

THE PARISH OF ALL SAINTS

ALL SAINTS ANGLICAN CHURCH & CHAPEL OF EASE

A PARISHIONER'S IMPRESSION OF VISION DAY 111- VISION 2010

Indian Arrival Day May 30, 2007

Venue: Chapel of Ease, Maraval

Time: 9.00am to 12 noon

When I was co-opted to work on one of the Vision 2010 Committees by my indefatigable Church Sister, I did not know what I had committed to. Indeed after much researching, emailing and late evening conferencing, I was informed that as able as she was, our Church Sister needed our support at the VISION DAY III session carded for, of all things, a Holiday.

So here I was, in Maraval at 9.am attending a meeting that would take up half of my day. But would you believe, at 1,15 pm I was still in Maraval at a meeting that continued after the meeting and I was loath to leave. On returning home, I asked myself, would the euphoria continue, would the Spirit stay or would all dissipate into inertia and inaction come next reporting VISION DAY IV ? Would all the negativity that was spoken about, the obstacles and bureaucracy, the confounders that existed in high places, would that continue to conspire against the earnest do-gooders and hard working Committee members that took the time to attend the Session?

I would like to deal with <Vision Day 3> from three (3) main Perspectives:

1. **What I heard and saw.**
2. **What seems to be needed to be done.**
3. **What I think that I, personally, as a Parishioner need to do to facilitate the Process..**

WHAT I HEARD AND SAW

1. Thoughtfully prepared and comprehensive Reports from all the Committees that were mandated one (1) year ago by our Rector, Canon Berkeley, presented in a professional manner – all using Power Point, showing the effort that had been given to the groundwork and the preparation and comfort in the use of the technology.
2. Smooth delivery and keeping to time by the presenters; equally constructive and intelligent feedback from the floor, assisted by the professional management team, who obviously had given thought to the planning and execution of the task.

3. Comprehensive Reports submitted by **ALL the Committees** which included :
 - (i) HEALTH - Champion: Mrs. Veronica Roach
 - (ii) COUNSELLING- given a new Name- P-A-P [Parishioners Assistance Programme] – Champion: Ms. Grace Talma
 - (iii) PARKING & TRANSPORT- Champion: Ms. Yolande Gooding
 - (iv) VOCATIONAL COMMITTEE- Champion: Mr. Trevor Townsend
 - (v) INTER-GENDERATIONAL- a new word coined by one of our creative ALL- SAINTS team players- Champion Mr..... :
 - (vi) LITURGICAL INNOVATIONS/ VARIETY- Champions: Misses Sharon & Pat Christopher
 - (vii) WEBSITE- Champion : Ms. Michelle Howard, who was unfortunately absent, but was ably represented by Mr.....
 - (viii) INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY- Champion: Mr.....
 - (ix) CHAPEL OF EASE- Champion: Mr. Brian Jones
 - (x) ALL SAINTS REFURBISHING- Champion: General Ralph Brown who was absent but represented by Mr.....
 - (xi) ALL SAINTS NEW CHURCH HALL- Champion: General Ralph Brown- represented by Mrs. Caryl Hinkson
 - (xii) YOUTH PARTICIPATION- Champion- Ms.....
This was the only one read by Canon Berkeley since no member of the Committee was present. **I wondered why... this was disturbing to me.**

4. Prior to the Reports, we heard From Ms. Ruddell who gave us a comprehensive historical overview of the Project VISION 2010, and a synopsis of what had gone before from
 - a) STAGE 1- ***“Building the Case for Change”*** where we examined Church Life & Faith; Church Assets & Finance; Church Communications & Fellowship; Church Ministries- to Men, Youth, Women, Schools and Families ; through to
 - b) STAGE IV- ***“Lessons from VISION DAY 2”*** where the information from questionnaires filled out by parishioners was tabulated using the following categories- *“Moving”, “Cruising”, “Strolling”* ; *“Struggling”, “Sinking”* and we found out that **47% of our members described our Church as “Cruising”**.-Characteristics of such a Church being- **Contentment, avoidance of commitment, goal diffusion, being reactive rather than proactive, conforming, nostalgic, blaming others, congenial, in denial.**
Frighteningly, **only 11% thought we were “Moving”** – characteristics of this kind of Church being: **God-centered, enhancing spiritual competence, emphasizing teaching and learning, building change capacity, defining own direction, developing positive cultural norms, addressing conditions that**

enhance change, maintaining momentum, monitoring and evaluating, recognizing and taking into account divergent stakeholder views, accepting and preparing for resistance, strategizing to achieve goals,

Even more frighteningly was the **26.4%** that thought we were “*Strolling*”, the **7.6%** who thought we were “*Struggling*” and the **7.6%** that thought we were “*Sinking*”.

I wondered whether any of us, including this **42 %** of our congregation, felt any sense of responsibility for the Stage that we thought we were in, whether we identified with it or whether we felt that this was none of our doing and therefore saw ourselves as aloof and apart.

I took my Bible and read *Revelations Chapter 1 v 11, Chapter 2 & 3* and I gave thanks to our God who never changes- who gave messages then and NOW- to the “*Cruising*” Church of Laodicea and to the “*Moving*” Church of Philadelphia. Here were clear directives and His expectations from this God we all serve.

5. I looked around me and wondered what this meant for our Church's future – whether the attendance represented truly the demography of our Parish and our Church – in other words how significant was this meeting ? .
The majority of the persons who attended were female, senior citizens, coming from the Service that I usually attended. Familiar faces were the ones who seemed always ready to serve and who seemed always to serve with humility, joy and dedication.
But equally there were the small voices who reminded us that there are persons amongst us - young and not so young, who are faithful but overlooked and that in being unmindful of members like these, the Church continues to drive away persons who are willing and searching for recognition and acceptance
6. .I soaked in the ambience of the place- the Chapel of Ease, its gardens and its quietness---- and prayed in my heart that when the time would come to expand the physical space, that the charm and beauty of this octagonal, tropical, open, peaceful place of Worship would be preserved. I thanked God for the foresight of our Parish when they purchased this acreage- so fruitful, productive, and full of promise and hoped that with all the plans afoot, with all the need for financial returns from this property that good, architectural, aesthetic and environmental sense would prevail.
7. Care was given not only to our spiritual needs by our Rector, Canon Berkeley and his able Curates- Fr. Carl Williams and Fr. Ackbarali but also to our physical needs - the tasty Trini- East Indian meal of paratha and curry with juice that was just sugary enough and other non-alcoholic drinks plus icy cold water. To top it off, we who stayed were lucky enough

to get a slice of the firmest and sweetest pumpkin garnered from our own Chapel of Ease vegetable garden.

WHAT IS NEEDED TO BE DONE?

ACTION! ACTION! ACTION! No loss of momentum.

Using the feedback from the Meeting, following up suggestions made and fine-tuning our Action Plans

Setting Time lines and keeping to time!

Networking more- using our Contacts

Finding Sponsors/ Patrons and actively sourcing Funding

TARGETING THE YOUTH- using the suggestions made at the Meeting

Strategizing to achieve our Goals

PRAYING EARNESTLY AT ALL TIMES FOR GOD'S CONTINUED FAVOUR AND DIRECTION

WHAT DO I As a PARISHIONER NEED TO DO?

Put my Money where my Mouth is-

I made a commitment to myself to give as much help to my Committee as I could, but also to cross link with other Committees where help was needed, bearing in mind the limitations of my time and my expertise, but I realized that

any help was better than no help at all.

I also made an inward commitment to put aside each month a certain amount towards the Restoration and Building efforts at ALL Saints and the Chapel of Ease.

There is a saying "Every mickel makes a muckel"- God honours the widow's mite. If everyone gives what s/he can, that can be invested in the meanwhile and it will make a world of difference

Stop being Judgemental and Uninvolved-

I resolved to see "Holy Spirit" in everyone in the Church,
to show LOVE rather than Disdain,
to be CARING rather than Uninvolved,
to be INCLUSIVE rather than exclusive,
to BOLSTER and lift up my Priests and Elders in prayer rather than pillory or criticize,
to be an agent of PEACE rather than sow Dissension and Apathy.

To help my Church brothers and sisters to build a Church that is "MOVING" rather than "Cruising" or worse yet "Sinking"

It was a beautiful morning, well spent.

~~~~~  
**Pressing on from Cruising to Moving"** and a text to match from **Phillipians 3 v.14**