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ON MY VISION FOR BURNING HEARTS

By Pastor Doug Winne

Some years back I read Phil Vischer's book, Me, Myself and Bob – a book I highly recommend. Phil was the creator of Veggie Tales. The book traced the rise and fall of Big Idea: how the company came into being, lost (in his opinion) its original vision and eventually headed into bankruptcy. At the end of the book Vischer writes about how his idea of "vision" changed. In the early years, his vision was marked by things like how many new films could be produced in a year or what new product line items might be produced. After it all came crashing down, Phil's vision for the future changed to a deep desire to know God...a Philippians 3:10 sort of vision. It reminded me of Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church's sign on the outside of their building where it says, "OUR VISION...PROVERBS 3:5-6."

Phil's book rang true to my heart. For by the time I read it I had grown very weary of the "church growth movement" and its emphasis upon being purpose driven (Warren), goal oriented, etc. So much of what I read sounded more like secular business plans than any seeking after the face of God. Also it all sounded so self-engrandizing, regardless of the fact that it was being done "for the glory of God."

So, without reference to any building project, any move to have Burning Hearts on the radio or on t.v., or that we be known as the church with the most _____ (and you can fill in the blank), here is my vision for Burning Hearts...

1. My vision, my desire from the beginning, is that Burning Hearts would be a church that takes the scriptures very seriously. I desire to see us all be real students of God's word. If the Bible is compared to a sword (and it is in Ephesians 6:17) then my vision is that Burning Hearts Community Church would be an army of young and old, all who are very apt in wielding their swords against the enemy.
2. My vision, my desire from the beginning, is that Burning Hearts would be a true fellowship of friends: people who truly love one another. It was a couple years ago now, at the Wednesday evening prayer meeting, that Al Zelek referred to those who had come out to pray as "my friends." That struck me and pleased me immensely. I have known thousands of people...by name. Yet to be in a church where the people around us are our friends and who truly care for us...why, that has to be what was God's plan all along for the church (John 15:15).
3. Furthermore, my vision has been that this fellowship of loving friends, who take God's word seriously, would be a body that prays. I know, as you well know, that prayer is hard work. But still we pray, resting upon His promise that He is indeed listening to us, and that our prayers can be very effectual (James 5:16) in changing the world.

There are, of course, other wishes, hopes and dreams that I have for Burning Hearts, but if these three that I mentioned are what we are or what we become, then regardless of our size, our budget, or our building, I believe we will be on the right track to being the kind of church that Jesus himself, if it were possible, would want to join.