

Renewing our Vision

Introduction:

Over the next few weeks I want to share with you the importance of renewing our vision, both personally and corporately. The Bible reminds us that without vision people perish and fall short of God's purpose and grace for their lives. However with vision people can accomplish great things for the Kingdom of God. Vision has a way of disregarding its detractors and chasing its dream regardless of the opposition faced. True vision from God is the ability to see and become aware of a possible and positive future. It is joined with genuine faith and the attitude that with God I can do all things. And vision involves courage to put into action all the daily details leading to a bright and glorious future. Consider these famous predictions that underestimated the incredible power of vision.

- Thomas Watson, the chairman of IBM in 1943 said, "I think there is a market for maybe five computers in the world."
- Ken Olson, president and founder of Digital Equipment Corporation said in 1977, "There is no reason why anyone would want a computer in their home."
- Consider this Western Union memo from 1876: "The Telephone has too many shortcomings to be seriously considered as a means of communication."
- Or consider the words of Decca Recording Company, when why they turned down signing the Beatles in 1962: "We don't like their sound and guitar music is on the way out."
- Last but not least, Charles Duell, commissioner of the U.S. Office of Patents said in 1899, "Everything that can be invented has been invented."

You get the idea. Vision has a way of ignoring those who say it can't be done and doing it anyway. And yet there are times in life when our vision fades, the flame of creativity and passion begins to dim and we can find ourselves going through the motions of life. This morning I want to remind us of our vision and in the weeks to come help us to renew our vision for life and ministry.

Mission and Vision – The National Picture:

As I speak to the mission and vision of our local church, I want to begin with the Big Picture of Canada. The mission of the Foursquare Gospel Church of Canada is to establish a Christ-centered national movement dedicated to serving people through planting and sustaining healthy local churches. We are the Canadian part of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel "dedicated unto the cause of inter-denominational and worldwide evangelism," quoting from the dedication statement on the cornerstone of Angelus Temple, the first Foursquare church started January 1, 1923.

The Foursquare Gospel is an unswerving presentation of Jesus Christ, God's Son, to every person in every culture and nation as:

1. **The Saviour:** The red colour reminds us of His bloodshed for our salvation and the cross symbolizes the pathway of His redemption of us. We all come to Jesus through receiving His love, by grace we are saved.
2. **The Healer:** The blue colour reminds us of the life-giving water that nourishes our soul, cleans us up from the mess of life and heals our hurts and the cup symbolizes our life that holds His healing. We are all hurt, physically, emotionally or spiritually in life and Jesus came to earth to heal every part of us.
3. **The Baptizer in the Holy Spirit:** The yellow/gold colour reminds us of the worth and dignity He restores to us as we receive the precious Holy Spirit in these fragile lives of ours and the bird (dove) symbolizes His coming from heaven to us. He gives us a valuable purpose and a job to do and we are given everything we need for life and godliness in the gift of the Holy Spirit.
4. **The Soon Coming King:** The royal purple colour reminds us of the kingdom of God that is to be spread throughout the earth. The crown symbolizes Jesus is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords and one day every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God.

The vision of the Foursquare Gospel Church of Canada is that of Jesus transforming people across Canada one life at a time, impacting communities through Holy Spirit empowered local churches, led by servant leadership teams.

- Result # 1: Transformed Lives - People of all walks of life and cultural backgrounds, touched by and changed by the love and grace of Jesus Christ
- Result # 2: Impacted Communities: Healthier families; safer streets; evidenced in lower crime rates; economic stability; more caring society; honest leaders.
- Result # 3: Holy Spirit Directed: "From the middle" force of life [that comes with having the Holy Spirit in charge] call, equipping, placing and empowering leaders.
- Result #4: Leaders Connected: Equipped, trained, resourced, celebrated, challenged and inspired partners in ministry, supported by servant leadership teams.
- Result # 5: Believers' Gifts Released: Leaders and members in local churches working with mission-focused teams, each person using their gifts, talents and abilities to participate in the great plan that God has for Canada.
- Result # 6: Healthy Local Churches: Powerful, influential, vibrant, reproducing, Spirit-filled local churches.

Mission and Vision – The Local Picture:

As a local congregation we desire to see all people restored to God's original design by establishing a community vision of apprehending God's heart and fulfilling his dreams. The values associated with Courts of Praise are:

1. A people of the gospel
2. A Christ-centred people
3. A spirit-filled people
4. A people of worship
5. A people of balance
6. A people with an open heart to all people
7. A people who all minister

8. A people who enjoy life
9. A people who serve
10. A people with a fresh vision

As we approach our relationship with God and each other, we passionately pursue and lifestyle of worship and intimate friendship with God. We invite one and all to participate and serve in the vision of our church respecting the diversity of people and personalities in the Body of Christ. In order to accomplish the vision we encourage hands on stewardship of our time, energy and resources. And in order to fulfill the purposes of God we believe that the Holy Spirit moves us together as a body in functional and relational interdependence under the headship of Christ, discipling, equipping and mentoring in the Holy Bible, with every member contributing as the body is brought to maturity. Under the direction of our God-given leadership we desire to see people released in their spiritual giftings in the context of our Christian community and times of gathering together. We believe that Christ's Church is made up of many races, creeds, colours, generations and denominations. Therefore, we commit ourselves to support the body in the community and at large and around the world.

This We Believe: In Essentials ~ Unity; In Non-Essentials ~ Liberty; In All Things ~ Charity (Christian Love)

Apprehending God's Heart and Fulfilling His Dreams:



In Conclusion:

This morning I have attempted to give you all the Big Picture, nationally and locally, of our mission and vision goals. Vision has a way of bring adventure to one's life. Listen to the following story.

I want to tell you about a young woman who was born in 1880 and had more than her fair share of setbacks and hardships. In spite of all of her trials, she refused to quit and refused to let any limitation hold her back.

She was accepted into Radcliffe College at the age of sixteen and graduated with great honours. Her single determination was to improve the lives of others and became an advocate for the blind. Her assistance helped the American Association for the blind become an institution. Her speaking skills and gentle spirit won her the admiration of audiences around the globe. She wrote four books, two of which become international bestsellers. One is still published today and is in more than fifty languages. There were lesser known works that are now out of print and one such volume was on the issue of faith. One quote from her states, "life is either a daring adventure or nothing at all." Her name is – Helen Keller. She has had streets named after her, as well as hospitals and schools.

She let nothing stand in her way. We need to remember that Helen was a healthy and vibrant young new born-child but suffered from Scarlet Fever at 19 months. The illness robbed Helen of both her sight and her hearing. Despite these horrible circumstances, Helen excelled at public speaking and became an international celebrity known for her intellectual prowess and strong wit. What made this remarkable woman excel? What made her achieve such amazing accomplishments? I believe that answer is simply – she dared to dream. She put her vision of a positive future into action and changed the course of history for many thousands of deaf and blind people. The word daring means to have an adventurous spirit, to live with a fearlessness and a sense of extreme boldness. It is enterprising and courageous in the face of opposition.

One of the greatest challenges for the church today is to restore that sense of vision and adventure. We all face the challenges of the nine-to-five life, trying to pay the bills and the busyness of family dynamics. Some of us have settled for a boring life when we are supposed to be living the adventure of a lifetime. Somewhere along the way we traded excitement for boredom. Somewhere along the way we exchanged daring for dullness. Somehow we gave up courage for complacency.

Jesus is looking for those who would be daring with vision on his behalf. He is looking for people who will stand for him and take a risk with their lives. He is searching for people like you and me who will be daring enough to apprehend his heart and fulfill his dreams.

In the weeks to come we will discover how to renew our vision for Jesus. We will find out how to follow him with a reckless abandon. Jesus is searching for a few daring hearts who will fully devote themselves to him and his purpose and grace for our lives.