



June 2007

"... seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper."
Jer. 29:7

If you are not already on our mailing list and would like to receive future bi-monthly letters, please send us an email with "The Bently" in the subject line.

How God has been at work in our lives...

We are unable to fit every detail from the past two months into this short newsletter, but we will do our best. We have experienced many ups and downs, yet through it all have sensed that God's hand and leading is definitely with us. Brian is transitioning out of his staff position at First Wes (last day June 8). We are excited to see where God takes the high school ministry that has meant so much to our lives over the past few years -- to new places and even more fruitfulness -- under the leadership of the new youth pastor, Dan Kilgore.



During this transition, we have seen God's hand move incredibly with the church plant and here are just a few of the highlights:

- Our burden and sense of calling to St. Joseph/Benton Harbor (SJBH) has grown and continues to develop in its intensity, especially in regard to a multi-cultural ministry that exists to overflow the boundaries in the region
- Numerous networking contacts in the SJBH region
- We have received the blessing and support of the West Michigan District of the Wesleyan church and the sanctioning of "Overflow Community Church" to be planted in the SJBH region
- We attended a Church Planting Boot Camp in May that provided great training and planning time for us
- Steve Nelson, a friend and ministry partner, has felt the Lord calling Him to join us and is going to relocate to the St. Joseph area over the summer

The Conception of Overflow Community Church

From Brian

I was telling a friend the other day that not only has church planting been something I have felt God was calling us to since 2003, but I have been slowly studying, preparing, and dreaming about what kind of church I would like to someday plant and be a part of. During this time, I have had the privilege of serving in ministry at First Wesleyan Church in Battle Creek the last few years, experiencing an environment of grace and a mission to reach the “lost and broken” first hand. This, along with many other life lessons and defining moments, has burned within me a deep desire for: community, multi-cultural ministry, racial reconciliation, and reaching others with the good news of Jesus Christ in both word and action. I have also realized that anything we do apart from Christ is void of eternal value (John 15:5) and our life in Christ leads to an overflow of love for both God and others and results in service and mission (2 Corinthians 9:11-13; Romans 5:13). With these thoughts and desires, Cindy and I headed to “Church Planting Boot Camp” at Trinity International University in Chicago May 14-18.

While at Boot Camp, we were challenged to begin articulating our shared vision for Overflow Community Church. The most beneficial aspect of our entire week was developing a shared vision with my wife. As we talked, we began to realize how our vision fit the area and the needs of the SJBH area. As we stated in our first Bentley, this region is a very polarized area economically, racially, and politically. There have been many great efforts to exert change in this region and while some have worked and done well, we have been told that many have failed because it was a very programmatic approach. Our heart and approach to Overflow is to literally journey together with the people of the community in an effort to follow Christ and serve others. We hope to see this new church plant become a movement that overflows beyond church walls into the day-to-day life of those that are a part of Overflow.

Our specific vision and mission are as follows:

Overflow Community Church **A Community for all**

Mantra

“God pours in, we pour out”

Vision

“Overflow is a church community for all people that exists to be a movement that overflows boundaries-- transforming lives in our region and beyond.”

Mission

“Overflow exists to reach the un- and de-churched in our world, journeying together as we learn how to passionately follow Christ and serve others.”

Our next steps:

As of June 9th, our family is going to take a much needed vacation to rest, relax, and recharge for the mission ahead. We would appreciate your prayers during this time and as we return to truly begin the early planning stages of Overflow Community Church.

Upcoming Steps:

- Sell our home and relocate to Benton Harbor (Fairplain township)
- Communication materials development
- Support Raising: prayer, finances, and people
- Spending time getting to know the local community
- Networking with those in and outside the region who share our vision

Prayer Requests:

- The sale of our home in Battle Creek
- Locating the right home in the Fairplain area of Benton Harbor
- That God would continue to develop our vision and mission and help us to translate that into communication materials that will help others understand our heart and mission
- That God will provide us with people that share our burden and vision in the areas of: prayer, financial support, and involvement with Overflow.
- That God will help guide our steps and help us to develop relationships and friendships within the community

Getting Involved:

- Please pray for us & consider joining our “Intercessory Prayer Team”
- Consider hosting an informational dessert time with friends and family
- Join our service projects team that will begin serving the community in practical ways after we relocate
- Check in periodically to our blog: overflowcommunity.blogspot.com
- Prayerfully consider supporting Overflow:
 - Checks payable to: Overflow Community Church
 - Mailing Address:
Overflow Community Church
C/O West Michigan District of the Wesleyan Church
1200 60th St. SE
Kentwood, MI 49508

Thanks for being a part of Overflow Community Church and thank you for your interest in our lives.

Brian, Cindy, Hannah, and Dawson Bennett

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