

# The Vision

Dear Friends,

When God births a vision the miraculous takes place. Who knows what might happen. An example of this is in 1774 when John Adams shared a vision of a new nation. This new nation would be a union of 13 states independent of parliament and the King of England. Against great odds the words of John Adams came true within 2 years of his proclamation.



In 1789 Wilber Wilberforce stood before the British Parliament and cried out for the day when men, women and children would no longer be enslaved, bought and sold like farm animals. Every year for the next 18 years his bill before parliament was defeated. But Wilbert Wilberforce continued his tireless campaign against slavery. Finally in 1833 just four days before his death, Parliament passed a bill abolishing slavery. Wilberforce's vision and his relentless pursuit of that vision prevented a bloody civil war in England such as took place in America thirty years later.

In the early 1900's two brothers, Wilbur and Orville Wright announced that the age of the flying machine had arrived. After ten years of disappointing tries, finally on December 17, 1903 the Wright brothers plane the Kity Hawk took off.

Henry Ford shared a vision to make automobiles available to the general public. After 15 years of pursuing that vision, millions of Fords were bought and sold for \$250 each.

In 1963 Dr. Martin Luther King stood on the Washington Monument and shared, "I have a dream". Because of the faith and courage of thousands of caring people who pursued that vision, racial equality has become a reality in the USA.

**Vision is the fuel and the energy that creates action. It is the compelling vision that changes the world.**

In Proverbs 29:18 we read, "where there is no vision the people are unrestraining." This means they are unable to focus. An older translation says, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." Without vision we lose the focus that helps us to be more than conquerors through Christ who strengthens us.

God has rekindled in my heart a vision to complete a job He gave us years ago. I know we can complete this job as we trust in God daily. It is His power and provision which makes it possible for us to be "more than conquerors through Christ who strengthens us" (Rom. 8:37).

We have been in the wilderness long enough. After years of victories, defeats, challenges, opportunities and disappointments I believe we need to let the vision God has given move us into the promised land.

For 44 years we have had a vision burning in our hearts at the New Life Evangelistic Center. This vision goes far beyond the provision of food, shelter and other emergency assistance, as important as that mission is.

This vision that has been the foundational vision of NLEC involves turning lonely, lost, hurting and homeless people into being leaders in the Kingdom of God. Second Corinthians 5:17 sums this vision up when it says, "If anyone be in Christ they are a new creation. The old has passed away and the new has come."

One of the greatest privileges God has given me is to witness lives being transformed through the grace of Jesus Christ. What a blessing it has been to work side by side with these individuals in God's Kingdom Dream Team which has resulted from this vision.

This team by the grace of God, continues to daily achieve the impossible as these new creations in Christ operate radio and TV stations, maintain the NLEC shelters and farms, host renewable energy fairs, plus assist hundreds of hurting and homeless individuals daily through the love of Jesus Christ.

This forty four year old vision now extends from Mid America to as far away as the country of India. When the Spirit of God moves upon the homeless prodigal sons and daughters awakening them from their “pig pens of life”, the Holy Spirit knows that it can direct these hurting individuals to 1411 Locust in St. Louis, 806 N. Jefferson in Springfield, MO or the City of Refuge in Kakinada, India.

At these locations, along with the other NLEC shelters and training centers including Joplin, Potosi, Van Buren, Columbia, New Bloomfield, MO throughout Mid America and Southern India, and Nigeria the hurting and homeless experience the love of Jesus in word and deed. Many of these individuals become a part of the New Life Community. This community, although it is commonly referred to as the training program, is actually the Kingdom Dream Team that God is raising up at this hour to provide refuge and help to the lost and the lonely.

As the Holy Spirit works in the lives of the members of this Kingdom Dream Team, I see the miracles of the four C’s blossom in their lives like beautiful flowers on a bright Spring Morning. The homeless who have responded positively to Jesus invitation “to repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand” are discovering the first C which is the miracle of the Holy Ghost inspired **Character** within them. This character involves the power to quit doping, drinking, smoking and over eating. It doesn’t stop there for as 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, “if anyone be in Christ they are a new creation.” This new creation can no longer go on lying, stealing, cheating and deceiving. The member of the Kingdom Dream team has experienced the divine purpose of serving Jesus Christ and trusts Him to give them the strength to be more than a conqueror through Christ who strengthens them.

When captured by the divine vision and purpose that God now has for their life the previously homeless individual adds to their character **Commitment**. Once wandering lost and lonely from place to place the new Kingdom Dream Team member now commits himself or herself to remaining steadfast, immovable and abounding in the purpose filled task God has given them.

This task depends on the individual and their talents, interests and opportunities available at the moment for them. It involves discovering the competency that the particular kingdom dream team member manifests. This third C for **Competency** often challenges the individual to stand on the Biblical declaration, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” As the previously homeless individual does things they have never done before, whether it is radio, television, renewable energy, directly assisting another homeless person, or even feeding a baby calf they discover new found confidence and fulfillment as they engage in the services of God’s Kingdom. This sense of competency grows in this Kingdom Dream Team member with each task performed for the glory of God and His people.

The Final C stands for **Chemistry**. This involves individuals learning how to live and work together with others who are different than they are. This chemistry mix is possible as the new creation in Christ discovers what it means to be a member of the Body of Christ.

## **The Four C’s:**

**Character**

**Commitment**

**Competency**

**Chemistry**

New Life Evangelistic Center is only one small part of God's great Kingdom Dream Team. Participation in this NLEC Team involves not only the previously homeless who are living and working together, but also a vast army of dedicated volunteers, prayer warriors and donors. Each one of these team members are dedicated to the unique vision God has given New Life Evangelistic Center.

This vision that the Holy Spirit plants in their hearts is a vision to reach out to those Jesus personally identifies with in Matthew 25:31-46. This includes the hungry, unclothed, sick, imprisoned and homeless. It then calls for teaching and discipling as outlined in Matthew 28:19, 20.

Now, more and more churches are partnering with NLEC in fulfilling this vision. These churches are including New Life in their budgets while others are preparing meals for the homeless coming to New Life Evangelistic Center.

I have a vision that this year NLEC will see twice as many lost, lonely and desperate people, who in the midst of their homelessness and hurt, experience the love of Jesus Christ flowing through His people.

In order to fulfill this vision we must at all costs continue our battle against the enemies of the cross of Christ. These enemies will go to any lengths to stop us from preaching in word and deed that the resurrected Christ has commanded us to provide assistance for the hurting and homeless. Because the saints of our Risen Lord Jesus joined New Life in resisting the city of Springfield's attempts to stop us from using the former social security building there, last year 54,850 visits were made by the homeless to the NLEC reception center at 806 N. Jefferson.

If those that God has blessed with the gift of giving had not shared with the New Life Evangelistic Center, and New Life had not fought in Federal Court the St. Louis Board of Public Service order for NLEC to stop sheltering up to 90% of its guests at 1411 Locust Street, New Life would not have been able to provide over 67,500 shelter beds last year.

We must continue to move forward this year to do even more for the glory of God. Hasn't Jesus promised that "He will be with us always, even to the end of the world" (Matthew 28:20).

This vision to move forward involves making major roof repairs on the NLEC shelters and training centers. It includes completing electrical, plumbing and tuck-pointing work that needs to be done at 1411 Locust. Along with this, a day time reception center needs to be opened at 1411 Locust that provides the services offered at 806 N. Jefferson in Springfield.

The vision God has given New Life Evangelistic Center involves bringing the hurting and homeless into a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. It also includes helping them become leaders in the work of God which involves opening additional shelters and training centers in Illinois and in surrounding counties. The vision extends to providing energy independence to 250 low income home owners experience energy independence through the use of solar Photovoltaic panels and wood furnaces.

I have a vision that KNLC Channel 24 which is operated by those who were previously homeless will become a great force for the glory of God in Mid America. To accomplish this goal I am believing God to provide a major marketing program to promote KNLC.

Not only must we fight for preserving the shelter at 1411 Locust but we must also have a vision for how New Life can assist local churches and faith based organizations in resisting local government's attempts to keep them from directly providing for the poor and homeless according to the mandates of scripture.

Presently all over America too many people are being left alone, depressed and homeless. These hurting individuals need to know that there is hope and that God has a purpose for their lives.

New Life Evangelistic Center must expand its ministry of providing hope by seeing that no one should have to sleep outside and that everyone can have the opportunity to discover the joy and purpose that comes from helping others.

Please pray for the \$500,000 Capital Funds Campaign that is being launched at this time to fulfill this vision.

New Life Evangelistic Center remains the last major year round walk in shelter in Mid America. Believing that the provision of shelter is a function of worship we must now directly resist those principalities and powers that want to stop the gospel of Jesus Christ from being shared in word and deed.

Please pray for the army of prayer warriors, volunteers and donors that are now needed at New Life Evangelistic Center. Daily NLEC must continue to stand up against the evil forces which desire to seek, kill and destroy the broken lives of the homeless and hurting.

The New Life community is a community of solidarity with the hurting and homeless. We are a community of resistance to the spirit of materialism and commercialism which has paralyzed the revolutionary teachings of Jesus in the lives of so many. The NLEC Staff have learned through over forty four years of community living that the abundant life means reducing the distance between ourselves and the oppressed. Daily we have the opportunity to meet the resurrected Christ in the life of each homeless, hungry and hurting person we meet. These are the brothers and sisters that the condominium owners consider a nuisance. The ones that many are tired of helping, loving, feeding, funding and living near.

The New Life Evangelistic Center Headquarters at 1411 Locust in St. Louis is a sanctuary for the disinherited. New Life is headquartered in the City of St. Louis where it is becoming increasingly difficult to follow the scriptural mandates to shelter the homeless and hurting. Yet, we have no choice. This is what Jesus has told us to do. He has promised that He will "never leave us nor forsake us." Now we must believe Him and be faithful in all that He has called us to do.

Jesus said the Kingdom of God is at hand. This is the time for members of the body of Christ to arise and join the New Life Evangelistic Center as it works to share the hope that is provided by our Risen Lord and Savior. Let us dedicate ourselves to helping those in need discover the joy and fulfillment that comes from being a part of the Kingdom Dream Team.

People helping people that what this vision is all about. It involves the lost, lonely, hurting and homeless experiencing what it is to become leaders in the work of Christ. Will you join them at this time of not only great need but great opportunity?

Yours in Christ Service,

  
Larry Rice