

Presentation of Vision – NTCG Sheffield – 30th April 2020

According to Scott Noble in his discussion on the importance of a church vision statement, he says "A mission statement describes why your congregation exists and its purpose. [In other words] why has God placed you on this planet - in this location, at this time? A vision statement communicates where you are going and what God wants your congregation to do. It helps you look forward and drives where you are going. Without these compelling statements, your ministry can feel lifeless and without purpose"

If we were to look at Holy Scripture and examine how God communicates a vision there are some examples of how God does this.

Abraham didn't have a vision statement for a church because he had no church. What he had was a vision statement for his life. God told him to get up from where he was; to go to a new place, where God would bless him and out of him all nations should be blessed.

When we think about the story of Joseph, the vision God had for Joseph was that he would be the key player in the preservation of his people in the midst of famine.

The vision God had for Moses was that he should deliver God's people from bondage and that the nation should be free.

The vision God gave Joshua was that he would lead God's people into a new land and that they would conquer and dominate.

The vision for Nehemiah was to see the destroyed walls of Jerusalem be rebuilt.

When I read the bible, I see that in each case God spoke to His servants through oral communication or through dreams. The point I am making here is that it is clear in scripture that when God communicates a vision he communicates it to the leader, or the primary person responsible for the outcome of the vision. That leader has a responsibility to hear from God before he communicates the vision to the people.

Since the 31st October 2019, when we made the decision to accept the pastoral appointment in Sheffield, my time in prayer and meditation has been consumed with the request to God to give me a vision for this church. I wanted to stand before you with honesty and integrity, knowing that I had spent time in His presence seeking His heart as to how to lead the church in the direction God wants us to go. I stand before you today believing in faith that what I share with you now is the heart of God for this congregation going forward.

Crucially, I understand that anything I present to you today must have a biblical basis, so the very document I am reading to you this evening is a spiritual document, not one constructed from a carnal perspective, but one that I believe has been guided by the spirit of God.

A Vision Statement:

A vision statement for a church is essentially what the leader wants that church to become. It is the leader's desired dream for the congregation - the things that leader wants for the church beyond all else.

We must be careful to understand that the vision statement is NOT the same as the mission statement. The mission for God's people is clearly revealed in scripture; it is found in Matthew 28:19 – 20; "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the

¹Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen." (KJV)

The vision statement however, is a "...statement describing the clear and inspirational long-term desired change resulting from an organization['s].... work,"

Now, since – as your pastor - I am not the true leader of this church and I am only an under-shepherd of God's people, let me share with you another scripture that I believe shows us all God's glorious vision for HIS church. The word of God can be found in John chapter 17; 21-23, and I am quoting from the Amplified bible.

That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

If this is God's dream for his church, then I believe our vision statement should be closely aligned and predicated on John 17.

Therefore, the **Vision Statement** for the Sheffield church will be the following:

SHOW SLIDE ONE

"Our church will be one in worship, one in giving and one in serving. Our oneness will cause us to focus on the needs of people rather than programmes; a church where everyone will actively care for someone, a church where none are left behind".

Mission Statement:

As a church, we will live out this ministry paradigm through our **Mission statement**. In June 2017, as I meditated, I asked the Lord what His mission was while he was on this earth. In other words, for the time allotted to him – some 33 years or so – what was he supposed to achieve – what was his calling, what was his vocation, what was his assignment.

As I prayed, the Lord showed me clearly that his mission on earth could be found in two places in scripture – in Isaiah 61 and in Luke 4, where Jesus outlines His purpose.

In Luke chapter 4, verses 18 & 19, Jesus said "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised...To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

Therefore, the **Mission statement** for the Sheffield church will be a simple one:

SHOW SLIDE TWO

"We will become a Luke chapter 4 church....specifically a LK 418 church". Every ministry undertaken in the Sheffield church will have Luke 4:18 as its foundation. Luke 4:18 shall be the substratum, the basis and the core driver for all we do.

One of the things that Pentecostal churches boast of the most is the pre-eminence or the superiority of the anointing among us.

We preach in our sermons and sing in the lyrics of our songs that the spirit of the Lord is upon us. If this is really true in our day to day experiences then we cannot help but become a church that is one with God and one with each other. If God has truly anointed us then our hearts' desire will be

¹ (<https://churchrelevance.com/2013/03/27/30-examples-of-church-vision-statements/>)

to become a LK 418 body of believers. If each one of us is truly a dedicated servant of Christ then Jesus' mission should become our mission.

To be anointed means that "...[I have been] commissioned....with authority, qualified....with gifts, and set....apart....[for a specific service to God]"

SHOW SLIDE THREE

Becoming a LK 418 church means that all our ministry must be rooted in the 6 principles of Jesus's mission;

- a) To preach the good news of Jesus Christ to the poor
- b) To do whatever we can to heal the broken-hearted people we meet in our day to day lives.
- c) To let those who are blinded by sin know there is restoration of their spiritual sight through Jesus Christ.
- d) We will tell those in prison (physical prisons or spiritual prisons) that there is a way out – and that way is Jesus Christ
- e) We will evangelise and tell people that this is their year to accept Jesus Christ as saviour, but also to warn them of the judgement which is to come.
- f) As a church, we will be deliberate in comforting people who are in mourning or have been bruised for whatever reason.

My vision is that LK 418 should inform everything we do, and I need the church to be clear that from this point forward, when it comes to church ministry in Sheffield, programmes or initiatives that meet elements of LK 418 will be prioritised in terms of how we spend the resources that we have.

Being a LK 418 church means that we must all walk in spirit and in truth. Becoming a LK 418 church means that each and every one of us must be able to answer the question, what is the spirit of the Lord upon me for – what do I believe God has anointed me and selected me to do – then finally if I know what my anointing is, am I living it out on a daily basis?

It means that I must be a peaceful person, since I am telling everyone that spirit of the Lord is upon me. It therefore becomes our solemn responsibility as God's people to be peacemakers, in oneness not only with God but with another. Crucially it goes without saying that ALL ministers, elders, deacons and church members should aspire to be people of peace; quick to deal with problems that arise among us...why...because the mission we are all involved in is greater than the ridiculous and often petty quarrels we sometimes get involved with. Paul said in Hebrews 12:4; Follow peace with all men and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord..

To become an LK 418 church means that we walk, talk and minister in our anointing wherever we go on a day to day basis. When we practice being LK418 people it becomes second nature to us and ministry under our specific anointing becomes easier.

The next issue I want to address is how the vision can be lived-out among the various departments we have in this church... so firstly let me speak to the ministry to our children and youth.

My experience and understanding of working with young people is that they are at their best when they are working towards a cause. Whether it be climate change...feeding the hungry, caring for older people, fighting injustice, or speaking out for civil rights and against racial injustice...young people are at their best when they fight for something.

Within the context of our church and community values, the cause I refer to could be missions...helping children at home or in foreign lands that have very little or need to build a roof over their heads. It could be the education of other kids in Third World countries; it could be raising money for, or helping out in some way at a local children's hospice.

But whatever Sheffield youth ministry will develop to be, my vision is that in your activities you model Jesus and live out the L-K 418 paradigm of ministry. In other words, look at the 6 principles of Jesus' ministry in Luke chapter 4 and discover how as a youth ministry you can make a difference to your church, community and the wider world.

Where you see the church not being relevant, don't complain and leave, help your pastors, help the leadership team by speaking out and showing us where we are going wrong...not in anger but in a spirit of Oneness.

Secondly, let me address the men's and women's departments by saying this;

This historic, famous and wonderful church here in Sheffield, must continue to become the hand of God extended in love. And as we pour love into people – people of every description – they will in return, receive the love of Christ.

Our church – the New Testament Church of God – has been in existence in the UK for over 60 years.

Whilst our church has achieved great things in so many areas of church and public life, there comes a time when we must ask ourselves if some of the traditional ways of doing things are really working.

I would like to suggest that some of them are not working and need to be re-examined.

Over the years we have spent a lot of time ministering to ourselves within the four walls of our churches. Whilst this is not a bad thing to do, there is a greater need that we minister directly to those that have needs – both in and out of the church community.

I have a vision to see ministry among the church auxiliaries to take place outside the 4 walls. This means men's, women's and youth ministry that touches men, women and youth right where they are in their homes and places of care. I will not rule out completely the assembling in the church of each department, to build up each other, to encourage and to fellowship from time to time. But the future for ministry MUST be at the very feet of those who need us most.

I have a vision that those who are 'shut-in' should be visited as we comb their hair, cook for them, tend their gardens, do their shopping and minister to their particular needs. I have no doubt that this is already being done in some quarters, but my vision is to see this become an intentional mission of the local auxiliaries.

I want to see single mothers being given the night off as we volunteer to care for their children and treat them to a trip to the cinema or a meal out. I see the same being done for busy and tired mothers and fathers; that they be provided with a break now and then and taken for a girls or a boys night out just to show we care. This to me is men's ministry; this to me is women's ministry as God intended. This – for me – is what men's ministry and women's ministry should be – it should mean ministry and caring for men and women in our church and community in such a way that their specific needs are met; thereby being the hand of God extended.

It means – for instance - that no sick or shut-in or hospitalised person should ever miss out on taking communion because ordinary spirit-filled servants of God – as you visit, minister and pray together will share communion in a women's or men's ministry meeting that takes place in a hospital or a home.

I am therefore asking for a complete and utter paradigm shift of ministry so that men's and women's ministry is completely unrecognisable to what it once was. The culture of the 4 walls ministry must end and our church must focus outwardly.

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My vision statement speaks of a church where nobody is left behind. One of the weaknesses of the modern-day church is that there are too many cliques in our congregations. Whilst I am grateful to God for the families and extended families we have in our churches, if we are not extremely careful and intentional in our behaviour, people can be made to feel side-lined since they do not belong to large family groups. We must be intentional so that when new people come to Sheffield somebody will reach out to them and provide for them the fellowship they will need as new believers.

I now want to introduce to the church the new logo that Sheffield church will be using.



SHOW SLIDE FOUR

Explain the five elements

This new logo has been approved by majority vote of the leadership of our church. It will be displayed on church letterheads and displayed on all local church correspondence, both on hard copy and electronic correspondence. It will be on the church web-site, the church noticeboard and in every place where the church wishes to communicate.

My vision is that this logo will be used on a clothing line that could include tee-shirts, sweat shirts, hooded sweatshirts, caps and so forth. This logo will become a visual symbol for the Sheffield New Testament Church of God; it will become the corporate identity for our church and will be one of the main things that makes people remember who we are and what we do.

I will now outline some specific areas of ministry that I would like this church to attain to.

Before I outline these areas, I absolutely appreciate that these ideas will not be exhaustive. I admit that as a vision setter I will need the help of experienced strategists, men and women of wisdom, planners and subject-matter experts. I completely understand that as you begin a journey, someone might suggest a better and more thought-out way to get where we need to go. I also understand that additional ideas will come from what I am proposing. My commitment to you is that all of these projects and ideas will be discussed with the leadership of the church before they see the light of day and that we will go forward as a team in openness, oneness and in agreement.

My short-term aims and goals are as follows:

1. To clear out and remodel the youth room so that it is fit for purpose for us by our youth and community and to become a learning space.
2. To re-model the communion room at the back of church into a reception area for visiting preachers and speakers. I want the room to be a place where they can arrive, sit, relax and be refreshed before they minister. This room will also be used for the initial response and encouraging of those who have come to the altar and made a decision to accept Christ.

3. To purchase a new acrylic podium to replace the old wooden one. A new see-through podium will be better for viewing what takes place on stage and will serve us better visually as we look to live-stream our services in the future. My desire has been that we will have this podium without any need to consume general church funds.

My short to medium term vision is as follows:

To consider new ways of generating income for the church. It is vital for all churches in this day and time to look beyond the raising of tithes and offerings for the finances of the church and new ways of bringing in funds must be found.

It is beyond dispute that individuals today do not give to the work of the Lord in the same way they did in years gone by. As a result, in many churches tithing – as the principal form of income is falling and we cannot afford to ignore this trend.

1. One vision I have is to redevelop the large hall at the Life Centre; to knock out the partition wall between the main hall and the smaller room so it can be remodelled into a banqueting suite. This banqueting suite could be used for weddings, small conferences, concerts and other initiatives. This could be a great income generator for our church. This space would have new lighting, suspended ceiling and audio-visual facilities to make it attractive as a venue.
2. To formally develop a web-site for the church that is current and informative for anyone seeking to find out what we do.
3. To develop new links with the local university campuses - so that for some of them this church can be their home whilst they are always from home.
4. I have a vision that we will one day be able to employ a full-time Christian youth worker to drive youth ministry in our church. It is my belief that with the plethora of young people living in the Sheffield area, youth work has the propensity to grow to huge proportions.

My long-term vision is as follows:

1. To develop and build ministry, whereby we can use every tool available to us to spread the gospel and make Jesus known. I have a vision that we can find space in the Life Centre or to obtain additional space elsewhere to set up a Christian radio station where perhaps our own aspiring DJ's can play music and engage in Christian discussion and debate online.
2. To further develop the project whereby the Sunday morning services will be live-streamed. I want to acknowledge the great work done so far by all those involved and I am hoping this can eventually become a reality in the not too distant future.
3. In order to pay attention to the physical health of our church constituents and others, I have a vision that we could build a gymnasium – so the church becomes a place where we minister not only to spiritual needs but also to physical needs as well.

Let me now turn my attention to Missions and Evangelism

Another, extremely important aspect of how we minister to the community is that of MISSIONS. We know that missions is at the heart of God for us as a church; but as a LK 418 church – alongside the message of the gospel, we should be going or sending in order that lives should be made better. It

is my intention therefore - as a short to medium term goal – to organise a team of people who will lead on Missions.

Pastor Mark Batterson writes: "God will bless us in proportion to how we care for the poor in our city and how we give to missions...I believe that one mission trip is worth more than 52 sermons," He also writes, "When your heart begins to break for the things that break God's heart, that is the foundation of God doing work in your life. I don't think that happens as often, as when you listen to a sermon than when you go and be the hands and feet of Jesus."

I have a vision that within 3 years, a small contingent from this church will be sponsored to travel and see first-hand the needs and the plight of those less fortunate than ourselves; to be with them, to pray with them, to feed them and to be a blessing to them. I have a vision that we will adopt a ministry that we can come alongside and do kingdom work to minister to those overseas – not forgetting the many needs we have in our own country.

Evangelism is a work that has been given not to one but to all, but somehow evangelism – as an important and crucial arm of Christian ministry has been overlooked and ignored in many of our churches and denominations.

Although I know that many of you are not afraid to share your faith and perhaps do so on a regular basis, I would like to see a cohesive and more robust drive for evangelism.

With Sheffield being the 4th largest city in the United Kingdom and with a population of over 569,000 people, there is tremendous scope for evangelism and the planting of churches.

I have a vision that within the next 3 years we will evangelise and plant 3 church missions across this great metropolis to the glory of God.

However, I am calling on everyone who can catch the vision to work in a spirit of ONENESS. I absolutely believe this is possible and in doing this we are living out the LK 418 mission and fulfilling the mission of Jesus Christ.

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The Future

Two of the primary considerations for the future of our church here in Sheffield are evangelism and how we engage with our children and young people.

Since we cannot afford to focus on planning for my generation – we must plan with children and youth in mind.

Not only must we plan with them in mind, we must do everything we can to ensure that they buy-in to the vision, because the future belongs to the youth.

I am determined therefore that our children must play a greater part in what we do as a church. The children MUST play a greater role in what we do in the main worship services, rather than just being seen on specific and sparse youth days, and I would love to hear of some creative ways in which this could be done.

I want to see young people developed to their full potential and I am longing for the day when I will see a young preacher coming behind me and pushing me.

When I was a young lad growing up in church, one of the things we constantly heard was doubt expressed about how and if we were able to be the future of the church. While I used to get very angry at some of my seniors for saying this, I later understood that they didn't hate us, but rather they wanted us to act like and be like them in every way.

They failed to understand that was not impossible and all we really needed was for someone to believe in us. To believe in us and trust us that even though we were different we still loved God.

What I am trying to say is that I don't want that to happen to the youth and children of Sheffield. We must understand that their maturity will come with age, but let us see the good in them now and nurture them to a place of greatness. This will involve risk, but it is a risk well worth taking.

To the young people I say this – love your church, own your church, be proud of Sheffield church and take responsibility for it becoming a great place to come to. If you as young people do not own the future of this church, then there can be no future and that is a reality we cannot ignore.

- i) I have a vision that at least one young person will be part of the Missions team that we will organise. Because young people are at their best and their most powerful and their most creative when they are involved with a cause that makes a difference.
- ii) My vision is to have quarterly youth days as well as youth participation in every church service we have.
- iii) I have a vision that a team of young people, with the support of the next generation above them will minister regularly as a choir in this church.
- iv) I want to see able young people as part of the praise and worship team and I am longing to see the next generation of musicians come forward.

Somebody will have to take over from our principal keyboard player one day. Somebody will need to learn to play the various guitars; where are you young people – I challenge you to step up and make it happen.

- v) To that end I have a vision to work towards the setting up of a music school – teaching not only instrument skills but vocal and singing skills also.

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Prayer:

Throughout scripture we have seen that no individual or group has ever succeeded in a God-given mission without the dynamic of prayer. Prayer is and always has been the engine of the church and if we are to achieve our vision then prayer must be at the forefront of what we do.

I am therefore asking us to uplift the prayer that the church does. I am asking that as many people as possible can support the weekly prayer programme here during the week.

Alongside prayer is the study of the word of God. This is something I want to see as a major driver in the church. What I have discovered is that Sheffield church has incredibly gifted teachers, so I want to make teaching a pillar of what we do.

- i) My vision is that teaching will take on a greater emphasis and we will work to bring teaching to the people both on a Sunday and during the weekly programme.

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Identity:

Since I came into pastoral ministry back in 2004, my heart has been to pastor a church that reflects the kingdom of God. By the kingdom of God, I mean the make-up of the races in God's kingdom.

God's kingdom has people of all races in it; and I unashamedly preach and believe that currently our church, and the overwhelming majority of NTCG churches do not reflect the kingdom of God in terms of their racial make-up. I fully understand the reasons for this, and that people might always lean towards church communities that look like them. I also know that we have no power to compel or save anybody and I understand the difficulties with regard to language. However, what we can do and will do as an LK 418 church is to be deliberate in our outreach to people of other ethnicities. Some of us may believe this is just a pipedream, but I am crazy enough to believe that with God all things are possible and we can grow a multi-cultural church.

The People

Lastly, I am confident in the fact that this vision the Lord has placed on my heart cannot be achieved without the help of all you. You see, I am not only asking you to fulfil the vision for the church, I am asking each of you to fulfil God's vision for your own personal lives. I am asking this question; **what is the spirit of the Lord upon you for?**

- i) I am sending out a clarion call for all those anointed to teach – that you walk in your anointing and teach again.
- ii) I am asking that all who may have stopped labouring, stopped working or stopped trying, that you shake off the enemy's plan for your life and once again walk in and demonstrate the anointing and the gifting God has placed upon you.

Some of you are great administrators, great teachers, great innovators, great ideas people, great at motivating people, great at encouraging and lifting people up, great thinkers, great strategisers – whatever ability and anointing God has blessed you with, I am pleading with you with all my heart to get back in the saddle and ride again – to take back everything the devil stole from you and rededicate your talents back to Jesus.

I therefore humbly ask you for your help. As the Vision commences and is even modified and shaped in the future, it will not materialise without you. It's going to take a commitment of resources and commitment of skills – skills that are within FWC in abundance. It is going to take a commitment of our money. Some of you have been blessed beyond measure so that you can easily give to a cause without it hurting you – why not consider blessing the church again with your finances as you give to the work of the Lord.

Let us believe God to become one of the greatest, strongest and most faithful churches there has ever been.

I will be actively looking for people I can help to raise up in ministry – people who are anointed, gifted and faithful. However, I will not rush into doing so and I won't push people forward who I do not know and have not proved. My ministry will be marked by integrity and an unbiased approach on dealing with individuals. Above all things I will do what is right for the Sheffield church over the personal interests and agendas of individuals.

Now that you have heard my heart, there can be no excuse or reason for anybody to say I am not being allowed to be a part of this, or for anybody to say I am not being heard and that my voice doesn't matter. Everybody counts, everybody matters – NONE WILL BE LEFT BEHIND. Whether you are the leader, or the supporter of the leader, your views, your voice, your experience, your wisdom and your knowledge is important beyond words.

Finally, when I shared my vision with my last church, I said this, and I will say it again.

When the chancellor of the exchequer delivers the budget to parliament, he always ends it by saying "I commend this budget to the house". With great humility and expectation of the help of God and the backing of this church, I COMMEND THIS VISION TO THE HOUSE.

God bless you.

Bishop Winston Taylor: Presented 30th February 2020 – NTCG Sheffield