

January 2010

Dear North Shore Fellowship,

The first Sunday of the year, I explained North Shore's philosophy of ministry, our present progress, and next steps in 2010 for living out of our vision. Some feel so energized by NSF's vision you want to start a church in your neighborhood already. Others of you are afraid you might be cut off from fellowship that you have found refreshing and healing. So let me recap what I shared to encourage your vision and hopefully calm any fears.

Our vision from the very beginning has been...

- to become a church transformed by the gospel so that we grow in love for God, one another, and our neighbors.
- to be a safe place for the emerging generations to discover Christ in an intergenerational community.
- to sacrifice for the social, cultural, economic, physical, and spiritual transformation of North Chattanooga and other parishes by meeting needs and *multiplying churches* in the city.

Our pastoral staff are encouraged that we are growing in our care for one another through parish-based fellowship groups and taking baby steps to become conduits of mission—not just cul-de-sacs of care. Our desire for un-churched and de-churched people in North Chatt and around the city to experience the gospel, compels us to cultivate gospel-centered fellowships and churches that function together simply, relationally, and missionally. We are discovering that moving toward this way of being the church can be both a life-giving and uncomfortable process.

Our elders believe that we need to become more incarnationally intentional and missional by...

- ...becoming like people in our neighborhoods, vocations, and spheres of influence (incarnational);
- ...orienting our lives around Jesus' kingdom coming for ourselves, one another, and our neighbors (intentional);
- ...multiplying parish church sites where we may focus on our un-churched or de-churched neighbors (missional).

How will we know when we are ready? We will multiply worship sites when and where...

- ...our people and leaders share real vision for their neighbors;
- ...people in fellowship are gaining traction enjoying and embodying Jesus;
- ...maturing leaders are actively caring for fellowships who enjoy and embody Jesus;
- ...our presbytery agrees for the need for a church in partnership with other churches in the area.

What will this mean for me if I am a part of a parish worship site?

- Worship: NSF's worship service comes to your part of town on Sunday evening.
- Fellowship group: your group may shift to an alternate time (a Sunday morning brunch in your neighborhood?)
- Children: we will continue to care for and invest the gospel creatively with our children.
- Our hope: this would create a simpler, more relational, and missional way of being the church together.

What if a church site in my area doesn't seem likely any time soon? You are wanted and welcomed at NSF!

We want to aim our lives at loving Jesus, loving our families, loving one another, and loving our neighbors so that parish church sites spring up organically. This aspect of our original vision may be near!

Grateful for you,

Gary Purdy