

Welcome to the 2019 NWMN Conference. Thank you, Dr. Bullock for your kind introduction.

Thank you, Pastor Mike & Roxanne Rima & the Lake City team for hosting us again and doing a great job!

Brenda and I are honored to serve our Network, as we *bring the hope of Jesus to our communities.*

Thank you, Brenda, for traveling with me, and being a constant source of support and encouragement.

Thank you also for your pictures, which chronicle our travels and Jesus' work in our Network.

(S) Pic of motorcycle ride

(S) Pic Don & Brenda praying with Cho

And thank you to the two Associate Network leaders and their wives who serve so faithfully, Dr. Dave and Debbie Cole and Dr.'s Don and Jodi Detrick.

And thank you to our special guests, the NW University Choralons! What a great job you did tonight.

And thank you, every pastor, missionary, evangelist and church leader for moving Jesus' mission forward and bringing the Hope of Jesus to the communities you serve.

Let's Pray.

Throughout the presentation tonight, we will make resources available to you. You can access them all at:

(S) nwministry.com/nc2019

Our focus this year is “NEXT”, the next 100 years, the next 100 leaders, next 100 missionaries, the next 100 churches... the NEXT 100.

(S) Because...The NEXT 100 years matter for eternity.

In keeping with our theme, I was able to talk with the oldest church member in our Network.

She was 6 years old when our Network started and has been a member of only one church, St. John Christian Assembly for 71 years.

I went to see her and asked her to pray for our next 100 years, for our pastors, churches, missionaries and leaders.

She is 106-years-old. Her name is Zola Ross. She is my grandmother.

(V) Show Zola Prayer Video Here

In our Network story, Jesus is the hero. He's challenged us to step up and follow Him over these last 100 years.

We stand on the shoulders of leaders like Frank Gray, J.S. Secrist, Dwight McLoughlin, R.J. Carlson and others.

Rather than a Bible teaching, tonight is a rejoicing of where we've come from, and a look at our future.

It has three parts:

1. The Lord **HAS** Helped Us-

We need to take time to reflect on our history and remember how the God of the Bible has helped us.

2. The Lord **IS** Helping Us-

We need to pause and consider what He is doing currently and recognize the fingerprints of Jesus.

3. The Lord **WILL** Help Us

And we need to consider our future, and dream and allow the Spirit's vision to grow inside us.

(S) Because...The NEXT 100 years matter for eternity.

Knowing that God has helped us and is helping us means He will help us in the future.

(S) Part 1: The Lord Has Helped Us

We were formed as a District in 1919 with the gathering of independent Pentecostal ministers and a few churches.

A partial list of these churches is presented to us in Ward Tannenberg's inspiring book, "Let Light Shine Out".

(S) Picture of "Let Light Shine Out" book

You can download a digital copy at resources or buy a hard copy in the lobby. In 1919, churches from...

(S) Lynden (1906) Ballard (1907), Olympia (1907), Poulsbo (1910), Yelm (1912), Lewiston (1915), Bremerton (1915),

(S) Anacortes (1918) Tacoma (1918) Spokane (1918), Puyallup (1919), Sunnyside (1919) and Walla Walla (1919) gathered.

...Montana had one Pentecostal church flourishing in Kalispell that year.

And in Oregon, Pentecostal churches were being launched. Alaska had one work in Juneau started in 1917.

These churches came together in 1919 to form the Northwest District Council with 14 ordained ministers.

These bold pioneers developed the following mission statement on July 3, 1919 for this courageous endeavor:

(S) “promote the evangelization of the Northwest District, our country, and the world by all scriptural means; set forth a basis of Christian fellowship and provide counsel and cooperation among those of like precious faith; establish and develop assemblies in the fellowship in accordance with New testament standards and principles.”

Our District was at one time, made up of churches from Washington, Oregon, Alaska, Idaho and Montana.

In these early days of Pentecost, these pioneers paid a dear price to pave the way for us to be here today.

Many of you in this room lead churches started by these brave men and women of faith.

They were ridiculed and slandered, and Pentecost was considered cultic by other Christian groups.

Misunderstandings and lies were often spread and many leaders were publicly slandered.

Pentecostals were “perfumed”, as they called it, with rotten eggs and tomatoes as they exited worship.

In 1918, Frank Gray, the first Supt., was tarred and feathered by an angry mob in Spokane.

One Pentecostal pastor in Idaho was beaten so badly he died a few days later.

By 1923 there were 44 ordained and 6 licensed ministers.

World Missions was at the heart of this new Pentecostal movement, even before it was formally founded.

In 1907 the first Northwest missionaries were sent out.

(S) Picture of First NW Missionaries

We began to expand, and church planting was built into our DNA as a District from the very beginning.

Around 1920, in a basement near Hunt's Point, Bellevue, and later in a rented building, a church was established.

Levi Larson, R.J. Carlson and Charles Butterfield served this church, and in 1938, Neighborhood Church moved into permanent facilities.

In 1921, C.C. Douglas formed a group to establish the first Pentecostal church in Yakima.

They started in what was affectionately called, "The Little Brown Church".

(S) Picture of Little Brown Church

They later moved into the Summit View building and in 1928 the "Stone Church" building was purchased.

(S) Picture of 1928 Stone Church

In Bellingham, Robert Gillespie started a church in 1922 and in Ballard in 1925 a church was started. Churches also started in:

(S) Auburn in 1923, Kelso in 1923, Ellensburg in 1923, Hoquiam in 1924, Sedro-Woolley in 1924 and Toppenish in 1925.

These churches were started with leaders of vision.

Both men and women leaders shared the message of salvation and the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

In many cases, churches were planted and led by women.

New Life, Renton, was planted by three women, the Brant sisters and Grandma Finch, and they led for 12 years.

It's clear God will not leave 50% of His work force out.

Were it not for brave women of faith, our Network might not exist, and women must continue to take a larger role.

From the early days of our District, women were featured prominently in leadership.

It is not enough for our fellowship to simply be open to women in leadership.

(S) We must recognize, in many places, we are constitutionally and organizationally open, but personally and culturally resistant to women pastors.

Men, we must embrace this idea and open the door and help women move forward in their calling.

Women must also walk out their calling in obedience to lead churches and not give in to fear.

I'm proud of Pastor Anh Johnson, planting a church in Lynden, the first city to receive the Pentecostal message in 1905.

I appreciate Pastor Tom Duchemin and Gateway Community Church serving as the parenting church.

One of the most significant milestones in our Network's history is the development of Bible Schools.

The need was critical. We had no Bible school for training pastors, closer than Minneapolis or San Francisco.

Bible Schools were started first in Centralia and Toledo in 1932, but neither lasted more than two years.

Then, in 1934, at our 16th District Council, the issue of a Bible School surfaced again.

It was decided that a Bible School should be established under the covering of the NW District.

Henry Ness had come to Hollywood Temple, now Calvary Christian Assembly, and served as the first “Principal”.

The Northwest District loaned \$500 to Northwest Bible Institute to get started in 1934.

Supplies and 50 chairs were purchased, and pastors were professors to 18 students that first day, Oct. 1, 1934.

By 1935, there were 49 students, leaving just one open chair and by 1937, there were 250 students.

Women students consistently outnumbered men, and enrollment peaked under Ness at 376 students in 1948.

Following the war years, Ness was appointed to a State office, so Charles Butterfield temporarily took over.

In 1949, the Bible school was at risk, as there was no permanent leader, so a presbytery session was called.

Butterfield did not want to assume the presidency, as he had no theological training.

But he was clearly the needed leader, and he agreed in February, 1950 to be President.

Through tremendous hardship the school persevered and in 1958, Butterfield received a letter from the Government.

He had boldly stepped out in faith and asked for surplus government land to be given to this Bible school.

The government said, they would gift the school 23 acres in Kirkland and sell another 12 acres for \$30,000.

The government demanded, that \$100,000 be in the school's bank, so construction would begin immediately.

Supt. R.J. Carlson, according to son Rollin, then a freshman at the UW, watched his father travel for a week.

After receiving gifts of \$1-10,000 the total was collected in the next seven days.

That's equal to collecting \$887,447 in a week. Amazing!

The bank then verified that Northwest had the money and the land grant was approved.

Northwest is still training ministry students today, although the challenges of finances remains.

I'm happy to announce, with Pres. Castleberry, Dr. Josh Ziefle, Dr. Troy Jones, and other leading pastors...

That we are formulating a new approach to training future AG pastors at Northwest University.

It's called "For Pastors by Pastors" where pastors will be partnering with Northwest in training ministry students.

Tonight, I'm excited to tell you about the school's commitment to make ministry training more affordable.

Even now, 25% of ministry students graduate with no student debt. Did you know that?

For those College of Ministry students who borrow, the average debt is \$33,000 total.

So here is the promise: We're finalizing a plan to ensure that EVERY ministry student can complete a degree owing less than \$35,000.

No student should have a debt they can't pay.

I am happy to announce, in partnership with Northwest University, beginning this Fall...

All **AG ministry** students will receive a 50% tuition scholarship, with the potential for even more.

And in 2020, Northwest is rolling out an additional \$10,000 scholarship for high-caliber students....

... that will provide an additional blessing for the next generation of pastors, missionaries and church planters.

We'll be sharing more soon and I am happy to serve on this task force for the College of Ministry.

I'm also reminded of our recent past, just 25 years ago this week, when we gathered in Everett.

Then District Supt., Dr. Frank Cole reminded us that God will help us, as He has in the past.

In 1994, we faced dire circumstances. We had massive debt due to accounting error procedures.

Dr. Cole reminded us God would help us, and presented this rock, as an "Ebenezer Stone" and read the scripture.

(S) Picture of the Rock with scripture

(S) Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, saying, "Thus far the Lord has helped us." I Samuel 7:12

Samuel made this statement during a time when Israel's very existence was threatened by the enemy.

God preserved them in such a powerful way, it had to be remembered. That is why Samuel set up this stone.

In 1994, we faced a grim situation. I reached out to Dr. Bullock for further explanation of the crisis we faced.

He said, "The cause of the crisis was a \$28 million church loan fund, supported by investors, but the accounting of which was determined to be faulty.

So, the Network had to offer all investors two options:

1) give their money back, or 2) give them the opportunity to reinvest based on corrected accounting.

After each investor made their decision, the District ended up with about \$10 million left in the loan fund.

This meant we were now 18 million dollars in debt.

To come up with the \$18 million, one of the things we did was to separate the loan fund from the Network finances.

We gave the fund as much of the Network's assets as possible.

Then, to make up the difference, we borrowed, which brought about a \$7.2 million debt for the Network.

It was a complicated crisis and was quite a pressure-packed time.”

Our crisis 25 years ago nearly destroyed us, but it set the stage for a critical shift in our District culture.

(S) God often uses crisis to realign our priorities.

Our financial crisis was a warning to other Districts across the nation who realigned their accounting practices.

The following year, many will remember when Supt.

Warren Bullock, led us during the communion service.

He stated God had been convicting him about the actions of the District leadership regarding this massive debt.

He had shared with the Presbytery, and they too, believed that God was asking them to confess and repent.

Warren then called all the Presbyters to stand with him on the platform, and these are excerpts of what he read.

“We have long since confessed our sin to God, and He has forgiven us, but it is imperative that we also confess to you, against whom we have sinned.

As your elected leaders, we have not served as responsible watchmen. We have failed and brought reproach to our God and you. We are responsible.

We ask you to forgive us and to pray for us. And now, if you are willing from your heart to forgive us, will you stand and pray for the healing of our District.”

We all stood in that somber moment, asking God to help us. We were desperate. We didn't know our future.

All disposable assets were then liquidated and for 10 years the District office rented space.

I want to honor every leader in our Network who took responsibility to lead us through those difficult times.

Thank you for modeling how to deal with crisis for every young leader in our Network.

(S) Pain opens our heart to change

Pain opens our hearts to change, and I'm grateful to our leaders, who served as cultural architects in those years.

We are indebted to them because of their sacrifice and the decisions they made to ensure a more hopeful future.

God used crisis.... and leaders like Warren Bullock, Mark Pearson, Mel Ming, Les Welk and others to lead us from a religious bureaucracy into a relational Network.

There was a shift from church's existing for the sake of the district, to a relational network existing for churches.

(V) Troy Jones Video Here

In 2003 we retired the 7.2 million-dollar debt to AG Financial services and burned the loan documents.

In 2004 we bought the Trailside building for \$6.5 million.

We will burn the mortgage on that building tomorrow night.

God helped us pay off pay off nearly 14 million dollars in debt in the last 25 years, while continuing to grow.

Tomorrow's mortgage burning is 25 years to the week that we faced a financial crisis that nearly bankrupt us.

God has helped us in the past 100 years, and He will help us in the future...

(S) Because...The NEXT 100 years matter for eternity.

Maybe you are facing a crisis, either personally or as a church. God is your help too. He is still Jehovah Jireh.

God won't do it without you, and you can't do it without Him, that's why scripture says, "***the Lord has helped us.***"

The Lord has helped us, and...

(S) Part 2: The Lord Is Helping Us

Through the power of His Spirit we've seen amazing things happen in the last few years.

We just concluded our fifth Prayer Summit last month.

In 2015, we made the decision to give our first day of presbytery business each year, to the Lord in Prayer.

That same year we also launched a Network-wide Prayer Initiative to cover every pastor and missionary in a year.

Network Presbyters were called upon to pray daily for those leaders in their areas and region.

We believe that...

(S) Prayer is the life blood of our Network.

When we pray, the right things are kept down, and the right things are lifted up.

When we pray, creativity is released and new opportunities surface, as we're led by the Spirit.

We are told by Jesus to always pray.

(S) Then Jesus told his disciples ... they should always pray and not give up. Luke 18:1

Prayer is designed by God to create a dependency on Him and prevent self-sufficiency in us.

We have resources for a prayer initiative in your church, and for each pastor to develop a personal prayer team.

(S) nwministry.com/nc2019

We pray now, because...

(S) Because...The NEXT 100 years matter for eternity.

God has helped us in missions' support in our Network.

Six years ago, Dave Cole started mission's paradigm trips in our Network.

We have seen our missions giving increase by over $\frac{3}{4}$ of a million dollars since these trips began, as pastors see first-hand what our AGWM missionaries are doing.

If you're a lead pastor and haven't been on a Paradigm trip, we invite you to reach out for more information.

I want to say thank you for your giving to world missions.

As a result of missions, nearly one person out of 100 on the planet (70 Million) are part of our AG fellowship.

(S) NWMN Missionaries Sent and Supported

We support 87 missionaries, MAPS workers Teen Challenge and nearly 50 Chi Alpha missionaries.

By the way, check out the Chi Alpha family tree in the exhibits, and see 16 unbroken generations of discipleship.

In 1972, a small group of college students, trained by Brady Bobbink, became campus missionaries.

After 45 years of continuous service, Brady Bobbink is handing off the reigns of leadership to serve as a mentor to Chi Alpha missionaries, regionally and nationally.

God has trusted us to be disproportionately responsible in our Network for missions, and here's why.

(S) 2018 Church to Missionary Ratio

As you can see, most Networks in our fellowship have a 13:1 ratio. It takes 13 churches to support one missionary.

But because of your generosity, we support one missionary for every six churches.

God's faithfulness to you, and your obedience in giving is nothing less than amazing. God is helping us now.

(S) Picture of Continental Theological Seminary

Your generosity was demonstrated last year in giving the largest missions offering ever at a Network Conference.

Nearly \$130,000 was given to Continental Theological Seminary to train students to reach out to the 39 nations in Europe with the gospel. Thank you for giving!

Every 41 seconds, 1 new believer is added to the church and every two hours, a new church is planted in the world.

We have another 360,000 churches worldwide, that's 10 times more churches than McDonalds restaurants.

And recruits for AGWM career missionaries has increased for three consecutive years. God is helping us now.

Who will the NEXT 100 missionaries be that we send?

We have always been a sending organization.

Jesus knows much better than you what will bring fulfilment into your life and move His mission forward.

Is God talking to you about stepping into missions? If so, say yes! In 100 years, you'll be glad you did.

Meanwhile, in our Network, 70% of our churches are declining or plateaued.

We launched Revite2020, to assess, encourage and support pastors in plateaued or declining churches.

(S) Revite2020 logo

This is difficult kingdom work, and I appreciate Pastor Bill Best helping facilitate this work in our Network.

We also co-launched with Northwest University a Master's in Church Revitalization with a significant scholarship.

Leading a turnaround church is a long, hard journey, and I applaud every pastor who accepts the challenge.

We are beginning to see traction, as trust is building and courageous decisions are being made.

I so appreciate each of our Executive Presbyters, serving as trained consultants working with our pastors.

If you're interested in more information about Revite2020, or the Master's in Church Revitalization, reach out to us.

God is helping us see churches gain health and strength and move into a new day as we prepare for our future.

(S) Because...The NEXT 100 years matter for eternity.

Three years ago, we launched the most aggressive church planting vision in our Network to date.

I am grateful to all the past efforts to plant new churches in our Network, which paved the way for this initiative.

In 2015, with the support of our Presbytery, I asked you, to accept the challenge of planting 100 churches in 3 years.

(S) Church Planting is the basic building block of the kingdom.

When a new church is launched, between 60-80% of those attending a new church are unchurched.

New churches grow three times faster than churches 15 years old or older.

We've seen seasons of extensive church planting.

David Olson, from the American Church.org, shows church planting in our nation from the Revolutionary War.

It is based on the ratio of one church per million people.

(S) Church Planting Graph from 1800 to 2000

You will notice that there are three significant drops in church planting in our nation's history.

The first is during the Civil War, not many new churches.

The second circle is the Great Depression and both World Wars, but notice growth in church planting after both Wars, and especially WWII.

The third circle shows a drop most significant for us.

This is the church growth movement where we focused on growing larger churches, not planting more churches.

Let me be quick to say, the church growth movement did help churches grow, and that is not a bad thing.

And those who know me, know I've studied church growth. But the question remains, did we gain kingdom ground?

(S) Did we gain kingdom ground?

That is why I believe the Holy Spirit is challenging us as an AG fellowship in our nation with church planting now.

Our Network Centennial serves as a way for us to both review our past and look forward.

We must honor the past, but also look to the future.

(S) Because...The NEXT 100 years matter for eternity.

We planted churches in the fifties and sixties. My Father and grandfather planted churches, calling it “pioneering”.

When a student graduated from Northwest Bible Institute, the question was, “Where are you starting a new church?”

It was just expected. And church strategies then were significantly different.

I remember a few years ago when I took my father on a trip to visit the churches he had planted and pastored.

He planted a church in the Spokane Valley, then moved to Garden Springs, near the Spokane airport.

While there, as a young leader in his late 20’s he experienced tremendous growth and the church grew from 50 to 140 in a building that seated 80 people.

After repeated attempts to get the board to step out in faith and build, he left the church in frustration.

I asked him, why didn't you just start another service so you could keep growing?

He said, "Don't this was in the early 1960's and no one had ever heard of such a thing as multiple services."

The strategy was one pastor for one church, one morning worship service each Sunday and one church per town.

Eventually we began to see multiple churches per city, especially in Seattle and Spokane.

Then we began to see multiple pastors in churches in the 1970's and then multiple services.

Now it is a common thing to have multiple pastors, multiple services and multiple campuses.

In fact, we encourage this leadership strategy.

God loves lost people and the Church of Jesus Christ is His plan to reach these lost people.

Three years ago, this Network stepped up to lead and plant churches, and I couldn't be more proud of you.

Your sacrifice and courageous obedience has brought glory to Jesus and excitement to your churches.

Churches that had never considered planting a new church, stepped out in faith and watched God work.

It has always amazed me when I hear of leaders who don't think their church is ready to plant a new church.

They say, "Our church is just not strong enough to plant. We need to grow to 200, or 400 to plant."

But the call is here, and the need is now. When Jesus taps us for action, he's calling us to step up.

A story like this took place in Marysville, with Pastor Nik Baumgart. I share these stories with permission.

The Coles attend church there and Dave Cole had a conversation with Nik, asking him about church planting.

Nik replied, "The Grove Church really isn't in a place to plant yet. We need to finish our campus expansion first".

Dave replied, "I see that, but can I push back a little?"

Nik, we've been attending the Grove for a while, and we're running 1,100 people.

You've got nearly a half dozen young leaders ready to lead and just after Easter we baptized 63 people.

I think we're strong enough as a church to plant now."

Nik accepted Dave's challenge and within two months launched a new work lead by Andrew Munoz (MOON-YOS).

Now the Grove Church, is running nearly 1,350 and has a third church campus in consideration.

Scott Cooper, Pastor of Reclamation Church, also in Marysville, is another example.

With an average attendance of about 100, they stepped out to launch a church with Pastor Enos (E-nus) Marshall.

Their new campus now has added nearly a 50% increase in the last two years to the churches total attendance.

Here's what I know about church planting, when you send out people to plant a new church, you will also welcome new people to replace those sent out.

It is a spiritual principle that we reap what we sow, and when you sow people, you also reap people.

If Jesus thinks your church is healthy enough to plant a new church, then you can do this.

(S) Jesus is looking for our obedience more than our resources.

Church planting in the NWMN is not a splash, it is a wave.

And by God's grace we will plant more new churches.

On the screen, here is a list of those churches that have been planted in the last three years.

(S) Multiple Slides of planted churches w/city

You've planted a new church almost every 250 hours for the last three years!

That's over 12% growth. Amazing and well done NWMN! Here is a picture of our last 50 years as a Network.

(S) 50 Year Graph 1965-2018

We actually grew the most under the leadership of Frank Cole, 1980-1994, who also focused on church planting.

And here is a snapshot of our last 15 years.

(S) 15 NWMN Growth Graph

I want to take a moment and express appreciation to every church planter and every parenting church pastor.

If you were part of a church plant in the last three years, as a planter, parenting pastor or team member, please stand.

Note: Applaud and wait

Now, full disclosure... not every church we've planted survived, in fact 10% of them didn't, but 90% did!

And I want to honor, not only those church planters and parenting pastors who were successful...

But I want to say thank you to the 10% who planted churches that didn't survive.

You showed the same courage and dedication, and I encourage to step out again in the future.

Even though this is a wonderful success, and I am very proud of this Network, the job far from done.

In our network, which runs from the Pacific Ocean to the Montana border and from the Oregon border to the Canadian border, we have 7.5 million people.

86% of them are unchurched, de-churched or have no clear understanding of the gospel. Our work is not done.

Who will plant the next 100 churches?

(S) Because... The NEXT 100 years matter FOREVER.

What will the future look like for us?

(S) Part 3: The Lord Will Help Us

Jesus, spoke to us about the future just before He left this earth, and we are familiar with His words.

***(S) Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”
Matthew 28:20***

Jesus promised to walk with us to the very end of the age, so nothing about the future should scare us.

We should, look forward to the future with great faith.

The late Anglican Bishop, Mark Dyer said about every 500 years the church has a huge rummage sale, and everything changes.

He further suggests we're living in one of those times now.

When the church goes through this season, the faith increases and new areas are reached, both geographically and demographically.

During the time of the first “ecclesiastical rummage sale” the church came out from hiding and spread further.

In 451 the Council of Chalcedon (Cal-seed-on) affirmed the dual nature of Christ, in 480 the Roman Senate met for the last time and the church expanded.

Then about 500 years later there was another major shift.

The “Schism of 1054” was the 2nd sale. It was the break of the Catholic Church and Eastern Orthodox churches.

This was about how the Holy Spirit was given, how communion is received and if one language is holier than all the others.

They concluded Latin was the Holiest language, so it was used in worship and writing, but the church expanded.

Then in 1517, the Reformation took place with Martin Luther, and the church expanded again.

Most churches in America are now variations of that change 500 years ago, that we call the attractional church.

And I believe we are now in the midst of another shift.

But I’m optimistic. I believe we’ll see increased expansion in the church as a result of what his happening.

Most churches in America still fall in the category of the “attractional church” but there are other emerging forms.

We’ve seen the development of missional communities.

There are house churches, dinner churches and even our first social media church in our Network.

When viewed through the lenses of the attractional church model, house churches look like small groups.

And dinner churches look like feeding programs, and a social media church looks like Facebook fun.

But in fact, each of these are a living expression of Christ's church and lives are being changed.

Pastor Angela Craig, who planted the first social media church in our AG fellowship said...

"I spend 80% of my time loving & leading people online. In our Facebook groups we are seeing lives changed as people follow Jesus."

These new, organic models may actually be closer to the first century church than what we are worshiping in today.

Twenty years ago, no one saw this coming.

After all, where is the youth group in this church, or the women's ministry and large Sunday worship gathering?

And how would you ever fill out your ACMR?

But God is using these new efforts to reach new people in new places, both geographically and demographically.

Catholics must have thought that Luther was crazy too.

They would ask, “Where is our confessional?”

So now, anyone can serve communion? Anyone can baptize? We can read the scriptures for ourselves?

The major changes that took place centuries ago, we now take for granted. And as a result the gospel spread rapidly.

But in many cases, we have stopped reaching our world with the same effectiveness, so God is shaking things up.

And we get to be part of it! As a part of my research I discovered an interesting fact.

In the 1970’s, then General Supt., Thomas Zimmerman recalled that when our fellowship was founded in 1914 they had the following focus...

(S) “...we commit ourselves and the movement to Him for the greatest evangelism that the world has ever seen.” (this quote is below the picture of 1914 minutes)

There was also the publicly stated goal of having one church for every 25,000 people in America.

The reason for the church ratio goal was missions support.

We cannot increase our missions worldwide without also increasing local church support. This was radical vision.

At that time in 1914, the U.S. population was 100,000,000.

This year, 2019, the U.S. population has reached 325,000,000.

(S) 325,000,000 divided by 13,000 churches = 1:25,000

We have reached the 1:25,000 church ratio. What our founding fathers saw, 100 years ago has come to pass.

In our own Network, we have now reached a milestone as well, and I have discovered our own church ratio.

(S) 7,500,000 divided by 350 churches = 1:21,428

While this is wonderful to consider, the work is not done. I began to pray, dream and ask Jesus for direction.

What if we asked Jesus for a double portion? What if we asked Jesus for a church ratio in our Network of 1:10,000?

That thought entered my mind two years ago, but I did not have faith to embrace the challenge.

Then, last winter I went out to lunch with Charlie Salmon, as we regularly do. Charlie is literally building a great church on the ridge.

(S) Picture of Worksite

(S) Picture of Charlie Salmon

Charlie asked about this year's theme. I said it was NEXT. The Next 100 missionaries, pastors and 100 churches.

Charlie exclaimed, "100 churches? We need 300 more churches."

300 churches would give us close to this ratio. My heart was stirred, but I didn't tell him what I was thinking.

Then in January, David Brakke lead our Presbytery devotions and taught on the parable of the talents.

It is a parable I have held close the last four years.

(S) "Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.'

(S) "His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. Matthew 25:24-26

David said this servant buried his resources out of fear.

And he was afraid was because he treated the gold like it was his own property.

He was under orders to invest it, to risk it, to step out and use it, but instead fear dominated him and he buried it.

I was reminded of a statement by Andy Stanley...

(S) “We’re ready to risk everything if we feel like we have nothing, but it’s hard to risk anything, if we feel like we have everything.”

What is it about success that causes us to pull back, get cautious, refuse to risk and not step out in faith?

The more David talked, the more my stomach churned. I knew it was time to step out and speak out.

It was time to cast vision, but I also knew that would create tension. Vision always creates tension.

(S) “Vision casting, by its very nature, first creates tension, then creates capacity for creativity and finally an opportunity to lead forward.”

But nothing ever happens without tension, and when leaders steer clear of creative tension... nothing happens.

At that time in our meeting, we looked at the list of newly planted churches, and we all rejoiced at fulfilled vision.

Andy Rosas said, “This is amazing. To launch an initiative like this and see it come to pass. We need to rejoice!”

Don Detrick spoke up, “We need to stop and thank God for this wonderful success. You know, Sarah is the only person who lied to God and got away with it.

God said you will have a child, and Sarah laughed, and God called her out. Then she lied and said, “I didn’t laugh.”

But God said, “You did laugh, and in a year, I’ll be back, and you’ll have a child and she did, and named him Isaac, meaning laughter.”

Saying, “everyone who hears of this will laugh with me.”

Don went on to say, “There were those who laughed at the idea of planting 100 churches in three years, but now they will laugh and rejoice, as we are.”

It was a Holy moment in that EP meeting. I knew it was time to speak up.

I said, “I have been sensing for some time like our church planting focus was a wave and not a splash.

I believe God has even bigger things for us in the future.

What if we asked for a double portion? What if we asked for one church for every 10,000 people in our Network?

What if we asked God to help us plant 300 more churches in the next ten years? Would you support such a vision?

It was very quiet in that room. No one said anything and I wondered if anyone would say anything.

Kent Mankins spoke first. He said, "I'm in. Valley is all in.

I was one who laughed when I heard the vision of 100 churches in three years, but now I'm rejoicing with you.

I come to these presbytery meetings each month and I hear all of you talk about your new church plants.

I hear about the new dinner churches and changed lives and how excited you are, and we want to be part of this.

I'm all in and Valley is all in. We will fully support this."

Then David Brakke said, "We're in too. Our church plant in Monroe prison is growing and we're getting ready to send my son out to plant a new church. We're in too."

Then Kyle Rasmussen said, "We're in too. We're ready to launch our fourth dinner church.

In fact, 1/3 of Bethel church attendance is in dinner churches now and it's changing us as a church.

People who have never stepped up to serve and reach out are now engaging.

We've got paperwork ready to send in now. We're all in."

It was a Holy moment. Jesus was in that board room. Faith was alive and the Spirit was speaking.

So tonight, I'm asking you the same question. What if we focused on this one goal for the next decade?

It is clear we need this. Look at the overview of our five largest cities in our Network.

(S) Seattle-725,000 with 15 churches.... need 57 more

Spokane/Valley-300,000 with 10 churches... need 20 more

Tacoma-210,000 with 13 churches... need 8 more

(S) Vancouver 173,000 with 10 churches... need 7 more

Bellevue 141,000 with 2 churches... need 12 more

Church planting is in our DNA since the beginning. What if we asked God for a double portion in the next ten years?

If we're to reach our region, then we must turn the eyes of the church we lead towards the harvest.

It is not enough to just take care of the folks who come, we must look towards the communities we serve.

If we're only concerned about our church, then we've forgotten Jesus loves the world, died for the world and has called us to reach the world.

We are responsible for our words and actions during the time God gives us.

That's why each of you was given a response card.

Tonight we are receiving a cashless offering, but it still involves your commitment.

(S) Picture of Response Card

Please take out the card that was handed to you as you came into the room tonight.

I want to walk through this card, and ask you to mark all the areas that apply for you.

In just a few minutes, we'll be receiving your commitment cards. I'd like the ushers to prepare to receive them now.

The choices you are making now will impact eternity.

Vision alone will not change things. We must also make obedient decisions, in the face of risk.

Fear is what holds us hostage, faith sets us free.

Who will the NEXT 100 leaders be? Who will the NEXT 100 missionaries be?

Who will the NEXT 100 pastors be? Where will the NEXT 100 churches be planted?

What will God do in these next 100 years? Next 10 years? Next one year? Next week? Next 10 minutes?

We don't know, but we do know it starts with us NOW.

(S) “There are three parts to a job God has called us to do. First it is impossible, then it is difficult, then it is finished.” Hudson Taylor

We are part of the greatest rescue mission the world has ever seen, and we're called by God to act.

All three servants in the parable of the talents experienced the next 100.

For those two servants who invested well, their next 100 was a 100% increase.

For the servant who buried his opportunity out of fear, his next 100 was a 100% loss because of that fear.

I don't want us to bury our talents. I don't want us to be held hostage by fear.

I want us be part of what God is doing in our region and cooperate fully with Him.

In a moment, we're going to close in prayer, and offer our commitments to Jesus.

(S) "If you think this is about church planting, as important as that is, you're wrong! If you think this is about evangelism, as important as that is, you're wrong! It's about REVOLUTION... World Revolution, and nothing short of that! The Kingdom of God is coming, and every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is LORD to the glory of the Father!" *Dallas Willard*

I'm going to ask Dr. Troy Jones to come to the stage and pray over this offering of commitment, as we enter into a new century together.

The NEXT 100 Years Matter for Eternity.

Now, we are the ones, asking God to make US the greatest evangelistic movement, the greatest church planting wave, that THIS REGION has ever seen.

Let's stand together as Troy prays a blessing over this offering.