

Executive Summary – Chloe’s People in Five Minutes

Chloe’s People was chartered to listen to God’s next call for Clay Church. To pray, study, and listen for how God would speak to us regarding the following questions: “How is God calling Clay Church to change the world”, “What does God care about that Clay Church needs to care about”, “What does God want us to notice now – not about ourselves – but about God’s world that needs the attention of God’s people”, and “What are the crying needs that we can and should do something about for our local and global community”?

Chloe’s People continues with the strategic focus of the Caleb Committee, and the Chloe’s Report is the next step of the vision of the Caleb Report. While the Caleb Report called to serve “the northern part of the greater South Bend area, including the areas in Granger,” Chloe’s People believe that it is time to expand our witness beyond the boundaries of our church walls.

Externally Focused Church

We believe that the Caleb Report’s foundation, our two site ministry, the discipleship path “Connect, Grow, & Share” and the mission of “Living In Faith Every Day” have all prepared Clay to hear, accept, and move toward God’s next plan for Clay that Chloe’s People have heard:

Clay is being called to become an externally focused church to walk with more people toward a transforming relationship with Jesus Christ by Living In Faith Every day.

This is not meant to minimize the already engaged members of Clay, but to provide an entirely new focus for the entire congregation upon making a Kingdom impact on our community – bringing the message of Jesus Christ to everyone. This does not mean that we should delay or change all of our existing ministries. This means that we should have laser like vision throughout the entire congregation on making an impact on our local and global community.

We feel that in the word of Micah 6:8, God is calling Clay “to act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly” with God. Chloe’s People challenges all of us at Clay to take the Discipleship Path of CONNECT, GROW & SHARE seriously. We can connect and grow as individual responses to what God is doing in our lives, but until we share we are not doing the world changing business to which God has called us...God may be changing us, but until we **SHARE externally** we are not really changed.

Chloe’s People originally thought we were being called to a specific ministry on which the entire congregation would focus. Instead, God brought to our attention various community ministries in which many of our members were already engaged. We felt God prompting us to get to know our already engaged members and to allow the entire congregation to leverage the experience and gifts that Clay has to offer in talent, time, and treasure.

Reveal and Engage

Moving from a building cycle to becoming externally focused will be a huge transition. Taking the right amount of time to understand how Clay is addressing the needs of our congregation and community is vitally important. It is the recommendation of Chloe’s People to engage in a two-part survey process.

Part one is an evaluation of how we are growing on the discipleship path (Utilizing a survey instrument like, “REVEAL Congregational Growth Conversation”). This will give us a snapshot of how we are doing *within* our church walls. This will assist us in GROWING on our discipleship path with questions such as “Who attends your church”, “Why do they attend”, and “Where are they on their Spiritual Journey”.

Part two is an evaluation of our current external ministries (which could be called, ENGAGE). A survey like this will give us a snapshot of what we are doing *outside* of the church walls. This will assist us in the SHARING of our discipleship path with questions such as “What corporate ministries do we engage in at Clay – create a complete internal inventory”, “How impactful are those ministries to the people they serve”, and “What ministries are our members involved in outside of Clay”.

Upon completion of these two surveys, we will have the information needed to understand where we *all* are on our spiritual journey and how Clay can best address its ministries *both internally and externally* to reinforce the importance of walking with Christ.

Four Strategic Next Steps

As Clay continues on the path of becoming an externally focused church, there are four strategic next steps that we uncovered that we now submit as the direction and challenge for Clay:

1. We are called to create strategic partnerships at home and abroad to impact our world with the love of God
2. We are called to develop leaders for new emerging ministries at all age levels
3. We are called to reach and include a younger adult population with the gospel of Christ
4. We are called to address the needs of the under-resourced in our local and global community

Next Step One

We are called to create strategic partnerships at home and abroad to impact our world with the love of God.

God told us again and again that we should not reinvent ministries, outreach events, and missions where existing successful services were already in place. Our concern is God’s mission; therefore Clay should be open to partnerships with existing ministries and service organizations locally and around the world that help us fulfill this mission.

We feel Clay is being called to partner with other churches and service organizations as a way of connecting servants with persons in need. Partnerships with secular organizations that are doing good things can be formed around a common love for and commitment to our community. In partnering with other organizations, we want to be faithful and obedient to God’s call. We are full of hope, certain that God will do great things in this community through the people of this community.

The Externally Focused Church describes a concept called the “sweet spot.” It is the area where the needs and dreams of the community, the calling and capacity of the local church, and the mandates and

desires of God all overlap. Service to others is that “sweet spot” – service is something the community needs, God desires, and Clay church has the capacity to do. It is out of serving and meeting the needs of others that relationships develop and opportunities to share the love of Christ can eventually arise.

Serving to bless and not to control or judge when partnering with other organizations is our goal.

Next Step Two

We are called to develop leaders for new emerging ministries at all age levels

It is clear that in moving to the next chapter is God’s plan for our church new leaders of all age levels will need to step forward and be trained. New leadership does not mean replacing the existing leadership. This is a step to *augment* both lay and clergy leadership in all areas of ministry at Clay to ensure we have capable leadership to allow God’s plan to go forward.

God has not called us to become an externally focused church by relying on the same number of people leading the same number of ministries. God is calling us to build a church that is focused on the crying needs of the world, and we cannot do this without expanding ministries and leadership here at home.

Increasing the number of new leaders at Clay will lead to increasing the number of new ministry opportunities that allow us to reach the community. We define ministry as simply meeting another’s needs with the resources God has given you. Regardless of where you are on the discipleship path, everybody can meet somebody else’s needs with the resources God has given them.

We have also found that there is a significant gap for the younger adult population in the Church today. Generation Y, born between 1974 and 1996, is an incredible source of talent and optimism yet is highly underrepresented in Churches today, including Clay. This group falls into the gap between leaving the church after graduating from Firehouse and returning to the church when it is time to start a family.

Understanding the needs of this energetic population can enable world-changing activities to be carried on through future generations. Generation Y is socially conscious, spiritual and family centric. This generation, unlike previous generations, has the potential, if realized, to align perfectly with God’s challenge for Clay to be externally focused.

Immediately after the first REVEAL results are returned to Clay, a team should be chartered to specifically evaluate where the younger adult generation, ages 18-30, is on their spiritual journey.

Next Step Three

We are called to reach and include a younger adult population with the gospel of Christ

Clay has phenomenal programs that serve a very diverse group of youth. We will continue to embrace and nurture youth, as well as look for ways they can participate in serving our community alongside us.

As we talked to community leaders, we heard time and time again of kids who basically “give up” before they even “get started” for lack of hope and/or opportunity. What a tragedy it would be if these kids never have an opportunity to experience the love of Jesus Christ, first hand, in the form of someone who cares. Someone listening to what they have to say. By leveraging Clay’s existing ministries like

Faithworks!, **firehouse**, and Side Walk Sunday School, and partnering with other ministries or service organizations, we can make a true difference for Christ in the world by reaching youth.

Think of the positive long term impact Clay will have on the lives of the current generation and their future generations by actively reaching out and helping the youth of our community. We may not always feel like we are having an impact, but we are obliged to reach and instruct today's youth. As we reach out, we will need to establish our credibility. In order to instruct, we must establish relationships and trust. We must seek to understand before we can be understood.

As mentioned, when we reviewed the ministries that Clay has for younger populations we realized that there is a very large gap and thus an opportunity to reach and include the 18-30 year old generation. We feel it is vital to the health of the church to act on this knowledge and respond to this challenge.

Clay must continue to understand how we can reach and include young adults who are new to the workforce, new to marriage, and newly "on their own." Engaging 18-30 year-olds can and will add a tremendous source of energy and enthusiasm to our expanded outreach focus. It is time to draw them back into the fold.

Next Step Four

We are called to address the needs of the under-resourced in our local and global community.

Clay is a very connected church community with many members who are involved in many different community initiatives and ministries. We believe it is God's call, through the message in Matthew 25:35, to focus on, engage, and address the needs of the under-resourced in our community. These people are usually marginalized in society and far too often overlooked. We feel called to organize and expand on the many ways Clay is already serving our community.

In the Parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus clearly defines a "neighbor" as anyone in need or distress. Like the Good Samaritan, we can choose to have a tremendous impact for Christ through serving others – those in need who live in the neighborhoods around Clay's two campuses, live in the many local communities of Michiana, and live throughout the global communities of the world.

Mercy and Justice

As noted in *The Externally Focused Church*, mercy is God's *attitude and action* towards those in need or distress. Mercy goes beyond pity and compassion. Mercy is compassion moved into action. Organizing and expanding on the work already being done corporately by Clay and individually by our members is essential to this calling, and which is why the ENGAGE survey is so important.

We are also called to demonstrate justice. Justice finds and heals the causes of problems instead of just treating symptoms. God is calling Clay to help the poor obtain the skills and relationships necessary to move out of poverty – social poverty, physical poverty, mental poverty, emotional poverty and spiritual poverty. We believe this outward focus is not only necessary for the growth of the Kingdom of God, it is necessary for our own personal spiritual growth as well.

Strategic Movement – NOW WHAT?

Based on the four strategic next steps, here are seven action items that we feel will get us started on what God is calling Clay to do next.

1. Introduce God's message through the Chloe's People report
2. Internal evaluation regarding how we are growing spiritually on the discipleship path
3. Internal evaluation of how we are currently engaged in external ministries
3. Charter a team to evaluate the survey results
4. Encourage existing Bible and book studies and the entire congregation to read and study *The External Focused Church*.
5. Adopt a simple church mantra: "Clarity-Movement-Alignment-Focus allows us to do Christ's work together."
6. It should not take more than one conversation to help someone understand the external focus of the ministry of Clay Church and get connected in outreach ministries.

This is how God has led us and we give this report as a gift to the church as a plan for future ministries. We trust the church's leadership (pastors, staff, and laity) to develop the people resources and strategic plans necessary to become externally focused. This is a call to Clay church to have that laser focus on the external needs of the community and world, combining the many passions of our Clay family to meet those external needs.

We invite you to read and study the entire Chloe's People Report and deepen your understanding of how Clay is being called to become an externally focused church to walk with more people toward a transforming relationship with Jesus Christ by Living In Faith Everyday.