

**REPORT ON DISCERNING GOD'S WILL FOR  
CLAY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

submitted

August, 2003

to

The Administrative Council and Congregation  
of Clay United Methodist Church

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**Adopted by the Administrative Council  
September 2, 2003**

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## OVERVIEW

In August, 2002 the Administrative Council of Clay United Methodist Church (CUMC, Clay Church) authorized Pastor Herb Buwalda to commission a committee of women and men to develop short and long range plans for Clay Church. The Committee held its first meeting in September, 2002.

The committee took its name, the Caleb Committee, from the Old Testament story in Numbers 13 and 14 (see Appendix I). The Israelites had finally arrived at the borders of the Promised Land and God called Moses to send 12 spies to investigate their new home. When the spies returned all of them reported of the richness and bounty of the land. Ten of the spies, however, also emphasized the dangers in the new land and urged the people of God to turn away from the land God had promised them. One leader, Caleb, took a different stand and, in the face of nearly overwhelming opposition, urged the Israelites to embrace God's promise. In a pivotal moment he remained steadfastly devoted to God and proclaimed, "Let's go up and take this land – now. We can do it" (Numbers 13: 30, *The Message*).

The Caleb Committee of Clay United Methodist Church was similarly charged with searching for and discerning the future that God has planned for Clay Church and reporting on that future to the leaders and members of the Church. The story of Caleb became a guiding standard for the committee both in terms of their purpose and the attitude with which they pursued that purpose. This report presents the results of these activities in the form of a set of recommendations to Clay Church.

We humbly submit this report as an offering to God, firmly recognizing that any good ideas represented are God's and any errors are our own. As in all things, our desire is that, through the recommendations and proposals described herein, Jesus Christ may be worshipped and proclaimed as Lord and Savior.

### **The Caleb Committee**

Sue Zumbrun	Mary Watson
Laura Schmucker	Dave Ready
Laura Midkiff	Doug Jaques
Angela Knobloch	Greg Freehauf
Nimbi Cushing	Addison Cowling
Herb Buwalda, Spiritual Director	Matt Bloom, Chairperson

## **SECTION I: GOVERNING PRINCIPLES OF THE CALEB COMMITTEE**

### **A. Formal charge of the Caleb Committee**

The Caleb Committee was established to develop short and long range plans for growing Clay United Methodist Church. Specifically, the Committee was charged with addressing the following issues:

1. Analyzing the needs of the church and its community
2. Reviewing present and anticipating future ministry programs according to Paragraphs 201-204 of the Book of Discipline and ensure those ministries are consistent with the mission statement of the church.
3. Develop specific intermediate and long range plans for:
  - a. Ministry goals
  - b. Staffing considerations
  - c. Facility needs
4. Presenting this plan to a called Charge Conference for adoption

### **B. Subordination to the vision and mission of Clay Church**

The activities and recommendations of the Committee were to be guided by and made in accordance with the vision and mission statements of Clay United Methodist Church.

#### **Vision Statement of Clay United Methodist Church**

*Clay United Methodist Church is a vessel of God's love committed to leading more people to a transforming relationship with Jesus Christ*

#### **Mission Statement of Clay United Methodist Church**

*By caring for others, sharing the faith, growing spiritually, and serving people.*

## **SECTION II: COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES AND PROGRESS**

### **A. Searching for God's will**

From the time of its inaugural meeting, the members of the Caleb Committee recognized that their primary objective would be to discover and understand God's will for Clay Church and to translate that direction into an actionable strategic plan. To accomplish this purpose, the Caleb Committee sought to ensure to the best of their ability that any recommendations or proposals they issued reflected God's will and not the will of the Committee members. As such, most of the Committee's activities were devoted to discernment: praying for God's guidance, looking and listening for God's voice, reflecting on insights the members had obtained, and seeking the counsel and wisdom of other Christians. It was only after many months of prayer, reflection, and discernment that specific recommendations were articulated and formalized. This section provides an overview of those discernment activities

### **B. Activities of the Caleb Committee**

- 1) **Discernment activities.** Because the primary focal point of the Committee was to search for and discern God's plan for Clay Church, each meeting began with a period of prayer, meditation, and reflection. This was the foundation upon which the Committee built all of its activities and decisions. The discernment activities the Committee utilized included deep study of the Holy Scriptures, intense and sustained individual and group prayer, regular meditation, private and communal reflection exercises, exploration of the writings and wisdom of historic and contemporary Christian leaders, extensive discussions with members of the Clay community, engaging experts from outside the Clay community for their advice and counsel, and a variety of discovery activities (e.g., brain storming, focused listening, open discussion forums) all of which were centered on searching for and discerning God's will for Clay Church. The intent was to create an environment of openness and exploration as the Committee searched for insights and ideas about God's purpose for Clay Church.

In addition to the activities of the Committee as a whole, each member also dedicated a portion of their own daily spiritual time to engage in personal discernment. The members kept prayer journals and other personal notes to record the insights, thoughts, and ideas that came to them during their personal discernment activities. At each meeting, members then shared the insights, questions, or ideas they uncovered during these periods of personal discovery with the Committee.

The committee also sought to understand the context in which Clay Church operates and the communities it is called to serve. Ed Fenstermacher, Associate Director of Church Development, from the office of the Northern Indiana District of the United Methodist Church, provided valuable information to the committee based upon an analysis of the characteristics of the current congregation and of the church's surrounding communities. The Committee sought to answer the question, "who is Clay Church called to reach for Jesus' sake?" and to define the growing edges of the Clay Church's ministry in terms of

outreach, hospitality, and mission. These activities provided information about the context in which Clay is called to work and it also provided important insights into the role God has called Clay Church to play in serving these communities.

At each and every stage of its progress the Committee took time to concentrate on being open to God's leading and asking for God to guide their deliberations and decisions. Careful attention was paid to giving sufficient time and attention to allow God to speak His will to the Committee before decisions were made.

- 2) **Approach to decision making.** Given its concern for ensuring that any recommendations or proposals reflected God's will, the Committee adopted, early on, a special approach to making final decisions. Decisions discussed and initially made at one meeting were not accepted until after a period of focused prayer and reflection. Normally, draft decisions made in one meeting were not ratified as final until at least the next meeting. In all cases, the Committee did not declare a decision made until all members felt that sufficient confirmation had been obtained. Then, and only then, would the Committee deem it appropriate to commit the recommendation to writing.

This report was viewed at all times as a work-in-progress, fully open to amendment and revision until such time that it is formally adopted by the Administrative Council of Clay United Methodist Church. Formal approval was granted on September 2, 2003.

- 3) **Objectives for formal recommendations and proposals.** This section describes the objectives the Committee sought to achieve in developing its formal recommendations and proposals.
  - a. **Strategic focus.** The first major planning objective the Committee addressed was to develop a strategic focus to guide all of the activities and decisions of Clay Church over the next five to seven years. Clay's vision statement defines the most basic purpose of the Church and articulates the role Clay Church seeks to play in advancing God's kingdom. The mission statement describes the unique way Clay Church will follow and achieve this vision statement over the next 25 years or more. The strategic focus should establish a narrower focus that will guide Clay Church over the next five to seven years. The strategic focus proposed by the Committee was developed to achieve the following:
    - i. Provide a clear, unique direction and a focused sense of purpose to guide Clay Church over the next five to seven years. The intention is that all ministries and activities of the church will be concentrated on enacting the strategic focus.
    - ii. Set the stage for bold, decisive action and create the basis for innovation, continuous improvement, and calculated risk-taking. Like all churches, Clay Church is called to act with assurance and confidence to achieve its vision. At times this will require innovative thinking, moving in new and uncertain directions, and taking bold steps to achieve God's plan. The

vision calls the church to resist being overly cautious and to be willing to embrace the uncertainty that discipleship requires.

- iii. Provide a common objective that will inspire, unite, and connect the efforts of every member of the Clay Church community. The strategic focus must express an ideal that the members of Clay Church embrace, one that excites their passions, and one inspires them to take action. It must provide a rallying point for the members of Clay church and a common ideal that the entire congregation can pursue together. And, the strategic focus must provide each person with a sense of how they can use their unique talents and gifts to make a meaningful contribution to achieving that ideal.

- b. **Strategic pillars.** A second major objective of the Committee was to develop a set of strategies that will define the major ministries and program areas of the church and which will also identify areas of concentration for the activities and initiatives of the Church. These strategies, what the Committee has called strategic pillars, are the major program areas that the Committee believes Clay Church must focus upon to enact its strategic focus in accordance with God's will. These ministry objectives will help set the major priorities of Clay Church for the next five to seven years and, as such, they should serve as the primary decision-making guidelines for the staff and leaders of Clay during that time period. The strategic pillars in this report are intended to achieve the following:

- i. Define the specific ministry focuses of Clay Church. The strategic pillars should make clear where Clay should concentrate both its resources and the efforts and contributions of its members.
- ii. Convert the strategic focus into clear, specific objectives. The strategic pillars should be the yardsticks Clay Church can use to gauge its progress toward achieving the vision and mission. The strategic pillars can also serve as milestones Clay can use to mark and celebrate key successes the Church achieves as it moves forward. Finally, the strategic pillars can serve as standards the Church can use to hold itself accountable to the vision and mission God has called it to pursue.
- iii. Define parameters and boundaries to guide key decision making activities. By clearly establishing how Clay should seek to enact its strategic focus, the strategic pillars not only clarify what things Clay Church will do, but they also create the basis for determining the things Clay church should not do. As recipients of God's gifts, Clay Church is called to be wise stewards of those resources by ensuring they are put to their best use. The strategic pillars help clarify to what purposes God has called Clay to invest its resources.

- c. **Facility planning.** The final major issue addressed by the committee was discerning God's will for the physical plant and property of the church. The committee sought to achieve the following objectives for facility planning:
1. Define the implications of the strategic focus and strategic pillars for the church's facilities. The recommendations are not intended to address the logistics of updating or obtaining facilities, but instead describe what kind of facilities the Committee believes are necessary for Clay to enact and achieve its strategic focus.
  2. Establish parameters for the timing of changes to the facilities. Again, the Committee did not seek to develop a detailed project timeline, but rather concentrated on discerning major milestones for facility improvements and changes.

## SECTION III: FORMAL RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROPOSALS

### **A. Fundamental and defining beliefs**

Among the important beliefs that we as members of the Body of Christ hold dear, we acknowledge four that are foundational for strategic plan of Clay United Methodist Church. We affirm that they are the basis for everything that we do.

- I. We acknowledge that Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior. We seek to honor and glorify Jesus in everything we do. Jesus has provided all the gifts we have and all the blessings we enjoy. We affirm that glorifying Jesus Christ and building His kingdom are the true core purposes of our church.
- II. We affirm that prayer is the indispensable guide for our church and our lives. Prayer reveals our true purpose, guides every good thought, and directs us to right and honorable actions. Prayer connects us to Jesus and leads us to live according to God's will. We affirm that prayer must inspire, direct, and permeate everything that we do.
- III. We are called to enact the vision God has given to Clay. We affirm that God has called Clay United Methodist Church to be a vessel of His love, committed to leading more people to a transforming relationship with Jesus Christ.
- IV. We are called to achieve the mission God has given to Clay. God has called us to enact our vision by caring for others, sharing the faith, growing spiritually, and serving people. We affirm these as the core values of our church.

### **B. God's call to Clay Church for achieving its vision and mission**

One of the most inspiring, wondrous, and consistent messages that the Caleb Committee received is that God is calling Clay Church to be a great church for Jesus, a church that moves boldly into the future God has designed for it, and a church that acts with energy, enthusiasm, and passion to fulfill its God-given destiny. We assert that the fears and obstacles that we might see with human eyes cannot deter, distract, or discourage us from pursuing God's holy purpose for our Church.

We also believe that as a church we are being called to a ministry of consequence and we cannot settle for mediocre levels of commitment or ministry from ourselves or from others in our community. We have used the phrase "good is the enemy of great" as a reminder that anything less than our best, most dedicated and sincere efforts is unacceptable. God requires that we are not only good stewards of our gifts and resources, but that we are willing to work, strive, and sacrifice to achieve His will. This also requires that we are candid about where we are not achieving the greatness that God has called us to. Telling the truth in love is a key part of discipleship and it must be a hallmark of the culture at Clay. It requires that we are open and honest with each other about where we need to improve. We must, as a church, hold ourselves accountable to the vision, mission, and strategy that God has called us to achieve.

## **C. Strategic focus**

The vision & mission statements represent what Clay hopes to achieve over the next 25+ years. The strategic focus represents where Clay will concentrate its time, talents, and resources over the next 5-7 years. It is the first major step in achieving our vision & mission. We propose that Clay United Methodist Church adopt:

### ***“Caring with a purpose”***

as its strategic focus. We believe that the cornerstone of our vision and mission is the love of Jesus Christ. We therefore believe that Clay Church must concentrate first on becoming a church where we care for others deeply with the purpose of leading them to a transforming relationship with Jesus Christ. While we firmly believe that growth, service, and sharing are key components of our faith and church life, we believe that our love for others must be our primary emphasis in everything that we do.

“Caring with a purpose” means that we are motivated by Christ’s love, compassion and care in all that we think, say and do. In so doing, we may become true vessels of God’s love and help other people find their own relationship with Christ.

At Clay church, “caring with a purpose” has the following distinguishing attributes:

- ***First***, we invest in individuals. We believe that each person is a unique and precious child of God, that each person has immeasurable worth because God loves them, and that each individual is called into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Because God made each of us unique, we each have our own, personal journey to Christ and we each experience Christ’s transforming love in a unique way. As a church we understand and support the personal nature of this faith journey.
- ***Second***, we build personal relationships. We believe that the love and care of others is an essential component of growing closer to Christ. Close friendships are one of the primary ways that we can receive the care and love we need to grow ever deeper in our faith. As a church, we are committed to helping each person develop strong, Christian friendships.
- ***Third***, we are open and accepting. God’s church is a place where everyone can find the worth that they have in Christ reflected in the attitudes and actions of others. We stand resolutely opposed to the worldly divisions that seek to separate people. Through the power and love of Jesus, we strive to be a church where every person – regardless of race, ethnicity, or background - can find the acceptance, care and love of Jesus.
- ***Fourth***, we seek a richer, deeper faith for everyone. We want to be disciples who are truly devoted to Christ and who are committed to living as He taught us. We seek to help each person grow into an ever deeper, richer, fuller relationship with Jesus. As a church, we strive to create an environment in which people are nurtured, supported, encouraged, challenged, and held accountable to constantly grow deeper in their relationship with Jesus.

- *Fifth*, we empower each other to care. We believe each member of our church community has the privilege and responsibility to develop their own care ministry. Each of us needs relationships where we are cared for deeply by others and where we care deeply for others. As a church, we are committed to helping each person find and fulfill the caring ministry that God has called them to.
- *Sixth*, we want to make a difference for Christ in the world. We believe that Christ's love, mercy and grace must reach every person. As a church, we are called to find ways of reaching people everywhere we can to share Christ's love.

#### **D. Strategic pillars**

To achieve our “caring with a purpose” strategic focus, Clay Church must concentrate and commit its time, talent, and resources appropriately. We propose that Clay Church adopt the following strategic pillars which define the specific ministry and program focuses that we believe God is calling Clay to emphasize over the next 5-7 years.

**1. Relevant Worship.** Worship is the central practice of the Christian faith. It is where we worship and adore our Savior. Worship helps us connect with God and teaches us how we can live in communion with Christ. It leads us to transforming decisions about who we are and who we are becoming as we grow in our faith. Worship causes us to think deeply about our lives and nurtures the desire within us to be changed.

Relevant worship incorporates themes and messages that reach the congregation where they are in their lives and in their faith journeys. It is relevant because it is worship expressed in terms that are salient and important to the congregation at Clay. It creates an atmosphere where the worship style, type of music, and worship activities are familiar and comfortable to the congregants. It is offered at times and in venues that fit well into the pace of modern living. It draws people away from the distractions of the world around them and into a sacred, grace-filled place where Christ is the focus.

Music and performing arts are essential elements of the vibrant, relevant, and spiritually moving worship services at Clay. They help make people feel comfortable in worship, provide a way to connect people with the Gospel message during worship, and give people a way to participate actively in worship. Music and the performing arts also help create Clay's own worship signature; they provide a unique worship experience that reflects Clay's culture, values, and vision. They also provide a mechanism for nurturing and developing the Christian faith in children, youth and adults as they participate in these ministries. Participation in drama productions, serving on the media arts team, and performing in musical events can be opportunities for spiritual growth.

Relevant worship also requires that our pastors assume several key roles. They must serve as spiritual guides, leading the congregation to learn about and engage in true worship. They must be teachers, sharing their deep knowledge of Scripture and Christian doctrine to inform the congregation about the teachings of Christ and the principles of Christian living. They must be shepherds, directing, encouraging, and challenging members to grow deeper in their faith. They must be preachers, proclaiming the Good News, bringing challenging and relevant messages that will lead us to transformed

decisions and lives. As a church, we must create an environment where our pastors can devote themselves to these important roles.

The Caleb Committee proposes that relevant worship be formally adopted as a key strategic pillar.

**2. Children's ministries.** We believe that creating life-long disciples of Christ begins by building the faith in children. A unique and key strength of children's ministries at Clay is its ability to minister to entire families. We see the following critical roles for children's ministries. First and foremost, children's ministries must nurture and develop the Christian faith in children. An on-going program of Christian education for children is clearly an integral component of Clay's vision and mission. A second key role is to continue its focus of helping support strong, nurturing Christian families. Families are the center for developing true Christian discipleship. Children's ministries has created many opportunities for families to develop and strengthen their bonds of love and to help provide parents with tools they can use to continue Christian education in their homes. We believe this role should continue.

Thirdly, children's ministries has also created connections that bring new people, especially unchurched adults, into the Clay community. Programs like Vacation Bible School and Sidewalk Sunday school have proven to be excellent mechanisms for drawing new people to Clay. We believe that this evangelistic dimension should be expanded. For example, there are significant opportunities for new programs that link children's ministries with MDO/LLP to further enhance Clay's evangelistic activities.

Fourth and finally, children's ministries has provided many mechanisms for community outreach. Programs such as Sidewalk Sunday school, the puppet ministries, involvement in South Bend community activities like the Summer in the City have been very effective ways for Clay to have a presence in the community. We believe these outreach efforts should be leveraged further as ways for Clay to offer Christian care and love to the surrounding community and help lead more people to Christ.

The Caleb Committee believes that children's ministries should continue to be a strategic pillar at Clay Church. We also recommend that efforts to expand the scope and breadth of these ministries in a manner consistent with the strategic focus be a major emphasis of the church.

**3. Youth ministries.** Research indicates that people who are not Christians by age 18 have a less than 10% probability of accepting Christ in their adult years. Effective youth ministries fill the essential role of reaching young people at a critical stage in their lives. We see youth ministries as a key area of ministry focus for Clay.

The first and most critical role for youth ministries is to reach young people for Christ and help them grow in their faith life. Sunday morning programs like 9:25 Alive! and weekday programs like the Watering Hole should continue to be emphasized and developed. These programs must focus on developing the faith life of youth and they must provide meaningful Christian education that is relevant to young people.

A second important role is to provide safe, nurturing environment in which youth can successfully develop and mature. In today's society, our youth are exposed to a variety of compelling forces that urge them to accept poor values and to engage in dangerous and destructive behaviors. We believe Clay should provide a range of activities and opportunities that provide an attractive, compelling alternative for youth where they can take pleasure in the joys of youth while at the same time they are encouraged to grow in their Christian beliefs and faith.

A third important role for youth ministries is to serve as a major mechanism for community outreach and evangelism. Like children's ministries, vibrant and effective youth programs draw entire families into church communities. Clay's youth programs have had success doing this. We believe that this evangelistic role should continue to be a dominate focus of youth ministries.

The Caleb Committee proposes that youth ministry continue to be a vital part of the ministry life at Clay. We recommend that efforts to expand the range of ministry opportunities and the reach of its influence be given high priority.

**4. Everyday discipleship.** To be true disciples of Christ and to serve God to our utmost requires that we must live out our faith in our daily lives. As Christians, we are called to be Christ's ambassadors, taking His love, grace, and mercy to every person and into every corner of the world around us. We are called to live fully as authentic disciples of Christ so that our faith is acted out in every sphere of our lives. It is in the church that we learn to live out our true purpose as God's people.

The Caleb Committee recommends that a new, application-focused adult-centered ministry –tentatively called “everyday discipleship” – be developed. We believe this ministry should be focused on helping adults explore what a Christ-centered life means and on providing them with practical help in actually living out their faith. This ministry should help lead people through a process of personal discovery so they can gain the insights they need to see how their faith can inform every part of their lives.

As Christians, we are called to practice the spiritual disciplines that Christ taught us. Activities like a deep prayer life, Bible study, solitude, fasting, meditation, and contemplation were a part of the lives of the Apostles and the church of Acts. The spiritual disciplines are key elements of living fully as disciples, yet, in modern life we have lost touch with them. Everyday discipleship ministries can assist us in learning about the spiritual disciplines, helping us discover how they can enrich our faith, and supporting us as we practice them.

The Caleb Committee proposes that Clay Church formally adopt an adult ministry focused on living fully as Christ's disciples as a strategic pillar.

**5. Koinonia: Building the Christian community.** We believe that God made us to live in a community with other people, yet our modern society often leaves people living in isolation, without deep, meaningful connections to others. At Clay, building community means making personal connections. People need to know that they are important and valued members of the Clay community. Building real, authentic friendships also allows

people to be nurtured, cared for, supported, and encouraged in their faith journey. We want people to find a faith community where they can feel at home and where they can become an integral part of the life of God's church.

Growing deeper in faith also requires that we be lovingly challenged and held accountable. We seek a community that is willing to speak the truth in love, including the candid conversations about difficult issues that we sometimes need to identify and reconcile obstacles to our faith journey.

A second important part of this ministry is extending our community into the world beyond the walls of Clay. When we meet each other at work, we must be a community. When we meet stores, entertainment venues, or anywhere around town, we must be a community. In our neighborhoods, at leisure, in the normal routines of life, where ever we meet each other in the world around us, we must be a community.

A third key element of this ministry is creating strong small groups. We do not sense that Clay must be organized around small groups, but rather we sense that fellowship or koinonia groups should be an integral part of life at Clay. We believe that each member of Clay should be part of an active small fellowship group. These koinonia groups should foster deep Christian friendships, provide personalized care and support, and ensure that each member is growing, serving, and sharing their faith.

The Caleb Committee proposes that Clay Church formally adopt building community, strong small groups, and deep, personal relationships as a ministry focus.

**6. Equipping ministries.** We believe that it is vital that each member of the Clay community has an opportunity to use their God-given talents in a way that is meaningful to them and that makes recognizable contributions to God's kingdom. Equipping ministries is devoted to providing people with assistance in identifying their talents, developing those talents, and finding a place to utilize those talents in various forms of ministry and mission to glorify Christ. Of course, God develops gifts in the body of Christ for service and mission to the world, and uses those gifts in Christ's service in local, national, and international ministries. Being the 'hands and feet of Christ' is an expression of our faith as we use our gifts on behalf of others.

One key element of equipping ministries is helping people to find their gifts, training them to use their gifts, and helping them to find how they can apply their gifts to build God's kingdom. Many people do not have a clear understanding of the gifts they have been given by God; Clay Church can help them discover these gifts. A gift, properly developed, becomes a talent – something that can be put to productive use to build God's kingdom. Equipping ministries should provide educational and teaching activities designed to provide people with the knowledge, insights, and wisdom they need to develop and use their gifts. Equipping ministries can also help match volunteers with activities that suit their skills and interests, and then properly train them to ensure they are ready and able to engage in a fulfilling service experience.

We also believe that Clay Church should develop special programs for equipping leaders. These include all those people who have been called by God to in leadership positions such as committee chairs, program directors, youth sponsors, Sunday school teachers,

and the like. Training these individuals in the principles of Christian servant-leadership would provide important foundational knowledge and create the basis for successful leadership. Leaders may also benefit from training in areas such as effective teaching, group facilitation, project planning and organizing, interpersonal communication skills, problem solving, facilitating discussions, and conflict resolution.

The Caleb Committee proposes that equipping ministries be added as a strategic pillar.

## **E. Who God is calling Clay Church to serve**

We affirm that Christ's church is open to everyone. Jesus calls on all believers to, "go and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19). We also acknowledge that there are some groups that God has called to be a particular focus for Clay Church. While we affirm that we must always remain open, welcoming, and available for all persons, the Caleb Committee also believes that God has called Clay Church to special missions to families with children in the home and to people who live in the northern part of the greater South Bend area, including the areas in Granger township. Through our study we have come to understand that being an effective church requires that we design programs and activities that fit with the values, expectations and life styles of the population that God has called us to serve. We must be careful that we are fully ministering those groups and we must also avoid trying to serve more people than God has called us to serve. At the same time, we must open and vigilant to the possibility that God will lead us to minister to new populations.

We also affirm that God is calling us to serve and minister to the members and groups that are a part of our current congregation. We are blessed with a congregation that is growing in its diversity and we believe that God has called us to continue caring for them.

The Committee believes that Clay Church should utilize available information to gain a deeper understanding of the populations God has called it to serve and, where feasible and advisable, tailor its programs accordingly. The Northern Indiana District Office has provided the Committee with extensive information about the characteristics of all the populations which Clay Church serves, including their preferences for church and worship, and the Caleb Committee recommends that this information be made widely available to Clay Church staff and leadership for their use.

## **F. Infrastructure planning**

An important part of achieving any vision and mission is to ensure that the proper infrastructure is in place. Two key parts of the infrastructure at Clay are (1) the physical plant & facilities and (2) the paid and volunteer staff. After spending considerable time searching for divine guidance, we believe that following proposals represent God's will for the infrastructure at Clay Church.

- 1. Long range plans for Clay's physical plant and facilities.** God has great plans for Clay Church which include significant expansion of both the number and scope of our ministries and the number and variety of people that will be called to be a part of the Clay community. Both types of expansion will, we believe, require a radically different and significantly larger building. Without the proper building, we believe that our ability to enact the strategic focus and strategic pillars will be severely

limited. We believe that God is calling Clay to build a new building on a new location that will provide the church with the space to meet the ministry and congregational goals God has us to both now and into the future. The following list of design elements is a result of Caleb's discernment into God's call for the new building. Some of the elements we regard as essential. Others we regard as important guiding principles. We have indicated the essential elements in the paragraphs below.

**a. Themes and characteristics of the new facilities.** God's message to us about the new building did not come in the form of architectural structures, but rather in the form of themes and characteristics that God is calling for the new building to include. We view these as design requirements in that they represent what God expects Clay to achieve in the new physical structure that it builds. The overriding theme that must direct all design activities is "caring with a purpose." Our new building must convey, in its design and decorations, the caring heart of Clay Church.

- 1. A centrally located sanctuary.** Worship is the heart of Clay Church and so it must be the heart of the church's buildings. The sanctuary must provide an environment that invites and supports the adoration, prayer, thanksgiving, and teaching that are a vital part of a relevant worship experiences. It must sit at the center of the building to serve as a symbolic reminder of our core purpose: to be disciples of Jesus Christ. The sanctuary must invite us to worship as a community. It must encourage the involvement of every participant. It must be a sacred and holy space that appropriately honors our Savior. It must also support the wide variety of music and performing arts that are a crucial part of the worship experience at Clay. This worship center should be versatile, allowing for both traditional and contemporary elements. Our current congregation is largely rooted in traditions of the church (former Catholics, etc.), but there is a growing emphasis on more contemporary forms of worship, both in terms of the Soul Journey service and in how we add these elements into the more traditional services. Ideally special rooms would be provided for parents with small children and nursing mothers so they can enjoy worship and remain with their children. A centrally located sanctuary an essential element of the new facility.
- 2. An emphasis on sacred space.** Sacred space involves images of beauty, peace, God, prayer, spiritual formation. It is life-enhancing space. Pockets of sacred space should be easily accessible throughout the building. Sacred spaces can take many forms including chapels, prayer areas, small alcoves, and even special seating areas. Emphasis should be placed on using both the design and décor to convey the appropriate images. We believe it is important to emphasize a prominent display of the cross throughout the facilities. It is an important reminder of the fundamental purpose of our church -- to worship our Lord and Savior, to be transformed ourselves and to lead others to transforming relationship with Jesus Christ. This is an essential element of the new facility.
- 3. Significant prayer space.** We believe that a variety of prayer venues should be included. Some should provide for private space for one to two individuals.

Other spaces, like the chapel, should allow for larger, yet still very intimate, gatherings. Prayer labyrinths, prayer walks, prayer alcoves, and prayer stalls represent some of the possible ideas for these prayer spaces. This is an essential element of the new facility.

- 4. Dedicated space for fellowship and community building.** We believe the new church must devote a considerable amount of space to rooms that will foster fellowship activities. This is an essential element of the new facility. These might include.
  - i. A great hall.** We envision a central “great hall” or “town square” that will sit at the cross roads of the building. It will be a place for meeting and greeting people, for easy fellowship, for welcoming new and old friends, and for a variety of community-building encounters. This space will be located so that it is easy to access from all parts of the church and so that it sits naturally in the middle of pathways to and from various parts of the facility. This will create a “town center” effect that draws people naturally and continuously back to the community. It will also cause us to interact with more people and with a greater variety of people versus focusing too heavily on our own small groups. We also see the need for small alcoves off the great hall that provide for the private conversations and allow for the personal prayer times that are integral to the caring friendships the church will nurture. The great hall should provide for a transition between the world without and the world within. It should be a warm, inviting, welcoming space and one that provides proper room for the Good Earth Taskforce to welcome and minister to visitors. This is an essential element of the new facility.
  - ii. Fellowship halls.** These spaces provide for large group activities and meals, venues for celebrations and other special events, and indoor recreational activities for the children’s and youth ministries. We envision several spaces so that multiple fellowship activities can be conducted at the same time.
  - iii. A kitchen.** In Jesus’ time, breaking bread together was a sign of fellowship and love. That same tradition has been important at Clay Church since its inception. Ranging from small group meals to all church picnics, meals are an integral part of many fellowship, service, and growth activities at Clay Church. We believe a kitchen is a vital part of our new building.
  - iv. Significant small group space.** We believe that the demand for small group rooms will increase significantly. The new facility must provide for age-appropriate teaching rooms, small group study and discussion rooms, and a library to support the spiritual growth activities of the church. This is an essential element of the new facility.
- 5. Dedicated space for staff offices.** Collaboration and cooperation among staff have always been, and will continue to be, a vital part of achieving God’s vision and mission for Clay Church. It is of crucial importance that the staff

be housed in a common location. In addition to personal space for each staff member, we envision a common space for group meetings and conversations, space to support special project activities, and small private rooms to support personal conversations. This is an essential element of the new facility.

- 6. A dedicated youth center.** We believe that a dedicated youth center is a crucial part of any youth program, but it is even more important given the societal forces that often compel youth into activities that jeopardize their physical, psychological, and spiritual well-being. We believe that Clay needs to provide viable alternatives that draw youth into Christian activities and fellowship. The center cannot be limited to space for Sunday school classes, but must include facilities that can attract unchurched youth and that can provide for a variety of youth-oriented activities. Although the design of the center may vary, we regard the presence of dedicated youth space as an essential element of the new facility.
- 7. A state-of-the-art equipping facility.** The strategic pillars emphasize the need for a variety of training activities that include both large and small group educational programs. We believe a dedicated space that can properly house the required technology and that will support the variety of pedagogies necessary to train leaders and members is a key part of the new building.
- 8. A chapel & spiritual life center.** Many phases in the life of the church and its members call for a chapel that can support small, intimate worship services. Chapels also provide for prayer vigils, special services, and small group worship as well as dedicated space for members to use for prayer, meditation, and reflection. We envision an adjacent spiritual life center that, with the chapel, creates a venue dedicated to disciplines like meditation, lectio divina, reflection, prayer, and other spiritual development activities. It may include prayer spaces, a library, small study rooms, and space to house spiritual development meetings and materials. This is an essential element of the new facility.
- 9. Children's education wing.** This wing should provide a variety of classrooms with age-appropriate design and décor. Ideally it would incorporate a central meeting area where large group activities can take place. Spaces for the operations of Mother's Day Out/Little Lamb Preschool may also be included in the design if alternative space has not already been provided. This is an essential element of the new facility.
- 10. Performing arts center.** This space should provide for rehearsal and preparation as well as performances. Ideally it would be suited for a variety of fine and performing arts ranging from large choral and instrumental groups to smaller musical ensembles. It would also support a variety of dramatic activities and performances. We regard some space dedicated to performing arts as an essential element of the new facility.
- 11. Media arts facilities.** The use of media arts has increased significantly at Clay Church. The use of media in worship services, the production of sermon and music CDs, the use of internet-based media, and a growing emphasis on

digital media are all technologies that Clay Church has utilized, and ones that are likely to grow in importance. We believe a properly designed and equipped media center will be an important part of the new facility.

**12. Design of interior spaces.** We know that interior design is as important as structural design. Décor helps create the appropriate atmosphere and can be used to convey important images and moods. We regard the following as some of the important interior design elements.

**i. Comfort.** The church should create a warm, hospitable environment that invites people inside and encourages them to linger within its walls. The Committee encourages the use of furniture, art, and décor that creates a comfortable, spiritual atmosphere appropriate to the purpose of each space in the facility.

**ii. Incorporation of nature.** The Committee believes that incorporating God's natural world into specific spaces in the facility will be important for creating effective worship and fellowship environments. Outside prayer areas, courtyards, and the use of natural light represent some ways to bring God's created world into the facilities.

**b. Location of new facility.** The Committee believes that the current location is inadequate for the size and design of the new facility that God is calling Clay Church to build. We believe that the Church must look for new land on which to locate the new facility. We do not rule out the possibility that Clay might continue to utilize its current location in some capacity well into the future. However, we believe that the church's primary location must be on a new and larger piece of property.

**c. Timing of new facility.** The Committee feels a strong sense of urgency about this issue. We believe that God is calling Clay to act confidently and swiftly to realize His will for this new facility. After a great deal of careful, prayerful thought it is our consensus view that we must have substantial presence in the new facility by December, 2008.

**2. Short range plans for Clay's physical plant and facilities.** Even with the exciting long range plans we believe God has for Clay, the church continues to face severe short-term space constraints. Our proposals for dealing with these are as follows.

**a. Fully tap congregational resources.** We take the church of Acts as our example and urge the church to launch a program encouraging the congregation to make rich and regular use of alternative facilities, like members' homes and the office space that local organizations might make available, to temporarily house church activities. Clay Church's own beginnings are in class room space at the University of Notre Dame. We view homes as an ideal location for most small group activities and many committee and other group meetings. We believe that the use of homes for these purposes should be adopted as a permanent practice because it fosters the community and fellowship that are a key element of God's plan for Clay Church.

- b. **Limit spending on the current structure.** We believe that spending on the current structure should be strictly limited to on-going maintenance and to a small number of crucial building projects. We feel that plans for any major expansion of the current facilities should be abandoned. We recognize that there will be some necessary improvements as we continue the mission during this transition stage and view the Board of Trustees as the appropriate body to determine which of these projects should be pursued.
  - c. **Limit the purchase of interim space.** We believe that in most instances it would be unwise to consider purchasing space to be used on an interim basis. We believe that God's clear plan is for Clay to build a new building on a new parcel of land. However, we also accept the possibility that God may well present the church with special opportunities to do so. We believe that such a purchase will emerge only after much prayer and careful analysis. We therefore strongly urge the church to proceed with great care when considering the purchase for interim space that might become available.
3. **Paid and volunteer staff.** Most of the proposals the Caleb Committee has with regard to staff center on volunteers and are contained in the section on Equipping Ministries. In terms of paid staff, we do believe that each of the strategic pillars will likely require a paid staff member to lead and direct the planning, design, and administration of the ministry's programs and activities. We also believe that paid staff must be increased as the size of the church and the scope of its activities expands. We also strongly urge the church to take significant steps to reduce the strain on the current paid staff. Our current staff do an amazing job – performing at higher levels and accomplishing much more than should reasonably be expected from a staff of this size. We believe that first priority should be given to reducing the work loads of our current staff and to realigning staff roles as appropriate for the strategic focus and strategic pillars.

## APPENDIX I<sup>1</sup>

### Numbers 13

#### *Scouting Out Canaan*

<sup>1</sup>GOD spoke to Moses: <sup>2</sup>"Send men to scout out the country of Canaan that I am giving to the People of Israel. Send one man from each ancestral tribe, each one a tried-and-true leader in the tribe."

<sup>3</sup>So Moses sent them off from the Wilderness of Paran at the command of GOD. All of them were leaders in Israel, one from each tribe. <sup>4</sup>These were their names:

from Reuben: Shammua son of Zaccur

<sup>5</sup>from Simeon: Shaphat son of Hori

<sup>6</sup>from Judah: Caleb son of Jephunneh

<sup>7</sup>from Issachar: Igal son of Joseph

<sup>8</sup>from Ephraim: Hoshea son of Nun

<sup>9</sup>from Benjamin: Palti son of Raphu

<sup>10</sup>from Zebulun: Gaddiel son of Sodi

<sup>11</sup>from Manasseh (a Joseph tribe): Gaddi son of Susi

<sup>12</sup>from Dan: Ammiel son of Gemalli

<sup>13</sup>from Asher: Sethur son of Michael

<sup>14</sup>from Naphtali: Nahbi son of Vophsi

<sup>15</sup>from Gad: Geuel son of Maki

<sup>16</sup>These are the names of the men Moses sent to scout out the land. Moses gave Hoshea (Salvation) son of Nun a new name--Joshua (GOD-Saves).

<sup>17</sup>When Moses sent them off to scout out Canaan, he said, "Go up through the Negev and then into the hill country. <sup>18</sup>Look the land over, see what it is like. Assess the people: Are they strong or weak? Are there few or many? <sup>19</sup>Observe the land: Is it pleasant or harsh? Describe the towns where they live: Are they open camps or fortified with walls? <sup>20</sup>And the soil: Is it fertile or barren? Are there forests? And try to bring back a sample of the produce that grows there--this is the season for the first ripe grapes."

<sup>21</sup>With that they were on their way. They scouted out the land from the Wilderness of Zin as far as Rehob toward Lebo Hamath. <sup>22</sup>Their route went through the Negev Desert to the town of Hebron. Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai, descendants of the giant Anak, lived there. Hebron had been built seven years before Zoan in Egypt. <sup>23</sup>When they arrived at the Eshcol Valley they cut off a branch with a single cluster of grapes--it took two men to carry it--slung on a pole. They also picked some pomegranates and figs. <sup>24</sup>They named

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<sup>1</sup>From The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language, by Eugene H. Peterson, Navpress; (July 2002)

the place Eshcol Valley (Grape-Cluster-Valley) because of the huge cluster of grapes they had cut down there. <sup>25</sup>After forty days of scouting out the land, they returned home.

<sup>26</sup>They presented themselves before Moses and Aaron and the whole congregation of the People of Israel in the Wilderness of Paran at Kadesh. They reported to the whole congregation and showed them the fruit of the land. <sup>27</sup>Then they told the story of their trip:

"We went to the land to which you sent us and, oh! It does flow with milk and honey! Just look at this fruit! <sup>28</sup>The only thing is that the people who live there are fierce, their cities are huge and well fortified. Worse yet, we saw descendants of the giant Anak. <sup>29</sup>Amalekites are spread out in the Negev; Hittites, Jebusites, and Amorites hold the hill country; and the Canaanites are established on the Mediterranean Sea and along the Jordan."

<sup>30</sup>Caleb interrupted, called for silence before Moses and said, "Let's go up and take the land--now. We can do it."

<sup>31</sup>But the others said, "We can't attack those people; they're way stronger than we are."

<sup>32</sup>They spread scary rumors among the People of Israel. They said, "We scouted out the land from one end to the other--it's a land that swallows people whole. Everybody we saw was huge. <sup>33</sup>Why, we even saw the Nephilim giants (the Anak giants come from the Nephilim). Alongside them we felt like grasshoppers. And they looked down on us as if we were grasshoppers."

## **Numbers 14**

<sup>1</sup>The whole community was in an uproar, wailing all night long. <sup>2</sup>All the People of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron. The entire community was in on it: "Why didn't we die in Egypt? Or in this wilderness? <sup>3</sup>Why has GOD brought us to this country to kill us? Our wives and children are about to become plunder. Why don't we just head back to Egypt? And right now!"

<sup>4</sup>Soon they were all saying it to one another: "Let's pick a new leader; let's head back to Egypt."

<sup>5</sup>Moses and Aaron fell on their faces in front of the entire community, gathered in emergency session.

<sup>6</sup>Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, members of the scouting party, ripped their clothes <sup>7</sup>and addressed the assembled People of Israel: "The land we walked through and scouted out is a very good land--very good indeed. <sup>8</sup>If GOD is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land that flows, as they say, with milk and honey. And he'll give it to us. <sup>9</sup>Just don't rebel against GOD! And don't be afraid of those people. Why, we'll have them for lunch! They have no protection and GOD is on our side. Don't be afraid of them!"

<sup>10</sup>But, up in arms now, the entire community was talking of hurling stones at them.

Just then the bright Glory of GOD appeared at the Tent of Meeting. Every Israelite saw it.

<sup>11</sup>GOD said to Moses, "How long will these people treat me like dirt? How long refuse to

trust me? And with all these signs I've done among them! <sup>12</sup>I've had enough--I'm going to hit them with a plague and kill them. But I'll make you into a nation bigger and stronger than they ever were."

<sup>13</sup>But Moses said to GOD, "The Egyptians are going to hear about this! You delivered this people from Egypt with a great show of strength, and now this? <sup>14</sup>The Egyptians will tell everyone. They've already heard that you are GOD, that you are on the side of this people, that you are present among them, that they see you with their own eyes in your Cloud that hovers over them, in the Pillar of Cloud that leads them by day and the Pillar of Fire at night. <sup>15</sup>If you kill this entire people in one stroke, all the nations that have heard what has been going on will say, <sup>16</sup>"Since GOD couldn't get these people into the land which he had promised to give them, he slaughtered them out in the wilderness.'

<sup>17</sup>"Now, please, let the power of the Master expand, enlarge itself greatly, along the lines you have laid out earlier when you said,

<sup>18</sup>GOD, slow to get angry and huge in loyal love,  
forgiving iniquity and rebellion and sin;  
Still, never just whitewashing sin.  
But extending the fallout of parents' sins  
to children into the third,  
even the fourth generation.

<sup>19</sup>"Please forgive the wrongdoing of this people out of the extravagance of your loyal love just as all along, from the time they left Egypt, you have been forgiving this people."

<sup>20</sup>GOD said, "I forgive them, honoring your words. <sup>21</sup>But as I live and as the Glory of GOD fills the whole Earth-- <sup>22</sup>not a single person of those who saw my Glory, saw the miracle signs I did in Egypt and the wilderness, and who have tested me over and over and over again, turning a deaf ear to me-- <sup>23</sup>not one of them will set eyes on the land I so solemnly promised to their ancestors. No one who has treated me with such repeated contempt will see it.

<sup>24</sup>"But my servant Caleb--this is a different story. He has a different spirit; he follows me passionately. I'll bring him into the land that he scouted and his children will inherit it.

<sup>25</sup>"Since the Amalekites and Canaanites are so well established in the valleys, for right now change course and head back into the wilderness following the route to the Red Sea."

<sup>26</sup>GOD spoke to Moses and Aaron: <sup>27</sup>"How long is this going to go on, all this grumbling against me by this evil-infested community? I've had my fill of complaints from these grumbling Israelites. <sup>28</sup>Tell them, As I live--GOD's decree--here's what I'm going to do: <sup>29</sup>Your corpses are going to litter the wilderness--every one of you twenty years and older who was counted in the census, this whole generation of grumblers and grouzers. <sup>30</sup>Not one of you will enter the land and make your home there, the firmly and solemnly promised land, except for Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun.

<sup>31</sup>"Your children, the very ones that you said would be taken for plunder, I'll bring in to enjoy the land you rejected <sup>32</sup>while your corpses will be rotting in the wilderness. <sup>33</sup>These children of yours will live as shepherds in the wilderness for forty years, living with the fallout of your whoring unfaithfulness until the last of your generation lies a corpse in the wilderness. <sup>34</sup>You scouted out the land for forty days; your punishment will be a year for each day, a forty-year sentence to serve for your sins--a long schooling in my displeasure.

<sup>35</sup>"I, GOD, have spoken. I will most certainly carry out these things against this entire evil-infested community which has banded together against me. In this wilderness they will come to their end. There they will die."

<sup>36</sup>So it happened that the men Moses sent to scout out the land returned to circulate false rumors about the land causing the entire community to grumble against Moses--<sup>37</sup>all these men died. Having spread false rumors of the land, they died in a plague, confronted by GOD. <sup>38</sup>Only Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh were left alive of the men who went to scout out the land.

<sup>39</sup>When Moses told all of this to the People of Israel, they mourned long and hard. <sup>40</sup>But early the next morning they started out for the high hill country, saying, "We're here; we're ready--let's go up and attack the land that GOD promised us. We sinned, but now we're ready."

<sup>41</sup>But Moses said, "Why are you crossing GOD's command yet again? This won't work.

<sup>42</sup>Don't attack. GOD isn't with you in this--you'll be beaten badly by your enemies. <sup>43</sup>The Amalekites and Canaanites are ready for you and they'll kill you. Because you have left off obediently following GOD, GOD is not going to be with you in this."

<sup>44</sup>But they went anyway; recklessly and arrogantly they climbed to the high hill country. But the Chest of the Covenant and Moses didn't budge from the camp. <sup>45</sup>The Amalekites and the Canaanites who lived in the hill country came out of the hills and attacked and beat them, a rout all the way down to Hormah.