

## **Behold, I Will Do a New Thing!**

by Jay Gary

Consider these pearls of wisdom from L.A. comedian, Dan Goodman, "Like water from a mountaintop spring... next year my life will be all downhill." Or, "Next week I will organize my life, which means organizing my mistakes and failures." Or, "Like the beaches that catch the pounding surf, my life will continue to erode day by day."

I'm a very high octane leader, fueling my inner life with vision and meaning. But sometimes I let myself get beat up by reality, and ask, Am I spinning my wheels? At those times I draw strength from the voice of God, found in Isaiah 43:18-19: "Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert."

As you look toward next month, or the next quarter, what wilderness do you face? What desert stands in the way of you and your team reaching the Promised Land? The Scriptures claim the Lord is ready to help you find your way out of your wilderness wanderings.

I can hear the comedians' retort, "Yea, right, Moses wandered 40 years and finally found a place where there was no smell of oil." True, there is a big difference today between the wealth of Saudi Arabia and Israel. Today Israelis have no natural resources to speak of and must invest in their own wetware between their ears. But consider the inheritance that all God's children have. God is with us! He can make a way across the wilderness. He can lead us to the Promised Land!

Ok, I realize Isaiah 43 was a word to the generation of Zerubbabel and was ultimately fulfilled by the exodus Jesus led in the New Covenant. But today we still live by the water that emerges from that eternal spring. Future generations will someday find a way to live without oil, but they will never find a way to live without water! As a leader you can draw upon this everlasting reservoir to create the future.

In September of 2000 I was visiting Jerusalem on business, and late in the afternoon I visited Gihon Spring. The Gihon was the original natural spring that gave water to Mt. Zion, the City of David. I walked down to the bottom of the Kidron Valley. I stood in the narrow channel, the water source for the temple of Solomon and Zerubbabel. While there the words of Jesus came to me, "Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7:38). As a leader, are you tapping into that inexhaustible well, deep within your soul?

In Isaiah 43:19, God says, "I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?" God promises us He will do something new. This is not something that will pop up tomorrow—it is something that can be seen today, springing up from the parched ground of our lives. This new thing will release all our constrained tomorrows, but it emerges from our inner life today.

The Scriptures beckon us not just to live by hindsight, or the memory of former things, but live by foresight or the anticipation of God's new thing. Verse 18 specifically reads, "Do not remember the former things or consider the things of old." The former thing was the mighty

miracle of the Exodus, the crossing of the Red Sea. We are not just to live by hindsight, but also by foresight.

In my work life of 25 years I've learned that there is a pull to the future. I've learned that God creates, not just from the past, but also from the future. The momentum of past-push will only take us so far. Tradition, experience and history will only take us so far. We also need to live by foresight. Why? Because God is ready to do a new thing! A great deal of value I provide my clients is to help them mine their future, and discover how the water springing up today is connected to new relationships, new products, new services and new brands that will change their industries.

Recognizing that God creates from the future, not just the past, means that we should also learn from the future, not just the past! It might seem counter-intuitive that leaders can learn from that which has not yet happened. But it happens! In today's chaotic work place, we cannot know the future completely in order to move forward. What we can do is align ourselves with other leaders on the way, and together as a team we learn in a distributed way how to move forward. We learn how to make sense of the uncertain future by trusting each other and creating knowledge as a group. Foresight is an individual capacity, but it is also a group capacity of teams to find their way forward, by letting "future-pull" school them.

Dan Goodman writes, "Someday computers will be taught to learn, and the first thing they'll learn is that you are a moron!" We humans might be morons as individuals, but as leaders, we walk together by faith. We live by future-pull and foresight, not just hindsight. Therefore we need to lean into the wind and together ask, What's next? What are you doing, Lord? What is the new thing you are creating in our midst?

JAY GARY is an assistant professor at Regent University, with the School of Global Leadership & Entrepreneurship. He teaches foresight to mid-career leaders from the MBA to the Doctor of Strategic Leadership, and serves as program director for the M.A. in Strategic Foresight. He can be contacted through his website, <http://www.jaygary.com>