

This scene is from James Cameron's 1984 sci-fi cult classic, "The Terminator." The plot is about a cyborg from the future that goes back through the "time displacement field" to terminate Sarah Connor before she can give birth to her son, who is destined to be humanity's savior in the future. Sarah is confused by what is going on so her protector, also from the future, grimly informs her about the nature of the terminator:

It can't be bargained with, it can't be reasoned with, it doesn't feel pity or remorse or fear, and it absolutely will not stop... EVER, until you are dead!

When we launched our vision series a few weeks ago, we saw how a vision terminator named King Herod, tried to snuff out God's vision of getting heaven to earth by terminating the toddler Jesus. He was unsuccessful, of course, but we also warned that Herod-inspired vision terminators still exist today. To wit, 5000 American churches died last year and another 85% are currently plateaued or declining. 1/5 of our churches will be terminated within the next 18 months if things don't quickly and radically change. Vision terminators have had their terminating ways, especially with the Methodist Church. Since 1957, it has lost an average of 105,000 members per year. So today our mission is to identify some of these vision terminators and terminate them before they terminate us. Before we do, let's do a quick review.

### **Review of Visionocracy**

We previously said a healthy church is one that is governed by a "visionocracy," i.e., a place where the vision reigns supreme, is the boss, and leads, all priorities, agendas, and preferences of the church. A visionocracy consists of three distinct levels:

**The Macro Level:**

**The vision God has of getting heaven to earth.**

**The Micro Level:**

**The vision God gives the leader on getting heaven on to earth.**

**The Mio/Mia Level:**

**The vision God gives each Christian for their ministry that gets heaven on to earth.**

I then shared the micro-vision God gave me 30 years ago

To create a flourishing church that worships God, equips the saints, and wins the lost.

Last week, Steve touched on our congregational 3Gs vision called, "Get, Grow, Go." "Get, Grow, Go" will help us realize our 5/25 goal (500 disciples by 2025) and includes this year's "All-In-Initiative" of contemporizing the sanctuary, starting a Pre-school, and adding a growth service. All of these are means-to-an-end, so that we might continue to become more of a Christ centered, Spirit led, biblically balanced, fully functional, and intergenerational church.

### **Vision Terminators**

I think we can all agree that "Get-Grow-Go" is a Big Audacious Vision. However, as we warned, vision terminators are skulking about with the sole mission to terminate it. What are some of these

terminators? Steve implied last week that secularism is one of them and he, as usual, is partially correct. I don't worry about worldly secularity (unless it infects the church) because: (1) The world is always secular, and (2) Secularism has never stopped the church. What I worry about are the three vision terminators that are already wreaking havoc in the church.

### **Vision Terminator: Indifference**

Indifference is a powerful terminator because it spawns other vision killers such as lethargy, apathy, unbelief, and negativity. I once told a person he was both ignorant and indifferent. He responded, "I don't know, and I don't care!" The late preaching professor, Haddon Robinson warned his students of the three attitudes they encounter every time they preach: "Who cares? So What! Prove It!" The only thing even the best and brightest leaders cannot lead is indifference. Because of indifference, Jesus couldn't do many miraculous things in his hometown of Nazareth (Mark 6:5-6). Now that's one powerful terminator!

### **Vision Terminator: Inward Focus**

Inward focus is also a "lean-mean-vision-terminating-machine." Inward focus occurs when the church focuses primarily on its wants, preferences, and conveniences. In so doing, it ignores the needs of its community and transforms the church into a spiritual country club or a holy huddle. Church Growth guru Thom Rainer, calls inward focus the "death knell of the church." He says this because inward focus betrays our calling and spiritual DNA as a missional/redemptive movement. As the late archbishop William Temple accurately said, "The church is the only organization that exists solely for non-members." WWII era Christian martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer adds, "The church is the church only when it exists for others." And last, but not least, we got that pesky little thing called the Great Commission where Jesus directly commanded us to, "Go into all the world (Matthew 28:18-20). Churches that are successful in fending off the inward focus terminator have an ongoing and unmistakable outward focus.

### **Vision Terminator: Intense Spiritual Consumerism**

Have you ever walked into a Wal-Mart only to buy/get something? Now I confess, and my beautiful wife can attest, I hate any kind of shopping unless it's for me. If so, I'm all in. When I go to church, however, I don't go to get, as if somehow worship is designed to be transactional. If so, I'd be a spiritual consumer i.e., one who goes to church not to worship God and serve others but to consume religious goods and services. One of the most powerful vision terminators of our day is spiritual consumerism. I get it, we live in the iPhone age and the "I" this, "I" that, and the "I" everything culture. However, because no church is the best at every ministry, it's common today for some Christians to go to one church for worship, another for youth group, and yet another for small groups. No one even questions this vision terminating practice anymore because consumerism, even spiritual consumerism, is the air we breathe. Honestly, this phenomenon is startling, given how Jesus made serving and self-denial (the antithesis of spiritual consumerism), a core Gospel requirement (Mark 6:5-6). When we start treating churches like spiritual Wal-Marts, the vision terminator has already gotten his metal fingers around our throats.

### **Conclusion: Vision Wheel**

As we conclude, let me move from Sermonator to Visionator so that we can go all Sarah Connor and crush the vision terminators of indifference, inward focus, and intense spiritual consumerism. The best way to terminate these terminators is to hop on the vision wheel. A vision wheel is like the “Life Wheel” template upon which we plot our goals for each area of our lives. Here’s an example of one:

### **\*Life Wheel Discussion\***

In coaching I like to use the “Life Wheel” to help people stay focused on their growth goals. However, here’s a Bay Point “Vision Wheel” I recrafted for today. It includes the six major congregational and personal initiatives of our “Get-Grow-Go” vision: (1) Great in the Great Commandment and Great Commission. (2) Irresistible Invitational Culture: “Each One, Bring One, Each Week.” (3) Consistent Generosity of our Time, Talent, and Treasure. (4) 5/25. (5) Sanctuary Renewal Project, and (6) Bay Point Day School. When you’re feeling that vision terminator stalking you, jump on the Bay Point Vision Wheel and run him over again and again until he is crushed like a tin can.

Let’s pray.