

LOOKING AHEAD

Last year, I bought a small greenhouse to extend the growing season on some superhot peppers I'd nurtured all summer. As Fall rolled out, I began to think through what I wished to grow in 2021, especially varieties not grown locally. With the help of a few heritage garden catalogs, I found red okra, lettuce leaf basil, heirloom ground cherries and a few other exotics. I also enlisted the help of a few trusted greenhouse operators, connected with a local garden supplier, and worked backwards from fruit maturation dates. Last month, I planted many of those seeds, including some saved from the super hot peppers. As they germinate and reach for the sun, I've watered, heated and divided out the plants. And planning has now shifted to garden layout, tilling of chicken litter from last winter, ordering watering parts and scouting for canning lids.

If I wanted to, I could just put some plants in the ground and let them fight for survival. I'm no greenthumb, but I love a "fruit-full garden." So, it is necessary to plan, to have a vision of "what might be."

I have a *vision* of a full pantry and delicious fresh food.

I have a *mission* of planting, fertilizing, weeding, tending, harvesting, and preparing the harvest.

And I have *goals*, such as 100 quarts of tomatoes and 100 quarts of green beans, increasing sales of super hot peppers, and enjoying an abundance of okra. (Go ahead. Judge me. I love fresh fried okra.)

In the church, we experience a tension between "without a vision, the people perish (Prov. 29:18)" and "man has plans in his heart, but it's the Lord's purpose that prevails (Prov. 19:21)." We all know that tension of navigating strategic planning and God's surprises. Having spent 25 years in vision meetings within nonprofit work with arts and faith institutions, I can testify we also can spend countless hours and resources in the pursuit of words that don't translate into action.

But if we desire a fruitful life, business, or ministry, it's crucial to spend time on vision, mission, values, and goals. To clarify the the distinctions between these words, I offer these definitions.



Vision: The preferred future we desire to see brought about. "Close your eyes and dream."

Mission: The strategic focus needed to bring about this preferred future. "Mission is what you do."

Values: The non-negotiable ways conducted while pursuing the vision, mission and goals. "The character framework of how it all rolls out."

Goals: The measurables that demonstrate we are accomplishing what we set out to do. "Benchmarks that measure success."

Some individuals might object to the church's use of what feels like business language and methods. However, an examination of Jesus' ministry can give us some framework for our own visioning work.

Vision: Early in Old and New Testaments, God reveals His desire for everyone to love God and their neighbor, even their enemies. Jesus clarifies this preferred future as "Everyone contributes to making disciples of every tribe, tongue and nation (Matt. 28:19)."

Mission: Jesus goes on to speak of how the preferred future will be achieved via a focus on "baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age (Matt. 28:19-20)."

Values: Sometimes it's hard to separate out *Values* and *Goals*, such as the Ten Commandments handed to Moses (Exo. 20/ Deut. 5) or Paul's Fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5). I would argue values are about character and goals are products of that character lived out. Values are non-negotiable ways of living, rooted in Love of God and Neighbor.

Goals: Just as Jesus came in the first century as a Jewish rabbi, we are recipients of the Gospel within a specific context. There are ways that each of us and our churches are uniquely positioned to reach specific people with the life-saving, life-transforming Gospel. That means we must do the hard work of identifying areas of ministry and assessing progress. This where Jesus says "Ask and receive (Matt. 7)" and James says God loves to give wisdom when we ask for it (James 1).

One of greatest temptations for individuals or churches is to mistake the Vision or Mission for the Goals. If not careful, we can say we are about "reaching everyone everywhere all the time" and divide our *(next page)*

Registrations closing soon for RE*GEN 2021

*"And no one puts new wine into old wineskins.
For the wine would burst the wineskins,
and the wine and the skins would both be lost.
New wine calls for new wineskins."*

Our national Re*Gen 2021 biennial gathering will take place July 1-5, 2021 at Taylor University (Upland, IN). Worship with *Sing Love* and teachings will be held every morning and evening. Midday events include delegate sessions, seminars, learning labs, recreational activities, and more. **Registration closes June 1, 2021, so be sure to visit EvanaNetwork.org to sign up!**

We are especially excited to introduce our speaker, Hannah Gronowski, the Founder and CEO of *Generation Distinct*, and a preacher, speaker and author. For more on Hannah, visit hannahgronowski.com.



Our website also has updated details on lodging, arrangements for youth groups, COVID guidelines, and more. Please note that we will be constantly updating the COVID guidelines as the event approaches. Grant County (IN) Health Department will be meeting the week of the 17th, and Taylor will be considering local and national guidelines for universities. We appreciate your patience and flexibility as we work with them.

Re*Gen Main Session Themes & Speakers

Thursday PM – New Wine for New Wineskins
Matt Hamsher, *Evana Network*

Friday AM – Our Past: Captives to Sin/Old Wineskins
Hannah Gronowski, *Generation Distinct*

Friday PM – Our Past: Captives to Sin/Old Wineskins
Marvin Lorenzana, Eastern Mennonite Missions

Saturday AM – Our Present: Salvation in Christ
Hannah Gronowski, *Generation Distinct*

Saturday PM – Our Present: Salvation in Christ
Gil Michel, *That Church Downtown*

Sunday AM – Our Future: Freedom in Christ/New Wine
Hannah Gronowski, *Generation Distinct*

Sunday PM – Our Future: Freedom in Christ/New Wine
Tyler Hartford, *Evana Network*

Monday AM – Sent Out: Not Trading New Wineskins for Old Wineskins
Wes Furlong, *Evana Network*

LOOKING AHEAD (cont.)

resources and energies. When we try to do everything, we usually find it harder to accomplish anything. If we instead focus on the one hurting person in our life that keeps us awake at night or lean into a specific community-wide area of brokenness, we can more effectively measure the outcome and build on it.

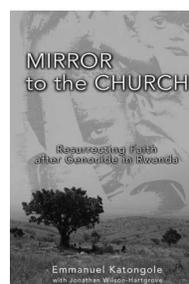
The process of getting developing vision, mission, values and goals is a wonderful opportunity to spend time in the Word and seek the Lord's wisdom. If you and your church need assistance identifying, clarifying, or implementing vision, mission, values, and goals, feel free to contact us. We'd love to talk with you about tools and resources for a bountiful harvest.

- Tyler Hartford, Director of Church Leadership

Reference Link: <https://ministryventures.org/an-effective-vision-and-mission-statement-for-your-ministry/>

The Book Pile

Jon Acuff has made his living out of motivating people. Several years ago, I was part of his focus group for Acuff's *"Start,"* based on a theory that most people just need to act on their dreams of writing, losing weight, starting a business, etc. That book led to *"Finish,"* based on the discovery that many have no problem starting things, but rather finishing. His newest text is goes even deeper into the roots of what derails starting or finishing. *"Soundtracks: The Surprising Solution to Overthinking"* explores how overthinking is the sneakiest form of fear. It steals time, creativity and goals as we worry, doubt and spin our wheels.



"Mirror to the Church: Resurrecting Faith after Genocide in Rwanda" is currently on the top of my pile. Genocide survivor and Catholic leader Emmanuel Katongole explores how a nation held up as a model of evangelism descended into sectarian violence. After 100 days of conflict with thousands dead, Rwandan Christians on both sides had to decide

whether to reach across the divide. Using personal testimonies of Christian forgiveness, Katongole speaks of a global Christianity, of people who live in a new identity that transcends the world's tribal categories. Ultimately, evangelism and discipleship go together because God's love in us necessarily results in our love for one another (1 John 4:7-12). Fitting texts for polarizing times.

What are you reading? Email Tyler@EvanaNetwork.org.

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