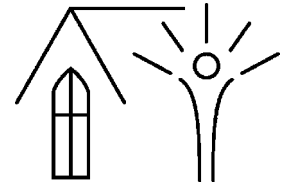




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*Our Mission Statement:*  
*“To Know Christ,  
To Grow in Christ,  
To Show Others Christ”*

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## “Where There Is No Vision, The People Perish”

Proverbs 29:18

Reverend Thomas Kim

On the platform of a railroad station there was a large crate with a big dog inside. He was the saddest dog you can imagine. A lady asked about him. “You would be sad, too,” she was told, “if you were in his plight. He’s chewed the tag off the crate, and doesn’t know where he’s going.”

Sounds like many churches I know. The church today has resources untold. We have a skilled, well-educated, talented people. We claim the allegiance of the best people in our community. We serve a Master who for 2,000 years has inspired people’s hearts and changed their lives. And yet we are only a shadow of what we might be. What is the problem with us? We focus on only the speed of what we are doing, but we don’t know the direction. We are not certain where we are supposed to be going. We’ve chewed the tag off our crate and we’re often bogged down in depression. Thus we come to Proverbs 29:18a, “*Where there is no prophecy, the people cast off restraint.*” (NRSV) “*Where there is no vision, the people perish.*” (KJV).

We are now in a visioning process to respond to God’s call for us as a church to know where to go. Motivational people know the power of visualization. They will tell you about a skinny, scrawny black youngster who one day heard a coach say, “You can be what you make up your mind to be. God will help you.” Afterwards his youngster came up to the coach and declared, “I’ve decided what I want to be the fastest man in the world.” The coach said, “Son, that’s a great dream but there is one problem. Dreams have a way of floating high in the sky and drifting around like clouds. A dream never becomes a reality unless you have the courage to build a ladder to your dream.”

He explained to the youngster that his dream would take determination, dedication and discipline. Jesse Owens listened to the words of that coach that day and was faithful to his dream, and at the 1936 Olympics in Germany he proved himself to be the fastest man in the world. He won four gold metals and embarrassed Adolph Hitler. A healthy church, also, begins with a vision, a dream, an inner picture of what we can accomplish with God’s help. To carry the vision God pours upon us, we need to begin with a mental idea of what we hope to achieve. We map it out in our mind’s eye. We visualize the church we hope for. Do you have a clear cut vision concerning your church?

Young Henry Clay of Kentucky was one of those visionaries. On his way home from Washington he stepped from the stagecoach, bent down, and put his ear to the ground. “What are you listening for?” inquired the driver. “I’m listening for the tread of unnumbered thousands of feet,” said Clay, “that will pass this way westward.”

In Acts 2:17, “*In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.*”

Part of the power that the Spirit brings is the ability to see visions and to dream dreams. Part of the impotence of the church today may be our lack of vision.

There were a primitive people who lived in a beautiful valley. As time passed, however, the soil played out. The number of wild animals thinned. Food was scarce. Life was hard. Some of the young braves had heard that beyond the distant high mountains there lay another beautiful valley that had not been despoiled by human

habitation where the soil was still rich. At much risk and with great courage, they climbed the high mountains, scaling each difficult precipice until finally they could peer to the other side. There lay the beautiful valley of promise. They went back to tell the tribe and soon all had made the pilgrimage to the new beautiful valley. There they lived in peace and plenty.

The years passed, however. The soil in the new valley began to lose its richness. Life was hard again. Words began circulating among the young braves that beyond a range of distant, high mountains there lay another beautiful valley.

They decided to climb the distant mountains to see if the reports were true. This time, however, the elders of the tribe gathered and decided that sending an expedition to search for the new valley was simply too risky. They opted for caution. No expedition was sent. The ironic thing, of course, was that the council of the leaders was made up of those who had once been the young braves responsible for seeking out the valley where the tribe now resided. That can happen in a church, can't it? Where there is no vision the people perish.

A vision and a dream are from God and are signs of God's presence with us. A vision is different from greed which is based on human desires. Abraham was 75 when he left his homeland to follow God's call, Caleb was 85 when he asked Joshua to give him mountain areas to conquer, and Moses was 80 when he was called. Joseph was only seventeen when he had a dream. They answered their calls because they had visions and dreams. Show me your dream; I will picture your future 10 years from now. I can tell you that those who bear dreams of God have a promising future. The Bible says that your future is not decided by the fat portfolios you have today, but the dreams you have.

When the Israelite soldiers and David saw Goliath, the soldiers were afraid of Goliath because of his size, David thought he was too big a target to miss.

When the 10 among the twelve spies returned from spying out the land of the Canaanites, they said, *"The people who live in the land are strong, and the towns are fortified and very large,"* and they added, *"to ourselves we seemed like grasshoppers."* (Number 13: 27-28 & 33) However, Caleb and Joshua said, *"Let us go up at once and occupy it, for we are well able to overcome it."* (13:30) Caleb and Joshua envisioned Canaan as a land of opportunity, but other 10 were simply scared by the size of their enemies as seen through their own eyes. Therefore, if you have a dream and a vision, you are called by God because you love him.

In 1 Corinthians 2:9 as it is written, *"What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him."*

Both a church and a person require vision, and of course pain, perhaps. But you tolerate the pain because in your vision you can see the beauty and the bounty that awaits you. The man or the woman who has caught a vision sees life's boundless possibilities. And the prize is worth the price!

Bruce Larson in his book *WIND AND FIRE* tells about a National Football League championship game many years ago in which Dallas was playing Green Bay which was dubbed, "The Ice Bowl." Green Bay was behind five points, with just seconds to play. Green Bay had the ball on the Dallas one foot line and it was fourth down. Everything hinged on that last play. In the huddle the quarterback of the Packers, Bart Starr, turned to Jerry Kramer, the offensive guard, and said, "Jerry, if you can move Jethro Pugh twelve inches to the left, you will make \$15,000." Jerry Kramer caught a vision of what to do. Jerry responded. Jethro was moved. Green Bay won.

Can you and I visualize what it would require for us to make the kind of impact on our community that God calls for us to make? What would we need to do to minister to the needs of persons within the sphere of influence of this congregation if we were all God calls us to be? "Where there is no vision, the people perish," says the Lord. Amen.