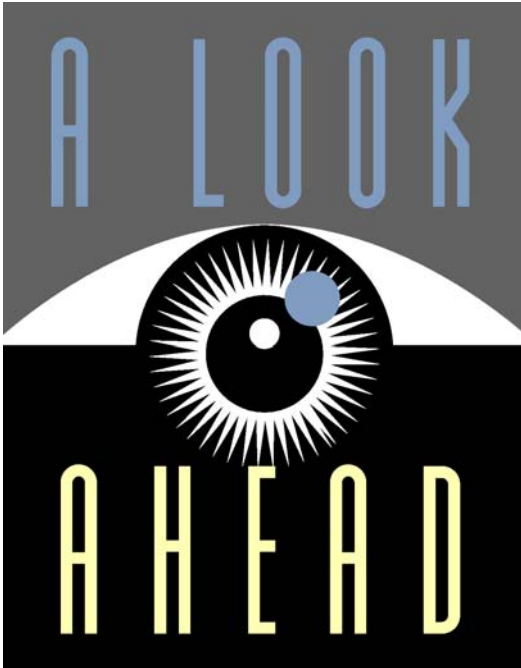


QV, DOMINE? ~ QV CBCC?

Dr. Fred Fourie ~Sunday, January 29, 2006



Matthew 5:13-16 "You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot. "You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one, after lighting a lamp, puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lamp stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

Isaiah 6 verse 8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I; send me!" **Proverbs 29:18** ~ King James Bible "Where There Is No Vision, The People Perish, But He That Keepeth The Law, Happy Is He."

The name of one of the many gods that pagan Romans believed in was JANUS. The month of January got its name from Janus. The Romans sculpted Janus with two faces because he could look backward and forward at the same time! Once again, it is the month of January. Later this morning the faithful people of this Church will gather for the 64th time, not only to look backward over the road already traveled, but also to look forward and plan for the road ahead. **Today is a day of prophecy, visions and the dreaming of dreams!** It is time to examine the past; to discover what was good and lasting; and to build thereon a great future in God's service.

A tourist walked down a pier and watched an angler pull in a large fish, measure it, and throw it back. He caught a second fish, smaller this time, he measured it, and put it in his bucket. Oddly, all the large fish that he caught that measured ten inches or more he immediately threw back in the water. All fish smaller than ten inches he kept. Puzzled, the curious onlooker questioned, "Pardon me, but why do you keep the little ones and throw the bigger ones away?" The old fellow looked up and without blinking an eye said, "Because my frying-pan measures only ten inches across!"

That is exactly how some people think, argue, and live. Their faith is as small as a ten-inch frying pan! They limit their ability to follow Jesus and make a real difference in this world because their only measure is a ten-inch frying pan.

It is time for our beloved church to shed the limitations of a ten-inch frying pan. As our Church seeks to develop and grow into the future, we dare not allow our vision and understanding of the ability of our God be limited by small frying pans. Expect great things! God is able - and if we can dream it, we can do it!"

At the first planting of the Church of Jesus Christ, on the day of the Pentecost, the Apostle Peter spoke without fear. He said, "In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophecy, and your young people shall see visions, and your old people shall dream dreams." That time has come! We believe that great things are about happen in this Church. I am bringing the message today that there is new life in Christ and a task waiting for each one of us. One person with conviction is worth more than one hundred with only an interest. Anybody can curse the darkness, but people of faith light candles to dispel the darkness.

What if there was a way to help this Church grow? What if this Congregation can experience spiritual renewal? What if there was a way to change this Church to move from maintenance to mission? What if, because of us, many unchurched people can come into lasting relationships with Jesus Christ? Here is the good news. Across America, plateaued and declining mainline Churches are becoming models of healthy and growing congregations. They overcame whatever excuses they had before, and are now saying, **"If we can dream it, we can do it!"** They are following a powerful formula of biblical strategies, courageous leadership and much hard work. All this is happening in Churches and turn-arounds are happening. The message is clear. What God is doing for others, God will do for us.

Our Church's Visioning Group has been studying and working. They have accepted the challenge. As from now on, you will hear them say, "Here is the vision, here is the dream." We believe, we hope, we pray that many amongst us will step forward and say, like the Prophet Isaiah did, long ago "Here am I; send me!" We believe that more and more faithful people in this precious Church of ours will discover, as we did, what happened when Gods people in other Churches accepted the challenge.

It is time to say, "Why not here?" With a few creative adaptations, we can empower our Church to discover our Christ's answer to the Quo Vadis question and see great things happen in the Ministry of our Church! This Church will make a real difference in the lives of people and in this community. New vision, new faith, new people and new excitement!

Quo Vadis, Domine? Where are you heading Lord? We will follow! Show us the way into an unknown and challenging future! **Here is how it happened for the Apostle Peter.** Legend says that the very same Apostle Peter who planted the Church on that Pentecost day of fire and wind, with so much determination and power, finally made his way to Rome where he served faithfully and well. However, there came a day when friends convinced him that he should abandon his mission and escape from the dangerous Rome while he still could. When he came near the gate of the city, he saw a vision of Christ meeting him. The pilgrim's staff fell from Peter's hands to the earth; his eyes were looking forward, motionless; his mouth was open; on his face was astonishment and delight. He fell on his knees, his arms stretched forward; and this cry left his lips, -- **"O Christ! O Christ!"** He fell with his face to the earth, as if kissing someone's feet. The silence continued long; then were heard the words of the aged man, broken by sobs, -- **"Quo vadis, Domine?"** To Peter's ears came a sad and sweet voice, which said, -- "Peter, If you desert my people, I am going to Rome to be crucified a second time." The Apostle lay on the ground, his face in the dust, without motion or speech, but he rose at last, seized the staff with trembling hands, and turned without a word toward the seven hills of the city. A bystander, seeing this, asked, **"Quo Vadis, Peter?" "To Rome,"** said the Apostle, in a low voice. Then he turned around, went back to his task and completed his mission.

Peter would have continued his journey to what he thought was safety **if he did not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.** His eyes had seen the glory of the Lord! There are many misconceptions about what it means to be a Christian. Here is the biblical test! You are only a genuine, true follower of Jesus if you actually follow! As Jesus was speaking to his earliest followers, he was also laying the foundation for future generations, every age, and time, for centuries to come. Jesus defined his followers as the "salt of the earth" and the "light of the world."

If I believed that these definitions of Jesus were no longer true, I would not be standing here today! "What does it mean to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world in the year 2006?"

In the ancient world, salt was a valuable commodity. Salt was so useful because

people used it to preserve food in the days before refrigeration. In those days salt also acted as an antiseptic to clean out infected wounds. Perhaps the most important thing about salt is that in its purest form **it never loses its taste**. Salt will always be salt. Salt does not get stale or lose its flavor if it is stored for a long period.

Jesus also challenged his followers to be "the light of the world". "A city built on a hill cannot be hid." Like a beam of light shining through the darkness, modern day followers of Jesus stand out and are visible for the entire world to see. Our temptation is to allow our light to shine only for those inside our Church, while ignoring people outside. A true Church of Jesus Christ steps beyond the boundaries of its own Sanctuary and membership. Jesus' mission for his followers opens the doors in ever widening circles – even to the end of the world.

The Church is an infirmary for sick people, but a health club, a wellness center where people come to get well and stay strong so that they can go back, repeatedly, back into the world to respond to the challenge of following Jesus in times like these.

**"You are the salt of the earth; "You are the light of the world.
This is our Vision. This is our Mission.
We Cannot, We Shall Not Perish!
AMEN**

