

## Whose Vision Shall We Follow by Carl McMurray

What will ignite a congregation and help to give it direction and movement in the proper direction? No doubt there are a variety of things involved that we could name that all must work together toward a goal like this. But one necessary ingredient to give movement the proper direction is "vision." Probably the best known "vision-building" verse would be Proverbs 29:18 which says, "Where there is no vision the people perish" (KJV).

In his book, *The Antioch Effect*, Ken Hemphill makes an interesting point concerning this passage of scripture. He writes...

"The New International Version reads, 'where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint.' Vision then, does not refer to the ability to formulate goals and work toward them, but rather to the work of the prophet. Thus the verse is pointing to the guidance or revelation of God. The word "perish" in the KJV is better rendered by more recent translations as "cast off restraint." The verse teaches that the nation or church that ignores God's word can anticipate spiritual anarchy and lack of clear direction. This verse properly understood still stands as the anchor for this characteristic. ...It is obedience to this God-given vision that gives the church restraint and provides direction." (emp. mine, mac)

What an insight! Why are there so many churches that seem to drift directionless and without real purpose? Perhaps it is because they have not accepted God's vision! Maybe the members can all quote the Great Commission, but individuals have not really accepted God's plan into their hearts and gone to work on it.

On the other hand, why are there churches who always seem to be trying something new, seemingly with much zeal, who are spinning their wheels and burning out their workers? The answer is the same. They haven't accepted God's vision either! They are busy, busy, busy; rocking their chair in one place. They are carrying out their own missions in their own way without seeking or trusting the counsel of our Heavenly Father.

Only when we open up to God's vision and make that instruction the plan for ourselves and for the church will we begin to see his power unfold in the lives of men. Submission and faith are key here. Truly, without vision the people perish.