

The High Calling

a bimonthly publication of The Francis Asbury Society

Pentecostal Vision

By Stan Key

Pentecost Sunday (May 24), invites us to reflect once again upon the Person and work of the Holy Spirit. Who is he? Why has he come? What is the mark of his presence? How does he manifest himself among us? These are questions of vital importance. A long history of contentious debates and church splits attest to the fact that answering such questions touches our deepest convictions and most passionate feelings.

This issue of *The High Calling* focuses on just one aspect of the Spirit-filled life: vision and the ability to see. Jesus expressed it this way to Nicodemus: “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born from above he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). We simply cannot see like God sees until the sanctifying Spirit cleanses and fills our hearts. Education and human effort may point us in the

right direction, but only the Spirit of God can open our eyes so we can see reality! After following Jesus for two years in the best theological education program in the history of the world, the disciples continued to bumble around in semi-darkness! In frustration at the end of a particularly disappointing day, Jesus plaintively asked the Twelve: “Having eyes do you not see, and having ears do you not hear?... Do you not yet understand?” (Mark 8:18, 21).

The gift of the Spirit is poured out to open the eyes of disciples who resemble the blind man in Mark 8:22–26.

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Tell Me Your Dreams and I'll Tell You Your Future

By Stan Key

The day of Pentecost came with signs and wonders: a rushing mighty wind, tongues of fire on the disciples' heads, and speaking in unknown languages. Such manifestations provoked the citizens of Jerusalem to ask, “What does this mean?” (Acts 2:1-4, 12). In answer to their question, Peter explained that this is what the prophet Joel had prophesied long ago:

*And in the last days it shall be, God declares,
That I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh,
And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
And your young men shall see visions,
And your old men shall dream dreams...
(Acts 2:17; see Joel 2:28–29).*

How interesting that the *first* thing Peter talks about when explaining the significance of Pentecost is vision.

For men and women, for young and old, and for slaves and freed men, the Holy Spirit is given so that all God's children can dream dreams and see visions. There are no distinctions

based on gender, age, or social standing. This is for everyone! Peter is saying that what happens tomorrow is determined by what we see today. The remainder of the book of Acts describes what a Pentecostal vision looks like. While many leaders and pastors today talk about the importance of vision, you can recognize if a dream has been inspired by the Holy Spirit if the following characteristics are present:

Big

It works like this: If you serve a little god you will dream little dreams, but if you serve a God as big as the One described in the Gospel, then you can't help but begin to see visions of things beyond your wildest imagination (Eph. 3:20). On the day of Pentecost, 3,000 people were converted. Big God! From one chapter to the next, the

book of Acts illustrates the expanding growth and deepening influence of the Gospel until by the close of the New Testament we read of believers in “Caesar's household” (Phil. 4:21). We begin to understand why

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. (Hebrews 11:1).

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A Surgeon's Vision for Eternity: One Step at a Time

by Bruce Steffes



Bruce Steffes is a surgeon, entrepreneur, medical educator, and the Chief Medical Officer of the Pan-African Academy of Christian Surgeons (PAACS). A ministry of the Christian Medical and Dental Association, PAACS trains African physicians in Africa, for Africa, and for a lifetime of service (see www.paacs.net). He left his

U.S.-based practice in December 1997 and has been involved with medical missions ever since.

1. Please share with our readers the vision that God placed in your heart and describe the current status of the realization of this dream.

I believe God rarely gives us a blueprint or vision for our lives in its entirety.

Should He do so, I know I would spend my time trying to live by the blueprint instead of by faith. Ps. 119:105 reads: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." God has only shown me the way one step at a time—and I have had the choice whether to follow. In the midst of a thriving surgical practice, He asked me to step out of it. Once out of it, He showed me the great need of suffering people and asked me to consider exploring medical missions. Once in medical missions, He showed me the need to train African physicians and asked me to consider the Pan-African Academy of Christian Surgeons.

2. Many believe that "visions" are mystical types of experiences reserved for the spiritual elite. Describe how this vision came to you.

I have often wished that there had been some mystical, clearly divine and clearly supernatural experience. It may have been easier during the times of doubt to cling to that experience. Instead, my changes have been more like C.S. Lewis' experience when he stated that he started that fateful trip as a non-Christian and finished it as a believer. For me, God has used an intellectual process—and sometimes an experiential process—to make these various changes of direction under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

3. How did you respond to such a vision? What was your reaction?

More often than not, I have intellectually protested mightily until I yielded body and soul. However, I continue to learn to trust His path for me.

4. As you have sought to follow the vision, what have been your greatest challenges?

That is an easy answer—me! And then after that, all the others. While I fully recognize that it is God's work, I too often claim fame or blame when neither is mine. The Accuser is always willing to nudge me in either direction. And if I feel I am approaching perfection, God uses others—and my reaction to them—to show me that there is a great deal of work to be done within my own heart.



5. What are the primary lessons God has taught you through this journey of faith?

That He remains Jehovah-Jireh and is worthy of our faith; that despite the limited talents and gifts that He has given me, there are none that He actually needs; and that anything worthwhile that is ever accomplished is His activity and to His glory.

6. What would you like to say to someone who feels they are stuck in a rut and living in spiritual mediocrity? Does God have a vision for everyone?

The closest thing to a vision I ever had was the blinding realization one night that God really loves me despite my inadequacies—enough for Christ to die for me and had I been the only one, He still would have died for me despite my unworthiness. So the vision that sustains me is not a ministry, or a glimpse of what He might allow me to do in Africa, but rather the clear vision of being with Him for eternity, and I strive to hear, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." That is a vision that can sustain each one of us and allows us to live a life of obedience—no matter to what God has called us.

Educating for Eternity through Truth and Excellence

By Anita Gajewski



Anita Gajewski and her husband were one of four couples that prayed for and started Legacy Christian Academy (LCA) in Caseyville, IL, over 22 years ago for their own children as well as the community (see www.legacychristianacademy.info). She has a Bachelor's Degree in Education from Eastern Illinois University and a

Master's Degree in Christian School Administration from Pensacola Christian College.

1. Please share with our readers the vision that God placed in your heart and describe the current status of the realization of this dream.

There are times when God is knocking on my door, trying to get me to sit down in quiet with Him for a few minutes and meditate on the past, the present, and the future of Legacy Christian Academy. I ask Him to show me the school from His viewpoint; what He wants accomplished with the ministry He put into fruition over twenty years ago. When I am pliable, He is faithful to give me visions of the future of LCA.

2. Many believe that “visions” are mystical types of experiences reserved for the spiritual elite. Describe how this vision came to you.

A couple of years ago, as I watched the enrollment at Legacy Christian Academy decrease with the economic problems of the time, I was praying and asking God to show me how to make the school motto more of a reality: *Educating for Eternity through Truth and Excellence*. The vision that came to mind was of a classroom with 10–12 students sitting in some of the desks. But all I could see were the empty desks.

3. How did you respond to such a vision? What was your reaction?

God reminded me that money shouldn't be a deterrent for students who truly wanted an excellent Christian education. As I asked Him to show me where to begin, He said, “For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in...” (Matthew 25). That's all it took. I went to the Christian school board and, though they were cautious, they agreed that if there were empty desks in a classroom we should open admission to students from our area who couldn't afford Christian school.

We now start the year with children who come to school with a chip on their shoulder or a wall between them and God and within a couple of weeks they have become a different person, no longer defensive but feeling safe and content and loved.

4. As you have sought to follow the vision, what have been your greatest challenges?

One of the greatest challenges we face is acceptance—in the community and in the church. Because our school is 70% minority some people feel LCA must be the school of “problem children” or a dumbed-down curriculum. It is truly heart-breaking to see such prejudices, especially from Christians. Our prayer is for God's people to become color blind.



6. What would you like to say to someone who feels they are stuck in a rut and living in spiritual mediocrity? Does God have a vision for everyone?

I have learned over the past 22 plus years that I never walk alone. All I need to do is to listen and obey. His ways are so far beyond mine. I leave you with this from His Word:

And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory...” (Ephesians 3).

Giving Up to Go Up: A Vision for Church Planting

By Ezra Byer



Ezra Byer is the lead pastor of Discovery Pointe Church in Scarborough, Ontario. He is happily married to his beautiful wife, Janan, and is the author of *What Kind of God Do I Serve?*. Ezra did his undergraduate education at God's Bible School & College in Cincinnati, OH, and pastored for three years

as an associate at Eastlake Community Church in Moneta, VA. In the fall of 2014, Eastlake sent Ezra and his wife to start Discovery Pointe Church. On March 22, Discovery Pointe held their opening service in Scarborough, Ontario (see www.discoverypointechurch.ca).

1. Please share with our readers the vision that God placed in your heart and describe the current status of the realization of this dream.

When I was fifteen years of age, I read Jim Cymbala's book *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire*. Through that book, I sensed a calling from God to move to the Toronto area and plant churches. It is our goal to plant 10 churches in the Greater Toronto Area by the year 2025. Currently, we are working to establish church number one with our core team of twenty people.



2. Many believe that "visions" are mystical types of experiences reserved for the spiritual elite. Describe how this vision came to you.

My vision for Toronto came after a time when I completely gave God everything in my life. At the time, I struggled with looking at God through the lens of other people rather than just communicating directly with God. There was a part of me that wanted to control my life and live as I wanted to live. Looking back, it was not until I died to myself that God began to birth in me a monumental passion and vision to help others.

3. How did you respond to such a vision? What was your reaction?

I immediately embraced the vision God gave me. Because I embraced it, I experienced a whole new level of clarity in life. I did not want to get bogged down in mindless high school activities. I had no interest in partying my way through college. And I certainly did not want to fake my way through being an associate pastor. Having a vision gave me a passion for "insignificant roles" and helped me to see the big picture in the midst of difficult times in ministry.

4. As you have sought to follow the vision, what have been your greatest challenges?

Hands down, the greatest challenge I have faced has been the decision to take my initial surrender with God to new heights. As my vision started to become clearer, I found God had to refine me in deeper ways. I stopped asking if I was doing the "wrong" thing and began asking God to show me how to do the "best" thing.

5. What are the primary lessons God has taught you through this journey of faith?

1) I must give up in order to go up. Every time God takes you to a new level he will always require a new level of surrender to him; 2) My ability to minister in public is directly tied to the quality of my time before God in private; 3) Partner with others and never be arrogant enough to think I can accomplish a God-sized vision with only my human-sized ambition; 4) Surrender my vision continually to God and seek to be "popular" with those who know me best; 5) Operate in the fear of God and not in the fear of men.

6. What would you like to say to someone who feels they are stuck in a rut and living in spiritual mediocrity? Does God have a vision for everyone?

If you are feeling stuck spiritually and want God to give you a vision, start by: 1) Asking yourself if there is any area in your life not surrendered to God. If there is, surrender that area and wait for God to speak to you on his time schedule; 2) Joining someone else's vision and help them succeed. Sometimes your "vision" is to join the dream that God has already birthed into the heart of someone else. Rest assured, if you refuse to do anything until God gives you a vision, you never will receive one. Grow where you are right now!

From Skeptical to Trusting in God's Healing Power

By Bob Paeglow



Robert Paeglow is a family physician who lives and works in inner city Albany, NY. Dr. Bob was called by God and miraculously accepted to medical school in 1990 at the age of 36. A veteran of over 30 medical missions, Dr. Bob has ministered in medicine and preached the gospel on six continents. He founded Koinonia Primary Care in his boyhood neighborhood, the poorest in Albany, in 2001 (see <http://www.friendsofdrbobpaeglow.com>).

1. Please share with our readers the vision that God placed in your heart and describe the current status of the realization of this dream.

God's specific words to me were, "Take my healing power right into your office. Take my prayer warriors and worshippers right in, and in the atmosphere they provide you will see miracles like you've only dreamed about." This vision seemed impossible to me because at the time I was employed for a large secular medical center in Albany, NY. Within months, I was privileged to establish Koinonia Primary Care right in the middle of the poorest neighborhood in Albany, right around the corner from where I grew up.

Fourteen years later we see 6,500 patient visits/year. Every patient is prayed for by me, and I have witnessed many miracles.

2. Many believe that "visions" are mystical types of experiences reserved for the spiritual elite. Describe how this vision came to you.

I received the vision while desperately crying to the Lord to take me home to heaven. I had worked 39 straight days seeing over 17,000 patients in Africa. I was physically sick, mentally and spiritually exhausted, financially broke, and terribly depressed. I felt I had nothing left to give. God had to allow me to get to that point because I am always wandering away from Him and trusting in my own efforts. When I was at the very end of myself, that's when the vision came.

3. How did you respond to such a vision? What was your reaction?

I was a bit skeptical. I thought that I was so sick I might be hallucinating. God had to repeat the vision and provide really specific details such as the exact location, the cost of the building, and the favor to come up with \$250,000 within five days. God continued to confirm His vision through miracles because my faith was weak. I felt

woefully unqualified to fulfill what He was asking me to do. I found out later that a number of previous residents of the building had prayed for many years for such a work to be established.

4. As you have sought to follow the vision, what have been your greatest challenges?

The greatest challenge is to continually trust in Him. When I started, I had nothing. I had to cry out to God desperately for everything. I felt so in over my head. I saw God's hand move in tremendous miracles. These days I have come into relative prosperity, and I have been honored by a lot of national media. Many in medicine, especially students, look up to me. I always have to struggle to remain humble and remind myself that everything I have is because of Jesus.



5. What are the primary lessons God has taught you through this journey of faith?

I've learned the place of experiencing God is honestly crying out to Him and throwing myself continuously on the mercy of His court. I've learned to trust and take one small step toward God when He calls. He does the rest.

6. What would you like to say to someone who feels they are stuck in a rut and living in spiritual mediocrity? Does God have a vision for everyone?

Obviously my salvation. I was a total agnostic, but also my whole ministry was total grace. I did not deserve heaven or the privilege of being miraculously accepted to medical school at age 36, when I wasn't even qualified for an interview. I scoffed at believers and in my own way persecuted the church. I am by nature a vile sinner. What God has done for me He can do for anybody.

William Carey (1761–1834) is considered the father of modern missions when we remember his motto: “Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God.”

New

The book of Acts is an unfolding adventure as the disciples keep moving from one new experience to another: mass evangelism, persecution, cross-cultural ministries, martyrdom, famine relief, raising the dead, conflict resolution, etc. Like the passengers on the starship *Enterprise*, the disciples keep boldly going where no man has gone before. Following a dream inspired by the Holy Spirit will always prove to be a spine-tingling, heart-pounding, breath-taking, white-knuckle adventure. You can be sure that a church needs a baptism of the Spirit when its primary goal is to preserve the status quo and committee meetings are punctuated by what some have called the seven last words of the church: “We’ve never done it this way before.”

Holy

The Holy Spirit can only inspire a holy vision. If your dreams are ego-centric and full of selfish ambition then you can be certain that those dreams did *not* come from the sanctifying Spirit of God! A big dream in a carnal heart is a very dangerous combination.

When James and John expressed a desire to sit at the right and left hand of Jesus when he comes in his glory, Jesus did not rebuke their request but told them they did not know what they were asking (Mark 10:35-45). The problem was not their ambition but their *carnal* ambition! Jesus *wants* us to desire greatness in his kingdom. But until our ambitions are purified by the sanctifying Spirit, we tend to confuse building our kingdom with building his!

Costly

Many contemporary books on leadership portray visioning as something that will enable you to achieve your goals and live your best life now. Follow your dream and you can be healthy, wealthy, and happy. The book of Acts gives us another picture. “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses (Greek: *martyrs*)...” (Acts 1:8). To follow a dream that is birthed by the Spirit is to follow a path that leads to a cross. When Paul explained to King Agrippa that he had not been “disobedient to the heavenly vision,”

he was in a courtroom wearing chains and facing charges that would likely lead to his execution (Acts 26:19). Dietrich Bonhoeffer understood this principle well when he wrote, “When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die.”

Evangelistic

Yet another way to verify if a vision is from God is to ask whether or not it leads to the conversion of souls. On that first Pentecost, Peter underscored this aspect of vision when he said, “And everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Acts 2:21). Even when dreams involve commendable social ministries such as providing medical care for the sick or educating the poor and underprivileged, if the vision is a Pentecostal vision, you can be sure that its ultimate goal will always be that men and women come to a saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Corporate

Peter may have been the spokesman on the day of Pentecost but there were 120 other believers around him, helping to clarify and implement the vision. When a vision is from God it always involves a community of believers, not just an individual. One night Paul received a vision calling him to Macedonia. The next day he shared that vision with his traveling partners. Speaking for the entire

The only thing worse than being blind is having sight but no vision. (Helen Keller)



team, Luke wrote that “*we*” concluded that “God had called *us*” to go over to Macedonia and preach the Gospel (Acts 16:9–10). Paul got the vision, but all of them got the call!

Conclusion

Psychologists often tell us that our *past* determines who we are and what we do. The Gospel tells us another story. It’s not our past but our *future* that determines our true identity and purpose in life! The infilling of the Holy Spirit makes it possible for us to be finally healed from the wounds of our past and set free from the bondage of our present so that we can dream dreams and see visions of the future God has prepared for us! It is not where you’ve *been* that determines your destiny but where you are going! Stop being crippled by your past and begin now to be empowered by God’s future! That is what Pentecost is all about.

A Burning Heart for Children

By Christina Whitworth



Christina Whitworth is a mother and grandmother who lives in Georgia with her husband, John. Beyond her volunteer efforts in Uganda, she is involved in a wide range of ministries in her community and church.

1. Please share with our readers the vision that God placed in your heart and describe the current status of the realization of this dream.

In 2003, I had the privilege of visiting Uganda. The one experience of that trip that burned into my heart was our visit to a school for over 400 students. Situated on a quarter of an acre of land, it was dark, dirty, and *very* crowded. With these limited resources, the school was trying to help the poorest in their village have a chance for an education. As I returned home to America, I simply couldn't get that school off my mind. The burden was such that I began to sense that God wanted *me* to do something about it! But how? What could I do? I was just a mom, not a missionary. And I lived so far away.

After talking to several friends, we decided to form the students into a children's choir and bring them to America to sing and raise funds for a new school. I had never done anything even remotely similar to this! But there seemed to be no one else. We formed that choir, had them trained by a girl who became my daughter-in-law, and on three separate occasions between 2006 and 2008, we brought them to America. With the money we raised, we bought 30 acres of land just north of Kampala and built the Royal School and Orphanage for these precious children.

2. Many believe that "visions" are mystical types of experiences reserved for the spiritual elite. Describe how this vision came to you.

There really wasn't anything mystical about it apart from the Creator of the universe speaking clearly in his

Word to his child! Jesus just spoke to my heart from Psalm 78:5-7. The verse gave me the vision. We simply wanted to disciple these children so that they could grow up to disciple others.

3. How did you respond to such a vision? What was your reaction?

I took a deep breath and simply said, "Well, Lord, this is a whole lot bigger than I am. In fact, there is no way I can do this, but if you can somehow accomplish your plans through someone like me, I'm willing."

4. As you have sought to follow the vision, what have been your greatest challenges?

The greatest challenge has been the disappointment I have felt as some have come alongside to "help" with the work but never seemed to grasp the core vision of making disciples.

5. What are the primary lessons God has taught you through this journey of faith?

There was a season when the work was so demanding and time consuming that

I realized I was neglecting my relationship with Jesus. Ministry without Jesus quickly becomes man's good deeds without his Spirit flowing through you. Once I confessed this to God, I found his grace enabled me to reconnect with him in a face-to-face relationship. Now, my

ministry is more consistently an overflow of my relationship with Him.

6. What would you like to say to someone who feels they are stuck in a rut and living in spiritual mediocrity? Does God have a vision for everyone?

Get alone with Jesus and delight in his Word. Find your contentment simply in abiding in him. Tell him that you are available to be used wherever and whenever. And yes, God certainly has a vision for everyone and it's no secret what it is: "Go and make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19).



Pentecostal Vision *continued from page 1*

When Jesus touches their eyes, they see. Praise God! And yet their vision is partial at best and erroneous at worst: "I see men, but they look like trees, walking." Pentecost is the promise of a deeper touch of grace that enables confused, bumbling disciples to see "everything clearly." On the day of Pentecost, suddenly, these men and women began to see distinctly what had been there all along: the loving Father above them, the risen Christ beside them, the needy world around them, and the powerful Spirit within them.

The lead article explains more about "seeing clearly." Then, a series of personal testimonies illustrate this Pentecostal reality. You will be blessed as you read the stories of "average" disciples who explain how the Spirit of God opened their eyes to see something that wasn't (yet) there! But once they saw what God was showing them, they responded in faith and obedience to the heavenly vision. How could they do otherwise? My prayer is that God will use these stories to encourage you to seek God's Pentecostal fullness so that you too, can see visions and dream dreams... and be used of God to change the world!

**Where there is no vision, the people perish.
(Proverbs 29:18 KJV)**



Hemlock Inn Retreats 2015

Bryson City, NC

August 25-27

August 27-29

The Potter's House

*...Until Christ is formed in you
(Galatians 4:19).*

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