



Evangelical Friends Church

EASTERN REGION

December 10, 2014

To Our Fellow Leaders in the EFC-ER

Dear Friends,

Over the past month, I have sensed the Lord speaking to my heart about 2015. What I am gleaning from that both excites and challenges me! Isn't that just like Him?! Let me briefly touch on it.

The Church is intended to grow and some of our churches are experiencing revival, but others are not. So to whatever extent any of us (or our churches) have stalled out on forward progress and work hard to just hold on and wait for a better day, I believe I have this word for us. It's time to put *MOVEMENT* back in our movement! The BIG thing before us is not more meetings or books, nor reorganizing or fundraising. The BIG thing before us is to bring people to the Lord and make disciples!

I recently heard that one person dies every three seconds without knowing the saving grace of the Lord. Do you know what that means? Of course you do; but does that pain you? Many of them are people you and I know. People we know won't make it to Heaven! We can't let that continue. So much of what we in church leadership do is run the church. I'm convinced that that isn't good enough. People around us are thirsty and we know where to find water—Living Water!

The Angel in Luke 2:10 was primed and anxious to announce to the shepherds, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people." He went on in verse 11, "Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord." Whether or not they know it, this Jesus has come to offer each person what they crave--the acceptance, hope, and guidance of a relationship with the God who made us. We can help bring this to them.

So you ask, "What's the plan?"

Here are six steps:

- 1) I will use the tools at my disposal to put the spotlight on evangelism and discipleship as a fresh call to each pastor and church, and to each board and committee, to win people to Jesus and disciple them.
- 2) I will arm you with these three questions that should help you cut through the busy-ness of church life:



EVANGELICAL FRIENDS

AROUND THE CROSS

AROUND THE WORLD



- A. Why?
We all put on Christmas programs (as one example). Why?
Because we love them? Because that's what we do as churches?
Not good enough. We do them to celebrate and worship...and to bring friends and relatives in to hear more about the "good news" the Lord has for them!
 - B. What does a fully devoted follower of Jesus look like?
In small groups within the churches, look at the saints you know. What are they like? Look at the challenges we face today. How should a disciple handle them? Create a profile for what all of that looks like and consider: isn't this what we want to move people into becoming? Now we know the eventual goal.
 - C. How do we move ourselves and others into becoming like that?
Given the people in our churches, the gifts they bring, the challenges we all face, budget and time constraints, and more; let's align what we do as churches to do the things that help us reach that goal. Cut out the busy-work. Put oomph into what we do. Trust the Lord and go for it!
- 3) Our boards will provide seminars and resources to help feed you and the churches with what you need to make things happen. Our superintendents (even fellow churches) will be available to help guide or inspire you as needed.
 - 4) We will also look for at least one church or one pastor who have the real potential to "pop" to the next level that we can give that extra "boost" in order to get them over the hurdle. To put it another way, if the potential exists but a church has always hit some ceiling, we want to help bust the ceiling! Pray with us to know who and how to help.
 - 5) We want to plant churches! This means we need to identify and train catalytic church planters, to study the demographics of favorable communities, to find a core group of people from healthy churches who can help plant these churches, and to secure the proper funding. Already we have four church plants in formation:
 - A. Morningside—a western campus just opened this past Sunday with Scott Crawford heading up this outreach.
 - B. Damascus—a replant of the former Salem Southeast church under the leadership of Craig Henry will open this Spring.
 - C. Dayton—a planning group is preparing the way for this potential church plant under the local leadership of Rodney Stewart.
 - D. Winston-Salem—an extension of the Hispanic Roco Viva church in Greensboro under the leadership of Sadot Medel.
 - 6) For all of the possibilities this plan holds, it is ultimately up to each pastor and each church to decide whether or not to participate. We can't make it happen for you. All we can do is to invite you as leaders "in pursuit" to join us. Soon, I will send each pastor, elder, and board leader (for whom I have an email address) a survey that will focus on doing what it takes to move forward and what you need to do so. I look forward to your

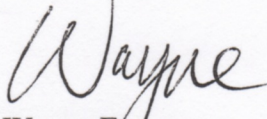
feedback.

As pastors, I challenge you to take advantage of this season of outreach and growth:

- 1) Teach and preach what it means to be unsaved or lost and how the Lord has provided grace because of what Jesus did for each of us who call on His name for salvation. Without over-emotionalizing it, make sure this is more than an academic exercise.
- 2) Ask your church leaders to apply the questions above (Why, What, and How?) and make necessary adjustments to assure that your church is poised to be most fruitful in your outreach ministries.
- 3) Plan some special prayer events to keep the hearts of the church people in tune with the Lord and His desire to reach others with the Gospel. Ask the Lord (and keep before the church) a goal that each church win at least one person to the Lord in the coming year and have at least some growth in attendance too.
- 4) Take part in some of the training efforts we will offer in the new year. They will both inspire and train you and your leaders to do the work of the Lord.
- 5) Plan some special outreach opportunities like a Friend Day, VBS or church camp, holiday celebrations, sport teams, and so forth. Prepare your church folks to “buy in” to their purpose and how they help make it successful.
- 6) Pass on your stories and pictures to us. Share them with other pastors and leaders through our website and our pastors’ Face Book page.

So here in this Christmas season and as we get ready to enter the newness of 2015, let's do it! I believe the Lord wants to help us with this. After all, this is His work! And His desire is to use the Church to accomplish it! If we miss this moment, we in our churches will languish and our movement will only be a shell of a movement. Now is the time! Let's do it. And know that we are praying for you—as we trust that you are praying for us.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year,



Wayne Evans,
General Superintendent