

OPEN LETTER TO GREATER CHICAGO CHURCH

From Ian Carroll, Senior Pastor

October 16, 2010



The Call of Abram

Genesis 12:1-3

¹ The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you.

² "I will make you into a great nation
and I will bless you;
I will make your name great,
and you will be a blessing.

³ I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will curse;
and all peoples on earth
will be blessed through you."

I often want things neat and tidy. I would like to leave one home and immediately move into another that is ready to live in. I would like zero delays, no obstacles, and I prefer to avoid ambiguity. I want to be sure and not need to have faith.

Abram and every other hero and heroine in scripture seemed to have a different mindset. They thrived in ambiguity knowing that God had spoken and their future was secured. Sure, some had moments when faith left the room, times when caution seemed to defeat courage, but our heritage is filled with courageous people who chose faith over safety and security.

Not that many months ago, 60 of us gathered for 6 months to form our mission and vision. What we are doing now is directly connected to what we talked about, prayed about and sought God for during that time. In 20 years time, we will look back and remember these days. A day of courage, innocence and great excitement for all God has, is and will do through each one of us individually and collectively.

Last night, the wider leadership, our Counsel, met to hear our plans. These will be shared again at our All-Church (Annual) Meeting on Sunday, October 24 at Brooks Middle School, Oak Park. (Dinner is at 5:30, Meeting begins at 6:30). For now, here is a summary of where we are and where we are going...

This is what I know:

- It is time to move. We cannot delay.
- We are called to be in the city.
- We are called to be present throughout the city, all 77 neighborhoods plus the suburbs and various demographically targeted ministries.
- This call includes being present in Oak Park
- We will be present in one of 4 ways in all 77+
 - Ministry center – designed to target a specific location. Could be a coffee shop in Wicker Park, a Crisis care center in Inglewood, etc
 - Satellite congregation – meets on Sundays, may use teaching from main campus, responsible for pastoral care and impacting the area
 - Church plant – under the direction of GCC Central with a goal of being fully released
 - Associate church- fully autonomous, capable of having their own 'children', in relationship with GCC Central

Tactically, this is what it will mean for us:

- The 2-flat has been placed on the open market to release funds for the vision. This was money that came from our savings and will be used to further the vision.
- We will immediately place 705 and 707 on the market.
- Beginning 1/1/11, we will meet on Sunday mornings as 1 congregation, 1 service, 1 location under 1 vision. This will both move us from this place (705) for Sunday services and establish 2 vibrant congregations – GCC central and GCC Oak Park. We will be ready and prepared to move when the building sells or by July 2011.
- July 2011 will mark the establishment of one church, one vision, many locations.

We are still in process with much of this but a plan is in place. Planning is an act of faith. We believe that He has spoken directly and indirectly, and we walk His mission out one step at a time.

On October 13, we had a visiting speaker in. Eva Dooley is a lady with a solid track record of ministering as a prophet and here is a synopsis of what she shared. It is notable that she knew nothing, absolutely nothing of our thoughts and plans.

- Moses is dead; it is time for Joshua to lead in strength and courage. (Joshua 1)
- We must prepare: spiritually to move to a higher level and physically to move to a higher level.
- Like Elijah, we have heard the rain before it is visible and we must prepare.
- Like Noah, we will build the ark even when it looks foolish to do so before it rains.
- 'When' is important. We are not to delay. We should not drag our feet.
- The past is over, we must move forward.
- Get ready in advance; God is always ahead of us. He is waiting for us.
- We are to do all that is in our heart to do.
- Prepare to build. The building we build should be exceedingly magnificent. We are to cut no corners in making it excellent.
- Set your mind and build a sanctuary. Be purposed in building the building.

Join me on at our Annual Meeting next Sunday to hear more but also to celebrate all that God will do and all He is preparing us for.

Yours,

Ian