

## The Power of Vision

By Santiago Lange



There is such a thing as being so much a part of one's environment that we're simply not aware of it. It's the old story of not seeing the forest for the trees. Whatever our present vision is, it's limited and needs extension. Our visions shape us. Our visions control us. Our visions are determining factors in who and what we become. Our vision of how we want to look determines the clothing we buy, the hairdresser to whom we go and the accessories that we wear. Our vision of what it means to be a parent or a mate or a friend largely determines the relationship that we will have with other people. Our vision of what is a family is a determining factor of what our families become. Our vision of what is marriage is a determining factor in what our marriages become.

Likewise, visions shape the nations, movements, institutions and the church of Jesus Christ. Our visions or lack of "vision" determines our interests, our directions, our finances, and affects the totality of the human experience. No part is left untouched by its influence. Unless a church has a shared VISION, in due time, it will be forced to close its doors and cease to exist.

The first Christians were always moved by and with a VISION from God. Christianity emerged because a few devout people were converted from "dead living" to a God-centered and empowered VISION to claim some territory for the King of Kings. As someone once succinctly put it: "One person with CONVICTION is worth more than one hundred with only an interest."

We can no longer live in the past or live off its memories. We can no longer blame our problems on others that God has called to address those problems. We must focus on God's power and purpose for the church. If there is no VISION for faith development and dynamic discipleship, then the JOY of growing and moving forward in the faith will never be experienced. If there is no VISION for world evangelism, then the church becomes a museum rather than a launching pad to reach the lost and unsaved for Christ. If we believe that in the shining face of Jesus Christ we have our truth about God, the truth about the world, the truth about ourselves, then we must share him. If we don't use our VISION, we as a church will have a weakened capacity for love, warmth, compassion, kindness, goodness and encouragement towards others. A church that has a vision, will not ask for tasks equal to its power, but for power equal to its tasks.

In World War I a French General was asked, "Which side will win?" His reply is worth remembering: "The side that advances." We have what the world needs – the good news of sin forgiven. But it's good news to those outside the church only if they hear and accept it. It's the cure only if they know they are terminally ill.

Consider what our life would be like if Jesus had not come and we could not know Him. The limitations of the Christian Church are not a lack of talent or brain-power. In spite of the financial challenges we are currently facing, it is not money. It is not lack of ability – but availability. What hampers and keeps the church from being the church that Jesus Christ is calling it to be, is a lack of a bold and courageous vision—the kind of a dream that Christ wants us to dream in this place.

Please pray that God may grant us all more love, courage and determination. Let's continue to follow Christ and HIS vision. □