



# The Vision

"Mobilizing Pastors Across America"

March 2001

## Monthly message from Pastor Rick

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**Dave Welch, Executive Director**

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Balancing my two worlds of leading Vision America while also pastoring a dynamic, soul-winning church is a challenging task. Thankfully God has blessed me with a dedicated colleague in Dave Welch, our Executive Director, to assist in Vision America and several and gifted and committed co-workers at the church. One year ago, my dear friend, Sonny Foraker, left one of the leading churches in South Carolina where he had been Senior Pastor for ten years, to link heart and soul with me as our Executive Pastor. Pastor Sonny retired from the U.S. Navy in 1986 after 22 years service on a nuclear submarine. He retired with the rank of Master Chief, the highest rank an enlisted man can attain. He has been a gift to our church and to me personally.

Up until the November elections, I focused almost entirely on Vision America and the impending elections. Since then, I have focused almost entirely on the church. As you are receiving this newsletter, we are preparing to move to our new 27-acre campus and state of the art facilities. After 10 years of prayer, preparation and finally construction, our new 77,000 square foot facility is completed and our grand opening is scheduled for March 4, 2001. Adjacent to our worship center and school is an 80 unit retirement complex for senior saints. We now offer ministry from birth through retirement. God truly has blessed our fellowship.

During these busy church days, Dave Welch has been carrying the lion's share of the workload. If you have followed us closely since the election, you know we have waged a number of very important battles for the cause of Christ and His church. Dave Welch has led Vision America to be a cutting edge ministry for God's Kingdom. We are all indebted to him. I discovered this week that our funds have been markedly down since Christmas. While all Vision America bills are paid to date, we have several pastor outreach and support projects that must be funded in order for us to proceed. Please prayerfully consider a special gift to Vision America this month.

Beginning March 15, I intend to redouble my efforts to enlist churches and pastors to participate in our cause. God continues to open great doors every day. This is God's ministry and He will provide...through people like you and me.

Thanks for being a part.

I remain...

Your friend and servant,

## The Vision

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# The Silencing of the Lambs

## Part Four

### What the ACLU does not want churches to know

By Dave Welch,  
Executive Director

Vision America affiliate pastor Charles Burchett, senior pastor at First Baptist Church in Kirbyville, Texas, is highly respected by his peers, as well as pro--family or organizational leaders across the state. Pastor Scarborough describes him as a pastor capable of leading a large church in a metropolitan area, who followed God's call to a small community. Tall, dignified with a quick smile, he is certainly no "radical."

In fact, last year he was asked to coordinate a prayer and repentance rally for the Texas State Republican Convention that was an awesome experience of God's redemptive character. So, what makes him different?

First, he is unafraid to be the God-ordained leader of the church he is serving, even when he has to "veto" committee decisions in order to hold firm to Biblical principles. Like other Patriot Pastors, he has been willing to lose members rather than compromise on issues of clear scriptural application.

It is really no surprise then that twenty-two years of solid servant leadership in this church and community have also given him a platform to speak boldly to cultural, moral and yes, political issues. In the last election, Pastor Burchett conducted his own research of local candidates, including municipal and judicial positions.

He subsequently mentioned from the pulpit that a candidate for justice of the peace had knowingly allowed liquor to be distributed to minors at a fund raising event. Pastor Burchett happens to believe that a person seeking a position of public trust should respect the law. Imagine that.!

Naturally, the weeping and gnashing of teeth began. Politicians and even some church members claimed that he had violated the "separation of church and state" and jeopardized his 501 (c) (3) non profit status.

This pastor understands that separation, as defined today, is unscriptural and directly counter to documented intent of the framers of the Constitution. He also is not bound by 501 (c) (3) restrictions because FBC Kirbyville is not a 501 (c) (3) organization. It is simply a church.

**"The fact is that as a church, they do not have to be a 501 (c) (3), and they have operated that way for decades. Simply put, this pastor is not restrained by the IRS..."**

How can that be, since many attorneys, accountants and church "tax law experts" counsel churches to the contrary? The fact is that as a church, they do not have to be a 501 (c) (3), and they have operated that way for decades. Simply put, this pastor is not restrained by the IRS, and can speak from the pulpit in whatever way he feels led by God to without fear of IRS retaliation. *He may even call candidates or elected officials by name and endorse or oppose them from the pulpit.*

Let me quote directly from Internal Revenue Service Package 1023 manual (Application for Recognition of Exemption, Under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, rev. September 1998):

***"Organizations not required to***

***file form 1023—The following types of organizations may be considered tax-exempt under section 501 (c) (3) even if they do not file form 1023:***

- 1. Churches***
- 2. Integrated auxiliaries of churches, and conventions or associations of churches....***

The IRS clearly recognizes churches as a unique category in which exemption from federal income taxes is automatically assumed. In *Branch Ministries v. Rossotti*, the Second Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals confirmed that policy. The court also stated that revocation of advance exempt determination did not predicate a tax liability on the church.

Out of hundreds of thousands of churches in the U.S., only one in the roughly 50-year history of the 501 (c) (3) status has had its advance exemption revoked. In addition, there is not a single, documented example of a "free church" such as Pastor Burchett's that has ever been levied for tax because it engaged in "political" activity.

Prior to the implementation of the progressive income tax in 1913 and the incorporation of churches, which was almost non-existent prior to the twentieth century, the thought of taxing churches was only a dream of power-hungry politicians. Now, however, the fearless voice of the pulpits, in opposition to tyranny through the revolutionary period, and later courageously standing against slavery, are nearly silent.

If churches are not required to apply for the "c 3," they should not fear losing it. They may even want to consider unlicensing themselves. It is time to decide which we want - liberty or the unneeded "benevolence" of the state.

## Pastor Joins the VA national team to enlist his peers

We are very pleased to announce that Pastor Ray Wilson, senior pastor of Agape Family Church in Marshall, Texas, has agreed to serve with Vision America by helping to enlist affiliate pastors for the Southeastern U.S. He will initially devote one to two days a week toward recruiting pastors and establishing local as well as state Pastor Councils in that region.

Ray graduated with a B.A. in Religion from East Texas Baptist University in 1981, and has served in a number of pastoral positions.

He and Terry Lynn, his wife of 20 years, and their three children have served Agape for over twelve years. It is a dynamic, growing church in Marshall, which is located between Dallas and Shreveport, Louisiana.

A national pro-family organization had recruited Ray to serve in a similar position, and had requested that he move to Washington D.C. in order to work out of their office there. Ray and Terri Lynn did not feel led to uproot their family or leave the pulpit at that time, so they declined the offer.

At about the same time, Ray heard about Vision America, and after contacting our office, they drove to Pearland to meet with Pastor Scarborough and Dave. It was clear that Ray had a strong burden as a pastor to help mobilize his peers and their lay leaders, and felt a parallel calling to what VA is doing.

Dave asked Pastor Ray what it was

that ignited that burden. His response follows:

*“Several years ago I began to be frustrated with all the liberal anti-Christ voices that were out there in our country and no one seemed to be responding to them. At about the same time two important things happened in my life. 1) I made my first trip to Washington D.C. and 2) I began to understand the significance of our nation’s spiritual heritage and the role pastors and churches played in the forming of our country.”*

*“Since those events I began to feel a calling from the Lord to both be a strong voice and raise up other voices to call America back to her roots as a Christian nation and a Christian people. I believe Vision America is the greatest vehicle to facilitate that coming to pass. They are an organization of integrity and vision and I am truly excited to be a part.”*

We are excited to have Ray as part of our national team, and will initially be concentrating his efforts in Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, Mississippi and Alabama.

Ray’s efforts, combined with active leadership teams in Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Kentucky and New Jersey, add up to a year with tremendous potential for Vision America to dramatically expand our church-based grassroots organization this year.

Please pray for Ray, his family and all VA leaders as they serve our Lord on the front lines of this battle.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

FEBRUARY 27— **Vision America of Iowa** Pastor Luncheon in Des Moines, IA

FEBRUARY 28— **Vision America of Iowa** Pastor Luncheon in Moline, Illinois

MARCH 4— Pastor Scarborough’s church (First Baptist Church, Pearland, TX) conducts first Sunday Worship Celebration in new church facility

MARCH 18, 19— VA “Wake Up America” Rally for **Vision Missouri** at First Baptist Church in Ferguson (St. Louis), MO.

APRIL 3—Pastor Rick speaks at Revival Fires Conference in Branson, MO.

APRIL 5 – Dave Welch speaks at Pastor /Leader Luncheon in Philadelphia, PA

APRIL 22, 23—VA “Wake Up America” rally for **Vision Kentucky** at Hopewell Missionary Church in Corbin, KY

APRIL 30 - MAY 5— VA Christian Legacy Tour from Norfolk, VA to New York, featuring Dr. Marshall Foster

## VA Helps Mobilize Houston Pastors Against Proposed Domestic Partnership

In mid-February, the Houston Mayor’s office announced that they planned to include employee benefits for same-sex “domestic partners” in an upcoming package being presented at a city council meeting. While Mayor Lee Brown is a vocal support of gay rights, there is still a strong pro-family base in Houston, and so Vision America partnered with Pastor Laurence White of the Houston Pastor’s Roundtable

to alert hundreds of pastors around the greater Houston area. A letter (with talking points) from Pastor Rick, along with a request to sign a statement, was sent to 400 churches by VA. Pastor White sent a letter and a sample bulletin insert for churches to use.

The response was very good, and it became evident very quickly to the city council that this issue was going to stir up

more public opposition than they were ready to face. The proposal was withdrawn, although a “fall back” attempt to include “sexual orientation” in city discrimination policies is in the works.

This effort shows what can happen, even in a major city, if pastors and churches are networked and coordinated to stand together. We are encouraged, and believe it can happen in any city!



Vision America  
Presents a  
**Christian Legacy Tour  
For Pastors and Church Leaders**

*Tour Leaders:*

**Dr. Marshall Foster, The Mayflower Institute  
and  
Pastor Rick Scarborough, President of Vision America**

**April 30 - May 5, 2001**

*"My vision for ministry has been increased, my love for my country has been rekindled, my understanding of the role of pastors in communities has been magnified. My passion to bring my fellow countrymen back to Jesus Christ has been stirred, and I want to share such an experience of personal revival with my fellow shepherds."*

*Pastor David Seifert, Big Valley Grace Church, Modesto, California*

**Walk The  
Christian Heritage of:**

- Norfolk, VA
- Williamsburg, VA
- Washington D.C.
- New York

**The Tour includes National Day of Prayer activities and a tour of the Capitol building!**

*As America enters its third century, we pray that you will join us for this great "pilgrimage" to the historic landmarks which gave birth to America. We do not want you to miss this first-class, unforgettable tour. We have chosen the most exciting and meaningful places that every American should visit. We are going to laugh, pray and share together with true characters and events of our providential history. Together, let's trust God with His promise to us in II Chronicles 7:14 and believe that America can be restored to one nation under God!*

*Marshall Foster*

Hosted by:

**AMERICAN  
CHRISTIAN  
TOURS®**

For a complete itinerary, registration and cost information  
please contact: Debi Fry at ACTS® 800-222-2001

**WE'RE ON THE WEB! [www.visionamerica.org](http://www.visionamerica.org)**



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VISION AMERICA

P.O. Box 1000, Pearland, TX 77588  
Phone: 281-485-6633 • Fax: 281-485-7382  
E-mail: [mail@visionamerica.org](mailto:mail@visionamerica.org)

## *Help us Identify Patriot Pastors!*

Do you know of a Pastor who is courageously preaching on the great moral issues of our day and encouraging his congregation to be involved as Christian citizens? How would your community be transformed if there were just a few more doing what he is doing?

Very often, the pastors who follow that course are standing alone, and receive opposition from within their congregation, from other pastors and certainly from liberals in the political and media elite. Our objective is to establish pastor-led teams in key communities, cities and states so that those pastors and their lay leaders who are willing to “Stand up, Speak up and Refuse to give up,” are supported by a team that crosses denominational and racial lines.

*We are providing pastors with:*

- **SCRIPTURAL** basis for civic involvement
- **HISTORICAL** truth about issues such as “separation of church and state” and our American Christian heritage
- **CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL** defense for pastors’ and churches’ free involvement in the cultural, moral and political affairs of the community, state and nation.

### **Our Vision—**

- A pastor who is leading his congregation to serve as effective Bible-based citizens
- A working Citizenship Ministry team serving in the church under the pastor
- A City/Community Pastor Council that solidifies the team of involved pastors
  - Establish a monthly or quarterly luncheon
- A City/Community lay team comprised of the leaders from each active pastor’s church, meeting regularly and performing the necessary grassroots development tasks.

**If you know of such pastors (or are one!), please fill out the form on the back of this page and mail or fax it back to us. Upon receipt we will send follow-up information and include them on a scheduled conference call with Pastor Scarborough.**

**“To the Pulpit, the PURITAN  
PULPIT, we owe the moral force  
which won our independence.”**

***Rev. John Wingate Thornton***





**Please send a Pastor Information Packet to:**

Title \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Church name \_\_\_\_\_ Denomination \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP code \_\_\_\_\_ website \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Church name \_\_\_\_\_ Denomination \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP code \_\_\_\_\_ website \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Church name \_\_\_\_\_ Denomination \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP code \_\_\_\_\_ website \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Church name \_\_\_\_\_ Denomination \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP code \_\_\_\_\_ website \_\_\_\_\_

**Please return in the enclosed reply envelope or by fax to 281-485-7382**