

THE VISION 100 RESOURCES DREAM

A Dream To See God's Kingdom Come

by Brian Vaatstra



CRCA MINISTRY FORMATION

"A Church Reforming To Reach the Lost for Christ"

www.ministryformation.com.au

A dream to see God's Kingdom come

Sometimes in our more reflective moments we dream about what the church could be, and how it might grow and become what God intends her to be. But as all the regular ministry demands and activities press in on us we leave the 'blue skying' behind and quickly get on with the immediate concerns of the church. But what if we refused to yield to the urgent, and allowed ourselves the time to dream and plan and work on the vital work of building the church. What would it look like?

Some years ago, David Jones (from the St Johns Presbyterian Church) and John Sikkema and Brian Vaatstra, (from the Christian Reformed Church of Kingston) got together and talked about an idea to plant 100 new gospel-centred, Bible-based churches in Hobart. The thinking behind this was that if we could, by God's grace, grow 100 churches of 200 people each, we would have reached 10% of the population of greater Hobart. This discussion was the beginning of a movement called Vision 100 Resources.

What is Vision 100 Resources? It's a network of church leaders working together to evangelise Tasmania, and sharing a conviction that the best and most biblical way to reach the most people is to multiply ministry teams and plant churches. Vision 100 Resources does not itself plant churches, but it is a catalyst for cooperation between

churches. It is a fact of life that churches tend to lose their outward focus and forget the lost. We want to keep the work of evangelising the lost high on the churches agenda, and the most effective way to do that is by an ongoing church planting program.

Vision 100 Resources does that through three key strategies. Firstly, it promotes the vision of church planting to existing churches through a variety of means, including regular prayer days, conferences and leaders days, as well as a quarterly



Vision 100 Resources newsletter. Secondly, Vision 100 Resources assists churches who have caught the vision of church planting to help carry it out. This is done through regular training days for church leaders, sharing resources and providing financial support for church

planting ventures. Thirdly, Vision 100 Resources seeks to assist churches to build new ministry teams by providing conferences and resources for the mentoring and discipleship of Ministry Training Strategy (MTS) apprenticeships, students, graduates, church planters and church leaders. The ongoing growth in available ministry workers is vital to the work planting new churches.

What God has done so far?

All this sounds grand but what have we achieved so far? By God's grace, four churches have been planted (Crossroads, Cornerstone, One Way Christian Church and Bay Christian Church). These churches

continue to gather strength both numerically and spiritually, for which we thank God. In addition, the Cornerstone Presbyterian Church has taken on the task of revitalising the existing Richmond Congregational Church, so that over time it too will become a vibrant spiritual community. It is exciting to hear regular news of new conversions to faith in Christ across these churches.

Vision 100 Resources has also run MTS Challenge conferences for a number of years, to encourage the development and training of people who will be equipped to preach and teach the gospel in church or para-church ministry teams. In 2007, seven couples have completed theological studies on the mainland and have come back into Tasmania. They will all be engaged in existing or new churches. In addition, in 2008, sixteen people are currently preparing for ministry as MTS apprentices or as students studying at theological college.

This year the Christian Reformed Church of Kingston and Cornerstone Presbyterian Church will be trialing an education and training program called, Church Based Theological Education, a new way of training leaders and church planters in 'the way of Christ and His Apostles.' (You can read about it in the PDF file called, Global Church Based Theological Education under the website www.bild.org.)

New church plants planned for 2008

2008 is shaping up to be a year when Vision 100 Resources churches take a significant step forward in multiplying ministries and planting new churches in southern Tasmania.

In recent months, Crossroads Presbyterian Church has taken the step to establish a new ministry to university students with the view to establishing a new congregation.



Vision 100 Resources will be financially supporting two other new initiatives this year; a new church planting work by Cornerstone in the Warrane area of Hobart, and a new International Bible Ministry at the University of Tasmania.

In addition, the Christian Reformed Church will be planting a new congregation in the Summerleas Road area of Kingston. A core group of thirty-five adults have been meeting in small groups for a number of months to pray and to study The Gospel-Centred Church (by Steve Timmis & Tim Chester) in preparation for this new outreach. They plan to hold their first public meeting on 30th March 2008.

Beyond these initiatives Vision 100 Resources is looking to encourage churches in the network to consider planting house churches in the Midlands,

where there are a number of smaller communities that urgently need a gospel-centred teaching ministry. This will require the identification of a suitable church planter and the gathering of resources for the work.

Who is Vision 100 Resources ?

The Vision 100 Resources committee is currently made up of the following members: Brian Vaatstra (Chairman, Christian Reformed Church of Kingston), David Jones (Vice-chairman, Cornerstone Presbyterian Church), Nathaniel Flinn (Public Officer, Christian Reformed Church of Kingston), Mike Lynch (Secretary, Crossroads Presbyterian Church), Emma Wilkins (Promotions, Crossroads Presbyterian Church), Tony Holland (Treasurer, Bay Christian Church) and Jo Hext (Fundraising, Christian Reformed Church of Kingston). The contact address for Vision 100 Resources is Brian Vaatstra, 6 Jayda Place Kingston Tasmania 7050.

Doing God's work together

God has given us a shared vision, a pool of supporters and some funds to use for gospel work. He has given us gifted, godly leaders. These are tangible means to make the vision a reality. We believe that God, by his grace has brought us together at this time to build his kingdom in this place, and that by earnest prayer and a positive, humble working together, we will see the Lord do wonderful things for his glory in Tasmania.

But regardless of what the future holds for Vision 100 Resources, let's own the dream in our churches, let's pray about it, let's give generously to support it, and let's talk about it, not just for Tasmania

but for the whole of Australia. As William Carey the 18th Century missionary once said, Expect great things from God, attempt great things for God. And should you be called to be part of a church plant, do it joyfully and eagerly, in full dependence on our loving and generous God, so that the good news of Jesus Christ will continue to go out across our nation.

- ▶ This article originally appeared in *The Trowel and Sword*, a publication of the Christian Reformed Churches of Australia
- ▶ Check out the Vision 100 Resources website: <http://www.vision100.org>