

## THE CHIEF SHEPHERD'S VISION

*"Where there is no vision, the people perish" Proverbs 29:18*

*"Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables" Habakkuk 2:2b*

Jesus gave His disciples His vision: Matthew 28:19-20 "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen"; and in Mark 16:15-18 "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

Luke 24:46-48, "And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things."

In John 20:30-31 "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."

As stated above, Jesus gave His disciples His vision, and the apostles who carried out His vision passed it on to the church. The church that followed the vision may deemed themselves to be Apostolic. There is no new vision or revelation. To continue in the apostle's doctrine, we must also believe as the apostles did, that if a teaching did not agree with the testimony of the apostolic eyewitnesses, then it arose from the spirit of the antichrist (1 John 4:2-3).

We are therefore, Pentecostal Apostolic restorationists. We attempt to return the church to its apostolic roots. This is the vision that I promote. This is the biblical orthodox view. We also know that orthodoxy without orthopraxy is incomplete. Orthodoxy is what we believe, and orthopraxy is practicing what we believe. You can't have one without the other.

If we are going to win the lost for Christ, we must speak the same thing and have the same vision. There cannot be competing visions for a given church. The

vision for the church is not given to the congregation or under shepherds in the church. God does not operate in this fashion. If you read the book of Revelation, you will notice that the message was given to the angel of the church. The pastor who receives the vision must have the utmost confidence in those who labor with him in the gospel. The church is not to operate on the basis of friendship, clicks or family ties, but in the love of God and the Holy Ghost. Some say blood is thicker than water. Yes, blood is thicker than water, but the blood washed and Holy Ghost filled believers are twice born, ARE NEW CREATURES!

Jesus said to Peter, "Do you love me? Feed my sheep, feed my lambs". It takes the love of God to carry out the vision Jesus gave to His apostles.

Not only must we feed the sheep and the lambs of RCC, but we must reach out to the whole world one block at a time, one soul at a time. You cannot count the shepherd's vision null and void. You may not understand the vision, but pray and fast that the Lord will give you understanding.

Members should be able to communicate with the pastor in various venues and must understand and feel the pastor's heartbeat. This is the only way you can truly embrace and understand the vision. You cannot follow the pastor's vision if you have your own vision. I'm speaking of the ministry's vision, not your personal vision outside of this ministry.

The vision given to this church is not the pastor, but God's vision through the pastor. God always works through leaders. Joshua's vision wasn't any different than Moses' vision. Joshua didn't try to have his own vision, but to walk as Moses led the way. Because he followed in Moses' footsteps, when Moses' time was up, God said to Joshua, "Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel."

God gave Joshua Moses' congregation because Joshua was faithful to Moses' vision. There is no more important character trait in God's economy than a man's faithfulness. It distinguishes him in a way greater than does his ability. (Amos 3:3) Can you and your pastor walk in disagreement? The pastor's vision must be your own vision, and not the other way around. You must operate in the frame work of the pastor's vision.

Observe your pastor, know his/her profile. Every profile is different. Isaiah's vision was different from Jeremiah's vision, Paul's was different from Peter's. They didn't have the same DNA. No one does. Yet, they had unity. Yes, there can be unity during diversity. Study to see how you can walk in unity with your leader. Psalm 133 is a good principle to follow. *"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore."*

There is a special anointing that flows through the organism when we follow the vision of the leader. The anointing ceases when the unity is broken. God is not in the midst. Jesus said *"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."*

You must have the same spirit and the same mind as your leader. Paul said, *"let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."* This is the apostolic practice.

Paul further said, *"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."* You must have the same vision, the same spirit. Christ is not divided, neither are we to be divided.

The vision of the church is given by God to the angel of the church. It is the role of the leader to delegate and assign duties and responsibilities to the under shepherds and staff. The pastor is not expected to carry out all of the responsibilities of the church. All saints are ministers in the body of Christ.

You must be incredibly loyal to your pastor. This is of utmost importance if the church is to operate as Christ intended. There will be times when you disagree with the vision. However, there is a time and place to communicate your disagreement. But this must not be done in public. Sometimes you must take low. Your job is to lift your pastor, hold his/her arms up as Caleb and Joshua held up Moses' arms. There will be those who will try to crucify your pastor. *Jesus said if they do this to a green tree, what will they do with a dry tree.* Never try to make your pastor look small. If you bring your pastor down, you will bring yourself down also.

Know your place. If you are not the pastor, don't pretend to be the pastor. John the Baptist could have claimed to be the Christ, but he said *I am just a*

*voice, I must decrease that He might increase. He is preferred before me.* Learn to abide in your calling, know your pastor's standards, and don't settle for anything less. You not only represent Jesus, you represent your pastor as well. If you can't respect your pastor, you must respect the office of the pastor, or you might just want to find another pastor. To you, your pastor is the best person in the world. The bible says, *obey those that have the rule over you and submit to their authority for they watch for your soul, that they must give account for you, don't let the pastor grieve over you that would not be profitable for you.*

Don't take engagements without checking with your pastor first. I consider this a cardinal sin against leadership. The pastor might have something for you to do, or may want to support you.

You must commit yourself to your pastor's vision while developing your own vision to blend with his. Ask yourself the question...*what is my vision and my commitment to ministry?*

I conclude this message with a statement of my own commitment to ministry:

1. I will affirm and reaffirm the fundamentals of the apostolic faith and Christian living, to myself and to the people I serve.
2. I will pursue life in the Spirit-including communion with Christ, the leadership of the Spirit in all things and the anointing of the Spirit in all that I do.
3. I will seek a balance, well-rounded life and ministry: In Spirit and Word, in preaching and teaching, in evangelism and discipleship.
4. I will love, respect and encourage people.
5. I will be merciful, and I will believe in people. If I am to err, I will err on the side of mercy. I will give people the benefit of the doubt. I will bend, but not break, to give people, the opportunity to grow and develop.
6. I will not seek personal gain, position, or glory.
7. I will serve God and serve people.

My heart is full of gratitude and love – thank you for allowing me to be your Pastor. May God keep and ever bless you. I love you....Christ is Risen!

*Chief Apostle Clarence Weston, Sr., Ph.D., Pastor*