

October 18, 2006

Dear GEBC family.

Pick your favorite aphorism dealing with vision:

- Sitting down does not make footprints on the sands of time.
- A path with no obstacles, probably doesn't lead anywhere.
- Why not go out on a limb? Isn't that where the fruit is?
- He who aims at nothing is sure to hit it.

So assuming vision is important, after all no one walks around with their eyes closed, how do we identify God's vision for GEBC? And what happens if half the congregation thinks starting a sister church is the way to move forward—while the other half thinks building a large auditorium is the proper path?

Well first, we must understand that God is the giver of ministry vision. God has a plan for GEBC and he is eager to reveal those plans to us and he will empower us to accomplish whatever he calls us to do. One example of God giving vision for a particular ministry, not to mention preventing a certain ministry, is found in the book of Acts.

Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them. Acts 16:6-10

This passage speaks of these earliest missionaries being "kept by the Holy Spirit" from certain ministry endeavors, as well as being led into ministry by "a vision of a man...standing and begging him" for the Word. Clearly, the Holy Spirit has plans for our ministries and we must be open to his leadership.

Secondly, we must realize that the vision God has is *for* the whole congregation. God is calling us *all* to participate in his plans, which means that we should each also play a part in seeking God's vision for GEBC. The elder board and staff have already begun that process of prayerfully seeking the Lord's

vision for GEBC, and the soon to be formed *Leadership Advisory Team* will also join the effort, and the broader church body is needed as well.

Yes, we want the entire church to begin thinking about God's desires for our future ministry. We want each person in the GEBC family to join us in prayerfully considering God's call upon our congregation in the years ahead, asking how are we to impact our community and the world.

We encourage you to begin to pray about this and to spend time meditating on the Acts passage above and asking the Lord what he has for GEBC. As you hear the Lord's direction for GEBC, talk to a member of the staff or an elder about where and how you believe God is calling GEBC to minister in the future.

We hope you will join us in this process and we look forward to hearing from you about how the Lord is speaking.

For the elders,

Jim Kraus

P.S. – If you are a financial contributor to the ministries of GEBC, then we have included your 3rd quarter giving statement with this letter to save on postage. We continue to rejoice in the generosity of the congregation and feel blessed to lead a community who is growing in the grace of giving (2 Corinthians 8:7).