

## Living Out God's Vision

By Santiago Lange



Bartemaeus, the blind man, was sitting by the roadside. Every day, he would come there to beg for a few coins. As he was sitting by the roadside begging, Jesus and His disciples were coming down the road. Bartemaeus heard the noise and inquired who was coming. He was told that it was Jesus, the Nazarene. He had heard of this Jesus. Some claimed He was the Messiah. He'd heard of His miracles. Should he call out to Jesus? It was now or never.

How great must have been his desire to see. We can hardly imagine how much we would want to see again if something happened to take our sight. If we were blind and had a great fortune, we would probably gladly exchange that wealth for a pair of eyes that could see. How we value the physical sight we have!

But there is another kind of sight about which the Scripture speaks. It is a sight in many ways more important than our physical sight. The Bible calls it "vision." Proverbs 29:18 says, "**Where there is no vision, the people perish.**" The vision spoken of here is a vision, a which goes beyond our biological capacity to see. And it is this kind of vision which we so desperately need in the Church of Jesus Christ today. Life can either be a random journey without real direction, or a purposeful adventure, reaching for a lofty goal. It is the Proverbs vision that makes the difference.

The word used for vision in Proverbs refers to a revelation from God. It's talking about God's vision, God's direction, and God's guidance in our lives. It is talking about specific leadership, given to us by God for our lives. This vision is a picture of a desired future. It is a picture that can be seen by faith of what is not yet, but of what can be. But more than that, it is what God wants to be.

Proverbs 29:18 says that without that, we „perish“. In some translations, the word perish is rendered "unrestrained." Other translations have it as "undisciplined," "lawless," and "made barren." As this word is used in Proverbs, it has the connotation of letting something slip through our fingers by ignoring an opportunity. In other words, without a clear vision to direct us, we fail in the most miserable of ways, by missing what God has for us. We are reduced to lost opportunity and the danger of living an undisciplined existence.

The kind of vision we need is a vision which will give us a real and enduring purpose for our lives. It is the kind of direction which will enable us to find our worth in helping to introduce the Kingdom. It is the kind of vision which gives stability and guidance, joy and excitement. It is the kind of divine motivation which turns Christians into dedicated laborers for the Gospel.

We need that kind of vision, both as individuals and as a church. We need to understand that there is a supreme, overriding cause to which we should give ourselves. It is the cause of Jesus in reaching the world. It is the cause of reaching people with the Good News of Christ in such a way that they are changed forever by it. It is the cause of seeing people appropriating Jesus Christ and brought into the fellowship of the local church, where they can be disciplined by the Spirit. It is the cause of bringing glory to God and fitting into His eternal purpose. We must settle for nothing less. This is the kind of vision which can make our churches dynamic and alive.

Are we open to new opportunities God may show us? Are we willing to venture where we may never have gone before in and for Him? In order to experience the power of this vision, we must first see it by God's revelation and then, in divine participation, order our lives by it. The result is a "change of mind". Moreover, seeing the vision and acting on it in participation with the Spirit can change our actions, shape the life of our congregations, and positively influence and affect the world around us.

Seeing and sharing this vision not only guides and empowers us, it also unites us. As we catch the vision God has for our church, and share that vision by working together to see it happen, we are united in a way that produces the kind of dynamic Christ centered life that characterized the church in the New Testament.

What is our vision? It is in essence the same for every Christian church. It is found in the Great Commission of Jesus inviting us to preach the good news to everyone participating in making disciples of those who respond to His calling and drawing.

Christians often mention the purposes we have as a church: outreach, fellowship, worship, stewardship and discipleship. We are here to communicate Christ, celebrate Christ's presence, educate Christ's followers, exercise God's gifts, and demonstrate Christ's love. These are our purposes. That is healthy church!

God has great things in store for us as we unite together to become what He is calling and changing us to be. □