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Pastoral Letter, April, 2017

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I still remember the Saturday morning of November 10, 2007. Our Board and pastors were praying over and discussing C4's ministry at our annual Church Board Retreat. We were facing three issues that would impact our future ministry. One was the fact that most of the Chinese community in Cleveland had begun to locate in the southeast suburbs of Cleveland. Though our members would not consider that distance to be great, it was already creating challenges to our evangelistic outreach in that area.

A second issue was the fact that we were not able to create and sustain duplicate ministries in various parts of the city. Though we were regularly adding members, because of the situation in greater Cleveland, we were also regularly having members relocate to other cities and states. Thus, our membership was not growing in such a way that would allow us to plant another new church in the southeast suburbs.

The third issue that had become a growing concern was a sense of division in the church. We were not experiencing any opposition between groups, but having ministries focused in different areas was resulting in a lack of deeper relationships across the church. By having the brothers and sisters together serving the Lord in one place, we could strengthen the bonds within the church, protecting and growing our unity.

As we talked and prayed, we agreed that our area didn't need another church, but one stronger church better situated to reach our city. What if we found a place nearer to the Chinese community, but with better access to the rest of the city than we currently have? We began to pray.

Initially we searched for a facility in the target area that we could use for our Friday night ministries. We could combine the Solon Saturday fellowship and the Eastside Friday fellowship, and explore the reality of a new church in that area. Unfortunately, we were not able to find such a place, but as the Church Board and pastors continued to pray, the vision for *Reaching the Next Generation* began to grow. Soon, we felt that it was time to begin looking for a place. It took a while, but in the right time, God led us to 27700 Emery Road. We purchased the property, and now we have completed our new facility.

As you know, this Sunday we will have our first service at our new church home. We will give thanks to God for all the ways that He has provided and worked to give us this building. I trust that many of us have grown in many ways through these years, especially in the area of trusting God to provide when we offer ourselves and our possessions to Him freely. I know many have experienced God's faithfulness and generosity both personally and corporately as they have sought to walk by faith through this process. I hope that we have all learned that we can't outgive God and that He always gives beyond what we deserve.

At this time, it is important that we remember the vision of *Reaching a New Generation* that God gave us and commit ourselves to serve toward this vision. God has given us this place to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. That good news is not the offer of a friendly community or God's blessing upon our temporal needs. It is the good news of God our Savior leaving heaven to live and die as a Man in our place so that we may be remade into the image of Christ. It is an appeal to repent of living for self, along with the offer of complete forgiveness for our rebellion against God. It is the promise of new birth into a living hope, the adoption into the family of God, and glory of being with God for eternity.

In giving us our new campus, God is opening a new door for us to bring this glorious good news to our world. In order to be faithful and fruitful in our reach outward, we must be faithful to pursue God Himself and in our call to build up the saints to walk in a manner worthy of our calling. We must remember that fruitful evangelism that leads to a church growing in number is the result of the spiritual growth of her members. As we grow to know, love, and keep the Word of God in our daily lives, and as the Word of God reforms the body of Christ, God bears the fruits of the Spirit among us. Lives filled with the fruit of the Spirit attract those whom God is seeking and make the truth of the gospel beautiful and compelling.

So then, as we give thanks to God for His gracious gifts and call, may we seek the Lord with our whole heart, build our lives upon His Word, and hold out the glorious gospel to our community and world—Straining Godward, Living Heavenward, and Reaching Outward.

Giving thanks with you,

PASTOR HOUSE