



PLANT & BUILD

JEREMIAH 29

“Build houses and make yourselves at home; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Seek peace and prosperity for your city and pray for its well-being. For when your city thrives, you also will thrive. I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord — “plans to take care of you, not abandon you, plans to give you a hope and a future.”

These are the words of Jeremiah to the people of Israel as they found themselves in Babylon. Our church is also in the middle of a city, and His words can guide us as we plant and build for the future



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Central Florida Cross Network
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Pastor Hoyer's Sabbatical

Thoughts from My Sabbatical

Words can't express just how much I have enjoyed and appreciated the last 2 and ½ months away from the day to day of my position as Executive Pastor of the Central Florida Cross Network. I had a couple of long weekends away with Betty and spent a great deal of time and energy helping Jacob to rebuild a house that they bought in Deland. This time away and time spent focused on manual labor allowed me to decompress and clear my head of all the competing thoughts that come with the guidance of this large organization. It also allowed me to celebrate the great blessings that God has bestowed on me and the Holy Cross Family throughout the last 33 years. In September of 1983 as I began work in Central Florida, Holy Cross had \$2,800 in a checking account and that was the totality of our assets! Today we have been blessed with a balance sheet that shows us with assets that number more than \$7,800,000.00. That is not even the greatest blessings that God has bestowed, because as those assets were being added, we were impacting the greater Central Florida Area with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and changing the communities where we live, we can't begin to count the number of lives that have been changed. To God be the Glory!!

I have done a number of things to stimulate my thinking on the future of our Network of churches.

- I went to California and met with Peter Meier and about 5 other Church Planting trainers/coaches with the Center for US Missions.
- I went to Phoenix for a "Best Practices" Conference. There were 2,000 LCMS people there sharing ideas for church growth and discipleship.
- I went to St. Louis and participated in the interview/assessment of 10 Seminary graduates to see if they would make good church planters. This gave me the opportunity to interact with 20 other pastors who are involved with starting churches in the LCMS.
- I invited the leaders of 5 Networks that I knew about, in the LCMS to come to Lake Mary and see what we are doing and share with each other the strengths and weaknesses of our organizations. These are all groups that are starting multiple churches not just talking about it. We spent two days together and we identified about 4 more in the LCMS that are actually doing multiple church plants. We will strive to get all of them to support each other in one way or another.
- I attended the Exponential Conference in Orlando the last week of April. This is a conference of thousands of people of various denominations meeting and learning for 2 days about all the different aspects of church planting.
- We contracted with a writer to gather and write the Case Studies of each of our 4 church plants and also a Study of the start of Holy Cross and what is now the Network. Out of these we should be able to start to develop some procedures for the start of new churches in our network.

As I see things today these are the conclusions that I have reached.

- Starting new churches is statistically proven to be the best way to reach those who do not know Jesus and connect them with His love and grace. As opposed to growing large churches larger. Therefore our focus and funding as well as our energy should be primarily geared toward starting more churches that start more churches and in that way reaching more of the lost people in our community.
- When churches have grown large enough and stable enough there would be the opportunity for them to become a separate church that also plants churches. This fulfills the "multiplication model" of church growth.
- We should not be reluctant to spin the Cross Mt. Dora off as a separate church. Rather we should celebrate with them the opportunities to now multiply with new church plants themselves. It will also allow us focus on additional church plants.
- This change in status would best be accomplished starting on January 1, 2017. That gives us 6 months to get things ready for their independence.
- We should start three more churches by 2020 and then look to start one new church each year through the Network of churches that we are building. This would necessitate a new definition of a "viable Church Plant". If our emphasis continues to be on living life together and stimulating discipleship growth a church may be viable even if it does not own or rent property. It may not be able to afford a full time pastor.
- We should be looking to start churches with non-ordained trained lay people, who keep their day job!
- Several districts in the LCMS use trained lay deacons as church planters and they conduct Word and Sacrament ministries.
- If it helps the Network and the individual churches some of these lay church planters could end up enrolled in the SMP program leading toward Ordination in the LCMS.
- The Network would have a group of Ordained Ministers that would help to train the lay leaders.

- Some of our Ordained Ministers would be “bi-vocational” meaning that they would have another job as well as pastor one of our churches. Some will have the traditional full time support. Each situation will determine which of these is best for each of our church plants.
- Some of our new churches should be in new ethnic groups and perhaps different languages.
- We need to develop a written plan for church planting. This can then be individualized for each situation.

Much of what we have been doing for the last 5+ years would continue the same. We still would have “One vision, one Mission, and one board and budget”. There are still good reasons to centralize finances. There are reasons for the church plants to operate without standing boards.

We need to continue to value relationships, both with God and with people. To live as a Believer in this world is to live life together with others who are living with Jesus. That life together is “the Church” it is not just the gathering together for worship, but it is that also as that becomes part of our life. We are on a journey through life with Jesus. We seek those who are on that journey without Jesus so that they may experience a life with Him.

These are my thoughts on my role with the Central Florida Cross Network.

- Through 2020 I would help to raise up the needed leaders and help organize the training that we need. I would hope that by that date we could have an organized program to identify and equip lay leadership.
- I would continue to mentor the pastors of the network in whatever stage of church growth that they may be going through.
- I would give strong leadership to all the new church plants.
- I would guide our role in leading the church planting of the SELC District and in the new networks that are growing in our synod. We have the opportunity to speak into that growth in the district and in the synod.
- I would encourage the vigorous use of the “L Team” concept in the structure of our congregations.
- I would hold high the vision that we are a Church that plants churches that plant churches! God is changing the face of Central Florida and He allows us to be a part of that change. Multiplication is the key to the future of the Christian faith in our community.
- I would do even more work than in the past to develop life-long givers for our churches and our school.
- After 2020 I would begin to work myself out of the vision role and develop a team of people that could carry on stewardship development among our people.
- My plan would be to stay involved in this group of congregations until at least 2025.
- I would love to work with the people of this community until the board feels that my leadership is no longer helpful or Christ comes again.

Thanks

I want to thank the board of directors that allowed me this time away and to those who encouraged me to take the time, when I was inclined to not take the time off. This has definitely given me a new perspective and a renewed vigor for what lies ahead. May God give us the courage to go where He is leading and receive the life He is offering to us.

God is Good All the time, All the time God is Good!



Paul Hoyer

 CentralFlorida Cross Network



CFLCN.ORG/PLANT-AND-BUILD

Plant & Build Progress

\$530,000.00

\$2,260,000.00



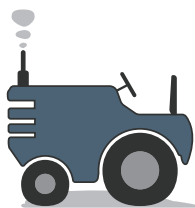
Planting

Your board of directors wants to make sure we are funding church planting as a priority and with the fulfillment we are ready to start looking to launch another site. As you read in Pastor Paul's sabbatical report, solid planning is underway for the future church plants.

Building

Each site is actively building for the future:

- At Holy Cross Lake Mary \$283,168.65 of \$934,913.00 has been collected to date. Plans are underway for renovating the youth room and worship center stage area.
- At theCross Mount Dora \$194,309.27 of \$903,657.00 has been collected to date. Renovations of the crossKids area and youth area will be completed soon.
- At Holy Cross Lutheran Academy \$24,281.83 of \$244,204.00 has been collected to date. The Academy has started collecting bids for the field renovations. Improvements to the Lower campus have begun with the removal of the Boy Scout storage shed. Summer plans to make improvements on the lower campus include: updating interior walls in early childhood building, relocating back fencing to increase green play space for elementary students, putting up shade cover on the playground that lost a shade tree.
- At theCross Orlando \$9,226.26 of \$61,780.00 has been collected to date. We're building out the new church space. It's almost four times the size of the current space we've had and a lower per square foot price in the area of highest growth downtown. We're very excited for the opportunity the space will give the cross Orlando to grow.
- At New City Church \$11,914.43 of \$65,500.00 has been collected to date. New City is renovating the new space, organizing prayer conferences and partnering with local churches for multi-cultural worship services.
- At Table Church the worship experience is solidifying and we are planning to complete the multi-purpose area adjacent to the expanded worship space.



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