

Captivated by God's glory. **Compelled** for his name.

Vision of the English Ministry

The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

Matthew 13:45–46

Introduction

God has been amazingly kind in building the English Ministry for over a decade. Having started as small group of young people in the late 1990s, we have grown to encompass a wide range of life stages, from students to young families.

We are now at a stage for our next phase of growth, based on a God-centred unifying vision of what we, as a congregation, are on about.

This vision document has been the result of months of thinking and discussion across the congregation. We looked at what the Bible has to say about what church is like, what our time and place in the world are like, and what God is planning to do in this world. From that we came up with numerous ideas of who we are as Christians, and the people we are to be like. These ideas are summed up in our vision statement—*Captivated by*

God's glory. Compelled for his name.—and is explained in this document.

This document is not a doctrinal statement, in that it only covers the essence of what we want to say about these topics. Nevertheless, the document is deeply theological—driven by what God has revealed to us in the Scriptures—as it should.

We are excited about this vision. We are deeply thankful that God has led us through this entire process. We pray that God would transform our hearts to be a people who is captivated by his glory and compelled for his name—something that only he can do.

To God be the glory!

Captivated by God's glory.

Captivated by God himself.

God is captivating as himself. He does not need us to assign qualities to him. God's sheer scale and glory are infinitely beyond our comprehension. He cannot be contained in our minds, for from him and through him and to him are all things. He is worthy of our love, our fear and our worship—by right.

Captivated by God's sovereign power and loving goodness.

We are awed by God's sovereign power and creative genius, which can be seen throughout the Scriptures. He rules over all things with righteousness and justice. At the same time, we are moved by God's goodness and love towards us, demonstrated most powerfully at the Cross. He is faithful to his promises and abounding in steadfast love and extravagant generosity towards us, despite our weaknesses and shortcomings. We are confident in God's sovereignty; we are joyful that in his sovereignty God is good.

Captivated by the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The good news of the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ is central to God's plans and purposes. The gospel reveals God's eternal plan to unite all things in heaven and on earth under one head, to his praise and glory. We are joyful that we, who have fallen so far short of God's glory, can be justified by his grace through the propitiation that is in Christ Jesus. This news may sound foolish and cause people to stumble, but to us it is the power of God and the wisdom of God.

Captivated by God's relationship with us.

We are amazed that God created us for relationship with him. He is the one who initiated this relationship, by revealing to us through his word and ultimately through his Son. We are overjoyed that despite our rebellion, God still cared for us and sent his Son to pitch his tent among us. Jesus died in our place so that our relationship with him may be made right. Our salvation is a personal, relational thing, captivating our whole selves, and not merely a transaction.

Captivated by God's plans for the world.

God works sovereignly in history in accordance with his plans and purposes, which have been revealed to us in the Scriptures. We live in a time where God has spoken to us by his Son, who is the radiance of his glory and the exact imprint of his nature. We are humbled that we have been chosen before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. We are comforted that despite the chaos we experience in our lives and in the world around us, God is in control, carrying out his plans. We are excited that even now, God works in our lives, changing our hearts so that we may be presented mature in Christ when he returns. We look forward to the day where we can see the great multitude from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing and worshipping before the throne and before the Lamb who has died for them.

Compelled for his name.

Compelled to be jealous for God's glory.

When we see God as who he is, then it is natural for us to be jealous for God's glory. The natural response for us is to love him, fear him and worship him alone. We are distressed and saddened when the world around us do not see or acknowledge the glory of God. Our desire is to have God change their hearts so that they might see his glory, just as he has changed ours.

Compelled to put God above all things.

By its nature, the glory of God compels us to put him above all things in our lives. Anything else would show that we neither grasp nor understand these truths. Therefore we are compelled to abandon our loves of this world and to have God in the rightful place in our lives. This means doing unnatural things in the eyes of the world and taking risks—because we are consumed by God's glory and long for others to see it.

Compelled to live as citizens of heaven.

It is God's intention that through the gospel he gathers for himself a people of his own possession who are zealous for good works. We are saddened that in this life we still struggle and fall short of God's glory. We are compelled to live as citizens of heaven, putting to death our sinful nature and living as a people set apart for God in the power of the Holy Spirit. This means acting and persevering against the culture of our age. Not that we are so arrogant to think that these things make us worthy of salvation, but we are merely reflecting the glorious state to which our God has brought us.

Compelled to pass the gospel onto nations and generations.

The gospel is only ever one generation away from extinction. However, the gospel works powerfully in people, that they would turn from idols to serve the living and true God. So we are compelled to show God's glory by passing the gospel onto nations—in our family, in our schools and workplaces, in our community, in our world—and generations—young and old. We will train and entrust the gospel to faithful people, so that they may defend the truth and teach the next generation. We long to see others join us in being captivated by God's glory.

Compelled to rest on God's sovereignty over all things.

We are excited to be part of God's unfolding plan, a time where the gospel is preached throughout the nations. We are confident that God is in control of all things, whether good or bad, and will work to fulfil his plans and purposes. We therefore entrust ourselves to God to be his agents in bringing out his purposes for this world. Our success is not measured by earthly results, but on whether we are faithful to the Sovereign Lord. We prayerfully look forward to the day when all things are summed up in Christ.

Next steps

This vision statement marks only the beginning, and not the end, in our planning process. The next step over the next few months is to work out how this vision statement affects everything we do as a congregation—our ministries, our structures, our methods and our priorities.

This is a really exciting process. These moments in living together as God's people here are huge—both in the sense of God's great works among us and his kindness in allowing us to experience these highlights.

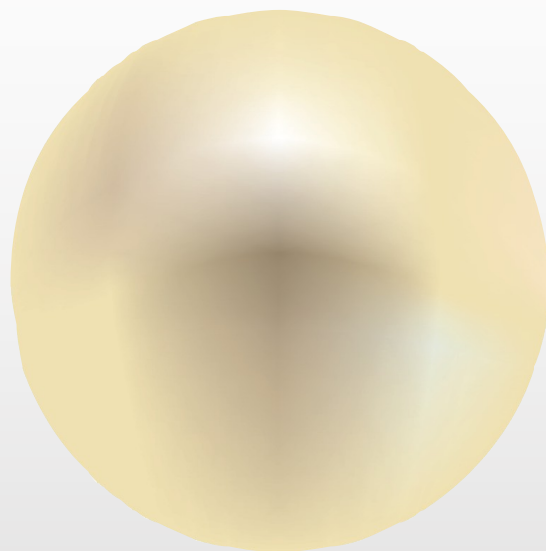
Please join us in this planning process and discover how great God's plans are for us.

English Ministry Vision

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North Side Chinese Alliance Church

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