

## When Words Get in the Way

**John F. Kennedy from Rice University at the dawn of the Space Age.**

**Dr. Martin Luther King Junior on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial.**

**Ronald Reagan in front of Berlin's Brandenburg Gate.**

All three of these iconic moments share one critical ingredient: *words that created worlds*. A language of vision has the power to move people to reach the moon, cross racial divides and tear down political walls. **But, words can also get in the way.**

Auxano has more than 13 years of walking alongside hundreds of church leaders seeking clarity of identity and direction. As a part of this team, I am more aware than ever of how the right vision language, or the lack thereof, can make all of the difference in the world. Here are 3 painful ways that I have seen words get in the way:

**1. When there are too few vision words to foster alignment.** Your leaders are leading to a vision. If you have not invested time and team resources into articulating identity and direction for your top level of leaders, their vision leadership is siloed and not shared. Conflicting ministry vision always leads to sideways energy and wasted resources. A senior leader with too few words likely spends more time mediating staff conflict than meditating on God's preferred future. Jesus did not hesitate to paint a clear and detailed picture of the crucifixion, fueling sacrificial alignment in each disciple's life from Pentecost forward.

**2. When the vision words are too generic to inspire hearts.** Safe vision language is actually dangerous to the health of your church. We live in a world of competing messages, in which skilled marketing practitioners move your congregation to buy their latest product or vote for their latest candidate. Many leaders fail to realize that their safe, yet sound words, either fly under the radar or over the heads of busy families and distracted people. Jesus never shied away from powerful words that struck the deepest nerve in the hearts of His listeners: "From now on I will make you fishers of men" wasn't a slick marketing tagline, it was a vibrant and specific picture of His compelling calling.

**3. When there are too many vision words to create confidence.** The team cannot execute if the play keeps changing. Overhauling your language and vision with every new conference method or leadership mantra leaves your leadership confused. If everything changes every six months, why should they ever be involved to begin with? The fast-following leader's desire for "new" starts to get old very quickly. Instead, seek to emulate Jesus as He consistently deployed a simple message of faith and repentance, to the point of rejection and ultimately, death.



**Vision Headwaters** is a two-hour trek designed to safely start the right conversations among your leadership. This engaging tool will calibrate your vision language using challenging assessment questions and memorable church-personality profiles. If you are not sure which, if any, of the above fits your church, **you can be sure that the rest of your team does!** To employ an honest assessment of your vision language, download your free copy of Auxano's latest tool for break-thru leaders: [The Vision Headwaters TeamUP](#).

In this TeamUP tool you will:

- Unpack your communication baggage in order to properly prepare for the vision journey ahead
- Plot your "Headwaters Profile" using key waypoints of missional language and church age
- Step onto the clarity pathway with experienced guides cheering you onward

**Don't continue to let words get in the way of the world God is calling you to create!**