

SESSION ONE: FROM HERE TO THERE

BILL HYBELS

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- Founding and senior pastor of Willow Creek Community Church in South Barrington, Illinois and chairman of the board for the Willow Creek Association.
- Convened The Leadership Summit in 1995, following a God-given whisper to help raise and develop the spiritual gift of leadership in the local church.
- Both visionary and passionate about seeing every local church reach its full God-given potential, he speaks around the world on strategic issues related to leadership, evangelism and church growth.
- An exceptional communicator, he is a best-selling author of more than twenty books, including *The Power of a Whisper: Hearing God, Having the Guts to Respond*.



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- A. The first thing that came to mind was the idea that leaders move people from *here* to *there*.
- B. If you're a leader, you must be able to stand in front of a group of three, thirty, three hundred or thirty thousand and say, "We are *here*, but someday, by God's grace, if we link arms, if we focus and sacrifice, if we work and persevere, we are going to wind up *there*."
- C. It may sound like this is just about vision, about the need to stand in front of people and paint a picture of the future that produces passion in people.
 - 1. Bill used to think that the very first step in moving people from *here* to *there* was simply describing how wonderful life would be if we were all *there*.
 - 2. He would cast as hot a vision as he could about what being *there* would look like, taste like, feel like, and smell like, and then within twenty-four hours he would get an alarming number of e-mails from good people saying, "We like it *here*."
 - 3. So then he would crank up the heat of the vision and stand up the following week, emphasizing how fantastic it would be when we get *there*.
 - 4. Then, the next day, the e-mails would roll in: "Nope, we're staying *here*."
- D. Bill has learned in the last eighteen to twenty-four months is that the first play is not to make *there* sound wonderful but to make *here* sound awful.
 - 1. Willow Creek Community Church has a food pantry that serves thousands of people every month and a cars ministry in which volunteer mechanics fix up donated cars for single moms.
 - 2. Both ministries have been housed in leased facilities off the main church campus.
 - 3. In recent months, God has been speaking to the elders, staff and volunteers about relocating both ministries back on campus, and Bill had to cast the vision for this in front of thousands of Willow's participating members.

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4. As he was preparing that vision talk, he realized that the average member was likely to just cross their arms and ask a legitimate question, “Why can’t both those ministries just stay where they are?” (translated, “We want to stay *here*”).
 5. So, Bill’s first move was to list all the reasons why letting them stay in their current locations was unacceptable:
 - a. If the ministries aren’t moved, they will never be able to expand.
 - i. In the winter, before the food pantry opens, hundreds of people stand outside in the bitter cold waiting to get in, and many of them don’t have adequate winter coats.
 - ii. The cars ministry is crowded, and in an economic recession, they need to serve more single moms, not less.
 - b. Because the ministries operate off campus, the recipients don’t make the connection that this generosity is being brought to them by a church, because it’s so far removed from the church.
 - i. They’re certainly meeting their physical needs, but we all know that these folks ultimately need God in their lives, and a church home and fellowship.
 - ii. If they received help on campus, they would make the association that this love and generosity was coming from a church.
 - c. Only a limited number of Willow volunteers even know where these wonderful ministries are. They’re out of sight, out of mind, and many potential volunteers will probably never wind up serving there because it’s just too far away.
 6. Then after Bill had built that case, he could talk about what cool things would happen if the ministries were relocated.
 - a. At the end of weekend services, Bill could tell people who were worried about feeding their families the next week, that before they leave the campus they could meet with some volunteers and get groceries for a week.
 - b. Single moms who heard a bad noise in the car on the way to church could get help from volunteers standing by to fix it.
 7. On and on Bill cast that vision, and several times people broke into applause. They understood that they couldn’t stay *here* for reasons Bill mentioned, and they could see clearly the day when they could be *there*.
- E. Long before Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the great civil rights leader in the U.S., gave his famous “I Have a Dream” speech, he gave hundreds of speeches that could have been entitled “We Can’t Stay *Here*” speeches.
1. Hundreds of times he stood in front of groups of people and said that there’s too much injustice for us to stay *here*.
 2. Then one day, he turned the corner and gave the speech, “I Have a Dream.”
 3. People were ready for the *there* speech because they had heard several “We Can’t Stay *Here*” speeches.
- F. Bob Pierce, the founder of World Vision, used to take donors to underdeveloped countries and have them stand in the food lines with little kids who were starving to death.
1. Bob would say to the donors, “We can’t stay *here*. This is unconscionable. But with your help, we could go *there* and feed millions of starving children.”

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2. Bob's famous line was "We must let our hearts be broken by what breaks the heart of God." What he was really saying is that staying *here* breaks the heart of God.
- G. Your God-given job is not merely to preside over something, not to pontificate to your underlings how smart you are, not merely to preserve something from its gradual demise; it's to figure out what God wants to get done in this world, figure out what role you play in that, and then to move something or someone from *here* to *there*.



2. Bill talked about how leaders move people from *here* to *there*, and how your first step should be making staying *here* seem awful, before casting the vision for moving *there*.
 - a. What are some areas that your team is trying to move people from *here* to *there*?
 - b. Choose one of those areas and take fifteen minutes to identify the reasons that staying *here* is unacceptable. Capture your ideas on a flipchart or whiteboard.
 - c. Review the reasons you listed and vote on the top three reasons you need to be sure to communicate when you try to get people on board with the change.

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- d. Once you've established that you can't stay *here*, you can start talking about how great it will be *there*. Take another ten minutes to identify the key elements of your vision for moving *there*.

- e. Again, review the reasons you listed and vote on the top three that you should communicate when casting the vision for moving *there*.

- f. Wrap up your discussion by identifying if there are any changes you need to make in your plans or communication about the change from *here* to *there*, in light of what you discussed.