

Q&A: What do you think about charismatic visions [like Unity's Vision]

waffleater asks: *what do you think about charismatic visions like this one <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pVyMPqvnw5k> do you believe in these gifts or not*

Thanks for the question Waffleater:

I'll embed the video you link for ease of access:

It's interesting. I haven't heard of Unity before. Your question is a general one – what do I think about charismatic visions *like this one* and do I believe in these gifts or not.

Let me answer generally, therefore. I do believe that God gifts his church with visions and revelations at times. Some examples in Scripture of such "extra-biblical revelation" include Agabus' foreknowledge of a famine (Acts 11) as well as through a prophetic symbolic act regarding Paul's likely imprisonment in Jerusalem (Acts 21). Paul himself had dreams that directed his movements (the famous "Man from Macedonia" in Acts 16). None of this is surprising in that the fulfillment of Joel ("Your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams") is applied to the church in and through the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost.

I know a number of people who have had similar experiences in their own ministry and mission work. I myself have had times of overwhelming conviction in certain circumstances. Surely this form of revelation/understanding/awareness/knowledge, whatever you would like to call it, can be a genuine and credible part of the Christian walk.

A key characteristic, however, is that revelations of this

type are always SERVANTS of God's clear and authoritative Revelation of himself through the Scriptures and its revelation of Jesus. If you like, the benefit of these forms of (little-r) revelation is that they help apply the (big-R) Revelation to a particular time and place. So the people of God can respond to the famine, Paul can be directed to Macedonia, and so forth.

I am ready to accept the revelations people experience from their walk with God – but they will always be tested by Scripture, and should always be a means of applying or grasping further the authoritative Truth of God.

Having said all that – let me consider Unity's vision. It is interesting in that it is a broad statement with very little specifics. It draws on biblical imagery from Revelation 13 and Matthew 25. It does very little, however, to help us apply those Scriptures. In many ways my conclusion would be "Why do we need this vision at all? Reading Revelation 13 and Matthew 25 directly would be a lot more powerful."

But, bring on revival in Australia. I can admire that sentiment.