

May 25, 2010

To Our Church Family,

“But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead.” (Phil. 3:13b). In this verse the Apostle Paul gives us a window into his life. Paul wasted little energy on his past, including his failures and successes, but focused on the future. As a congregation, we need to do the same- put the past behind and look toward the future.

There are two goals discussed at the Annual Meeting in the Looking Ahead 2010 document. I have recently been working and praying on:

Goal number one: Become an “intentional” regional church. Our region is in great need of a strong evangelical church that focuses on making more and better disciples of Jesus Christ. There are many people in our region who are lost and do not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Since God has blessed us with so many resources it is our responsibility to do all we can to influence the region for Christ. We currently have seventy three families who live outside of Fremont and I believe this number could be increased as we “intentionally” reach out to our region. There are 45,000 people within a 30 minute drive north and 15 minute drive south and 15,000 of this number do not claim any home church according to the Association of Religious Data Archives. As Jesus said, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest.” (Matthew 9:37)

Goal number two: Retire the debt and purchase land. Before we can purchase land, we need to retire our debt. Our debt is \$180,000 and it costs us \$11,000 to service this debt each year. It would be great to retire this debt and begin to build a capital reserve fund so that in the future we can begin to look for property that would be adequate for our future ministry needs and service our region.

Both goals are a great challenge to us as a congregation. We have been praying and thinking about these two goals since the Annual General Meeting. In answer to our prayers, God has providentially brought two men into my life.

The first man, Pastor David Engbrecht, was recommended to me by our District Superintendent, Rodger Peck. Pastor Dave is senior pastor of the Nappanee Missionary Church in Nappanee, Indiana which has a population of 3,400 and is surrounded by many other small towns. He recently told us the story of how God transformed their small neighborhood church of 100 members into a large regional church of 3,000 people. He had great insight and encouraged us to think, pray and work regionally. Pastor Dave will be a great resource for us in the future as we work to “intentionally” expand throughout our regional area.

The second man who was providentially brought into my life was Dr. Curt Dodd, Senior Pastor of Westside Church, Omaha. I was reading a book called Successful Church Fundraising by Dr. John Bisango, and noticed it was dedicated to Dr. Curt Dodd, his son-in-law. After reading the book I e-mailed Dr. Curt Dodd and we ended up having lunch together. During our lunch, he shared with me his own experience of raising funds in the different churches he served, as well as helping other churches raise funds through his own stewardship ministry, Shepherds Group. Here are some examples he shared with me:

Prairie Lane Christian Reform Church in Omaha, a church of just over a hundred people, used his services and over three years were able to raise \$595,000 to the glory of God. One of our board members, Keith Huizinga and wife Barb were at one time, members of this church and recently attended their celebration banquet. This church grew in faith and saw God work in miraculous ways.

Desert View Bible Church in Phoenix, Arizona is a church of 900 in attendance with a \$1.3 million annual budget. In February, 2010, they pledged 1.7 million dollars. Kent Sheets, Executive Pastor, said the campaign unified the church and that it was a very sweet experience for everyone involved. He went on to say Pastor Curt Dodd was a great communicator, motivator and made things simple, easy, effective and supplied a roadmap.

New Horizon Church, Champaign, Illinois, has an annual budget of \$700,000, which is close to ours, and they were able to raise \$2.23 million dollars over three years. The people grew in unity and faith and were committed to reaching people for Christ.

As I spoke to these churches, I began to see that a capital campaign is not about raising money, but it is about raising faith. This kind of giving reminds me of the time when Moses commanded the people to stop giving because they had more than enough to furnish the tabernacle.

The Governing Board invited Dr. Curt Dodd to present his stewardship strategy. After much prayer and discussion the Governing Board decided unanimously to hire Dr. Curt Dodd to be our stewardship consultant toward retiring our debt and raise funds for the future purchase of land.

There is much prep work to be done, but the bulk of the stewardship campaign will take place in September and October. In the coming weeks, a steering committee will be put in place and you will be hearing more about this as we get closer to our banquet in the fall. These are going to be very exciting days for us as a congregation. Please be in prayer as we strive to reach Fremont and our region with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

One of the requirements God gave Joshua to cross the Jordan River was that the priest had to step foot into the river before the flow would be cut off and stand up in a heap. And the text tells us that "...as soon as the priests who carried the ark reached the Jordan and their feet touched the water's edge, the water from the upstream stopped flowing." (Joshua 3:15b-16a) It is time for us to step out in faith and get our feet wet so that we too can see the power of God displayed in our midst.

Pressing On Together,

Tom Nevius
Senior Pastor

Roger Koertner
Campaign Chairman

Wendell Dorsett
Co-Chairman