

Afraid of "Vision": Afraid of the Future
by Bob Young
August 2008

The article was about a church called "Vision Community Church" in Warwick, New York. The article outlined some of the challenges in the experience of the church and its community, but the line that caught my attention was the minister's summary: "My theory is that this fear of Vision all began in someone's inbox." He was referring to fears in the community about the influence of his church; this article is about being **afraid of the future**.

Why would people be afraid of vision? Well, for one thing, people with a vision are different. For too many Christians the working definition of heresy is "things I didn't already know." I learned in my studies of church history that the heretics are the guys who lost the debates. (Please recognize my generalization as a generalization.) A second fearful thing is that the development of a vision requires that a person think and ask questions. I am proud to be part of a congregation that invites questions. I love to ask questions when I teach, and even when I preach. I want people to think, and to believe, and to question, and to grow. After all, this matter of following Jesus requires that we come to grips with the complexity of truth. The third problem with vision is that we often don't like what we see when we are forced to look at things without our rose-colored glasses. Developing a vision requires that I look at things from God's perspective rather than my own, that I take the long view rather than the short, and that I seek his will more than my own. All of a sudden, the test of my Christian faith is more like an essay test than a completion fill-in-the-blank matter. And passing the test of faith is not nearly as easy as it was before I was challenged to connect with God's vision for the world.

The article concluded with this warning, in the words of Grandpa Simpson talking to Homer, "I was *with it* once. Then they changed what *it* was. Now what I'm *with* isn't *it*. And what's *it* seems weird and scary to me. It'll happen to you!"

Beware. The visionaries are out to get you.