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## Case Study

### *A Tale of Two Churches*

5 Johnny Builderback looked out upon the congregation. His mouth joined  
6 in the chorus, but his mind wandered back over the events of the past few  
7 months. Surely the presence of the Lord was in this place. The relocation  
8 process had gone smoothly enough. The new worship center and educational  
9 space were as functional as they were beautiful. Best of all, the buildings were  
10 debt free.

11 “Now listen as the choir sings...” *Jimmy will be a great addition to the*  
12 *staff, Johnny thought. He’s young, energetic, creative, talented. What I*  
13 *wouldn’t give to be 26 again.*

14 It was only Jimmy Dapper’s second Sunday in the pulpit. His first  
15 Sunday was the last Sunday in the old church plant. Jimmy was a graduate of  
16 Belmont University where he’d studied music. He met Angie his sophomore  
17 year when they sang in the Belmont Reasons. They’d married three days after  
18 graduation. “No sense making the family make two trips,” Jimmy told Angie.

19 Jimmy served as the music associate at Two Rivers Church in Nashville  
20 before coming to Calvary as the Associate Pastor for Music and Youth. They  
21 didn’t have any children of their own, but they readily adopted the youth of the  
22 church.

23 *He’s coming at a great time. He should help pull this congregation*  
24 *together. Just what the Great Physician ordered, Johnny thought. The choir*  
25 *was well into its anthem, but Johnny was thinking about his sermon. He’d*  
26 *worked hard on it this week. Last week he focused on the grief of letting go.*  
27 *Today he wanted to celebrate the joy of beginning again. As the anthem ended,*  
28 *Johnny rose to go to the pulpit, paused and made eye contact with several in the*  
29 *congregation before he began. A smile broke across his face. “Our God is the*  
30 *God of new beginnings.”*

31 Ed Watts tried to listen closely to the pastor’s sermon. Still his mind  
32 wandered. Things seemed too good to be true. Ed Watts, 55, was the Associate  
33 Pastor for Education. He and Edna had been married for twenty-four years.  
34 They had two children. Faith, their older daughter, was only six weeks old when  
35 they adopted her. Now she was 19, and in her second year at JBU majoring in  
36 marketing. Hope, their second child, should have been named Surprise. She  
37 was born just sixteen months after they’d adopted Faith. Hope was a freshman  
38 at the community college with no idea what she wanted to study. Full of  
39 personality and charm with little interest in serious study, the Watts figured  
40 Hope would meet some fellow, get married and never finish her degree.

41 The last few years had been difficult professionally for Ed. Calvary was  
42 the only church he’d ever served. Ed was the vice-principal at a nearby high  
school when he sensed God calling him to vocational ministry. He attended

43 classes at the seminary extension program and completed his M.Ed. in four  
44 years. When Calvary called him twenty years before, it was a growing church  
45 located in the suburbs. It had grown from 155 in 1960 to an average Sunday  
46 School attendance of 845 in 1972. Then he watched as the city expanded, the  
47 community transitioned, and the church declined.

48 “Just as we celebrated our past last week, we are here today to dedicate  
49 ourselves to the future.” *The future. I wasn’t always sure Calvary was going to*  
50 *have a future*, Ed thought.

51 Calvary began in 1955 with ten families. Originally a mission of First  
52 Church, Calvary had help from the state convention and the local association  
53 along the way. Calvary grew rapidly. Within twenty-four months it constituted  
54 as a church. The church grew steadily from 1955 to 1972. Then the economy  
55 went sour. The gasoline crisis hurt the city. The community around Calvary  
56 was especially hurt because so many folks work in the nearby refineries. Interest  
57 rates soared. Layoffs and cutbacks were common. Many folks in the church had  
58 to default on their home loans. Property values dropped. The school district  
59 and local municipal utility district raised taxes to offset the declining property  
60 values. Folks began leaving for other communities. Many homes sat vacant for  
61 a long time. Mortgage companies practically gave the property away just to get  
62 the property off their books. It wasn’t long before the inner city moved out to  
63 embrace the community around the old church plant.

64 “At Calvary, our past has not been perfect, but our future is bright.”

65 *Our past has not been perfect. Now that’s an understatement.* Ed’s  
66 thoughts trailed away from the sermon again.

67 Even with all that was happening around it, Calvary’s decline was slow  
68 at first. Though some families moved out of the area, they kept coming back to  
69 church at Calvary. There were two major crises that disrupted the church and  
70 initiated periods of serious decline.

71 Dr. Bill Wilson was perhaps the most popular pastor Calvary had ever  
72 known. He was the pastor during the late sixties and early seventies. Under his  
73 leadership the church experienced its greatest growth and undertook a major  
74 building program. They built a sanctuary that would hold 1,200 folks. Quite  
75 unexpectedly one Sunday morning, Dr. Wilson stood to preach and instead  
76 announced his resignation. The worn look on his face led some folks to assume  
77 it was the strain of leadership that led him to resign. Others said the deacons  
78 knew more than they were telling. It was a few months after Dr. Wilson  
79 resigned that the truth about his affair with his secretary leaked out.  
80 Disheartened, folks started leaving the church.

81 Calvary had grown so rapidly and the future looked so bright under Dr.  
82 Wilson’s ministry, the church had gone heavily in debt to build their new  
83 worship center in 1972. Now with the unforeseen economic crisis and the  
84 declining attendance, the church experienced serious financial problems. There  
85 was serious conflict over how the church should deal with the financial situation.

86 Some thought they needed to cut back on staff. Others thought they should  
87 renegotiate the loan. Many voiced the opinion they never should have built the  
88 worship center in the first place. The finance committee recommended  
89 renegotiating the loan and dismissing two staff members. Drastic measures for  
90 drastic times seemed to be the mindset. Unfortunately, drastic measures in  
91 drastic times were also accompanied by drastic declines in attendance. Ed  
92 considered himself lucky to still have a job.

93 Ed really didn't need to worry though. Most folks at Calvary considered  
94 him indispensable. Ed was quiet, well-organized, a plodder. He liked to work  
95 behind the scenes. During the crises, folks knew they could always count on Ed.

96 "When Moses died and Joshua assumed the responsibilities of  
97 leadership, the people grieved but God knew the best was yet to be. When  
98 David died and Solomon became king, the people grieved but God knew the best  
99 was yet to be. The people needed to let go of their celebrated past and embrace a  
100 future that was even brighter! When Jesus died, all was dark and dreary. But  
101 three days later, the stone rolled away and the disciples learned that with God the  
102 best is yet to be! With God the best is always yet to be."

103 *I hope that's true*, Ed thought. When Bill Wilson resigned, it would  
104 have been hard to think of the next few years as the best that was yet to be.  
105 Attendance fell off drastically. Giving dropped. The church went through three  
106 short pastorates and several staff changes. It was a highly unstable period.  
107 Eventually the church called Rob Johnson as pastor.

108 Johnson was Calvary's pastor just before Johnny Builderback came. He  
109 was fifty-five when he came to Calvary in 1980. No one really expected much.  
110 Folks were surprised when things began to turn around. Even at 55, Builderback  
111 was still excited and energetic. He looked, acted and thought like someone  
112 much younger. Attendance even began to increase. Giving improved modestly.  
113 The community was racially mixed by this time, but the church was  
114 predominantly white, middle class. People in the community responded to  
115 Johnson's effervescent spirit, upbeat preaching and contagious enthusiasm.  
116 Families of color began to join. Johnson was pleased. "This should be a  
117 community church, not a commuter church" he often said from the pulpit. Folks  
118 began to talk about Calvary as a community church.

119 Things looked bright for Calvary—until Rob Johnson suffered a series of  
120 heart attacks. The first two were light. Though the doctors warned Johnson to  
121 slow down. "Rob, you are overweight. You don't exercise properly. You have  
122 a family history of heart problems. [His father died of a heart attack at 55.] And  
123 you put too much pressure on yourself at work."

124 "I'd rather burn out than rust out, Doc!" Rob would say. Then he would  
125 slap Dr. Colson on the back, flash his famous face-covering grin and keep right  
126 on going. Eighteen months after the first heart attack he suffered a major arrest.  
127 He was hospitalized for three weeks and near the point of death for a while. The  
128 church came together and prayed for his recovery as they'd never prayed before.

129 Johnson survived, but he was never again the same. Not only was his  
130 physical energy greatly diminished, but it was obvious he struggled some with  
131 depression. His sermons lost their optimistic, visionary vigor. Folks hung on  
132 for a while, but little by little they began to leave the church. Attendance  
133 declined Johnson's last three years as pastor.

134 Rev. Johnson took early retirement in 1988. During the last few months  
135 before he retired, Johnson met with church leaders and suggested the next pastor  
136 they call should help them relocate the church. "It's Calvary's only hope," he  
137 told them. Most agreed.

138 Ed glanced around. It was obvious the congregation was enjoying the  
139 service. Johnny Builderback was a good preacher, not great, but certainly better  
140 than average. Builderback and Watts were about the same age. Watts was three  
141 years older than Builderback. Builderback came to Calvary in 1989.

142 From the beginning Builderback had been focused on relocation. When  
143 the search committee talked with him they shared their strong views of the need  
144 to relocate. From what Builderback could tell, it seemed like the right move. So  
145 shortly after he came to Calvary, he began talking about relocation.

146 Builderback asked Watts to do some research showing the need for and  
147 benefits of relocation. Once the report was prepared, Builderback moved  
148 aggressively to bring the matter to the deacons.

149 The deacons reviewed Watts report and discussed the matter of  
150 relocation in three consecutive monthly meetings. It was evident from the first  
151 meeting that the deacon body was not as committed to the idea of relocation as  
152 the search committee had led Builderback to believe. Those who wanted to  
153 move cited their reasons: where the church members lived (most lived outside  
154 the community), the poor use of space (buildings designed for 1,200 but only  
155 300 regularly attended), worship center felt empty, insurance costs kept  
156 escalating because of the community, neighborhood racially mixed but the  
157 church was primarily Anglo. Others cited the church's long history in that  
158 location, the need for a vital ministry in the inner city, and that many of the older  
159 members who still lived in the community would not have a church if Calvary  
160 moved to the suburbs. Besides, they asked, who would pay us what this property  
161 is worth?

162 The answer seemed to come from heaven. An official from ISD  
163 contacted the pastor after she learned the church might be interested in  
164 relocating. ISD wanted the property for a magnet school and would pay them  
165 the estimated price for their property. When Builderback presented ISD's offer  
166 to the deacons, there was a general feeling that God was leading them to  
167 relocate. Though not all were convinced, the deacons voted to recommend the  
168 church sell the property.

169 When the matter went before the church, the congregation voted 65% to  
170 35% to sell the property and relocate. Right after the vote was announced an  
171 elder statesman in the church, one who had voted for selling the property, stood

172 and said that 65% was not “a clear mandate from God” and he moved the church  
173 send the matter back to the deacons. Though someone else spoke against the  
174 motion saying that the majority should rule, the church decided to send the  
175 matter back to the deacons for further consideration.

176 The deacons called a special meeting the following Sunday afternoon.  
177 The meeting began at 4:00 and when it came time for Discipleship Training, the  
178 deacons were still behind closed doors. The pastor emerged in time for the  
179 worship service and, rather than preaching, asked the congregation to pray. “The  
180 deacons are near a decision. If possible, I’d like for us to hear from them  
181 tonight.” The congregation began singing a few hymns and was just beginning a  
182 season of prayer when the deacons came into the sanctuary. The pastor  
183 conferred with the chairman for just a minute, nodded and went to the platform.

184 Builderback recognized Dr. Colson, the deacon chairman. Dr. Colson  
185 reported the deacons thought relocation was the right thing to do, but they  
186 respected those who believed there was a need for a strong church in the  
187 community. He made a light attempt at humor. “As the politician said, ‘Some  
188 of my friends are for it. Some of my friends are ag’in it. And I’m for my  
189 friends.’ I think that’s the way the deacons felt. Therefore, the deacons  
190 recommend the church sell the property to ISD and relocate. Further, the  
191 deacons recommend as soon as the church is established in its new location that  
192 it start a mission in this area which will be an outpost for the gospel in the inner  
193 city.” The recommendation met with a few amens and nods of approval.

194 The pastor then announced a special called business meeting in two  
195 weeks to consider the deacon’s recommendation and asked the folks to pray for  
196 God to give us a clear mandate. The church later passed that motion with 88%  
197 voting in favor, 9% opposed and 3% abstaining.

198 The night the congregation approved the deacons’ recommendation,  
199 Larry Lawrence escorted his wife Vicki to the pulpit. The Lawrences were long-  
200 time members of the church. His voice had a sandpaper quality to it that  
201 irritated some folks, but what he said brought genuine excitement to the  
202 congregation. “Vicki and I have really prayed about this relocation. We’ve had  
203 it in our hearts to help, but we needed to be sure this was the Lord’s doing and  
204 not ours so we haven’t said anything to anyone except the preacher until tonight.  
205 As some of you know, we are developing a new subdivision near Buena Vista  
206 Lake. (Larry was a land developer.) It’s about fifteen miles from here. Most of  
207 you know about where it is. Well, we’d like to give the church 10 acres to build  
208 a new sanctuary and educational building. With the money we make from  
209 selling the property we ought to be able to get into the new buildings debt free.”  
210 The congregation rose in spontaneous ovation to the Lawrences’ generosity.  
211 The general feeling was that God really had given them a clear mandate and a  
212 certain sign. Only thirty-six months passed from the time Johnny Builderback  
213 began his ministry until the church’s first Sunday in the new location.

214 “Let’s all stand and sing as the invitation is given.” *That was a short*  
215 *sermon*, Ed thought.

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219 The mood was upbeat around the church office the next morning. No  
220 Monday morning blahs this week. Everything had gone well Sunday. The  
221 attendance was the highest it had been in years. Over 475 folks gathered for the  
222 morning service. Some were former members who wouldn’t be back, but many  
223 were visitors, young couples. There was already talk of adding another service  
224 in the near future. The weather was perfect for the dinner on the grounds.  
225 Things could not have gone better. It was like God smiled down on all they had  
226 done and said, It is good.

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“Ed, everything was great. Greeters were in place. Guests felt welcomed. There were no hitches as far as I could tell. Everyone seemed to know what they were doing. And, Jimmy,” Johnny paused, “the music was great. I really like what you are doing with the music.”

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Music and worship styles had been a sore spot at Calvary for a while. It began before the relocation when Builderback, his wife, Ann, and two key couples from the church attended a week-long seminar at Willow Creek. One of the laymen was Gene Jennings, the interim minister of music. One of the women, Mary White, chaired the music search committee.

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The Willow Creek seminar focused on structuring the church to reach the unreached in the community. “Our purpose is to turn pagans into missionaries,” Bill Hybels said. “We structure everything we do around that purpose including our worship services.” As he described their seeker service, the lay couples from Calvary nodded. “That’s what we need at Calvary,” they discussed over a late-night cup of coffee.

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Builderback liked much of the new music, but he was not convinced the church needed to make any significant shifts in strategy while the relocation project was going on. “I see the value, but I don’t think the timing is right,” was the pastor’s position. Gene Jennings, the interim minister of music, was insistent. “We’ve got to do something, pastor, to reach more people. Times are changing. You’re a good preacher and all, but folks are getting tired of the same old hymns. We at least need to try.”

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Builderback wasn’t entirely convinced, but he said he’d let Jennings try. He had to. Jennings wasn’t the kind of fellow Builderback could say no to. He was strong-willed, had a deep voice which added authority to his words, and he had a quick temper. More than once he’d gotten upset with the pastor in a private meeting, raised his voice, stormed out of the room in anger and had to come back later to apologize. Though Builderback didn’t think much about it, Jennings was much like his father.

256 Builderback’s father was an alcoholic, but few folks outside of the family  
257 knew about it. An “impaired physician” might be the term used to describe  
258 Builderback’s dad today. Around the hospital and whenever he had surgery, Dr.  
259 John Builderback was as sober as a judge. He only drank at home. Most of the  
260 time things were civil, but then the weekend would come. If Builderback’s dad  
261 wasn’t on call, he would usually drink until he passed out on Friday night, sleep  
262 it off most of Saturday and repeat the process Saturday night. When he was  
263 sober, there was not a nicer guy than “Dr. John,” as the nursing staff called him,  
264 but when he was drunk he could be mean and abusive. Johnny loved his father,  
265 but he couldn’t stand to be around him when he was angry. Going to church was  
266 his great escape. He would spend the better part of every Sunday involved in  
267 church or youth activities just to get away from home.

268 When the couples returned to the city, Jennings introduced a few  
269 contemporary praise and worship choruses to the congregation. They met with  
270 mixed reviews at first, but gradually they became part of the worship style.  
271 Builderback was never sure if the church really liked the new music or they  
272 tolerated Jennings because they knew he was just an interim.

273 No one was really sure why, but a couple of younger families joined the  
274 church. Mary White, chair of the music search committee, attributed it to the  
275 new worship style. Buoyed by the “success” of the new worship style, she  
276 convinced the committee to call someone who could lead the church in a more  
277 contemporary worship style. When Mary White talked with Jimmy Dapper she  
278 told him Calvary needed a worship style that would reach the unreached. “It’s  
279 what the pastor wants and the church needs,” she said.

280 “I’m glad you like it pastor. I’d like to try a few other things if you don’t  
281 mind. I’d like to experiment with some different instruments, maybe a little  
282 orchestra, and some drama. We live in a highly visual society. Folks are  
283 accustomed to tv and the movies. If you’d let me know what you’re planning on  
284 preaching about in the coming weeks, I could try to develop something that will  
285 support your sermon.”

286 “Thanks, Jimmy, I’ll think about it,”

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290 The parking lot was packed. It had been eight months since they moved  
291 into the new building. Attendance was up. New families visited every Sunday.  
292 They even went seven Sundays in a row where someone joined the church.  
293 Folks were talking about the possibility of adding another service or putting a  
294 balcony in the new auditorium.

295 Johnny Builderback looked out over the congregation. Jimmy was  
296 introducing a new chorus. The platform was getting a little crowded for the  
297 pastor. Jimmy’s “orchestra” turned into a little band, complete with drums. The  
298 music was upbeat and lively. Johnny had to admit, the younger families seemed

299 to like it. He liked some of it himself. The songs were unfamiliar at first, but he  
300 occasionally would find himself humming one of the choruses on Monday  
301 morning.

302 Music was one thing. Drama was another. Their first two attempts at  
303 drama were disasters. The skits were not well written and the acting was poor.  
304 Then Jimmy purchased some scripts from Willow Creek. The last drama was  
305 cleverly written and Builderback referred back to it during his sermon.

306 Quality wasn't the real problem with the drama. Johnny didn't like the  
307 way Jimmy got the drama started. The first drama was a surprise to the pastor.  
308 No, it was more than a surprise. He was shocked. The bulletin said "Message in  
309 Song ..... "*It Is Well With My Soul.*" As soon as the soloist began to  
310 sing the chorus someone from the congregation stood up and challenged the  
311 words. "It may be well with your soul, but not with mine." The soloist and the  
312 accompanists stopped. "My name is Job. I just lost everything and I'm not even  
313 sure God cares. I wish God were here. I've got a few questions I'd like to ask  
314 him." Of course, it was all planned. Jimmy had warned the pastor not to be  
315 surprised if something unusual happened during the worship service. The  
316 twinkle in his eye let Johnny know something was up, but Jimmy never told him  
317 what. Jimmy had planned it to coincide with the pastor's new sermon series on  
318 "Jesus Answers Questions from Job."

319 Johnny covered his surprise well when he stood to preach, but the next  
320 day in staff meeting he was furious. The secretary couldn't hear everything that  
321 was said, but there was no doubting the pastor let Jimmy have it. "Creative? It  
322 was a disaster," Builderback said, his voice strained but controlled. "I told you  
323 I'd think about it and get back to you."

324 "All you ever do is think about it," she heard Jimmy say as he stormed  
325 out of the pastor's office slamming the door as he went. The pastor came to the  
326 door, looked like he was going to say something else, then turned and closed his  
327 study door.

328 Ed emerged from the pastor's study a few minutes later and told the  
329 secretary to hold the pastor's calls for a while. If she needed him, he would be  
330 in Jimmy's office.

331 Tension seemed to subside after that. Jimmy made sure he cleared  
332 everything with the pastor in advance. The pastor gave him a little more leeway  
333 in designing the worship services. There were no more overtly hostile staff  
334 meetings.

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338 In staff meeting the next morning, Ed Watts suggested they needed to  
339 begin planning for their first anniversary in the new facilities. "The way  
340 attendance is going we'd better make some plans to add space, start a new  
341 worship and Sunday School, or our growth is going to stall out. I know it's

342 moving pretty fast, but the first anniversary would be a great time to announce  
343 some plans for the future, even if it's just the formation of a committee to help  
344 us decide on the next step."

345 "I think you are right, Ed, but I'd like us to talk about something else  
346 first." Builderback reached into his drawer and pulled out an envelope. He  
347 opened the envelope and produced a petition signed by forty-three members of  
348 the LLL Club (basically a senior adult social organization). As Jimmy perused  
349 the petition Johnny said, "They don't like the drums and all the choruses,  
350 Jimmy. Some of them told me they have tried to talk to you, but you don't listen  
351 to them."

352 "One person came to me, pastor," Jimmy responded. "Mrs. Anderson.  
353 She said she didn't know some of the new songs, and the drums were loud, but  
354 we've dampened the drums. Other comments I got were positive. Just look at  
355 the younger families joining our church. I thought everything was okay."

356 "Jimmy, these folks like you and they don't want to hurt your feelings,  
357 but they don't like what you are doing with the music in the worship service. I  
358 do, and I mean that, but lots of our folks just tolerate it."

359 Johnny's comment surprised Ed. He'd never been quite sure where the  
360 pastor stood on the music in the worship services.

361 "Some of the folks are talking about leaving and going to other churches.  
362 I've asked them to let us talk about it as a staff. Jimmy, if folks start leaving, we  
363 won't have a space problem."

364 "If that's what they need to do, I'm sorry. But we've got to think about  
365 the lost."

366 The pastor stiffened. Trying hard to keep his voice under control he said,  
367 "Jimmy, that's what you say every time I try to talk to you about music or drama  
368 or anything else. I care about the lost, too, Jimmy, but I don't see many lost  
369 folks in the congregation. It's mostly Christians."

370 "And whose fault is that?" Jimmy responded.

371 Ed intervened. "Fellows, this is getting us nowhere."

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375 For a pastor, it seems like every other day is Sunday. Either you are  
376 planning for worship or leading it. When things are going well, it's not so much  
377 of a problem. It may be stressful, but it's the kind of stress one likes to have.  
378 When things aren't going well, the burden of leadership can feel like heavy  
379 pressure that rarely lets up.

380 As Johnny Builderback surveyed the congregation, his feelings were  
381 mixed. Most of the younger families really enjoyed the new worship format.  
382 Some would close their eyes as they sang praise to God. A few even raised their  
383 hands. That caused quite a stir among some of the brethren at first.

384 “Good morning, Miss Peacock.” Johnny smiled as he remembered the  
385 startled look on her face the first time Sally Reinfeld raised her hands and said  
386 “Praise the Lord.” *I thought she was going to swallow her upper plate when*  
387 *Sally did that.* Miss Peacock thought the pastor was especially friendly this  
388 morning.

389 The older members seemed to tolerate the changes more than appreciate  
390 them. Nothing was ever said at business meetings, but Builderback could tell,  
391 especially since the petition, that there was growing discontent. Occasionally  
392 someone would complain about how many times they sang the same chorus or  
393 how loud the new band was. Though Jimmy had toned down the drums, there  
394 were so many musicians on the platform now, Johnny had to sit on the front pew  
395 before he preached.

396 No one had yet suggested they change back to the old way because things  
397 were going so well. Attendance continued to increase. They were approaching  
398 550 in worship attendance and talking about adding a second worship service in  
399 the fall. Giving was up. The memory of declining attendance and financial  
400 problems were still in the minds of some of Calvary’s long-time members. No  
401 one wanted to return to those “old days.” “I’ll go along, but I don’t really like  
402 it,” was a popular sentiment.

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406 The anniversary service was appropriately celebrative. So many new  
407 folks had joined the church that few people seemed to notice the significant  
408 number of families that had been present the year before that were no longer  
409 members of Calvary. Dr. Colson noticed . . . and it troubled him.

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413 Jimmy Dapper couldn’t be at the budget planning meeting. The youth  
414 had a big rally planned before the homecoming ball game and he thought he  
415 needed to be there. After all, the staff had gone over the budget together and  
416 seemed in agreement on his requests.

417 Looking back now, Jimmy realized he’d made a major mistake by not  
418 being there. He didn’t know all that went on. The pastor and Ed gave him one  
419 story, but of the choir members who served on the committee gave him another.  
420 One thing was becoming increasingly clear to Jimmy: the pastor didn’t support  
421 him.

422 The committee seemed ready to approve the budget when Dr. Colson  
423 spoke up. *Everybody knows he doesn’t like the changes in the worship service,*  
424 Jimmy thought. Dr. Colson was a member of the LLL class. Though the  
425 Colson’s name didn’t appear on the petition, Jimmy thought he knew how  
426 Colson felt. His wife had certainly been vocal enough.

427            “I’m concerned about some of our older members. Pastor, they don’t  
428 like all the changes being made. They feel left out. I think you know some of  
429 them are talking about leaving. My wife told me the other day the Smiths and  
430 Thompsons are visiting Grace. The Bonners, Justices, and Wallaces have  
431 already gone. And these families have been some of our biggest givers through  
432 the years.

433            “If we keep losing folks like these, we won’t make this proposed budget.  
434 Those of us who’ve been part of Calvary for years know what that means. I  
435 think we need to keep our budget total the same as it is this year. I know our  
436 attendance is up, but that doesn’t mean the money is going to come in. These  
437 younger folks demand a lot and take a lot, but they don’t give very much.”

438            “Dr. Colson,” Johnny Builderback said, “I share your concerns about  
439 those who’ve left the church. No one likes to see friends leave. Me especially.  
440 I feel like I’m not doing something right.”

441            “It’s not your fault, preacher. It’s the music in the worship service. I’m  
442 not out to get Jimmy. I think he is a fine young man and he’s doing wonders  
443 with the youth. I just think we need to be more conservative with our money,  
444 that’s all.”

445            Betty Harris and a few others on the committee voiced similar opinions.

446            “If you all feel that way, let’s see if we can’t make a few changes without  
447 hurting our overall program,” the pastor said.

448            *A few changes ... right, Jimmy thought. He decimated my music budget!*  
449 *But I’m sure that won’t hurt our overall program any.* If there had been an  
450 Olympic event for sarcastic thinking, Jimmy would have been an medal  
451 contender.

452            “I recommend we keep the music budget the way it is this year,” Dr.  
453 Colson said. “Jimmy won’t be able to do all the new things he wants, but I think  
454 our youth are more important and I don’t want to cut the youth budget.”

455            *He didn’t cut anything from the educational budget. Ed can get anything*  
456 *he wants. At least he didn’t cut my youth budget.*

457            When the meeting was over, the committee had what most considered a  
458 realistic budget. The pastor and Ed were not entirely happy, but they agreed the  
459 proposed cuts would not hurt the overall program.

460            Jimmy didn’t see it that way. When Johnny and Ed told him about the  
461 meeting the next day, he just sat, stared and listened. He’d already been warned  
462 about what to expect the night before when the choir member from the  
463 committee called him after the game. Though Jimmy didn’t say anything, he  
464 knew this wasn’t going to be a long-term ministry. *What I really want, is to be*  
465 *part of a church that’s interested in doing whatever it takes to reach the lost.*

466  
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510 “I’m not talking about doing anything different here. Do you remember  
511 what the church decided just before we came? About starting a new work in the  
512 old neighborhood? Well, Angie and I have been praying about that....”  
513

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515  
516 Dr. Colson had recently been elected deacon chairman for the fourth time  
517 in five years. The by-laws said a man could serve two consecutive years, then  
518 had to rotate off for a year before being eligible for re-election.

519 The pastor and his wife invited the Colson’s to dinner. Dr. Colson could  
520 tell by the way Johnny insisted they get together that this was more than a social  
521 visit.

522 “I think this could be the answer to a lot of problems, pastor,” Dr. Colson  
523 said after Builderback explained what Jimmy wanted to do. “Let me make sure I  
524 have this straight. Jimmy wants to start a Bible study in the old neighborhood  
525 on Saturday nights in Claire Olson’s home with the idea of starting a new  
526 church. Eventually he would become the pastor. And he wants us to pay his  
527 salary for two years **and** the cost of renting a place for a year if they need it. Is  
528 that right?”

529 “That’s about it.”  
530

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532  
533 Monday night deacons meetings can seem to go on forever, especially  
534 when there’s a good football game on that night. This time, though, things really  
535 had gone on late into the evening.

536 Pastor Builderback presented the proposal to the deacons. The proposal  
537 was met with mixed reactions. Though no one said it this way, some of the  
538 deacons thought it would be best if Jimmy left. The comments went like this:  
539 he’s done a good job, especially with the youth, but that band has got to go—it’s  
540 not Baptist; we can help him out a little bit, but two years is too much; thought  
541 he wanted to live by faith.

542 Others were hurt. They loved Jimmy. They loved the way he led  
543 worship. Their kids were active in his youth program and would be really hurt if  
544 he left. Again, though no one said it, they thought the pastor was forcing Jimmy  
545 out. It just wasn’t fair. Maybe the pastor ought to go, not Jimmy.

546 After lengthy debate Dr. Colson said, “Here’s the amended motion.” His  
547 heavy sigh before he summarized the motion indicated the level of tension in the  
548 room. “The deacons will recommend to the church that Jimmy Dapper continue  
549 as associate pastor for music/youth for six months. During that time he will be  
550 free to start a Bible study in the old neighborhood on Saturday nights. At the  
551 end of six months he will be free to work full-time on the new church. We will  
552 continue to pay his full salary and benefits for the next six months. Then for the

553 next six months his salary will be cut by one third, then cut an additional third  
554 for the next six months. That ought to give him a good start. Any questions?”  
555 “What about rent on the building? I think we ought to do what he asked,  
556 especially since he’s not getting two full years of salary.” James Cox amended  
557 the motion to include the first year’s rental for the new church.

558 The amended motion passed.

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561  
562 It was unexpectedly chilly outside. A light dusting of snow fell in the  
563 afternoon, not enough to disrupt traffic or force anyone to stay home. It was just  
564 enough to let folks know winter had come.

565 Claire Olson’s living room was toasty warm. A blazing fire and a cup of  
566 steaming hot chocolate greeted those who’d come for the first Bible study in the  
567 old neighborhood.

568 Jimmy looked around the room at Claire Olson and the five couples that  
569 had joined him and Angie. Their faces and conversations testified to the  
570 eagerness and excitement they felt being here. *It’s good to see these folks*  
571 *enjoying themselves so much*, Jimmy thought.

572 Jimmy nodded and Dane and Thomas got out their guitars and starting  
573 playing. Sarah Dawson began singing along and soon everyone joined in the  
574 praise and worship. Angie suggested they pray and really give themselves to  
575 God. Some got on their knees. A few couples held hands. Almost without  
576 direction they began to pray, first one, then another. After Jimmy prayed, they  
577 focused their attention on him.

578 “I’ve thought a lot about our first meeting and what we would study  
579 together. At first, I thought about a study of Exodus and Joshua, about the way  
580 God led the Hebrew children from bondage into the Promised Land. This  
581 neighborhood may not look like much, but I think it is our promised land and  
582 there are Jerichos, strongholds, out there that need to be brought down.”

583 “Amen to that,” Joyce Evans, Dane’s wife, said.

584 Amen, indeed. The community around Claire Olson’s house was  
585 nothing like it was when she and Ollie, her deceased husband, moved in forty  
586 years before. Then, it was a quiet, middle class, Anglo community outside the  
587 city. A demographic study Jimmy got from the association office painted a  
588 different picture.

589 The community was racially mixed: 45% Anglo, 25% African  
590 American, 15% Hispanic, and 15% Asian.

591 There were some folks, like Claire, that had lived here most of their  
592 lives. About 14% of the folks were 55+ years and long-time residents of the  
593 area. Most all of these were Anglos. A few were still members of Calvary.

594 Most of the residents, though, were under 35. There was a big gap in the  
595 35 to 55 age bracket. Nearby Encarta University had turned parts of the

596 neighborhood into a residence area for college students. Some of the older  
597 residents had turned their two story homes into little apartment units by renting  
598 out rooms in their homes to college students.

599 The Veranda Corporation recently purchased an entire block and had  
600 almost completed sixteen upscale townhouses. Though not yet complete,  
601 several of the units had already been sold, mostly to young professionals.

602 Most folks over 18 had completed high school. Many had college  
603 degrees, but were not yet established in their chosen fields or professions.

604 A survey Jimmy and his group conducted before beginning the Bible  
605 study suggested area residents had little or no church background, were  
606 unfamiliar with church traditions, and thought the Bible was a good book on par  
607 with the Koran and other great religious documents. Of those who did have  
608 some religious background, Roman Catholic was the most common. There was  
609 a growing Islamic movement in the community, however.

610 Jimmy smiled. "But the more I prayed and thought about it, the more I  
611 felt God leading me to a study of the book of Acts. I think the early church's  
612 struggle to get started, to establish itself in a hostile community, to bring the  
613 hope in the gospel to people who were looking for it and didn't even know, I  
614 think that's going to be our struggle. So open your Bible to Acts 1 and let's  
615 begin."

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619 Jimmy was a strong Bible teacher. Some folks would say he had learned  
620 from a master Bible teacher, his father. For as long as he could remember,  
621 Jimmy felt God wanted him in the ministry. But he had doubts about being a  
622 preacher. Though he loved his dad, he knew couldn't measure up to the  
623 standard set by his father.

624 Jimmy's first experience preaching was painful. After preaching the  
625 Sunday morning sermon during youth week, he waited for his dad to say  
626 something. The family completed lunch with his dad talking about everything  
627 except Jimmy's sermon. Somehow, Jimmy knew his dad was not pleased. Later  
628 that afternoon Jimmy overheard his father tell his mother he would have thought,  
629 after listening to all his sermons, that Jimmy would have done a better job and  
630 not just rambled on like that. "Maybe he's not called to preach."

631 He may not have been a great preacher, but Jimmy could sing! So he  
632 assumed God wanted him in music. That's one reason Jimmy never went to  
633 seminary. He thought he'd learned what he needed to know about music  
634 ministry in college.

635 So Jimmy was surprised at how well folks responded to his teaching.  
636 His dad tried to help by offering some resources on Acts, but Jimmy decided he  
637 would read the Scripture, see where God led him to apply it to his situation, and  
638 go from there.

639 The Bible study group was growing. It didn't take long before additional  
640 couples joined them. Most came from Calvary, but two couples joined them  
641 from the community. One couple was African American. Within five months  
642 more than thirty folks crowded into Claire's living room every Saturday night.  
643 All the adults were in their 20's and 30's. Some had small children they left  
644 with babysitters while they attended the Bible study. A genuine sense of  
645 community developed among the folks.

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648  
649 "We've only got a few weeks left and I'll be doing this full time" Jimmy  
650 told Angie. "I know it was a risk, but I think I'm going to like it."

651 "Jimmy," Angie asked, "what are we going to do next?" Angie, she was  
652 ever the practical one in the family. Jimmy had dreams about a church that was  
653 evangelistically oriented, that ministered to the community, that worshipped in a  
654 non-traditional way. But he'd never been in a position where he had to establish  
655 the structure of the program. It had always been there for him. Usually his job  
656 was to expand it. Now he was starting from scratch. He had to build the  
657 structure, and, frankly, he didn't know how to do it.

658 "I was talking with Dane and Thomas the other day. Dane has a friend, a  
659 business consultant who teaches part-time at Encarta. They suggested I talk with  
660 him."

661 "I know you don't want to hear this, Jimmy, but I think that would be a  
662 good idea."

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665  
666 Terry Harrington had known Dane Evans since high school. They'd  
667 gone to college together at Jefferson University. Terry majored in business;  
668 Dane in pre-law. Graduate school had taken them in different directions, but  
669 business opportunities brought them both to the city. Terry was a consultant  
670 with R.A.M. Dane had worked in the District Attorney's office for a while  
671 before starting his own law practice. Every week they would get together for a  
672 competitive game of racquetball. When Terry's wife left him, Dane and Joyce  
673 were there to help him through it.

674 Dane had consistently invited Terry to attend the Bible study at Claire's  
675 house, but Terry always had an excuse. When Dane asked him to consult with  
676 Jimmy, though, Terry couldn't refuse, not after all Dane had done for him.

677 Dane, Terry and Jimmy met for coffee at Starbucks on Thursday  
678 afternoon. Jimmy told him about his dream of being part of a non-traditional  
679 church where people really understood what it meant to be Christians and  
680 minister to others. Terry had never met anyone with as much passion as Jimmy.  
681 His idea of Christians was limited to a few television evangelists and Dane.

682 Dane was different, but he didn't have a high opinion of Christianity. So he was  
683 surprised to hear the words come out of his mouth, "Well, Jimmy, I'll be glad to  
684 help, but to really know what you guys are about I'll probably need to come to  
685 one or two of your Saturday night meetings."

686 Dane hid his smile.

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690 Jimmy continued to serve on staff at Calvary while the new work  
691 developed, but tension between him and the pastor was never resolved. A few  
692 weeks before Dapper terminated with Calvary the pastor said he understood a  
693 number of families from Calvary had joined Jimmy's Bible study. Though the  
694 pastor never said it, Jimmy thought he'd accused him of proselytizing, of  
695 targeting key families and getting them to leave Calvary and join him. Though  
696 he never talked much about it, Jimmy resented Johnny Builderback. Once, in a  
697 conversation with Dane and Thomas, he described Builderback as a man with no  
698 vision, a poor leader, and predicted Calvary would never reach its potential until  
699 it had another pastor.

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702

703 "Look, Jimmy, if you guys were a business I'd know what to tell you, but  
704 I don't know how this is going to fit your paradigm."

705

"You've already lost me, Terry."

706

707

"A paradigm is a frame of reference, a way of looking at things. You  
Christians look at things one way. I'm a businessman. I look at things  
differently. You talk about faith. I look at the facts. We just don't see things  
the same way."

708

709

"Terry, there is some truth to what you've said. I'm sure I do see things  
differently than you. But there are several key facts that are important to me  
and, whether you've thought about it or not, faith is important to you."

710

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712

Jimmy and Terry had made it a practice of gathering at Starbucks for the  
last few weeks. Terry had been a tremendous help to Jimmy. He'd helped  
Jimmy take care of the necessary paperwork to incorporate with the state. But  
Jimmy had balked at the idea of developing a business plan for the church.

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"Look, Jimmy, if you really believe what you say, you are in the most  
important business in the world. Why shouldn't you know who your customer is  
and figure out ways to get the product to them? If you were one of my clients, I  
would insist on a mission and vision statement. Then we would work on goals  
and action plans."

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721

Reading Rick Warren's Purpose Driven Church had given Jimmy a more  
positive attitude toward what Terry was suggesting. The more he thought about

722

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724 it, the more sense it made. Vision, goals, action plans, it sure sounded secular,  
725 but maybe it would work.

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729 “Claire, thank you for opening your home to us. We couldn’t have  
730 gotten started without your help. But, folks, it’s really getting too crowded in  
731 here. So I have arranged for us to meet in the auditorium of the old Calvary  
732 church next Saturday night. ISD has agreed to let us meet there for six months.”

733

734 The forty-seven folks that crowded into Claire Olson’s living room taxed  
the air conditioner to the max. But it had been exciting to watch the group grow.

735

736 Jimmy suggested they call themselves Renewal of Hope. It seemed the  
737 right name for their group. They were a church, but they didn’t want the words  
738 Baptist or church in their name to stand in the way of folks meeting with them.  
739 Some of the members back at Calvary hadn’t been too happy about that, but  
740 Jimmy had been clear and forceful. They wanted to remove as many barriers as  
possible to folks coming to faith in Christ.

741

742 “After our Bible study and worship time, I’d like for us to stay and talk  
743 about our future as a church. Terry has convinced me we need a mission  
744 statement and some goals. I’ve thought about it and it seems to me our mission  
745 has been carrying out the great commission in the spirit of the great  
746 commandment to love one another. We’ve all been involved in informal  
747 discussions, but next week we need to talk about how we are going to carry this  
out.”

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751 Someone had forgotten to tell the maintenance people to turn the air  
752 conditioner on. So all throughout the worship time the auditorium had been  
753 almost unbearably stuffy. But things were beginning to cool down.

754

755 Folks had enjoyed the potluck supper. Some left because the heat was  
756 too much on their kids. Others said they needed to relieve the babysitter. Jimmy  
was disappointed everyone didn’t stay, but all in all this was a good group.

757

758 Terry divided everyone into four dialogue groups. Their assignment, he  
759 said, was to talk about what they thought it meant to carry out the great  
commission is the spirit of the great commandment in this community.

760

761 After thirty minutes, Jimmy called everyone back together. “Well, what  
do you think? Who’ll be first?”

762

763 Hal and Anne Hendricks were one of the first folks to join the Bible  
764 study after they started meeting in Claire’s house. Hal had come from a Baptist  
765 background. Anne came from an Assembly of God background. He was never  
766 happy in an Assembly of God church. She felt stifled in Baptist churches, but  
they’d found Renewal of Hope to be a place where both felt comfortable.

767 “This may not be what you are looking for, but we’re not sure about the  
768 idea of a business plan. To us it seems like the world’s way of doing things. No  
769 offense, Terry, but we think we just need to be sensitive to the Lord. He will  
770 lead us like he led the Hebrews out of Egypt into the Promised Land. We don’t  
771 need a business plan. What we need is a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by  
772 night.”

773 “Okay, Hal,” Terry said, “let’s talk about that.”

774 There was general agreement that having a business plan seemed secular,  
775 “but God had a plan for man from the beginning” someone suggested.

776 Turning to their consultant, Jimmy said, “There is one thing, Terry, that I  
777 really agree with. This shouldn’t just be something we sit down and dream up  
778 ourselves. We really do need the Lord’s leadership. It may not be a pillar or a  
779 cloud, but if we aren’t following God’s plan, our own won’t succeed.”

780 There was something about that comment that troubled Terry. In some  
781 ways, it seemed like they were avoiding dealing with reality. *On the other hand,*  
782 *he thought, they really take God’s leadership seriously. I have to admire them*  
783 *for that.*

784 Terry responded, “Then you guys need to pray about this. We weren’t  
785 going to make any plans tonight anyway. But I would like to hear from the other  
786 groups.” That seemed right. One by one the groups shared what they had  
787 discussed.

788 They talked about using spiritual gifts to develop ministries. “Every  
789 member a minister” was suggested as a slogan.

790 “We could survey the community, find out what’s needed and see if  
791 God’s given us someone with a spiritual gift that could meet that need.”

792 “Our group thinks we need to focus on evangelism if we are going to be  
793 a great commission church.”

794 “We really like our small groups. And we are getting so big. I’m afraid  
795 we are going to lose a lot of the intimacy we’ve got right now. We wondered if  
796 there was a way we could still meet in homes or at least keep our small groups.  
797 We are afraid if we just meet here we are just going to become another  
798 traditional church.”

799 “One other thing, we think we need elders or someone to help you,  
800 Jimmy. “

801 As the groups talked, Terry listed their ideas on a whiteboard.

802 The meeting went late into the night. Folks were tired but energized. It  
803 was going to be nice not getting up tomorrow morning for church.

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807 The alarm clock was going off. Instinctively Jimmy hit the alarm clock,  
808 but the noise wouldn’t quit. That’s when he realized it was the phone. *What*  
809 *time is it?* The red integers on the clock said it was 1:04. *I hope mom’s okay.*

810 Even as he reached to pick up the phone, Jimmy remembered his mother's  
811 recent mild stroke. Nothing to worry about the doctors said, but when it's family  
812 it's hard not to worry.

813 "Hello."

814 "Jimmy, sorry to bother you so late at night." It was Dane.

815 Momentarily relieved, Jimmy said, "No bother. What's up?"

816 "Terry and I talked for a long time after the meeting tonight. We talked  
817 some about the meeting, but eventually I asked him if any of this had changed  
818 the way he thought about God. He said he'd gotten curious and started reading  
819 the gospel of John I'd given him. You're not going to believe this, but he asked  
820 me what it meant to be born again. I told him and he just prayed to receive  
821 Christ. I told him he needed to share this with someone. He wanted you to be  
822 the first person he told. Here, I'll put him on."

823 "Jimmy!"

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827 The meeting had been announced well in advance. Everyone's interest  
828 was piqued. Jimmy and Angie, Dane and Joyce Evans, and Thomas and Sarah  
829 Dawson had taken the ideas the folks suggested in the Saturday night meetings.  
830 Together with Terry they had developed a "ministry plan" (Thomas thought that  
831 sounded better than a business plan). Now they were ready to share their plan  
832 with the others.

833 "Angie is passing out some information sheets. I'd like for us to take a  
834 few minutes to go over them together after we've spent some time in prayer,"  
835 Jimmy began.

836 "The list looks good. I want to commend all of you for your hard work,"  
837 Herb Miller said. Herb and his wife Gloria and their son, Rees, had been with  
838 Jimmy from the beginning. Herb and his wife were third generation Baptists.  
839 Rees was one of the first youth to make a profession of faith after Jimmy came  
840 to Calvary.

841 "But I've got a couple of unanswered questions that we haven't  
842 addressed. Perhaps you can help me. First, I'm still not sure who we are as a  
843 church. This sheet gives us some action plans, but it doesn't really tell me who  
844 ROH is. Are we going to be part of the association? If we are a church, I know  
845 what a traditional church looks like, but I'm still not sure how we are going to be  
846 a church.

847 "Second, and this may be just a continuation of my first question, I'm not  
848 sure how we are structured. We are members of ROH, I guess, since we've been  
849 with you from the beginning. But is anyone who starts coming and a Christian  
850 considered a member? Or do we even have membership.

851 “And another thing, Jimmy, maybe this is a third question, you’re doing  
852 a great job, but you can’t do this all by yourself. Are we going to have other  
853 staff members, or deacons, or elders, or what?”

854 “Those are good questions, Herb.” *Oh, great, a male version of Angie!*  
855 *We’re talking ministry and he wants to talk about how we organize.* “We’ve  
856 talked some about those things, but we don’t have any answers yet. Other  
857 questions?”

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861 Worship was a great experience when the ROH family gathered together.  
862 They’d decided to meet in small groups for Bible study on Wednesday nights  
863 and worship together as a community on Saturday nights. The Saturday night  
864 group had grown to about 145. More and more of the folks came from the  
865 community. Sometimes it looked like a little bit of heaven to Jimmy. Though  
866 they were still predominantly Anglo, there was an American-born Chinese  
867 couple, the Chens, that worshipped with them and took an active role in one of  
868 the small groups. Three Hispanic families participated in worship though they  
869 hadn’t become part of a small group yet. The Youngs, their first African  
870 American couple, had gotten some of their friends to join them.

871 Jimmy was surprised to see Johnny Builderback come in the back and sit  
872 by the Millers. *I wonder why he’s here?*

873 *Jimmy’s got his band again.* Builderback smiled at that thought. *Looks*  
874 *like he’s doing a good job. I wouldn’t have expected anything less from him.*  
875 *He’s got a lot of talent to go with his charisma. There are the Andersons. I*  
876 *thought they must be coming here. I wish I knew more of these songs. No, what*  
877 *I really wish is we could sing more of these songs at Calvary. That thought*  
878 *surprises me. Maybe I ought to bring Dr. Colson and a few of the deacons down*  
879 *here, let ‘em see what we are getting for our rental money. Wouldn’t that be*  
880 *something? Most folks at Calvary would have a fit if they saw all these folks*  
881 *clapping and waving their hands. Imagine that. Folks just stand up and read*  
882 *Scripture. Seems pretty disorganized, but it seems to work for them.*

883 The band stopped. Jimmy stood up. “Now it’s time to hear from our  
884 small group leaders.”

885 One by one, small group leaders gave reports on what was happening in  
886 their groups. Not all of them reported every week, but each of them had the  
887 opportunity. Some talked about answered prayers. One leader introduced  
888 Cynthia and her boyfriend who prayed to receive Christ that week.

889 Most of the groups were doing well. Six of the eight had grown. Two of  
890 the groups had developed problems. Jimmy had learned to expect that. *The*  
891 *good thing about the cells is that folks feel cared for.* Most of the cells had done  
892 a good job of including unbelievers. In the seven months since they expanded  
893 and started additional cells, nine people had been baptized and four more were

894 waiting. *Nine, plus four, plus Cynthia and her boyfriend. I'll bet that's more*  
895 *than Calvary's baptized this year.*

896 Jimmy had resisted developing a standard curriculum for the cells even  
897 though it was one of their action plans. He thought the cell group leaders needed  
898 to be free to follow the Lord's leading as they saw fit. But some folks would  
899 switch groups depending on the topic. That caused problems, so they went  
900 ahead and standardized the material somewhat. It seemed to be working.

901 The thing that was giving Jimmy the hardest time was deciding on a  
902 structure. Terry said they needed a CEO, but Jimmy didn't like that model. It  
903 may have worked for his father, but he didn't like the way it worked at Calvary.  
904 Besides, he could never see himself as a CEO. The elder concept looked more  
905 appealing, but they hadn't decided how to work that out yet. *Give us time.*

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909 After the service Johnny Builderback sought Jimmy out. "Jimmy, looks  
910 like things are going well. I'm pleased."

911 *I'll bet you are.* "Thanks, pastor."

### **Renewal of Hope—A Christian Community**

#### *A Ministry Plan*

Vision: To carry out the Great Commission in the spirit of the Great Commandment.

Priorities To maintain Christian community.  
To reach the unreached.  
To help believers become fully mature followers of Christ.

Action plans for maintaining Christian community:  
Meet together weekly in small groups.  
Develop community leaders.  
Develop a coordinated curriculum to use in community groups.

Action plans for reaching the unreached:  
Encourage ROHers to develop relationships with unbelievers.  
Encourage each community to include unbelievers.  
Do a survey of the spiritual gifts of ROH members.  
Survey the community.  
Help members develop spiritual gifts and ministries to use them evangelistically.

Action plans for helping unbelievers become fully mature followers of Christ:  
Develop a standard of accountability that .....