

-Vision of the Church-

“In the Last days, “God says, I will pour out my Spirit on every kind of people: Your sons will prophesy, also your daughters; Your young men will see visions, your old men dream dreams. When the time comes, I’ll pour out my Spirit on those who serve me, men and women both, and they’ll prophesy” (Acts 2:17)

When was the last time that you set your personal vision or did you dream dreams – not the nightmare or fantasy dream? At the period of childhood or teenage, boys and girls used to have dreams - going to college or finding job; young adults dream to have happy marriage and family; mid-life aged or old adults dream for their kids to build their own lives independently and responsibly; retirees dream to enjoy their lives with good health surrounded by friends or friends or they dream to leave a legacy to their family or church.

The words “dream or vision” are inspirational words. Whenever I hear someone saying about his or her dream or vision, I am always moved and touched. I hope that each of you has your own dream or vision –small or big. But I see many people not being aware of the dream or vision given from God. Beyond personal life, each organization has its own vision. Of course, church has its own vision inspired by God. What is the vision of your church? What kind of church do you dream of your church to be? Mission is what God calls the church to do; it is the purpose of a church; it is its reason for being. Vision is to which God is calling the congregation to do in the near future to advance the mission.

Through this past summer, the church council tried to make the vision statement of our church through their discernments and prayers:

Bentleyville: “We strive to be positive and growing congregation that seeks to provide a church home where people of all ages have the opportunity to grow in love and Christian discipleship.”

Houston: “As a congregation we strive to grow in faith and become faithful disciples of Jesus Christ. We are a church for all people, exemplifying the love, kindness & hope of Jesus Christ.”

(Do you want to accept that vision statement? What words do you like and challenge you?)

Where does vision come from? Who inspires you to restore, renew, and re-dedicate yourself to follow the God-given vision?

In today’s Scriptural reading in Acts, the apostle Peter addresses the crowd gathered to hear God’s Words; standing in front of them who are fearful, he starts his preaching quoted from the words given to Joel – one of the prophets in Old Testament: “In the last days, God says, I will pour put my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.” The Scripture says that the Spirit would be upon all people – sons, daughters, young persons, and old persons; God’s Spirit is available to all people when they open their minds and embrace the Spirit. The Spirit is the source of the vision and dream that lead not only your life but your church too. The Spirit-led-church is the vision-filled-church.

When Peter preached these words in Acts chapter 2, no church on earth was organized yet; they just gathered together to listen to God’s Words. The Spirit gave birth to the church on

earth; the Spirit touched people and moved them to go forward as witnesses of Jesus Christ: out of from their worries, the Spirit gave confidence to them, out of from fear to hope, out of from being stayed at comfort zone to risk-taking outreach and mission. The Spirit of God enabled them to restore the vision as well as helped them to go through their witnessing Jesus Christ to Jews and Gentiles who don't know Jesus Christ.

God's vision leading church is to obey what God wants us to be and to do, focusing on growing in faith of Jesus Christ and maturing in Christian discipleship.

Through news media we've been hearing bad news during this week such as world economy, jobs, politics, etc. In my view, the problem that we faced is not the lack of resources to resolve these problems, but the problem is that we face **the lack of vision**; we lost the big vision of where our country is heading for and what our country wants to accomplish. I also see many people losing their hope and vision in their personal lives –the unemployed; we need to rekindle the hope and vision of our country as well as at personal life. Above all, we need to be reminded that where God leads us; and we need to believe what God can do for our church through your service and sacrifice. That is the genuine vision sustaining as well as strengthening us.

Scripture says, "When the time comes, I'll pour out **my Spirit** on those who serve me, men and women both, and they'll prophesy. I'll set wonders in the sky above, and signs on the earth below." God's Spirit is upon people of God who serve God as you. Through your gifts and talents **many signs** will take place at our church soon.

Crowds responded to Peter. So now what do we do? "Peter said, "Change your life. Turn to God and be baptized, each of you in the Jesus Christ, so your sins are forgiven....Get out while you can, get out of this sick and stupid culture!" Be focused on the right relationship with God through Jesus Christ, who is working through the Spirit in us.

I want to share with you the following words: "**If you can't feed a hundred people, then feed just one**" (Mother Teresa). You can reach out to one person whom you love; you can introduce Jesus to him or her with your deep love. You can't feed the souls of one hundred people, but you can feed just one soul with the Spirit. One person at a time; that person might be your friend or family or neighbor or stranger...Touch one soul at a time.

While I was walking at the Richardson Park, I saw two persons –father and son- walking ahead of me. I thought to myself; how can I approach to them; they look new at this community. After I pray for the Holy Spirit to give courage to me, I came closer to them and told them, "Hi, how old are you? What's your name? How long have you lived this town? Do you belong to any church? Then I introduced myself and children program of our church, he was surprised at seeing me and asked worship time. Later on, when they were about to leave the park, he told me, "Thank you for welcoming me. Hope to see you again..." (Pastor needs to practice what he preaches! Over the week, I tried to remember the mission of God every day, reciting "Making Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World. And pray for God to have such an opportunity to contact person.)

There are big difference between those who live with vision and those who live without vision; if you have your personal vision, the vision sustains as well as guides you; but if you lose the sense of vision, each day might be bored and tired. If you follow the vision of our church, the Spirit would be upon our congregation so that we can be used as witnesses of Jesus Christ, approaching to unchurched people, helping them to relate with church and Jesus Christ.

“Where there is no vision, the people perish” (Proverbs 29: 18, KJV) – county, church, family, and personal life.

Our God is the Spirit of God who pours out the Spirit to every person who wants to be inspired. God desires of you to touch your loved with the Spirit and help him or her to restore the sense of vision. God desires of you to reach out to the person who needs Christ with the spirit of love; pray for that. Then God will be with you. Let us ask God in your prayers that God’s vision for our church would be fulfilled to become vibrant, fruitful, and growing congregation in the faith and love of Jesus Christ! Let it be so by the Spirit. Amen.