

Write the Vision

By Leslie Urie

Meet Some Missionaries, October 2022

(This article was written by Derrick. For security reasons, his name is withheld and the article is published under the name of Leslie Urie, WMPL's Prayer Mobilization Team Leader.)*

“Write the vision...”

— Habakkuk 2:2, NRSV

“The prophet Habakkuk received a vision, many long years ago. He was told to write it down—plainly, “in big block letters, so that ‘it can be read on the run’ (MSG)”. He was to write it in hope, as an encouragement for all the generations to come. The Spirit of God was on the move. And he was about to do something special.

Another sort of prophet received another sort of vision, nearly a century ago. It was a missionary vision—a clear, broad vision for the evangelization of the world. He, too, was instructed to write the vision down—point by point, in clear and simple language, as a guide and encouragement for generations to come. The Spirit of God was on the move. And, once again, he was about to do something special.

You have that vision in your hands. This was a vision given to a fellow named Ernest Weinhardt in 1929, in a little town called Mboula, in what is today Cameroon. It has found its way in the many years since to a little Bible school in Minneapolis, a little village in the mountains of Bolivia, the faraway steppes of Mongolia, the towering Himalayas of Nepal, and thousands of points in between. It has birthed a committed community of like-minded friends, who have prayed and dared the vision into a living reality.”

— Pr. Charles Lindquist, Foreword, *The Spirit of God was Moving* (2019)
(To download PDF, go to wmpl.org/spirit-moving/)



Ernest Weinhardt



Hildegard, Ernest and Betty Weinhardt



Ernest & Hildegard

The Vision Then

The vision of some young adults studying at Lutheran Bible Institute in Minneapolis in the mid-1930s was not unique, but it was spontaneous. Go with the Gospel to the hearts of three continents: Asia, Africa and South America. Seek out the unreached. Enlist men and women out of existing Lutheran churches to do it. Look for the unmistakable call of God on a person's life and proceed without budget or even the promise of continuing support. It was a reckless approach by a group of unusually dedicated and confident people. The commission to preach the Gospel to the whole world seemed so overwhelmingly great that Weinhardt could envision it being accomplished only by a large number of workers sharing the task together. Weinhardt felt that there were many who would be willing to go if the opportunity were given to them. He commented:

There are many young men and women in the homeland who feel there is no need or room for them on the mission field, or rather, that societies will not and cannot accept and use them. They therefore immediately dismiss the idea of becoming a foreign missionary. An appeal for a definite number of young people—that is, an appeal to God—would give them to know that there is a definite need and that there's room for them. Many also think that to be a foreign missionary one has to be a super-individual. This should be clarified. A good training is highly desirable, but it should be explained that there is also a need for those who are not so highly trained, but who are wholly given to God and to the salvation of souls.

“Brother Weinhardt,” John Carlsen said excitedly, “I believe that God has brought us together. You must visit us in Minneapolis. My wife and I have opened our apartment and some who are concerned are coming to pray.”

Coming to pray. Prayer is our working method. Prayer takes our eyes off circumstances, off appearances and focuses them fully upon the Lord of the harvest. He alone has the answers. He alone has the resources. Is there a need for laborers? We pray. Do we have a need for money, for government permits, for transportation, for equipment, for anything? We pray. We know no other way to meet the situation.



Photos of
Lutheran Bible
Institute students
in classroom



John Carlsen had been advocating the establishment of a headquarters for the mission. He referred to it as the "Prayer House," a place where candidates would be trained in prayer and community, in evangelism and in trusting God for their daily needs.

Every Saturday evening the community offered an open house get-together, with a buffet supper served, followed by a two-hour informal meeting. Enthusiastic singing, testimonies and a stirring talk, usually by Paul Lindell, characterized these meetings.



John Carlsen

Paul Lindell understood the aim of the Prayer House to be three-fold:

- 1) to stir up missionary interest in the churches
- 2) to acquaint the church bodies with the vision and the program of the mission
- 3) to prepare new recruits for this new type of missionary endeavor.



Margaret & Paul Lindell



Paul Lindell with friends on porch of Prayer House

Every morning at nine the Prayer House family came together. Problems and victories, joys and sorrows, all were shared. Abundant time was given to discussion. The Bible was turned to for light on the subjects being considered. Discussion easily flowed into times of prayer. "Bear one another's burdens" became a daily working principle. Praise was given a predominant place in

the life of the home. Dozens of hymns and gospel songs were committed to memory so one could break out in song at any time.



1st PrayerHouse



Artist's rendition of Prayer House by Cathy Hagen, 2020

The Vision Now

To this day, we continue to gather for events such as the bi-weekly prayer meeting known as Ask for the Nations, a weekly young adults group, and hosting international students from local universities at the Mission Home. Since the launch of the Discipleship House in August 2022, many have gathered around the table, prayed for the unreached, hosted meals, sang songs of praise that fill the house with music, and been taught on what it means to live a Commissioned Life by WMPL staff and local pastors and leaders.



Prayer, discussion, fellowship, worship, laughter, and food fill the WMPL mission home during the Discipleship House commissioning weekend.



Current and former workers gather alongside Discipleship House residents to pray and consecrate the DH apartments.



Bingo brings stories of God's goodness and faithfulness.



MKs at play. Before they were residents, some participants lived overseas.

Reflecting on the Discipleship House's Beginnings

There are three foundational facets of WMPL's past that carry it on into the future.

- 1. Provision:** a reliance upon God to provide.
- 2. Prayer:** our working method to mobilize others in the unfinished global task of reaching the unreached.
- 3. Mission:** to see God glorified and all people participate fully in His Kingdom work here on earth by equipping and empowering the next generation of believers in a discipling community, working with the Holy Spirit in developing/nurturing resilient disciples who serve God in local and global contexts.

It is the sincere hope that as a Discipleship House we would be living as an intentional Christian community, growing together as disciples of Christ, and exploring our roles in God's global plan. Many are the hopes, prayers, and objectives that would mark those who live in our community, but I feel led to pray the words of Evald Conrad, who commented of the power of reconciliation after a time when the World Mission Prayer League and "Prayer House" were at odds with each other back in the 1940s:

Lord, just as October 22 will stand out as one of the great days in the history of our mission—a day of rejoicing, an unforgettable day—I pray that August 26th, 2022 will do the same. Only the Holy Spirit can affect a true union. Men may try by arguments, organizational setup and united meetings to combine and unite, but no true union ever follows. Only the Holy Spirit can so unite hearts that there is a true oneness of purpose, vision, program and fellowship. Holy Spirit, unify us under the headship of Christ and His

great love for us. May we be compelled and united all the more in our aim and ambitions first and foremost to glorify you in our lives. Second, to live out the Great Commandment and fulfill the Great Commission by your grace and your leadership. Lord, the harvest is plentiful and we pray that you would stir the hearts of your Church to go where the gospel is not.

**For more information about World Mission Prayer League and the Discipleship House,
go to wmpl.org**