

## Vision-Casting Vignettes

by Steve Smith

**Vignette** [vin-yet] - noun

1) a decorative design or small illustration used on the title page of a book or at the beginning or end of a chapter.

2) any small, pleasing picture or view.

3) a small, graceful literary sketch.<sup>1</sup>

We want to cast vision to believers about what God can do **in them** and **through them**. Vision casting must be repeated to your trainees again and again because it is so easy to get discouraged. Sometimes we need a whole sermon, Bible study or message on vision. But the majority of time we need something shorter, something easy to pass on: **a vignette**. As time goes by these vignettes will be passed on generation by generation.

***A vision casting vignette is a short, moving, easy-to-remember image, story or lesson that can be passed on generation by generation. It casts vision for what God can do IN and THROUGH believers, especially in regard to CPM.***

We have already shared a number of these vignettes with you in the book.

- Each of the kingdom kernels in Chapter 4 of the T4T book.
- A number of the stories that Ying shares in the sidebars of the book are actually used in casting vision.
- Any short case study can be an encouraging vignette: “God did it there [name and a few details]. He can do it here. You’ve heard many case study examples in the T4T book.

Essentially, any time we exhort believers to live out the high calling of the Scriptures, we are casting vision to them. When we share testimonies together of how God is working, we are building vision.

In this document are a number of additional vision-casting topics that can be easily translated into vision-casting vignettes you can adapt and use for your context. To save space, we will not include the entire vignette all of them word-for-word, but will give you the basic idea. You’ve heard some of them already, although you may not realize it.

### Ying’s Four Basic Vision Casting Vignettes

#### *Jesus’ Great Commission (usually during the first third of Session 1)*

In the first session with a group of new trainees, Ying usually shares this vignette with his group. Read Chapters 3 and 5 to review it.

#### *Heavenly Father’s Heart (usually during the first third Session 2)*

In the second session with a group of new trainees, Ying usually shares this vignette with the group. Read Chapter 3 to review it.

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<sup>1</sup> Dictionary.com Unabridged. Based on the Random House Dictionary, © Random House, Inc. 2010.

### *Holy Spirit's Power (usually during the first third Session 3 when people are getting discouraged)*

During the third session, when people are starting to get discouraged, Ying reminds his trainees of the importance of being filled with the Spirit continually. He shares with them an encouraging word based on the outline below.

#### BE FILLED DAILY – JN 14:12

- We do greater works – “Because H.S. comes”
- 3 ½ years apostles had Jesus but no power
- But at Pentecost, filled with the Holy Spirit – then they were bold
- → Do the works of Jesus
- We need the Spirit's power to fulfill our call: “Little Christ's”

Daily **PRAYER TIME** for Holy Spirit's power. Ask to be filled DAILY. **Pray in four ways . . .**

- JESUS' BLOOD TO PROTECT US. (See Chapter 20 for Ying's example in the sidebar)
- WEAR WHOLE ARMOR
- PRAY FOR THE GIFT YOU NEED (See Chapter 9 “Pray For What You Need And Take A Risk” sidebar)
- IN/FOR EVERYTHING GIVE THANKS! (See Chapter 17 “The Power of Thanksgiving to Change A Life” in the sidebar)

### *Four Calls*

A good vignette is the Four Calls that every believer should hear calling him to witness. Ying includes them as a whole lesson, but you can include as a vignette in the first third of your meeting. You can use them as a package (all four) or share one call each week. See Chapter 8 for the vignette.

### **Other Vignettes**

#### *Ready Harvest*

I already told you one vignette – the John 4 White Harvest:

In John 4:35, Jesus chided His disciples for missing the harvestable person (the woman at the well). They, too, had an excuse:

"Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest."

In all likelihood, the wheat fields that Jesus was pointing to were *green*. Each of the disciples knew it would take four more months of maturing before they would be ready to harvest. But Jesus used that physical analogy to describe a heart attitude of the disciples. While

Jesus sat at the well, tired and exhausted from traveling, whom did the disciples pass on the road to the Samaritan village of Sychar? In all likelihood, they pass the immoral woman that Jesus would witness to. They missed her, while Jesus found her. Their circumstances were identical. Twelve found a field unready for harvest while One found a field ready for harvest.

The same is true where we are. We can approach our fields *assuming* that it will take a certain number of months or years before people are ready to believe. Or we can believe that the fields are ready now. The Spirit has *already* prepared these fields for harvest. Let's go find them!

A variation on that is Matthew 9:

In Matthew we learn that as Jesus went through all the towns and villages, he taught in their synagogues, preached the good news of the kingdom and healed every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

God wants all people to know him and his love. That happens as believers go to the lost to share the good news. God is ready to move. He is waiting for us. He will also raise up more workers from the harvest we will reap. Let's take some time to pray asking that God would send more workers to lead people to know him.

### *The Spirit as Attacker and Teacher*

As I mentioned in Chapter 4, the Spirit is attacking the lost and teaching the saved – preparing fields that are ripe. Casting vision for the role of the Spirit can be very encouraging. Knowing that God is backing their actions should encourage those we train. You can share these at the same time or separately.

#### **Attacker – John 16:8**

The Holy Spirit is attacking people all around us!

*"And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment." John 16:8*

The word for "convict" literally means to accuse, interrogate, harass or even attack. It is used to describe lawyers attacking a person on the witness stand until he or she confesses guilt. Have you ever thought of the Spirit as an Attacker?

While you hear these words, the Spirit is out there all around your neighborhood, city or people group *attacking* lost people. He is showing them their sin. He is creating a desire for a different kind of righteousness. He is creating a longing to avoid the fear of death which is eternal judgment. *He* is the attacker, not we. He is tearing down the objections of their minds and hearts.

Many of us go about our witness assuming that we were the first to witness to someone. We weren't. The Spirit was there before us. Many of us assume we must pick up rocks before we can witness. We're wrong. We're never commanded to pick up rocks. That's the job of the Spirit – removing the obstacles of the hearts of people. Many of us assume it is our job to convict. It's not. There is only one Convictor.

Holy Spirit is already doing that all around us. Our job is to find the people the Spirit is attacking! How much easier! Have you ever been somewhere and smelled a coffee shop (while craving a cup of coffee)? What did you do next? You began sniffing and following the smell until you found your coffee shop.

In the same way, our job is not to tear down the obstacles of people's hearts, but rather to *sniff out* those that the Spirit is attacking. We find them through witnessing to them. And when we find these people of peace, they will eventually believe – usually sooner rather than later. Our job is to “sniff out” those that the Spirit is attacking. Let's go find them through witnessing to people and praying for their needs.

#### **Teacher – John 14:26**

*“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.” John 14:26*

*As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him. 1 John 2:27*

A second role of the Spirit is that He is a Helper or Teacher. He indwells every new believer is ready to help them or teach them all they need to know in following Jesus and fishing for men. We need to trust the Teacher to equip those we are training.

Paul the apostle is a good example of this. He is a good example of moving from place to place – sometimes in a place for days or weeks. Yet he left behind maturing, spreading, multiplying groups of believers. How? He trusted the Spirit to be their Teacher, not Paul (or Cephas or Apollos).

This does not mean that Paul did not teach. But his teaching taught new believers how to *listen* to the Spirit of God, apply His Word and grow in faith without Paul's continued presence. Paul returned when he could, wrote letters and sent colleagues to help. Nevertheless, it is astounding how the movements grew without Paul's bodily presence. But grow they did because they had learned to rely on the presence of the Spirit helping them.

God can do the same with our trainers, even when we are not with them. Let's train them, and then trust the Spirit to teach them the truth of it and convict them to obey it.

### *Follow & Fish*

The first words out of Jesus' mouth in Mark 1:15 were to “repent.” This means to change your whole way of thinking. Why? Because the kingdom of God had arrived. God's ways are so different from ours, we have to repent and change our whole way of thinking.

One way is how we view ourselves. God wants to start a discipleship revolution around us. He wants us to have a new understanding of how to follow him. The next words out of Jesus' mouth were in Mark 1:17:

*And Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men."*

Every disciple of Jesus is called to live out the universal double-sided call to **1) follow Jesus** and **2) fish for men** (Mark 1:17). Our love for their Master and desire to see His Name glorified in all the earth should inspire us to sacrificial commitment that transforms daily life and interpersonal relationships.

If you are a follower, you must obey the great command to love God with all that you are. This means obeying all of His commands. Are you willing to obey everything?

If you a fisher, it means you must love others as you love yourself, and live out God's mission of preaching the gospel to the whole world.

The whole purpose of history is to prepare a bride for Jesus. Will you be a part of this mission?

### *Lost & Saved*

I often combine this with the previous one (Follow & Fish).

Since everyone is called to follow Jesus and fish for men, we should realize there are only two kinds of people in the world: lost and saved. Lost people need to follow Jesus. Saved people need to learn to fish. Do you see only two types of people in the world?

When you see two types of people, then your daily interactions get much simpler:

- LOST = witness
- SAVED = train

If you meet a lost person, witness to him. If you meet a saved person, offer to train him. It can't get much easier than that!

### *The Call to Multiply Trainers*

In the book of Acts, we see how believers trained one another to be trainers of others. One of the first followers of Jesus was a man named Barnabas. We don't know how he heard the gospel, but perhaps directly from Jesus or one of the apostles. He found a new believer named Paul and encouraged him. He believed God could change Paul's life to make him into a great apostle in the church. Several years later, Paul was preaching the gospel in another province. He found a young man named Timothy who believed in Jesus. Paul believed that Timothy could be useful servant in God's kingdom even though he was a young Christian. Paul took Timothy with him to share the gospel in many places, later leaving him in one. At that time, Paul wrote to Timothy that he should train faithful men in his churches to find other younger Christians to train.

Here's how Paul said it:

*The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. 2 Timothy 2:2*

Jesus to Barnabas to Paul to Timothy to faithful men to other younger Christians. All Christians are called to train trainers who can train trainers to train others. In this way the gospel spreads rapidly!

### *The Story of the History of the Kingdom of God*

I shared this story with you in the prologue. You can easily adapt it for your context, especially if you are working cross-culturally. This story is **especially helpful** when a foreigner is trying to initiate work with national believers for the first time (first training meeting).

*You are probably wondering who I am and why I am here. That's a great question. And the answer is beautiful!*

*You see, in the beginning of the expansion of God's kingdom, the gospel was given to a group of people called the Jews. They were insiders who received this message and began to follow it. But Jesus commanded them to go to other people groups and nations and share the gospel until the whole earth knew about Jesus.*

*So, they went out to share with people who were different from them. The Jews, who had been insiders at home, now were outsiders to this new group they witnessed to. But they were obeying the great commission and the kingdom was spreading. Even though they look and sounded funny to this new people group, the gospel was received.*

*The great commission was received, also, and this new people group – the insiders – went to another people group or nation with the gospel. Now the insiders were outsiders to this new group. They looked and sounded funny, but they shared the gospel anyway to the new insiders. Finally this group of insiders repeated the process.*

*For the last two thousand years, this process has been repeated over and over. It's the story of history, and it's beautiful. Today it is fulfilled with you!*

*Look at me. My nose is big, my skin is light, and I talk funny. [Insert how you are different here, and poke fun at yourself!] I'm pretty funny looking and sounding. But don't you see? That's the beauty of the kingdom of God expanding around the world.*

*Today, I am here to pass on to you what I've received. You're the insiders and I'm the outsider. But one day soon, you will become the outsiders to a people group that has not heard the gospel yet. To them you will look and sound funny. But you'll go anyway because that's what God commands you to do.*

*That's the story of history of God's kingdom, and it's beautiful!*

### *A Whole Oikos Believes!*

In Acts 10, God told Peter, who was a Jew, to leave his village and go to people that were a little different from him in another town to share the good news. Peter was reluctant, but

obeyed God. When he got there, he found that God had already prepared a Roman army officer named Cornelius to hear the gospel. In fact, Cornelius was so excited he invited all his family and friends to hear the good news. There was a large crowd gathered waiting for Peter.

God prepared the group so well, that when Peter shared the good news with them, they all believed and were baptized! A whole network of family and friends decided to follow Jesus!

God is working powerfully around us. It may be that God will save a whole family or group of friends. When we share the gospel, let's encourage them to hear it all at one time, or perhaps share with the whole group over a period of days or weeks. Let's ask God to save the whole group and start a new church through them.

What groups is God telling you to go to? Are they are little different from you? That's okay.

### *A Whole Province Hears!*

Acts 19:10 tells the story that in one city where Paul started a church, they had a vision for sharing the gospel all over their province. They didn't just go to one town or village, but many towns and villages. Paul stayed in one place, but the new believers that he trained went to their families, business partners and other places to share the gospel. The new people they led to faith did the same thing.

God started such a movement that in two years time, every person in every village and city in the province had heard the Word of God! God can use us to share His love with our whole area. And He can do it in a short time!

Additionally, you can use the narrative expanded story of Ephesus from Chapter 9, pp. 165-167 to illustrate this.

### *Time Frame Vision*

A number of colleagues have used a time frame as an example of what God can do. One colleague used a T4T multiplication spreadsheet with some educated national partners. He input the number of believers in their three house churches into the spreadsheet. He showed them how it was possible to witness to everyone in their city of 700,000 in **59 ½ weeks**.

In a later assessment of this CPM, 3-4 years later, it was interesting to find many **new** believers who could quote the vision of 59 ½ weeks to reach their city, even though the 59 ½ weeks had long come and gone. The vision was implanted, and people believed that many could hear.

By the time the assessment was taken, our estimate was that 200-300,000 people in their city had heard the gospel. Remarkable.

My son was casting vision to some national believers from a Tibetan Buddhist stronghold. He cast vision to them in a similar way that I did in chapter 1 of the T4T book (3 ½ years example). He asked them how many villages there were in their country. He showed them a progression if they and every new church started a new church each six months. Ironically, in their scenario, just like with



the Ina, they could reach every town and village in 3 ½ years! The small band of trainees were so excited that a party broke out. This was a vision they could hold onto.

Helping your small band of believers see how fast it *can* happen can be inspiring. It doesn't usually happen that fast because the enemy opposes us, but it can ignite a movement.

### *Numeric Goal: Seed Churches*

Among the Ina we had broken down the 5000 churches we needed to plant among them into a manageable start. We used this numerical goal to cast vision.

Among the Ina, we didn't know where to start in seeing 5000 churches start. In an oppressive country closed to evangelists, it appeared impossible. But we began to examine our people group to see if there were natural ways the people related in ways beyond the local village. We discovered that all the villages traded goods and crops each week with only about 90 different "market towns." These were natural places of congregating in our people group. Suddenly our strategy became easier. We didn't have to start **5000 churches**, but only **90 churches** with a vision to reach everyone around them.

But this was still too overwhelming. However, we discovered that these 90 market towns were located within only **11 counties** in which commerce traveled between market towns. Suddenly, our strategy became even easier. All we had to do was start 11 different churches or groups of churches with a vision for reaching every market town in their county.

All we needed to start is 11 "seed churches" in 11 counties. Paul did the same thing in the Roman empire – he planted the seeds of a movement and then moved on to the next place.

After explaining this to a group of potential partners, I can ask this question.

- ***Would you be willing to start one? Will you start the seeds of a movement in a county? It may only take 2-3 months to get it started.***

### **Three-minute Vision-casting Example**

Here is an example of a story that I shared with potential national partners (neighboring Christians) in my country about reaching the Ina People Group. If I had the picture of the old woman with me, I would show them the picture also while sharing this with them.

*I recall the first time I went to an Ina village. They are an unreached minority group here in our country. I had only been here in this country one month before I travelled down to this village. I had never been in such a poor place before. As I walked down the muddy lane into the village, a man invited me into his hut. I walked into a dark, smoke-filled one-room hut and sat down on a small wooden stool. My host served me some tea and we began to "chat." I say "chat" but I mostly listened – without understanding – because I couldn't say much more than "hello" and "thank you!" I was just marveling that I was finally sitting in a*





*hut of the people group God had called us to – after so many years of preparing.*

*As I sat on my stool talking to my host, my eyes were repeatedly drawn to an old woman in the shadows in the corner of the room. She was as thin as a board, her eyes glazed over with glaucoma and she coughed continually – probably with tuberculosis. With trembling hands, she tried to find and string beads onto a thread to make some clothing beadwork to sell. There was something familiar about her, but I couldn't put my finger on it.*

*I continued my "conversation" with my host, but I kept glancing back at this old woman. Finally, after I finished my chat, I bid my host goodbye and left the hut. No sooner had I gotten outside the door than I sensed the Spirit speaking to me: "Steve, the reason you couldn't take your eyes off that old woman is that her face actually resembled your own grandmother, who just passed away!"*

*Suddenly, this people group of 1.4 million people got very personal to me. This could have been my grandmother. I knew my grandmother knew the Lord, but what about this woman? She was enslaved to demons and had never once heard the name of Jesus. Immediately desperation filled my heart: "Who can tell her, Lord? I don't have enough language to witness to her – probably won't even in a year. And in year, she will most likely be dead – in hell."*

*Brothers and sisters, I have no doubt that this woman died and went to hell. There was **no one** reaching out to her village or other villages like hers. There are 5000 villages filled with grandmothers, sons, sisters, mothers, grandchildren. And no one is sharing Jesus with them. But **you** speak the language. **You** could easily share with them.*

*Would you consider taking a short trip with me? This weekend on Friday night after work, we will get on a sleeper bus and ride down to the Ina areas. In the morning we will visit a village. We'll meet people, drink tea with them and pray for them. In the afternoon, we'll do the same. We'll just go to see the need and let God speak to us. Saturday night, we'll take another sleeper bus back here, and you'll be back in time for church. The whole trip will cost \$20 dollars. Will you go with me?*

At any time in working with the Ina, I was ready to share that, or something similar, and **call people to a commitment**. I wasn't asking them to make a huge step, just a baby step. Even today, when I share this story with others, it is difficult for me not to cry. I still hear the coughs of that old woman in my mind. Just like a voice of lost rich man called out from hell for someone to warn his family (Luke 16:27-28), I hear her call out in her coughs: "Who will go to my village and warn my family not to come to this place of torment?!"

### *Raising the Sails for the Wind of the Spirit*

In the old days, sailboats had no motors – they relied on the wind. When large sailing ships were becalmed, they went nowhere. One thing sailors did in times of calm was to take every square inch of sailcloth and hang it from as many masts and yard-arms as possible. *They could not make the wind blow, but they could be ready for the wind when it did blow.* Failing to put up the sails would mean they were going nowhere when the wind did blow.

The Spirit of God is described as a wind in John 3:8. We cannot make Him blow; He blows where He will. We cannot create movements, only the Spirit of God can. But we *can* posture ourselves, raise the sails of kingdom-oriented ministry, so that when He does blow, we are ready to move forward. Human-dependent programs are no sails at all. T4T is one process that is helping us raise the types of ministry sails that can move with the blowing of God's Spirit.

The good news is this: the Spirit of God is blowing everywhere! He waits for us to posture ourselves to move with Him. He is not blowing at the same velocity everywhere, but He is blowing.

Let's raise the sails!

These are a few vision-casting vignettes. You can share them when you first cast vision to a group of believers. You can use them during the first third of each T4T session. Cast vision continually for what God can do *in* and *through* believers.

### **Be a Doer, not just a Hearer!**

Write down how God has spoken to you and what you need to obey as a result: