is maybe what God requires of us. (Buck Rogers, *The IBM Way*, Guild Publishing, 1986, Page 117) [Pages 36, 37]

18. God Uses Broken Places

'The man who makes no mistakes does not usually make anything. God often speaks to us in 'the broken places', as Tom Sine puts it. (Edward Phelps, American lawyer, quoted in *Business Quotations*) (Tom Sine, *Why Settle for More and Miss the Best?*, Milton Keynes, Word Publishing, 1987, Page 153) [Page 37]

19. Need the Facts

To arrive at a vision you must know the relevant facts. [Page 39]

20. Need Information

Quantitative information can stimulate our praying, encourage us in our work, and give us firm facts on which to move. [Page 41]

21. Need Inspiration from God

It is easy to pour scorn on some facts, like the tale of a roadside merchant who was asked to explain how he could sell rabbit sandwiches so cheap. 'Well,' he explained, 'I have to put in some horsemeat too. But I mix them 50-50. One horse, one rabbit.' Professor Oliver Wendell Holmes, the American author who died in 1894, once wrote 'All fact-collectors, who have no aim beyond their facts, are one-storey men. "Two-storey men compare, reason, generalise, using the labours of the fact-collectors as well as their own. Three-storey men idealise, imagine, predict; their best illumination comes from above, through the skylight. (Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr., *The Poet at the Breakfast Table*) [Pages 41, 42]

22. Christianity Is Alive and Well in the World

Christianity is alive and well around the world. An estimated six million Christians join the church in Africa every year. Five thousand new congregations are planted every twelve months in Latin America. One hundred years ago there were few Christians in Korea. Today, an estimated 25% of South Korea is Christian, and 47% of the Armed Forces. Forty years ago in Singapore there were relatively few Christians; today 60% of the doctors and 40% of the teachers are Christian. Even twenty years ago who would have expected 20,000 missionaries from Third World countries be engaged in cross-cultural evangelism? (J. Oswald Sanders, 'Am I Ready?', *Decision* magazine, September 1988) [Page 43]

23. Increasing Urbanization

. . .there is increasing urbanization. Five per cent of the world lived in cities in 1880. By 1980 that had increased to 35% but such is the pace of the movement that by the year 2000 it is estimated that perhaps 70% of the world's population will be attached to an urban conurbation. Who can imagine a Mexico City of 32 million people? It is 19 million now, and almost choked to death with cars and air pollution. [Page 44]

24. A Great Number of Asians in the World

The world's population passed the five billion mark in July 1987 according to the American Population Crisis Committee, and is due to hit the six billion mark in the late 1990's, so that by the turn of the century the worldwide population will be approximately 6.2 billion. That means one billion more people in the world than at present. The weight of increase is accruing in South East Asia, so that by the year 2000 58% of the world's population will be Asian. [Pages 44, 45]

25. Visionaries Grasp Somewhat of God's Plans

Visions enable individual people to grasp something of God's over-arching plans for His kingdom in the human world and to take decisive action at critical points. [Page 82]

26. Visions Stronger Than Dreams

Visions are stronger than dreams, reflected in the title of Jacqueline Buskin's book (Pan, 1987), *Dreams Are Not Enough*. What then are some of the differences?

Dreams are:

Visions are:

Frequent	Had
Natural	Seen
Sometimes symbolic	Rare
Transient	Special
Remembered	Clear
Personal	Permanent
Often past or present oriented	Followed
Often preparation for action	For sharing
Often about imaginary events	Future oriented
Given to everybody	For action
	Predictions of real events
	Given to influence/leaders

27. In Scripture the Holy Spirit Is Linked with Visions

The link of the Spirit of the Lord with a vision to His servant is particularly prominent in Ezekiel, where the Scriptures record several occasions, ‘The Spirit lifted me up’ or ‘The Spirit of the Lord came upon me’. Joel also indicates that it is after the Lord has poured out ‘my Spirit on all people’ that ‘your young men will see visions’. And it was ‘while Peter was still thinking about the vision, (that) the Spirit’ spoke to him. All visions come through the power of the Holy Spirit. Without Him, nothing is given. (Ezekiel 3:12, 8:3, 11:1, 24, 43:5 for example, Ezekiel 11:5, Joel 2:28 and Acts 18:9 respectively). [Page 88]

28. Visions Are Never for Just an Individual

Visions are never given for an individual’s private benefit. [Page 94]

29. Visions Are Meant for God’s Kingdom to Move Forward

Visions always seek to help the Kingdom of God move forward. God never gives visions gratuitously. Visions are essential for direction, control and encouragement. But they are not generated by humankind, but rather are bestowed by God. [Page 97]

30. God Is Control of Events

Donald Bridge in his book *When Christians Doubt* (MARC, 1988) focuses on the experience of Job. Of all people, one could have expected Job to wither under the deluge of disasters that happened to him and his family. But he didn’t and the Biblical record shows how his faith stays firm most of the time. At the end God reveals Himself, and without answering the fundamental question of why He had allowed Job to suffer so much, gives Job a vision. Job’s response was ‘I spoke of things I did not understand. My ears had heard of you but **now my eyes have seen you**. This vision of God (a)

highlights Job's limited viewpoint as he is confined to one point of time and space, (b) reinforces that God is in control of all events however strange they may be, and (c) acknowledges the seen and the unseen, the explicable and the inexplicable, in every event. (Job 42:3,5; italics Brierly's) [Pages 99,100]

31. God Is the Universal Ruler

In Daniel's book, Nebuchadnezzar had a vivid dream which Daniel describes also as a vision. 'There is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come.' As Daniel then unfolds the meaning, the purpose of his explanation becomes clearer. It was to show the potential God-fearing King (a) the greatness of God's power, (b) the continuous nature of His rule, (c) the humble acknowledgement He requires of His Sovereignty, and (d) the justice of His ways. And what Daniel proclaims is ultimately borne out in the King's personal and trying experience until he acknowledges that God is the universal ruler. (Ezekiel 11:24,25; Daniel 2:28 and 4:32 respectively). [Page 102]

32. A Visionary Leader Shares His Vision with Others

Philip Greenslade in his book *Leadership* (Marshall Pickering, 1984) suggests that a leader with a clear vision gives to his people a true sense of destiny, brings coherence to their energies at work, needs endurance for the task to be done, and provides a community for his people. In other words a leader with a vision helps others to have the same. [Pages 108, 109]

33. A Biblical Vision Is Controlled by Character and Personality of the King

C.T. Studd's motto was, 'If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for him'. He came to this from reading the pages of Holy Writ. Any biblical vision will be controlled by two dimensions - the character of the kingdom and the personality of the king. [Page 109]

34. Have Faith in God to Do His Will

Luis Palau at the Columbian Conference in Latin America in 1987 said, 'Dream great dreams and pray great prayers'. William Carey, the father of modern missions, said: 'Attempt great things for God, expect great things from God'. [Page 111]

35. Need Clear Thinking

John Henry Jowell writes, 'Wise doing always begins in clear seeing. We should be more efficient in practice if we were more diligently assiduous in vision. Looking is a most needful part of our daily discipline'. [Page 112]

36. Experience Helps

Facts make you look at the world the way it is, not the way you wish it to be. Information gives you clues about how you might respond to the facts. Information, or knowing your business, is 'being able to bring to bear on a situation everything you have seen, felt, tasted and experienced. (H. Ross Perot, founder of Electronic Data Systems, quoted in Robert Waterman's *The Renewal Factor*, London, Bantam, 1988, Page 43) [Page 112]

37. Vision-Integrity-Presence

The letters VIP were given a new meaning in the October 1988 issue of *Decision* magazine. Billy Graham suggested that they might stand for Vision-Integrity-Presence. 'Having vision,' he said, 'is the quality of seeing what can be done, what ought to be done, and how to get it done.' [Page 120]

38. Christ Determines Who You Are and Who You Will Be

Committing yourself to the future is the most important thing you can do. As Tony Campolo puts it in a sermon title 'It's Friday, but Sunday's Coming' referring to the death and resurrection of Jesus. The essential you is determined by your parents, attitudes, experience or power, but who and what you will be is determined by Jesus Christ as we yield ourselves to Him. And He promises to do more than we can ever ask or think. [Page 122]

39. Need Ministers of Vision

The Manchester Guardian on July 3rd, 1938, urged the Prime Minister, Neville above personal rancour, because England needed 'Ministers of vision'. (William Manchester, *The Caged Lion*, London, Michael Joseph, 1988, Page 427) [Page 125]

40. We Lack Heroes

The cardiologist George Sheehan writes, 'Where have all the heroes gone? They've gone with the simplicities and the pieties and the easy answers of another era. Our lack of heroes is an indication of the maturity of our age.' [Page 125]

41. Lives of Great Men

... take the Longfellow verse 'Lives of great men all remind us we can make our lives sublime. And, departing, leave behind footprints on the sands of time'. [Page 125]

42. Don't Look Too Far Ahead

Churchill's timely warning, 'It is a mistake to look too far ahead. Only one link of the chain of destiny can be handled at a time.' [Page 126]

43. Commitment Produces Results

'It is commitment, not authority that produces results,' says Bill Gore. Mrs. Steve Shirley, the founder of Fl Group PLC, explains, 'If you are not committed, you are just taking up space (Advertisement in *Daily Telegraph*, March 16, 1989) [Page 131]

44. Need Obedience

Campbell Morgan of Westminster Chapel once said, 'Obedience is the one thing needful for further vision'. [Page 132]

45. Shadow Things Do Not Matter

... at the funeral of Martin Luther King on April 9th, 1968 a recording was played of part of a sermon he had preached just two months earlier. 'Yes, if you want to say that I was a drum major, say that I was a drum major for justice; say that I was a drum major for peace; I was a drum major for righteousness. And all of the other shallow things will not matter. I won't have the fine and luxurious things of life to leave behind. But I just want to leave a committed life behind. And that's all I want to say...

If I can help somebody as I pass along,
If I can cheer somebody with a word or song,
If I can show somebody he's travelling wrong,
then my living will not be in vain.
If I can do my duty as a Christian ought,
If I can bring salvation to a world once wrought,
If I can spread the message as my master taught,
then my living will not be in vain.'
[Page 133]

46. Study Haggai for a New Vision

For the leader who wants a new vision for the people, the actions are:

- 1) Heighten awareness of the **present situation** and discontent. Talk about them, preach them, write about them. (Haggai 1:6)
- 2) Point to specific actions that can be done now. (Haggai 1:8)

- 3) **Remind** the people of God's general purposes for His people and His creation. (Haggai 2:9)
 - 4) Remind the people of what **God has done** and can do. (Haggai 2:5,6)
 - 5) Push the horizons out. Ask a group to think about the **future** and what is happening in the world at large. (Haggai 2:22)
 - 6) Start the organisation praying for the future.
- [Page 161]

47. We Have Great Spiritual Resources

What is unique for Christian groups is the spiritual resources available to us. David Cornack summarizes these as:

- 1) The Word of God
- 2) The Will of God
- 3) The Wisdom of God
- 4) The Way of God
- 5) The Power of God
- 6) The Presence of the Holy Spirit

(Based closely on material in *Vision Building and Strategic Planning*, a MARC Europe Seminar hand-out originally written by Dr David Cormack) [Page 162]

48. A Vision Is an Expression of a Leader's Heart

The vision has to motivate people. The vision has to be an expression of the leader's heart. It has to be worked out in detail. We have to anticipate problems. Change can be expected. Communicating the vision well is critical. The strategy behind the vision needs to be articulated. [Page 163]

49. Be Part of the Solution

Eldridge Cleaver, the radical American author, once said, 'You're either part of the problem or part of the solution!' [Page 164]

50. Future, Strategy, and Inspired Team

Leadership requires a vision of the future, a strategy to achieve it, and a willing and inspired team. So believes Raymond Lewis, Chairman and Chief Executive of the Frazier-Nash Group Ltd, talking about leadership to the British Institute of Management.¹ John Naisbitt would agree. 'Once people experience ownership in a vision, the leader's job has only just begun,' he writes. 'His or her challenge is to

reinforce, refine and refocus the vision while supporting and inspiring the people aligned with it.’²

(¹ - British Institute of Management, ~ *News*, Autumn 1988; ²- John Naisbitt and Patricia Abundene, *Re-inventing the Corporation*, London, Guild Publishing, 1985, Page 28) [Page 173]

51. Organization Work Standards Needed

What are your working principles as an organisation? Write them down. Set them as the key motivators for all that you do.

It is not easy to write down such standards. World Vision held a Directors’ Conference in Australia in October 1988, one outcome of which was the affirmation of the following set of standards:

- 1) We are Christian.
- 2) We are committed to the poor.
- 3) We value people.
- 4) We are stewards.
- 5) We are partners.
- 6) We are action-oriented.

What are the standards or values to which a missionary organisation might work? In the discussions surrounding the formation of a new enterprise, it was felt crucial to identify those concepts which the organisation would be known for. These were:

- 1) Flexibility in its operations.
- 2) An active rather than a passive role towards the Christian scene.
- 3) Accountability at all levels.
- 4) Indigenous sensitivity.
- 5) A commitment to personal development among its members.

Such a listing is scriptural in principal. When Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem, and the walls had been rebuilt, he and the leaders made a series of promises (Chapter 10):

- 1) To keep marriage pure (v 30).
- 2) Not to purchase goods on the Sabbath (v 31).
- 3) To service the House of God (v 32).
- 4) To dedicate the first-born of their sons and cattle (v 36).
- 5) To give the Levites a tithe of their crops (v 37).

Outside the Edward Ward at Farnborough Hospital is a small notice proclaiming the ‘philosophy’ of the Ward. Drawn up by Sister L. Portman, it states that it aims:

- 1) To give a high standard of individualised care.
 - 2) To recognise the anxiety patients and relatives may feel.
 - 3) To give as much information as possible about pre- and post-operative care.
 - 4) To enable all specialists and others to work together as a team.
 - 5) To learn from each other, maintaining an atmosphere which is conducive to this.
- [Pages 177, 178]

52. Communication and Environment

Mr. G.J. Pearson in a useful book on strategy⁴ suggests that the leader of any company or organisation or group has two key responsibilities - **communication** and **environment**. (G.J. Pearson, *The Strategic Discount*, John Wiley & Sons, 1983)
[Page 178]

53. Lacking the Willingness to Change

Historian J.H. Elliott composed an epitaph to describe the decline of Imperial Spain during the seventeenth century:

Heirs to a society which had over-invested in empire, and surrounded by the increasingly shabby remnants of a dwindling inheritance, they could not bring themselves at the moment of crisis to surrender their memories and alter the antique pattern of their lives. At a time when the face of Europe was altering more rapidly than ever before, the country that had once been its leading power proved to be lacking the essential ingredient for survival - the willingness to change. (Robert Waterman, *The Renewal Factor*, London, Bantam, Pages 12-13) [Page 181]

54. Despite Difficulties Sight of the Goal Is Important

Dr. Samuel Zwemer, sometimes called the Apostle to the Muslims, wrote in his *Call to Prayer*: 'The Alpine climber who is trying to reach a summit can, on the upward path, scarcely see his goal except at certain fortunate moments. What he **does** see is the strong path that must be trodden, the rocks and precipices to be avoided, the unbending slopes that become even steeper. He feels the growing weakness, the solitude and the burden. And yet, the inspiration of the climber is the sight of the goal. Because of it, all the hardships of the journey count for naught.' He risked all for the sake of winning Muslims to Christ. (*The Frontiersman* newsletter, 1988, Page 6) [Page 186]

55. Take Risks

Lee Iacocca says 'If you take no risks, you do nothing. (Lee Iacocca, *Talking Straight*, Sidgwick and Jackson, 1988) [Page 186]

56. The Vision Needs to Be Spelt Out

The actual vision has to be spelt out so that all may see, hear and read. This is one of the key tasks of the senior leaders. How may a vision then be best communicated? Three broad rubrics are suggested below.

Simple Words

- 1) Write the vision initially in one sentence. This is your core vision concept.
- 2) Use words familiar to your audience.
- 3) Use clear, unambiguous words.
- 4) Use active and doing verbs rather than passive ones.
- 5) Be as short and crisp as possible.
- 6) State one idea at a time. Do not put two into one sentence.
- 7) Frame the statement in the positive.
- 8) State the particular not the general. Beware of abstractions.
- 9) You are aiming for a response. Therefore be specific.
- 10) Focus on the future not the past.

(See also Mrs. Elizabeth Gibson, *House Style Notes*, MARC Monograph No 7, 1986) [Pages 188-189]

57. Explanation, Not an Argument

Dale Carnegie once said, 'The best argument is that which seems merely an explanation.' [Page 193]

58. Without Vision, We Perish

Dag Hammarskjold, the Swedish Statesman and First Secretary-General of the United Nations wrote, 'Only he who keeps his eye fixed on the far horizon will find his right road.' 'Where there is no vision, the people perish' (Proverbs 29:18, AV) [Page 196]