



The Family Report

Loving God... Loving You...

April 13, 2008

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Reflections on Our Vision

Well, it was a little more than a year ago when we developed a vision. We all had a vision before then, but it was April 1st, 2007 when we came together to commit our common vision to paper. And, I think the one year mark is a fitting time to be reminded again of the framed statements in the back of the building and the block of text on the last page of the bulletin. A time to reflect on our successes as well as any shortcomings.

We can all look at each of the seven statements and find ways we could improve. And, while I encourage every one to seriously consider each statement and what more we can do to achieve it, that is not the purpose of this "reflection."

After realizing that it was more than a year ago when we created our vision, I thought back to that time. I reminisced about our Bible studies and all of the passionate remarks I heard. More than remembering Gary's five minute summary of his section of the book that lasted more

than thirty minutes, one statement that still rings in my head is something Amy said early in the study.

I may not get the quote exactly right, but she said that she could feel God working in our congregation, and she felt like something big was going to happen.

More than a year later, we must ask ourselves, "have big things happened?" I think it might be easy to say that, really, it's been quite a hum drum year. But, has it?

Looking back over the year, I am astonished at the blessings God has poured out on me personally, and on my Church family. I am reminded of Malachi 3:10 which says that God will pour so many blessings on us that we won't be able to contain them.

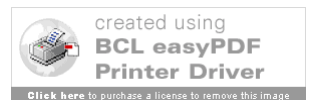
It was about a year ago when God delivered Rick from a terrible ailment. Looking at him today, one would never guess that just a few months ago he endured a grim prognosis and risky surgery.

When we stop to think about it, God has touched nearly every one of our fami-

lies personally in the past year with healing. We have watched Wayne's healing. We rejoiced with Lona and her family at her mother's recovery. Paulette is doing great after battling cancer. Even my own mother is more healthy today than she was a year ago thanks to the Lord and a recent medical procedure.

But, the Lord didn't stop at making us a healthier group, He also blessed us with more precious souls. I think that it has been an absolute delight to get to know Donna, to listen to her beautiful poetry, and to eat her delicious homemade pickles. It has also been great to have Katie, Shelby, Hayden, and Archer. Katie's cakes never cease to amaze me, and Archer always makes me laugh. And, our Christmas Celebration wouldn't have been the same without Shelby and Hayden. I also appreciate the addition of Garcia and Brenda and their sons and enjoy swapping stories with Brenda about the likenesses of our Johnies (even though the spelling is most likely not a

Don't forget our night of fellowship!!! @ the building @ 6 pm tonight



similarity). Chris and Lisa and their family have been very welcome faces lately, as well.

As you know, I haven't been here much longer than a year myself, and all of you who accepted me with open arms hold a special place in my heart. I probably don't tell you all I love you and appreciate you as much as I should, but it's not just words on paper when I say you mean a lot to me. The dinners, the surprise party, badminton games, boat trips, help moving, and all of the fellowship and encouragement have been nothing short of a true blessing.

And, while we all can agree that our spiritual blessings are far more important than monetary ones, we have reaped much earthly comfort from the Lord, as well. I don't know every one's salary by any means, but I do know that we travel in our cars to and from our warm houses and our gainful employment. We meet together each week in a sturdy building. I think the statistics put us in the top 5% of the world as far as our wealth is concerned. And, the Lord has not been content to let us continue without improvement. I know Rick and Aaron have both been blessed with new and better jobs in the last year. And, only God could have given Johnie his much wanted promotion several weeks after the supervisor "decided to go with some one else."

This is just the tip of the iceberg of abundance we enjoy. So, has God been among us? Have big things happened? That answer must be yes. But, I think the more important ques-

tion is, Can bigger things happen? That answer is also yes. And, we should all be asking ourselves how we can help in those efforts.

But, what of our vision, the topic of this piece? Well, one "big thing" would be the realization of our vision. And, while I don't think we have arrived (we are only one year into our two year endeavor for elders and deacons), I think we have made steps forward. One event touched me deeply, and it was in my reflection of this event that I was reminded of our vision.

As most of you know, Johnie received some very unsettling news two weeks ago during our worship. I'm only 23, and probably one of the least qualified to reflect on a year's worth of work in a congregation. Nor can I call back years of past experience. But, there have been times when I've seen how congregations handle crisis (one example comes to mind when a member passed out during communion... services went on and she received attention after the dismissal prayer... thank the Lord it didn't happen in the opening prayer, right?).

But, I'm reminded of our vision "to maintain and promote a true family environment where all may feel they belong and everyone knows each other's name." When Johnie received his news, people weren't wondering who the young man was who was so distraught. People weren't even sad about whatever must be going on, but back to worship. Every one has an investment in each other, and whatever news

has impacted Johnie is going to affect every one of us. It read on every one's faces and actions.

I'm also reminded of our vision "to become intimately aware of the needs of our congregation... and to actively try to meet those needs." If we need to become actively aware of needs in the middle of a sermon, then we do. If we need to meet those needs in the middle of worship through being some one's words when they can't find their own or through prayer, then we do.

And, the true catalyst for this entire writing: "to allow ourselves to be led only by His Word and Holy Spirit." I've heard a lot of negative preaching in my short life about being "Spirit-led." Very unfortunately, at one point in my life, I was taught that speakers who get up and "let the Spirit lead them" are liars, frauds, and show offs. But, praise God, it was never more obvious to me than in our Wednesday night worship service following Johnie's grandma's death that I was more sure that we are being led by His Holy Spirit.

Did the men who spoke, read, and prayed beautiful words of comfort prepare those words for weeks or days beforehand (as I was taught that "true" brethren do)? I believe that the entire service was extemporaneous and completely motivated by love. Man's preparation isn't that eloquent, nor can it provide the peace that passes understanding. Only God can get the credit for that.

In the words of a dear brother: Amen, Church.

Prayer Report

We have a wonderful privilege and honor to go to God in prayer. As you pray, please remember the following people:

Edward, Vicki's father, is dealing with several health issues. Please remember the family as they mourn the passing of Vicki's mother.

Keith, Coeta's brother, is sick. Also, for **Coeta**. She is currently struggling with depression. **Coeta's sister** is also struggling with health issues.

Ollie A., Coeta's friend, is battling cancer.

Nita M. is having eye problems.

Vince, Stacy's brother, has scar tissue on his brain.

Cathy M. is suffering from emphysema due to smoking cigarettes.

Shirley, Luther's daughter, is suffering from lupus.

Ladonna and Lauren, both Henry's friends, are suffering from cancer. Lauren is a freshman in high school and is only 15 years old.

Kevin, Randy's brother, is battling an addiction to drugs.

Olivia M. has cancer. She is only 5 years old.

Randy M. is dealing with heart trouble.

Frieda D. also is suffering from heart problems.

Dan, Randy's co-worker, had a stroke.

Brenda, Stacy's cousin, is going through a divorce. She has two children.

Johnny, Rick's brother, is serving in Iraq.

Ray, Wes's friend, suffered a stroke.

Karen, Wes's co-worker, has cancer. Her counts are going down after chemotherapy treatment.

Grant T., Randy's nephew, was recently diagnosed with Crohn's disease.

We want to always remember the entire **Tambov congregation** in our prayers.

Let us pray that they will have strong leadership.

Nellie, Pat's mom, is suffering from a blockage in her neck.

Leland D. is recovering from a stroke.

Gary's mother is suffering from brittle bones

Pearlie T., Wes's co-worker, is suffering from seizures.

Justin, Wayne's son, will be going to Iraq soon.

Additionally, remember

Mike, Sharon, and Jim C., Ron and Greta, Beth and Michael (friends of Kat and Don), **W.D.** (Randy's neighbor), **Pam** (Stacy's sister), **Ann** (Wayne's mom), **Garcia's father, Sarah** (Jeff and Lona's neighbor), **Don** (Randy's brother), **Clara** (Paulette's mom), **Chuck** (Katie's friend), **Hal M.** (Donna's friend), Donna also has a friend who is suffering from cancer, and **Val V.**

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Justin, Wayne's son, will be going to Iraq soon.

Additionally, remember

Millie, Alma's sister, was diagnosed with cancer.

Greg, Donna's son, is suffering from an auto-

immune disease.

Mike and Jenna, friends of Aaron and Jessie, are expecting a child. Pray for a healthy pregnancy and healthy baby.

Grant B., from St. Louis, was recently diagnosed with IBS and is having complications with some of the medicines he was taking.

Frank T., from Ohio, is suffering from stomach cancer.

Bonnie was hospitalized and diagnosed with severe thyroid problems. She moved to West Virginia with family.

Harley N., from Lamar, has cancer in his lymphnodes.

Bill and Sheryl are mourning the passing of Sheryl's mom.

David, Johnie and Amy's neighbor, has suffered from several mini-strokes recently.

We want to pray for **Gary, Teresa, and Bethany** as they are currently working in Russia.

We also don't want to forget to thank God and praise Him for all of His wonderful blessings.

He blessed Lona's mom and Paulette F. with successful surgeries to remove cancer and healing. He also gave safe travels to Gary, Teresa, and Bethany on their Russian work.

Praise God!!!

Our Vision

Community

It is our vision to become an active member of our immediate community; to provide hope, help, love, acceptance, and spiritual encouragement.

Growth

It is our vision to welcome new people into the fold, and help them discover the gifts and talents that God gave them to be used in proclaiming Christ to a lost and dying world.

Faithful to God's Word

It is our vision to remain faithful to God's word, to place Christ first in everything we do, and to allow ourselves to be led only by His Word and Holy Spirit.

Concern for Others

It is our vision to become intimately aware of the needs of our congregation and community and to actively try to meet those needs.

Evangelism (Reaching the Lost)

It is our vision to focus intently on ways to reach the lost in our local community and in foreign lands, and to send missionaries from the body on short and long term mission projects.

Leadership

It is our vision to have scriptural leadership; to have elders, deacons, and teachers within the next two years.

Family Atmosphere/Relationships

It is our vision to maintain and promote a true family environment where all may feel they belong and everyone knows each other's name.

*Please join us in
worshipping God!!!*

*Sunday morning: 10 am
Wednesday evening: 7 pm*

*803 W. 63rd St South
Wichita, KS 67217*

www.gods bible.org

April Schedule

*Sunday, 13th: Wes speaking
Fellowship night @ 6pm*

*Wednesday, 16th: Wes speaking
Hebrews 4*

*Saturday, 19th: singing at Ballard Street
Congregation @ 6pm*

*Sunday, 20th: Randy speaking
Lunch following services*

*Wednesday, 23rd: Randy speaking
Hebrews 5*

**** Jean is preparing communion ****