

MOVING FORWARD PARTNERSHIP

FEBRUARY 2025

‘THE NEED FOR VISION’

HABAKKUK 2:2-3 - THEN THE LORD REPLIED - ‘WRITE DOWN THE REVELATION(VISION) AND MAKE IT PLAIN ON TABLETS SO THAT THE HERALD MAY RUN WITH IT. FOR THE REVELATION AWAITS AN APPOINTED TIME IT SPEAKS OF THE END AND WILL NOT PROVE FALSE. THOUGH IT LINGER WAIT FOR IT, IT WILL CERTAINLY COME AND NOT DELAY’

ZECHARIAH 4:10 - ‘DO NOT DESPISE THESE SMALL BEGINNINGS FOR THE LORD REJOICES TO SEE THE WORK BEGIN’

PROVERBS 29:18 ‘WHERE THERE IS NO REVELATION, PEOPLE CAST OFF RESTRAINT’ NKJV - ‘WHERE THERE IS NO VISION THE THE PEOPLE PERISH’
ESV - ‘WHERE THERE IS NO PROPHETIC VISION PEOPLE CAST OFF RESTRAINT’
AMPLIFIED - ‘WHERE THERE IS NO VISION(NO REVELATION OF GOD AND HIS WORD) THE PEOPLE ARE UNRESTRAINED’

MF is a context of Christian leaders and aspiring leaders. Leadership and Vision are close bedfellows and complement each other. Going to ‘splurge’ some thoughts, quotes and principles on the need for vision and trust that at least some land in each of our hearts afresh. (Perhaps, to take back to your own leadership teams to emphasise to them why you as their leader carry a vision)

The irony is not lost on us that Kristian was going to today due a session on Vision-a subject and practice he is strong in-but a natural eye issue prevents that. Natural sight tends to diminish with age. Not so spiritually! God wants us to have a sharpening, intensifying and broadening of our spiritual sight and as a consequence our vision.

VISION IN THE CONTEXT OF ARENA CHURCH? - ONE LOCAL CHURCH EXPRESSED IN SIX DIFFERENT LOCATIONS, REACHING SEVERAL HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE ACROSS ALL GENERATIONAL AGES.

THE VISION ESTABLISHED A NUMBER OF YEARS AGO NOW, OUT OF A SEASON OF REPURPOSING STANDS STRONG STILL

‘TO GO AND GROW, AND LOVE AND SERVE OUR WORLD’

It needs to remain straightforward to most in the church and yet leaders also have to grasp at the fact it has many layers. Salvation, Mission, Discipleship, Outward Focus(both on Sunday and from Sunday)Love(what does that look like?) The world(Local, Regional,

Cross-Cultural, International)- John Wesley 'The world is my parish'. The plurality of leadership and involvement. Kingdom principles, Teams, Finance, Durability(For the long haul) and more.

The DISCIPLINE OF A PRIMARY VISION in the context of multiple contexts. THE DISCIPLINE OF THE PRIMARY LEADERSHIP TEAM who all have an opinion, some of it strong! If we became or become ill-disciplined, you then have DI-VISION, and it pulls apart! The visionary journey at Arena has been very collaborative - Senior Leadership Team, Elders, Arena Board, Campus Pastors and more. But in talking through all sorts of models on lead, my conclusion is 'there is only one skipper on the ship'. In our instance that is Kristian. It is a mandate he carries and it comes, like it will with you, with a price tag. Later we will hear from Julie on some of the strategy that compliments vision, it never comes before it. It saves us from being day-dreamers, but does empower us to be dreamers in our day.

No model of church expansion and growth is perfect, but what cannot be compromised is the vision-casting and the vision clarity. Sadly betrayal, duplicitousness, and ambition has marked some churches to the detriment of vision. God by His grace has helped the Arena Leadership to 'hold the line', the results have seen kingdom expansion.

VISION

1/ WHAT IS IT? - Below are a few definitions

An ability to see

The art of seeing the invisible

An inspired look that leads to inspired action

The ability to help other people to see a preferred future

Vision has a desired objective and goal

Vision - It will enable the local church to be a prophetic people(the old word for prophet was a Seer) motivated by current now-world needs expressed in an increased burden

2/ WHY WE MUST HAVE IT?

As we have already noticed, without it, people perish, and do not flourish. One of the noticeable things from the verses at the top of this paper, is that no vision leads to an unrestrained ill-discipline - Judges 21:25 'Everyone did as they saw fit' - Chaos!

If you don't land vision and are defined by people who don't want a vision, they are out there. You will be defined by

Tradition - Is all tradition bad? No. But tradition that nullifies the Word of God-Mark 7:13 - is.

Seven words of a dying church 'We've never done it this way before' - Vision challenges issues that have become embedded in the journey of a church, and need to be challenged

Timidity - 1 Timothy 1:6-7 - 'For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of hands. For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid (fearful, anxious) but gives us power, love and self-discipline. - President Theodore Roosevelt's speech on Citizenship, Sorbonne, Paris 1910, here is an extract - 'It is not the critic who counts, nor the man who points out when a man stumbles and where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the man and woman in the arena. Face

marred by dust, sweat and blood, who strive valiantly. If they err, and come up short it is not because of no effort or their shortcoming. If they fail, at least they fail daring greatly, so that their place shall never be with those cold timid souls that know neither victory or defeat' - 1 Timothy 1:18 - 'Timothy (put your own name there) I am giving you this command in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by recalling them you may fight the battle well'

Temporality - 2 Corinthians 4:18 - 'So we fix our eyes not on what is seen(the temporal, the natural, the tangible) but what is unseen(in the spirit realm) since what is seen is temporary but what is unseen is eternal' - The vision you carry may find its complete fruitfulness in a future generation, you seeing it fuelled that and eternity records it

3/ WHERE WILL IT TAKE US?

It will take us on a forward moving journey - Joshua 3:4 - 'Then you will know which way to go since you have never been this way before' - Remember the Bible defines us as Pilgrims, Sojourners, Strangers, travelling along the faith-filled direction given by God

The Bible is all about people with Vision

NOAH - A vision that invited incredulity/disbelief/scorn

ABRAHAM - Vision that meant 'upping sticks' and going to another land - 'He went'

DAVID - Given a vision of a glorious temple(yet he was forbidden to implement it) He graciously and practically paved away for his successor

JOHN THE BAPTIST - A vision to prepare the way then get out of the way 'I must decrease, He must increase'

JESUS - A vision rooted in the heart of the Father-Matthew 26:39- that took Him to the Cross.

PAUL - Acts 26:19 - I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision' It impacted ministry on earth - *'The Christians of history that made most impact on this world are the ones who thought most about the next'(CS Lewis). *'He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose'(Missionary Jim Elliott) *'This life is just a dressing room for eternity, that's all it is'(Leonard Ravenhill)

In the amazing common grace of God, he has gifted men and woman, not necessarily of faith with vision

In War - 'I have nothing to offer but blood, sweat and tears' - Winston Churchill

In Civil Rights - I have a dream...' - Dr. Martin Luther King

In Medicine - 'Example is not the main thing in influencing others, it is the only thing' - Missionary and Doctor Albert Schweitzer

In Business - 'As we face future challenges, will we empower others?' Bill Gates

In Sport - 'We used to have to sweep the broken glass off the downtown municipal tennis court' Richard Williams - Father and Coach to Venus and Serena

Much of earthly vision is unredeemed and for personal gain. In the hand of God the impact can be extraordinary.

Ephesians 1:18 - 'I pray the eyes of your heart may be enlightened'

See LONG - Generationally - Psalm 145:4

See WIDE - Relationally - Acts 2:42-47, Proverbs 27:17

See DEEP - Radically - Matthew 3:10

See HIGH - Adoringly - Psalm 95:6

Make the Vision

SIMPLE - As already illustrated there will be a 'complexity' to it, but that is not for everyone to wrestle with

REPEATABLE - Not be you but by the people!

SUSTAINABLE - If you are changing the vision every five minutes you are going to freak people out, it will become an obstacle to following

Vision is a 'Prophecy' a declaring of what is not to be and become, so it will be

CONTESTED for. Vision attracts spiritual warfare - See the example of Nehemiah, with a vision to rebuild a wall - Vision invited

RIDICULE - 2:19

ANGER - 4:1

CONTEMPT - 4:2-3

UNHOLY ALLIANCES - 4:8

COMPROMISE 6:2

FALSE ACCUSATION - 6:5-7

PROPHETIC DECEPTION - 6:10-13

Nehemiah DISMISSED what was said and done, DEFINED who he was, and DETERMINED to press on - Nehemiah 2:19-20, and so should we.

Some final thoughts on Vision from now retired Baptist pastor, teacher, missionary and leader Paul Beasley-Murray

Vision....

FUELS - For the church to carry a missionary mandate

IS UNIQUE - To your call and church, be secure in it

FOCUSES - On the way ahead, the future

TOUCHES - People

IS REALISTIC - Not presumptuous that goes BEYOND faith

LOFTY - If achieved easily, your vision is too small

INVITING - It draws others in

IS GROUPS/TEAMS - Many contribute to the visionary journey

IT IS GOOD NEWS - That something lies ahead

HOPE - 'A confident expectation in the unseen and the future'

VISION - 'The task of visionary leadership is to take people where they have never been'(Dr. Henry Kissinger) - Receive it, Live it, Share it, Communicate it, Stand firm in it. May our

lives, our churches, our communities the nation and the nations, not perish but flourish
because called men and woman in our day live with a vision!