

“The Vision of LCC”

Pastor Rick Shelton

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- In the 1961 book “The Company of the Committed,” Elton Trueblood wrote *“What reason is there to suppose that our civilization in contrast to civilizations which have preceded it will endure? The person who has not faced this question is hardly alive, that many different ways of life have flourished and then have declined in the past is beyond contradiction. Consequently there is no high probability that the fate of our civilization will be different unless...the precise character of the word unless is of such importance as to attract and behold our best thinking both individually and in groups. It is our most urgent question. As we analyze the record of the experience of the past, we realize that neither technological nor material success is sufficient for endurance of a civilization nor even for survival. Life goes down whatever the physical conditions may be, unless there is a relevant faith held by a sufficient number of people. And not just any faith will suffice. There must be certain features of that faith... little is gained without the spirit, and the spirit can't be maintained by separate individuals... Therefore, the church or something like it must be cherished, criticized, nurtured and reformed. The church of Jesus Christ with all it's blemishes, it's divisions and it's failures remains our best hope. However poor it is, without it things are worse.”*
- We're designed to live with positive attitudes, choosing to believe the best in everything and everyone. No matter what's happened, we're not to get down in our attitude and our mouth. Example: The government...there is no allowance in Biblical Christianity to for bad mouthing on our government and our nation, and presently that can be difficult. But the fact that it's difficult doesn't mean it's allowable. In order to be a part of the solution, we must do something other than the problem does or the people who are part of the problem do.
- It's important for us to not just dwell on what we view as problems or negatives in our society because *we as the church are the ANSWER.*
- Our civilization is not unlike any other civilization, such as the Roman empire, UNLESS;
- “Little is gained without the spirit” – the Spirit is the answer. *At the root of ALL our problems, the answer is always spiritual.*
- Of course there are things happening in our world that are tragic and frightening, the moral decline that has happened in our nation has simply happened because we have left our roots as the basic fabric of our nation.
- “The church of Jesus Christ with all it's blemishes, it's divisions and it's failures remains our best hope. However poor it is, without it things are worse. ”

- The church of Jesus Christ keeps moving forward, with all of our blemishes and failures. It's not discouraging but encouraging knowing that **God uses us with all of our mistakes and failures**. When you understand that, then you can understand why the church is the answer.
- We cannot walk out our faith and make a difference in our world as separate individuals. We have been called together collectively to be a family of believers called the church.
- The word church comes from the word *ecclesia*, which means, in this case, to be called out of the world and to be called into a gathering of people.
- The whole idea that we can have a Christianity that is isolated from anyone else and that we can live it out ourselves, is erroneous at best and very destructive. Yes, there have been wrong expressions of the church but that doesn't mean the church isn't valuable to us.
- I don't believe that the church is like a hierarchy or government, our government is in heaven.
Ps Rick is not the ruler or dictator but is, as the apostle Paul said, I'm not a dictator of your faith but I want to be a helper of your joy.
- The beauty of the church when you understand what it really is, it's not a building, it's not a just a clergy, it's not a government – it's a body of people, all of us are empowered, all of us become valuable, all of us have the same authority like Pastor Rick has.
- It's healthy for us to get our eyes on something other than ourselves, to understand we're part of something larger. And to understand if we help build what God's called us to build corporately as the church, *because you are the church*, it will end up helping us accomplish what we want to accomplish in our lives too.
- Churches start in many different ways; voted in by a board, started by a group by strategy.
- Life Christian Church was started this way:
First of all, at the time of this vision, Ps. Rick was pastoring a small church in South Carolina.
In 1979, the Lord gave me (Ps. Rick) an open vision I saw a sea of humanity, so many people I can't number it. I was standing in front of them teaching them the Word of God. They were all holding Bibles, notebooks, and pencils. They were taking notes about what was being taught. Between the masses of people were aisles filled with hurting, sick people in wheelchairs and stretchers. Not just physically but hurting and broken lives. I saw the people get out of their seats and begin to minister healing to the sick ones. It was significant that I didn't go minister but to train the people to go minister. The Lord said, "Rick, if you will be faithful and obedient, what you see in this vision will come to pass."
- This vision is what caused this church to be born about a year later. June the 22nd 2010 it will be 30 years since we started this church.
- November 1999, we started to go through crisis. Ps Rick began his anxiety and panic attacks. This last November it was 10 years since that began.
- When we get saved the first thing we need to understand is that God has come not

only to put us back together but to make us part of a mighty army that will help to put a multitude back together. ***You're here not just to get healed, but to help heal the world.***

- After the sabbatical in March 2006, LCC was at our lowest point and now 3 ½ years later we're rebuilding and restoring.
- At the end of 2010, God told Ps Rick to devote himself to building this house, to build a new generation of leadership in this house that we can get on the move and accomplish what God has called us to do.
- What Ps Rick is called to do is raise up leadership to minister, and we're called to be the ministers.
- Look at this vision and see what we are:
 - 1) We are born of a vision – God decided, not Ps Rick.
 - 2) Ps Rick was standing on the platform and the people had notebooks taking notes, this speaks of discipleship.
- We're not here to recruit church members for attendance; we're here to be a place of spiritual of growth. Ps Rick challenges us to our highest potential, to make you do what you don't want to do to become who you want to become.
- Our journey of faith goes like this in relation to the church:
 - 1st you come to a church to get comfort, it's a good reason to come to a church but it's not a good place to stay.
- You have to go from the comfort level to the connection level. It's important not just to come to receive preaching but to build together.
- The next level is from comfort to connection to commitment, you embrace the idea that you are now a part of this house and you will be a part of it and what the house is called to do.
- Some people come to the place of commitment and stop there and think that's enough. But if you stop at that level, the commitment it becomes a chore or duty and you'll lose your excitement and life, and it becomes just going through the motions.
- The next level is crisis, every Christians when they become part of a local church, they will be tested at least once and usually many times with their relationship with the church – hurt feelings, whether it's your fault or even the Pastor's.
- Conviction is the next level; it's when the conviction of the house is not just the Church's conviction but yours too.
 - 3) In the vision, people were getting up to minister to the sick. We are called here not for just the Pastors to do the ministry.

Ephesians 4:7, 11 "But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift... And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers"

- The Pastors are to train you for ministry. ***Ministry isn't just preaching but it's about loving people, taking what God has done in you and helping others.***
- We are not called, as a church, to get behind Ps Rick but Ps Rick is here to get behind you. To push you and help you to become all that you are called to be.
- The Church has more people attending than ever before, but the problem is not in our lack of numbers but our lack of strength, ***our strength is in the quality of what God is doing in the hearts and the lives of the people.***

- We've become confused about what the church is and how it's to be built. ***We're trying so hard to be relevant to our society around us that we've watered down everything that makes us powerful.***
- We've so forsaken the roots of biblical Christianity that the church has become weak; some of the reasons she's in this weakness:
 - 1) She can't defend her faith intellectually – people who believe in experience only.
 - 2) She begins to compromise her morality and holiness.
- Being culturally relevant is not necessarily going with the tide of the prevalent thinking of that day, it's taking the old powerful truths of the Gospel of Christ and bringing them forth in a way that is real and authentic. It's consistency with scripture and the truth.
- We are weak when the moral fiber is taken out of the church. The only power we have to change a human being's life is the power that comes from the message of the blood of the cross. It's not being right with the hierarchy of the church but being right with God.
 - 3) In the vision, the disciples were getting up and ministering to the hurting and broken. Ministry to the hurting or broken, it's not a group or people but it speaks of our fundamental way we see humanity. ***We're all messed up and hurt and broken, and the grace of Jesus Christ is what makes up the difference in your brokenness.***

Matt 9:12-13 NKJV "When Jesus heard *that*, He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick."

- The church is not a shrine to see all the pretty saints but a hospital to bring all the hurting and broken.
- If you can see people through the eyes of Jesus the way He sees them you won't have a problem holding grudges.
- Everybody is hurting in some way, and if they act obnoxious, they're trying to project something that overcomes this weakness that's hurting them.
- This year we're going to do things purposefully to reach out to bring people in. Bigger is better if we're adhering to Gospel and lives are changed. God's called us to reach a multitude.
- Even if the full vision doesn't happen in our lifetime, still yet we must devote our full attention and energy to the purpose of that vision.