



March 25, 2009

Dear Cypress Family,

Ever heard the expression “you can’t get there from here”? When it is a complicated journey from one place to another, it is easy to simply say, “you can’t get there from here”. That’s how it felt for a while with our **Building Bridges** Campaign. The great news is we ARE getting there. It’s just that “there” has changed a bit, and this letter will begin to catch you up on the latest progress.

About eighteen months ago we launched a capital campaign to raise funds for a three-part project, our biggest ever. We have several hundred new attendees among us since we began, so let’s recap the story up to this point. We call this entire effort **Building Bridges**; it is comprised of three components:

- 1. A Skills Training Center in Zambia, Africa**- Cypress is the lead congregation in funding this great enterprise, which provides training to establish micro-businesses that in turn can lead to economic turnarounds. We have committed \$125,000 over five years of time (see enclosed photos).
- 2. West of the Creek Development**- We have about 25 acres of property on the west side of our creek. Our intentions are to further develop our athletic fields; build a multipurpose shelter house and establishing a walking track, paintball course and a number of team and family-based activity opportunities. Our new playground equipment is on site and ready for installation.
- 3. Phase One of a new children’s center and church complex on the East side of Alton-Darby Rd**

...and that is where significant change has occurred. **We had to totally shift from #3 above.** Protecting the Darby Creek watershed region (which we are in) has become an increasingly important environmental issue in very recent years. We investigated the latest restrictions on building and development, which led to the discovery that over 40% of our east property could not be used for the type of construction that we intended. That discovery was a total surprise, but most of all it turned out to be providential.



The barriers to building on our east property forced us to look at options on the west campus (where we currently are located) that we did not think existed. Much to our surprise, we discovered that we can do our essential construction in one phase, thereby gaining worship space much sooner and saving millions in the long run!

So now, #3 above is a facility that will be able to sustain our growth. It will include a 1200 seat worship center, children's suite that is near the worship center, new café, large functional lobby, hospitality center, audio-visual recording suite, and a large unfinished section for future classrooms.

Now comes a **surprise fourth part** to the whole equation: 9,000 square feet of new space has been offered to us by our district superintendent, in the form of the District Ministry Center, which is on the north end of our parking lot. The property could be leased or purchased over a long term period to reduce the monthly cost. After investigating possible uses for the facility, **we have discovered that our Student (youth) Ministries folks would love to use the facility** for expansion of our middle and high school ministries. Details are being worked on at this time.

The final piece of the Building Bridges campaign is getting city water. The EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) has been on our case about dealing with our water "issues" and the timing is tight, but work should begin on this within a month. That is excellent news. Another piece of good news is that the bids for the entire project came in well under the estimates, saving us tens of thousands of dollars.

Comments by our board members and many of you have overwhelmingly registered your views that our current plan is far better than the previous one. All of this has confirmed our sense of peace and confidence that God is guiding us along the way.

Then, along came the current economic meltdown that has affected so many in our country and now around the world. We felt that it would be best to slow things down a bit. We have continued to work on building designs and cost factors, but chose not to pursue financing, until the national picture cleared up. It now appears that our economic woes in America may continue for a while.

In an effort to be sensitive to these difficult times, we have been examining what the trends are and what issues may arise at Cypress. First, we re-learned a principle that has been in existence for a long time. When the rest of the world is in trauma or chaos, the Church of Jesus Christ enters its "best of times". When other props are knocked out from under us, people turn to faith, God and the Church. That is exactly what is happening to Cypress. Our attendance is increasing. This trend of growth is our best in the past six or eight years! We are on track for an increased average of about 200 new worshippers this year!

In addition to attendance increases, we have also seen a recent spike in finances, but it is difficult to know exactly where they will lead in the near future. If the attendance keeps trending upward, that should be an ongoing boost to finances as well.

Here is the current plan for building:

1. Finalize details on facility plans
2. Complete working drawings
3. Work on various permits
4. Submit application for church district approval (April, 09)
5. Put the job out for bids
6. Review and select bids (late June, 09)
7. Confirm costs and loan availability
8. Church board drafts resolution to borrow money for project
9. Cypress membership votes. If approved...
10. District board votes. If approved...
11. Construction begins...(see attached timeline)

Throughout this process, we will be providing plenty of information to keep you updated. Soon you will see visual presentations, including color boards in the lobbies, video info-mercials, newsletters, and website-looks at what will become instruments of influence for Christ in the lives of thousands to come!

There are already hundreds of us engaging in capturing the present and building the future of Cypress, the Lord STILL being our Helper! We invite everyone to be a part of this amazing opportunity to partner together and build bridges into God's future for us and those He will help us reach for Christ

Together In Him,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David Holdren". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the text "Together In Him,".

David Holdren, Executive Pastor