

The EARMARKS of the True Visionary

By J. Mark Jordan

"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." Ephesians 3:20

You are a true visionary when you are willing to start something you cannot finish. Either your vision is too big for you to finish it by yourself or it will take too long for you to complete it in your lifetime. You need not harvest the glory of a completed task; indeed, it would be absurd to even think in terms of personal glory. You are content with sowing the initial seed that puts it all into motion. This is not condoning procrastination or laziness, but a testament to the magnificent dream. The founders of the American democracy knew they could not finish their task. Abraham Lincoln did not know the full ramifications of the Emancipation Proclamation. The Apostle Peter did not know where the open Gentile door would lead the church. The enormity of their vision did not frighten them from lighting the fuse.

You are a true visionary when you are willing to go places that are not on the map. You don't seek out the charted course. You don't look for a dream previously accomplished. You do not need the security of the known way. You see places that others think don't exist; you envision successes that history has not yet recorded; you hear sounds that have never been produced. Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees not knowing where he was going. Paul launched out on his missionary journeys not sure of his destination. Christopher Columbus left "Ne Plus Ultra" behind on the basis of a dream.

You are a true visionary when you are willing to build something you cannot control. To see your success skyrocket far beyond that which you anticipated excites you. You see something so big, so wildly successful that you actually become immaterial to the end result. You realize that the thing you create may render you obsolete, but, you would rather be eclipsed by your own success than marinate in mediocrity. It was said of Jesus, *"Because zeal for your house has eaten me up."* (NKJV) Robert Warburg, a Bay Area analyst jokes, "[Bill Gates] greatest fear is that some kid will brew up the next killer app in his garage in Kenosha and *"Microsoft won't own it!"* You are willing to turn the control over to God.

You are a true visionary when you are willing to embrace something you do not fully understand. Wilbur and Orville Wright did not understand the profound impact that their flying machine would have on worldwide transportation when they became airborne at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. Bill Gates did not understand all the implications that the nascent computer field would have for the world when he designed his Microsoft Windows in his garage. Frank Ewart and R. E. McAlister did not fully understand everything there was to know about oneness theology when they began preaching it in the early twentieth century. Yet, all of them took the leap because they were absolutely convinced it was the right thing to do. The visionary suspects that there are endless possibilities in his idea or dream. He boldly lets that truth go wherever it wants to go. To insist on understanding every minuscule detail of the truth would abort the birthing process before the baby ever has a chance to say hello to the world.

You are a true visionary when you are willing to become who you have never been before. Abe Lincoln started out as a farm boy, but he saw himself as a businessman, a surveyor, a postman, a lawyer, a congressman, and then as president of the United States. Neil Armstrong, from his beginnings in the small town of Wapakoneta, Ohio, started out as a navy aviator, then a test pilot, then a backup astronaut, then the first man on the

moon. Securely locked within our insular definitions, most of us shut down when life tries to transition us into a new calling. When innovative ideas threaten to inflict too great a change on our comfortable status quo, our crusty old wineskins start to burst. We would rather say no and be safe rather than say yes and be infinitely better or set off vast changes on the human landscape.

Missionary John Nickerson, Nigeria, believes that the African continent stands ready to be set ablaze with revival fires---not only for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, but also to receive the revelation of the oneness of God and baptism in Jesus' name. He has shared his vision with his many partners in missions, and readily admits that the river of his vision may overflow its banks. As the momentum builds, hundreds of pastors with roots outside of Apostolic circles have already been baptized. His passion inspired the foregoing paragraphs about a true visionary. I am reminded of the poem of Sam Walter Foss,

*Bring me men to match my mountains, Bring, me men to match my plains,
Men with empires in their purpose, And new eras in their brains.*

Indeed, what would happen if we took off the limits we have placed on God? What if we would replace our fear with faith? What great things would God do if he saw great faith in his people? Who among us will dare to find out? Sunday night, October 1, Nationwide Arena, Columbus, Ohio would be a great place to start.