

# ALL CHRISTIAN'S FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL

## VISIONS: AN EXPRESSION OF GOD'S MIND

i) **The key thought:** "Where there is no vision (revelation), the people perish (cast off restraint); but he that kept the law, happy (blessed) is he." Proverbs 29:18 (KJV, NW).

ii) **Introduction:** "Vision is essential for survival. It is spawned by faith, sustained by hope, sparked by imagination and strengthened by enthusiasm. It is greater than sight, deeper than a dream, and broader than an idea. Vision encompasses vast vistas outside the realm of the predictable, the safe, and the expected. No wonder we perish without it ". (Charles Swindoll)

God has plan for His church; but much more interesting is the fact that God has a plan for each and every member of His body *Jer. 29:11; Joel 2:28*. We are not created in life to be "going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it " (*i.e. aimlessly*) *Job 1:7*. You are designed for a specific placement. Before you were born He knew you and has designed your life for a specific goal and assignment *Jer. 1:4-8; Ex. 1:1-2; 3:7-12; Eph. 1:4-6; Rom. 8:29-30*.

Your placement in the grand master plan of God is located by vision; vision is the path-finding tool in the hand of the believer. Vision is the unfolding of a divine plan as it relates to an individual. It is having a supernatural insight as to one's placement in life. We don't invent vision but vision summons us.

iii) **What vision is not**

(a) **AMBITION:** It is a personal expectation what you look forward to achieving, not necessarily what God intended for you but a self-made plan.

Absalom was ambitious and he was killed by his ambition. Ambition says "I want it by all means but vision says "I have it because God says it and I am in His plan. Ambition is a brother to anxiety, whereas vision is a neighbour of peace *Ps. 85:8*.

(b) **PRESUMPTION:** It is assuming that something is true without actually receiving a word from the Lord. Acting contrary to the instruction from God and following one's own way, though result may come out, but it is an act of presumption. It may receive the applause and approval of many but that is still presumption. *Num. 20:7-12*. When one zealously engages himself or herself in an assignment that God has not ordained him for, that is presumption *II Chr. 26: 16-20; II Sam. 6:6-8*.

**Causes of Presumption:**

(i) **Impression:** This is being carried away in one's thoughts about what one likes in others: their vocation, business, or ministry. These thoughts when compounded pose as a signal for direction, but they are what can be called an impression. *Prov. 23:7* "Prove all things and hold fast that which is good" *I Thess, 5:21*. Don't mistake impression for vision.

(ii) **Imagination:** It is the act of image formation. It is very powerful but it can be destructive when it is handled out of the context of the Word of God. Though powerful, imagination is not vision.

(iii) **Situation:** This is the direction arrived at as a result of what one is going through at a particular time. God can use situations to guide His people (*e.g. The persecution of the church at Jerusalem led to the spreading the gospel among others*) but one must not act presumptuously, that a particular situation is an indication of the call or vision from God.

*"I have not sent these prophets; yet they ran" Jer. 23:21.* That your job is not going on fine might not be an indication that God is calling you into the work of the ministry, wait until you have received a clearer word from the Lord.

(iv) **Reaction:** Many are doing what they are doing today just because they dislike something in their Ex-Pastor or Minister. This has led to break-away syndrome in the church today. What you detest in others that has led you to break-away is what others will see in you also and many more will break-away. God is not the author of confusion, He has a better way; apart from the way of confusion, in placing you at your God appointed place in the ministry.

Moses slowed down the plan of God for his life as a result of "reaction", vision came after 40 years in the wilderness. Heed Bible's warning in *Ecc. 7:17*. Other sources of presumption are Confirmation, Association and Natural Instinct. Vision is vision and presumption is presumption.

#### (iv) **Receiving God's Vision**

God's given vision is a product of God working in us. He creates the vision and we just receive it, henceforth it becomes the focal point of our lives. It is not what we perceived needs to be done but it is divinely sourced directive, which draws a response from us and calls us forth into action. Vision from God summons us.

Vision from God seeks out of the desire to know and do the will of God and to become what God wants us to become. Vision from God can be seen, heard, experienced, personal and prophetic. God's leaders should be confident of the fact that God is more than willing to communicate his mind and will to His servants. Hence, they need to spend time with God to discover this purpose of God to them. *Heb 11:23-27; Ex. 3:1-10.*

Discovering this vision of God is the only way that we as Christians can live the fruitful, abundant, fulfilled lives that God promises us *Eph. 2:10; John 10:10*. Example of Moses *Ex. 4:1-8; Joseph Gen. 37:3-11 with 40:23-41; 9-16; 32-45.*

Jesus is the head of His Church, as the head, His function is to direct us. Is it likely that He will lead 20 this way and another 5 people of the same corporate vision in another diverse way? No, God is not the author of confusion,- He will always lead us together under the same corporate vision. Of course, there will be minor differences, but discovering and obeying the mind of Christ enables unity in the spirit. In fact, unity becomes automatic as we function under the headship of Jesus.

(v) **Corporate Vision:**

All Christian churches, ministries - in fact, every work of God - should be founded on corporate vision. Corporate vision is received by an individual, but is not limited to that person alone. It is given by God to enable His will to be carried out by a group of people (*most of God's work is carried out by teams of people*). Here, God releases His vision to one person and then catches other people up into it so that the vision can be fulfilled.

Plurality of vision in a church set-up will bring confusion and division (division) and God is not the author of confusion but in fulfilling God's giving vision, it takes more than one person. But it is important that all the team members should catch the vision so that together they can run with it to the glory of God. (*Example of God's given vision: The building of an ark for the salvation of people and animals from an impending danger of flood. Gen. 6:5-8; 14-22*).

(vi) **The components of corporate vision:** Visionary, ENABLERS, AND SUSTAINERS.

(a) **Visionary:** The way God has moved throughout history is finding a person who would be a creative source of His VISION. This is why some churches become suddenly alive after 200 years and why some can be a huge success after only a few years - God has founded and planted a person through whom He could source His vision. Here he is called VISIONARY. if you take away a visionary from a church, it may run for a while, but it will eventually stagnate, and become traditional and ineffective. Moses is an example of creative vision for the people of Israel.

(b) & (c) **Enablers and sustainers:** A vision needs people to maintain it. God calls people to actually lift up His vision on daily basis by doing the work the vision Created Without these people the vision could not be successfully outworked. These people do what is necessary to solidify the vision practically and to keep it going. The ENABLERS get the vision organised and take up more difficult leadership tasks; then it is up to the people we have called SUSTAINERS to carry out most of the work of the vision.

Moses - the source of a creative vision (VISIONARY) for his people.

ENABLERS: Aaron (*spokesman*); Joshua (*director, Army Captain, Moses' aide*); Bezalel (*craftsman, builder*); Hur (*uplifter*); Caleb (*encouraged*); Jethro (*advisor*). The Exodus 3 experience did not belong to these men, only Moses. These men were called by God to enable the vision that was sourced in Moses to become practical reality. In case of Moses, his sustainers were the Levites, the sons of Aaron; the judges, the leaders of the 12 tribes, the master craftsman/designers, and the 70 Elders etc. These men were responsible for particular areas of activity of the enablers.

In our individual heart there is a cross and a throne. If our ego is on the throne, then Jesus is on the cross. If Jesus is on the throne, our ego therefore is on the cross. Children of God should carefully refuse to take credit for accomplishment, knowing that any good that came in our life has resulted from God's working through us. And such must not be encouraged or supported in the body of Christ for the Bible says that we shall be held responsible for whatever we do in the body. May the truth of God's word be acceptable to us.