

God's Vision Frame

If you're a friend of Auxano, you are likely well versed in the **Church Unique Vision Frame**. Its five components define every church's DNA and create a platform for all vision casting.

1. **Mission** – a clear and concise statement that describes what the church is ultimately supposed to be doing
2. **Values** – shared convictions that guide the actions and reveal the strengths of the church
3. **Strategy** – the process or picture that demonstrates how the church will accomplish its mission at the broadest level
4. **Measures** – a set of attributes in an individual's life that reflect accomplishment of the church's mandate.
5. **Vision Proper** – the living language that anticipates and illustrates God's better intermediate future for the church

This same tool that gives churches clarity for their mission is also helpful for understanding God's unfolding plan of redemption for His created world. But whereas a church's Vision Frame uses different words and phrases to possess and communicate clarity for a given period of time, **God's Vision Frame has only one phrase for each component for all of time: the Cross**. God's mission is the Cross. God's value is the Cross. His strategy is the Cross. The Cross defines the attributes or qualities of His followers, and nothing illustrates the future God has for His people better than the Cross.

From the beginning, Scripture tells the story of the Cross. The tree of life, the serpent's fatal wound, and the shedding of blood to provide covering for Adam and Eve are among the earliest references (Genesis 1-3). Abraham's ceremonial covenant (Genesis 15), the provision of a substitute for Isaac (Genesis 22), the Passover in Egypt (Exodus 12), the bronze serpent with Moses (Numbers 21) and many other narratives shed even more light on the coming Cross of Christ, to say nothing of prophecies like that of Isaiah's Suffering Servant (i.e., Isaiah 53).

Given the centrality of the Cross in the Old Testament, we are not surprised to see that same focus throughout the New Testament. Though the Gospel writers differ in their approach, the core of their message is the same: "that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, be killed, and rise after three days" (Mark 8:31, HCSB). Combined, the gospel writers record nearly 20 allusions or direct statements about the Cross.

Because the Cross is central to the gospel, the stories that tell of its spread, along with the letters and sermons that make up the bulk of the New Testament, all keep the Cross central. The very thing that one would think would diminish Jesus' credibility (a violent, grotesque, and shameful public execution) was the very thing Peter, Stephen, Paul, and many others preached and wrote about prolifically, either as evangelists to the lost or as encouragers to the struggling faithful.

- Throughout the narrative of Scripture, we see God's clear mission: the Cross.
- Throughout the narrative of Scripture, we see a conviction toward one thing: the Cross.
- Throughout the narrative of Scripture, we see all things revolving around one thing: the Cross.
- Throughout the narrative of Scripture, all of our behaviors and qualities are measured against one thing: the Cross.
- Throughout the narrative of Scripture, we see that God has nothing better for us than giving us Himself through one thing: the Cross.

So the Church Unique Vision Frame is not only a powerful way of understanding your church's mission, but also a helpful tool for understanding God's unfolding plan of redemption for His created world. This is because any biblical church's Vision Frame is always operating under the premise of God's Vision Frame. **Whatever our mission, values, strategy, measures, and vision proper may be, they will always be subservient to the Cross.**

It is one thing to know this, yet it is another to effectively communicate it to the church you serve. To that end, here are three simple but effective ways to ensure the church you serve is operating according to its Vision Frame within the greater context of God's Vision Frame.

1. **Preach the language.** Pulpits, lecterns, music stands, and high-top tables will always rank highly among the most effective means of communication, but all too rarely do preachers and teachers use God's Vision and the church's Vision Frame to frame their messages. Embrace that weekly teaching time to show how your unique vision relates to God's sole mission.
2. **Live the language.** The apostle Paul unequivocally states that we are transformed by the renewing of our minds (Rom. 12:2). Too often we assume that mind renewal occurs in a classroom, when the reality is that much of our transformation takes place as we experience and share what we are learning. Use the evangelistic and missional experiences you and your people have as a means of connecting them to your Vision Frame and God's Vision Frame.
3. **Study the language.** An often overlooked yet powerful opportunity for reinforcing the church's and God's Vision Frame into the congregation is through a regular small group gathering for fellowship and Bible study. The problem is that these groups are often dependent upon volunteer leaders, people who often do not know the Vision Frames to the same degree as the church staff. That's why we recommend smallgroup.com, a custom Bible study tool that gives you and your group leaders access to a vast and growing library of studies you can customize for your group. With smallgroup.com, you can incorporate the language of your Vision Frame and God's Vision Frame into the fabric of every study your groups complete. Group leaders can be quickly and easily equipped with a study that truly speaks the language of your church and more deeply imbeds your core values into its people.

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How will you go about infusing this truth into the people you serve?

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