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Some leaders believe that if they fill people's vision buckets all the way to the top one time, those buckets will stay full forever. But the truth is, people's buckets have holes of varying sizes in their bottoms. As a result, vision leaks out. You or I could deliver a mind-blowing, God-honoring, pulse-quickenning vision talk on Sunday that leaves everyone revved up to go change the world, but by Tuesday, many people have forgotten they were even in church the previous weekend. Unbelievable, huh?

Something I have to remind myself of constantly is that people in our churches have *real lives*. You heard it here—engagements *other than* church. They have challenging jobs, children to raise, lawns to mow, and bills to pay. Because of all these daily responsibilities, the vision we poured into them on Sunday begins to drain out of them sooner than we think.

When you can tell it's time for a vision refill, use every communication means available to you to repaint the picture of the future that fills everybody with passion. And then take it a step further by reporting *progress* on the vision's achievement. Trust me, when you wrap a little real-life proof around the accomplishment of your church's vision and show that the dream really is coming true, the fog will start to clear and people's heads will start to nod. "Oh yeah!" they'll suddenly remember. "I get it! I get it! *This* is what we're about! *This* is why we exist as a church."

We've been lifting up the value of racial reconciliation at Willow for many years now. It's a central part of the vision God has called us to pursue. Nearly every time I close out a talk on the subject, I stand on stage in front of the whole congregation and say, "Now, Willow, as we go back out into

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our neighborhoods, our job sites, and our communities, let us be the *very first ones* in every social setting to reach a hand of friendship over a racial divide. This is part of who we are! We are the *first people* to bridge the racial divide.”

A few months ago during our celebration of Martin Luther King Jr. weekend, we invited a member from a church on Chicago’s south side to do an interview with a guy from our church. Like most everyone else, the two men had full lives and occupations and families to tend to. But over the course of several years, they carved out time to get to know one another beyond racial stereotypes. They took lots of emotional risks in their conversations, and eventually a deep friendship developed. Our leadership team hoped that the story would paint a vibrant picture of what it looked like to bridge the racial divide in everyday life.

I watched that interview from the monitor near my seat on the front row, and as the camera panned to various members of our congregation, I saw tears streaming down cheeks and obvious pride written on faces. “I love being part of a church where racial reconciliation is a high value,” their countenance seemed to convey. “I love our vision! I love that we are actually achieving our vision!”

Ask key staff, “How full is your vision bucket these days?” Ask volunteers, “Do you sense progress around here toward our vision?” Ask members of your congregation, “Which part of our church’s vision is the most meaningful to you?” Get a gauge on how full buckets are around you, leader, and then get busy topping them off.