



Listening to God: Central Fellowship Baptist

November 13-14, 2020

“Where Have We Been?”

Conversation 1

Overview:

As you are aware, we are looking to God for His direction for the next chapter of our church's journey. We have set aside three blocks of time (conversations) to discern what He is saying to us. At each conversation, we are prayerfully engaging one question.

- Conversation One: Where have we been? – How has God been at work shaping us?
- Conversation Two: Where are we going? – What is the mission and vision God has given us?
- Conversation Three: How will we get there? – What steps of obedience must we take?

With the clarity these conversations provide, we will discern the path and call God has upon us. On November 13, 14 we engaged in our first conversation. We began by asking the question – “Where have we been?” Many years ago J.B. Toews, a Christian leader said, **“He who does not know the past has no understanding of the present and no vision for the future.”** We began by writing our history as honestly as possible. We built a journey wall. We included the joyful times, and painful (not necessarily bad) circumstances. It was an effort to understand, not to fix blame or explain why.

Then we went on to process four more questions.

- “What do we value?”
- “What is God saying to us?”
- “If we are to move forward with God in our next chapter, what might we need to release (surrender)?”
- “If we are to move forward with God in our next chapter, what might we need to address?”

What follows is a digest of our observations and responses. This is what we thought was said. We invite you to reflect and offer your perspective as well. As you continue to read this summary ask yourself, “Is this accurate and reflective of us as a church? If it is, we must take these factors into consideration as we seek God's will in setting our course for the future. You will have further opportunity to engage and discuss this in your prayer triads.

Question 1: Where Have We Been?

Our Journey Wall

A Good Start- Crash		Building Foundations		Glory Days		Chaos & Pain		New Hope	
1980		1990	2000	2010		2016	2018	2020	
Dennis & Miriam	Several People leaving/split?	Mike Mahorter Ministry and leadership	Pastor Alex Hoogendoorn Youth pastor	Bridging the Gap Y Adult Ministry (x4)	Worship	Theological Differences	Pastor Michael Daykin	Impact Leaving	
			Bike trips	Bridging the Gap supervision concern	Home Groups			Michael Daykin resignation (x2)	
Steve Horton – Evangelism and growth	Pastor Horton fall	Home Groups	Men’s bike trip	Reigan Brown Ministry (x3)	Reigan Brown resignation (x3)	AGM (x2)		Current renovation	
		Outreach Deciding to grow	Pastor Brian Joyce (x4) heart guy	Building Project & Vision (x2)	Colombian refugees	Split Slow Leak Exodus (x3)		Reg, Angie, Ester	
					Columbian refugees				
			Leadership Vacuum/ training miss.	Soup Kitchen		Brian Joyce leaving (x3)			
						Brian Joyce ministry			

Unshaded – Events, circumstances and people Dark Shaded – Painful (not necessarily bad) events, circumstances and people

Summary Notes:

A Good Start ... Crash (1980-1990)

- Pastor Steve Horton brought a strong evangelistic focus
- There was good, solid growth in this season
- Lawrence’s had a positive influence in the church with long term faithfulness
- Spiritual growth took place in this time.
- Baptisms took place with 9 adults baptized on one day
- Pastor Horton left under a cloud of suspicion; this was painful
- People left and it felt like a split

Building Foundations (1990-2000)

- Pastor Mike Mawhorter came and brought strong leadership and relational skills.
- Strong teaching by Pastor Mike
- Training of leaders and development of leaders
- Ministries were stopped that didn’t work
- Leadership was willing to take risks and were supported
- Complaints were handled well - examine and improve
- Strong sense of family and community with various events
- Pastor Mike’s wife was also a strong teacher/mentor
- There was a renewed focus on outreach with a decision to grow
- Home groups were started and became a focal point of the church

- Pastor Alex Hoogendoorn came to work with the youth; lots of positive activity and growth among the youth
- Bike trips became a place where generations connected
- Pastor Alex was a dynamic leader
- There was a leadership vacuum and training was missing

The Glory Days (2000-2015)

- Pastor Brian Joyce came with a caring heart for people.
- A lot of positive ministry took place in these years
- The church grew in number - two services
- Bridging the Gap helped to engage with young adults.
- Worship, not just music became important - sharing, prayer
- Known as a welcoming church
- Pastor Reigan Brown helped to develop the youth, young adult ministries and worship
- New ministries were started - Soup Kitchen, SS trailer, ministry to Colombian refugees
- Worship became a source of strength
- There was a desire to build a new place of worship to be together.
- The vision for ministry and a desire to have a good location was strong
- Prayer focus of listening to God, praying for a vision for the future
- A lack of connection/supervision between CFBC, as a church, and Bridging the Gap
- Painful leaving of Pastor Reigan

Chaos and Pain (2016-2020)

- Strong theological differences developed and grew
- 2017 AGM was very hard and caused lots of pain - words used - evil, sinful, terrible, toxic...
- Many people didn't know what was happening or why
- Some wished that there would have been a way to stop the meeting; others were affirming of the kind of language being exposed
- Unable to process the pain of what happened
- Deep loss of connection and relationship - very deep personal pain
- The Fellowship asking the church to address the theological concerns
- Leaving of Pastor Brian Joyce - thankful for his ministry yet hard to see him leave
- Hiring a family ministries pastor - Michael Daykin
- Difficult ministry season due to staff leaving and role change for Pastor Michael
- Review of Pastor Michael, including Fellowship, and his resignation
- Impact ministry leaving was surprising and sad
- COVID - circumvented the processing of what had happened

New Hope (2020 -)

- Seeing a way forward with transitional ministry suggested by Fellowship
- Hiring of Ester (office admin.), Angie (bookkeeper), Reg (transitional pastor)
- Current renovation is giving a positive feel & fulfilling a vision of a renewed worship space

Most Joyful:

When asked which milestones gave us the greatest pleasure we said:

- Seeing more positive than negative - resilience in hard times
- Worship development - willing to look at tough things

Most Painful:

When asked which milestones sadden us we said:

- Splits that couldn't be resolved
- Lack of leadership development
- Lost relationships

Observations :

- It seems that the church rises and falls with the pastor
- Vision needs to come from the church then look for a pastor
- We need to support our leader rather than depend on them
- Loving one another is key
- We don't seem to be able to connect with each other
- Leaders are elevated above the congregation
- Worship is missing in our wall
- We have been outwardly focused but didn't mention it

Responses:

When asked how we have responded to the things that happened we said the following are all responses we have demonstrated:

- We talk to those who agree with us
- We look to leaders to solve the problem
- We don't deal with pain and hurt
- People tend to leave rather than work it through

Question 2: What do we value?

We worked in clusters and expressed the following "actual" core values as those that define us today – based on our journey wall and our behaviour. They are not our "preferred" values.

- **Preaching** - We value the teaching of God's Word holding it as true for our lives.
- **Inclusion** - We value intimate relationships and connections.
- **Personal Comfort/Stability** - we value the comfort of who we are and what we are.
- **Depending on our Pastor** - we value a pastor who we can depend on even when it might be unhealthy for us and them.
- **Outreach** - we value reaching out to others, being a place of healing, being uncomfortable with people different from us.
- **Generosity** - we value being generous of our time, using our gifts and our money

Other values that surfaced but did not make it into the "core"...Discipleship, worship, dependence on God

Questions 3: What is God saying to us?

We paused to reflect on our discoveries. Around our tables we talked of what Jesus would say to us if He were walking amongst us as He did in Revelation. Here is what we concluded:

God would affirm us for:

- Standing up for the truth and integrity of the Word
- Experiencing His love in the pain
- Our loving relationships
- Our desire to reach out

What would God challenge us on:

- Looking more outward into our community
- Our lack of deep relationship with each other
- Our lack of seeing the lost and reaching out to them
- Our fear or blindness of difficult situations
- A need to become spiritual healthier as individuals
- Putting Jesus first in our church and lives.

God would draw us to the following scriptures:

Scriptures and Words of Direction

- Tradition - see new ways Gal. 5:13-26
- A focus on prayer
- Dependence on God 1 Sam. 8; John 17:3
- Prioritize God and outreach Rev. 2:2-5
- Own my relationship with God John 14:6
- Elevate the pastor Col. 2:8
- Discipleship focus on Jesus
- Unified teaching 1 Cor. 1:10
- Financial generosity
- Trust each other and leaders

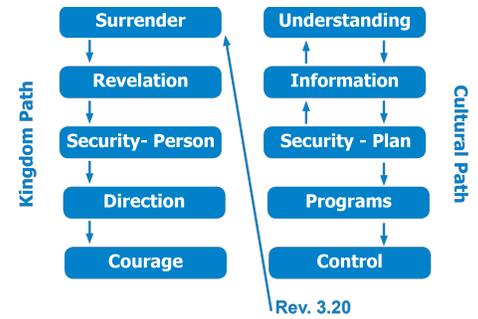
Scriptures and Words of Encouragement

- Worship as life; serving; gifts; music; preaching - Prov 3:1-6; John 17:13, 17
- Grounded in truth; surrender to the Word
- Psalm 119:9-11
- Hebrews 5:12 - reverse
- Proverbs 4:2
- Generosity - 1 Cor 8:2; 9
- Loving relationships/a healing place - 1 Peter 4:8; John 13:34, 35
- Heart for Outreach
- Heart for Discipleship
- Welcoming/Warm Acceptance

Questions 4 & 5: If God is to have his way with us, what must we surrender & address?

Our natural tendency is to look for information so that we can understand, plan, and regain control. However, God is inviting us to surrender to Him so that He can reveal to us His plans and so that our obedient trust is in who He is and what He has done rather than in our own resources.

We asked ourselves what we would need to release if God were to have His way at Central Fellowship. We talked about our points of surrender and identified the following:



If God is going to have his way with us in our next chapter we will need to release

- Our will to God's will
- The Chaos Chapter
- Control over my way or God's way
- Expectations of people, programs - "My ways are not your ways"
- My personal need for a particular outcome
- My idea of a pastor
- Our present purpose
- Expectations of leadership
- My personal assumptions and perceptions

If God is going to have his way with us in our next chapter we will need to address

- Our personal walk with God
- Lack of open, transparent relationships
- Success measures - outreach/numbers
- Our purpose/vision - Battleship vs Cruise ship

Conclusion

As we closed, there was a sense that God is with us. God has been shaping us. If we let him have his way, we will be a deeper more authentic people. It is a future we look forward to discovering together as we continue to seek God in future conversations.

Questions for Prayer Groups/Others

Please take notes of your discussion and return your response to the office (email is fine) by December 20th.

1. Where Have We Been? (Journey Wall) Are there any key omissions? Would you modify or add to the comments or observations in any way? If so, how?
2. What Have We Valued? Does the list of actual values resonate? Would you add or subtract any of them?
3. What is God Saying to Us? Anything further?
4. What Do We Need to Release? Do the points of surrender resonate? Do you concur or disagree? Would you add to or modify the points? If so, how?
5. What Do We Need to Address? Do you concur or disagree? Would you add to or modify the points? If so, how?