

DANIEL A. OVALLE

2010



- ❖ MINISTRY PORTFOLIO
- ❖ ORDINATION EXAMINATION
- ❖ PASTORAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Ministry Portfolio



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January 13, 2008

Dear Mr. Ericsson:

By way of introduction, I humbly submit my [Ministry Portfolio](#)* for your consideration regarding the opening for Senior Pastor at *Haverhill Community Church*. To this end, I have crafted a variety of short essays on the topics of my vision, statement of faith, philosophy of ministry and more. You will also find a links to my other web pages, [Project 66 \[genesis – revelation\]](#), a compilation of various articles and resources and a collage of video clips on [A Crumb From The Master's Table](#)..

The highlights of my Pastoral calling include:

- (1) 20+ years diverse cross-denominational association
- (2) 12+ years experience with 4 church plants in MA and CA
- (3) M. Div. theological education equivalent
- (4) Church Planting, pastoral and lay ministry experience
- (5) Knowledge and familiarity with the New England culture and context.

As a Christian of 25 years and a 1988 graduate of Calvary Chapel Bible College in Southern California, I have had the privilege of planting and being co-pastor of Coram Deo Reformed Congregational Church in Dana Point, CA and Interim Minister at Andover Baptist Church in Andover, MA. Over the past several years I have had the honor of Sunday morning guest pulpit ministry at First Congregational Church – Bradford, King of Grace Church - Methuen, Edgeworth Community Church - Malden, True Life Christian Fellowship - Lynnfield and New England Bible Church – Andover, all in MA.

As I seek to fully engage in the Christian community, the culture in which we live and the calling of God on my life - my greatest desire is to communicate the wonders of Jesus Christ. It is my vision to “proclaim Him” – by word and action - with clarity, conviction and compassion!

My prayer is for future fellowship in these matters...

With Sincerity,

Daniel A. Ovalle

*The entire 11 page Ministry Portfolio in MS Word format is included below.

Ministry Portfolio



...To see, savor and show forth Christ...

“I will make with them an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from doing good to them. And I will put the fear of me in their hearts, that they may not turn from me. I will rejoice in doing them good, and I will plant them in this land in faithfulness, with all my heart and all my soul.”

Jeremiah 32.40,41

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vista:::

“a vibrant, holistic, biblical 21st century church”

...to know God (Father, Son & Holy Spirit) better than we know anything
AND to enjoy God more than we enjoy anything!+

to see...This is *faith* in Jesus Christ
to behold The Lord and Savior of the world – who He is, why He came and how
He impacts every aspect of life!

to savor...This is *worship* of God
to contemplate the glorious splendor of His majesty - to exult in and enjoy the
profound wonders of His eternal glory!

to show forth...This is *love* for man
to creatively demonstrate to others the manifold ways that God has expressed
His goodness, mercy and grace toward mankind!

This community of Christians will hold the Bible in high regard as the spiritual foundation to all we believe and do. In particular, we will focus upon the doctrines of grace*, in which Jesus Christ is *always* and *in all ways* both central and supreme - that is, eternally matchless! Therefore, since He is the greatest reality in the universe, He is worthy of our deepest passion to enjoy, worship and serve to the utmost!

We will approach our cultural context with godly sensitivity, creativity and uncompromising convictions, by both living out and proclaiming the timeless message of a *real* God who has provided a *real* Savior for *real* sinners, lest one face *real* judgment. Our contextual approach will, under God, be free from self-righteous judgmentalism and free from pretense of all sorts, accepting people from all walks of life - *just as they are* - and introducing them to a God who cares enough not to leave them there!

Therefore, by cultivating theological precision (*orthodoxy*) that produces heartfelt worship (*orthopraxy*), the pulse of this community will be founded upon a vibrant, comprehensive, Biblical discovery of...

“Jesus Christ, who loved me and gave Himself for me”

+A MUST SEE VIDEO: [“The Supremacy of Jesus: 10 Minutes of Feasting”](#)

*doctrines of grace:

God -a high view of the sovereignty, holiness and glory of God,

Guilt -a truthful view of man’s state before his Maker,

Grace -a clear view of the “unmerited” nature of Christ’s love

Gratitude -a comprehensive view of true good works!

truth:::

The scriptures ~ I believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the verbally inspired word of God, the final authority for faith and life, inerrant in the original writings, infallible and God-breathed (II Tim 3:16, 17; II Peter 1:20,21; Matt 5:18; John 16:12,13).

The Godhead ~ I believe in one Triune God, eternally existing in three persons--Father, Son, and Holy Spirit-co-eternal in being, co-eternal in nature, co-equal in power and glory, having the same attributes and perfections (Deut 6:4; II Cor 13:14).

The Person and work of Christ ~ I believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God became man without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful man (John 1:1,2,14; Luke 1:35). I believe that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His obedient life and passive death on the cross as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice; and that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead (Rom 3:24; I Peter 2:24; Eph 1:7; I Peter 1:3-5). He fulfills the ministry of Representative, Intercessor, and Advocate (Acts 1:9, 10; Heb 7:25, Heb 9:24; Rom 8:34; I John 2:1-2).

The Person and work of the Holy Spirit ~ I believe that the Holy Spirit is a person who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; and that He is the Supernatural agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ, indwelling and sealing them unto the day of redemption (John 16:8-11; II Cor 3:6; I Cor 12:12-14; Rom 8:9; Eph5:18).

The total depravity of man ~ I believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God, but that through Adam's sin the race fell, inherited a sinful nature, and became alienated from God; and that man is totally depraved, and of himself utterly unable to remedy his lost condition (Gen 1:26,27 Rom 3:22, 23, 5:12; Eph 2:1-3, 12).

Salvation ~ I believe that salvation is the gift of God brought to man by grace and received by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, whose precious blood was shed on Calvary for the forgiveness of our sins. God thus places all our sin on Christ and credits to us all of Christ's' righteousness (Rom 4; Eph 2:8-10; John 1:12; Eph 1:7; I Peter 1:18-19).

The Church ~ I believe that the church, which is the body and espoused bride of Christ, is a spiritual organism made up of all born-again persons(Eph 1:22,23; 5:25-27; I Cor 12:12-14; II Cor 11:2). I believe that the establishment and continuance of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament scriptures (Acts 14:27, 18:22, 20:17, I Tim 3:1-3 & Titus 1:5-11). I believe in the autonomy of the local churches, free of any external authority and control (Acts 13:1-4, 15:19-31, 20:28; Rom 16:1,4; I Cor 3:9, 16, I Cor5: 4-7, 13; I Peter 5:1-4). I recognize believer's baptism and the Lord's Supper as scriptural means of testimony for the church. (Matt 28:19,20; Acts 2:41,42; Acts 18:8; I Cor 11:23-26).

Creeds/Confessions ~ Apostles Creed, Nicene Creed, Augsburg Confession, Belgic Confession, Canons of Dort, Heidelberg Catechism, Westminster Confession of Faith, London Baptist Confession 1689, Cambridge Declaration.

preaching distinctives:::

Within the essentials of Christian doctrine there are the following theological categories, which are critically important and must be understood in our day! They contain truth that *profoundly* affects God's relationship with us, our relationships with each other and our living the Christian life.

God is God-centered in everything: (Exodus 3: 14; 34:6,7)

God is a God-centered God! He is not a man-worshipper, He is not an idolater. The Scriptures reveal God as Eternal, Infinite, Holy, Sovereign, Just, Wrathful, Merciful, Love, Gracious, Immutable, Self-Sufficient; Existent, All-Powerful; Present; Knowing, Transcendent, Immanent, Incomprehensible, Knowable... Therefore He is central and supreme in all things for the displaying of His infinite glory and the eternal enjoyment of every person within the framework of [Christian Hedonism!](#)

A clear distinction / Proper use of Law & Gospel: (Gal. 3:19-24; Rom. 4:1-25)

The Word of God, from Genesis to Revelation, is divided into two principle parts or kinds. One is the Law and the other is the Gospel.

Law: Righteousness God *demands*; written on our hearts by nature; Primary purpose is to declare the righteousness of God and thus aggravate sin in us and cause us to despair of our own righteousness.

Gospel: (Good News) Righteousness God *gives*; not at all in us by nature, but is a Sovereign, Unconditional, Free, Promise that is revealed from Heaven that Jesus Christ not only died for our sins, but also gives us His righteousness.

Christ Centered Focus of the Scriptures: (Luke 24:27; John 5:39, 1Cor. 2:2)

The Old and New Testaments *primary* focus is to reveal something of either a promise/type (OT) or fulfillment/reality (NT) about the nature, person and finished work of Jesus Christ. He is Prophet, Priest and King. He is our Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption! Jesus must be understood first as our substitute, then as our example, in justification as well as sanctification.

Moral applications follow.

God-centered, Grace-permeated Perspective on Faith: (John 1:13; Gal. 1:12; Heb. 11:1;)

God *reveals* a sovereign, unconditional, free, grace promise that creates faith.

"A firm and certain knowledge of God's benevolence toward us, founded upon the freely given promise in Christ, both *revealed* to our minds and *sealed* upon our hearts through the Holy Spirit." -John Calvin

"What is true faith? True faith is not only a knowledge and conviction that everything God reveals in his Word is true; it is also a deep-rooted assurance, created in me by the Holy Spirit through the gospel, that out of sheer grace earned for us by Christ, not only others, but I too, have had my sins forgiven, and have been made forever right with God, and have been granted salvation."

- Heidelberg Catechism, 1563, Question 21: What is true faith?

at core:::

“The most revealing thing about the church is her idea of God, just as her most significant message is what she says about Him, or leaves unsaid, for her silence is often more eloquent than her speech.”

- A.W. Tozer

caring about God’s Glory

With a high view of God, a Christ-centered perspective of scripture, and a humble appreciation of the grace of God in Christ on my behalf, I joyfully, energetically and authentically worship the Father, Son and Holy Spirit for time and eternity! My aim is for the glory of God...and our good.

caring about truth

With sound theology as the backbone and lifeblood of the Christian faith, the framework of our fellowship is founded upon “the 5 sola’s” of the Protestant Reformation and the “Doctrines of Grace”, (see VISTA) discovering the truth about God, guilt, grace and gratitude. Getting back to Bible basics that radically impact life is my aim.

caring about interaction

With a three-fold philosophy of teaching people to think, humbly ask good questions and search the scriptures for what is true and profitable, I seek to engage in a healthy forum of discussion and debate utilizing church history, systematic theology and proper methods of Biblical interpretation (hermeneutics). My aim is to elevate Biblical discernment.

caring about style

With a personality reflective of honesty, humility, and creativity, I seek to distinguish between those Biblical “absolutes” and “non-absolutes” concerning “doing church”. My aim is to be who I am, being biblical and innovatively engaging in our culture, as one in the world but not of it.

caring about others

With a life-changing understanding that God so loved us He gave His Son for us, we as a spiritual community are so impacted so that our desire is to give to others as well. My aim is to minister to the spiritual and physical needs of those both inside and outside our Christian community.

method:::

Along with a vision that is from God, there must also be the God-given method of implementing that vision. This highlights the importance of a clear Biblical philosophy of ministry, that is, a framework in which to accomplish what God has called us to. This methodology must begin with a solid theological approach and result in creative application (in that order!). To do less is to violate the Word and will of God.

Theological Considerations

- A. Biblical priorities of the Ministry of the Word of God and Prayer within the framework of expositional preaching.
- B. Historical / Redemptive, literal, grammatical hermeneutic.
NOTE: awareness of context is crucial.
- C. Define and maintain a proper distinction between Law and Gospel, i.e. the Law only/always *demands* and the Gospel only/always *gives*.
- D. To cultivate a plurality of elders operating in a team leadership style who have a solid foundation of scriptural interpretation, church history and systematic theology.
- E. To establish a church personality and style that is founded upon a clear distinction between Biblical "absolutes" (Word, prayer, sacraments, fellowship) and "non-absolutes" (meeting day/time, order, length, format, style).

Practical Considerations

- A. To provide a forum in which to teach people to think clearly, encourage them to ask good questions, and direct them to search the scriptures for matters of faith and practice.
- B. To live before God and man in the power and leading of the Holy Spirit through actions of selfless giving to the needs of others.
- C. To equip a community of believers who minister to each other in the issues of both faith and life.
- D. To engage in our culture in a way that is truthful and compassionate, yet thought-provoking and non-judgmental.
- E. To be a responsible part of the local communities in issues of civic duties, social programs and community service.

o' happy day:::

John 21.25 Jesus also did many other things. If every one of them were written down, I suppose the world wouldn't have enough room for the books that would be written.

On a rainy Sunday, June 6, 1982, while attending the Billy Graham crusade by the urging of my two sisters, I "felt my Lord's atoning blood, close to my soul applied. Me, me, He loved, the Son of God, for me, for me He died."* Thus began my new life in the Christian faith.

For the previous 21 years of my life, being in an unconverted state, I grew up thinking myself to be a good kid. And by all accounts of those around me, I was. That's right. **Compared to those around me**, I was a good kid.

I was raised as a Roman Catholic, being baptized as an infant and in time, receiving my first holy communion, confirmation and the coveted Pope Pius XII award by the time I was 13 years old. Perhaps I could more accurately be classified as a "practical atheist", for my religious convictions had little association with the life I was living. The two, in my mind, were for occasions of their own. Me, myself and I owned 6 days and 23 hours of the week. Religion possessed a mere 1 hour on Sunday mornings, if that. Besides all that, my reigning philosophy about religion was pick any religion, then be the best person you can be and you'll make it to heaven. In those days it never entered my mind that if you can make it to heaven by being a good person, then Jesus Christ died in vain!

Not until that rainy day in June, as I listened to the preacher, did it dawn on my soul that before God I am not so good. That's right. **Compared to the Holy and Righteous God** how could I ever stand with my head held high? For the first time in my life I was measured up against One of infinite goodness, holiness and justice and immediately my badness was shown for what it really is. Under the weight of this realization my heart was crushed. While under this burden of conviction of sin and heaviness of heart, the preacher continued. God, in His mercy, then revealed to me that even as I am, Jesus Christ loved me and gave Himself for me, to take away my sin and to give me His very own righteousness! Such love melted my heart, with tears streaming down my face! Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who lived a sinless life, died on a cross on my behalf, rose from the grave three days later to give me new life...real life!

...What's your story?

* From the hymn: "And Can It Be", Charles Wesley, 1738

chronicles of the faith:::

QUALIFICATIONS:

Proven servant-leadership experience as Co-Pastor, President/CEO, two church plants, interim pastor, guest speaker and counseling/resource ministries. Public speaking and group presentation expertise acquired throughout 20+ years, combining education and experience in the ministry of the Christian Faith. Outstanding communication skills in writing, speaking and *listening*. Creative problem solver, excellent organizational abilities, insightful and motivated visionary in the Christian community.

CONVERSION:

1982 Billy Graham Crusade, Boston, MA

EDUCATION:

1986-1988 Calvary Chapel Bible College, Twin Peaks, CA (Seminary Level)
Biblical Studies

EXPERIENCE:

2006-Present **theocentric** Bradford, MA (house church) Lead the establishment of house church gathering.

2003-2006 **King of Grace Church** (Non-Denomination) Methuen, MA
Assignments: Preaching, Children's Ministry, Small Group Host.

2001-2003 **New England Bible Church** (Non-Denomination) Andover, MA
Assignments: Pulpit Ministry, Hermeneutics Seminar Leader.

2001 **Andover Baptist Church** (American Baptist) Andover, MA
Assignments: Interim Pulpit Ministry, Preaching, Counseling.

1992-1995 **Coram Deo** (Reformed Congregational) Dana Point, CA
Assignments: President/CEO, Co-Pastor, Church Planting, Pulpit Ministry, Evangelism, Counseling, Administration, Home Group Coordinator, Speaker at Carlsbad High School, Carlsbad, CA.

1988-1990 **Calvary Chapel** (Non-Denomination) Boston, MA
Assignments: Church Planting Team, Pulpit Ministry, Sunday School Teacher, Worship Ministry, Men's Prayer Ministry.

1985-1986 **Christian Broadcasting Network** (700 Club Affiliate) Malden, MA
Assignments: Counseling, Operation Blessing Coordinator, Ministry Resource Associate.

1983-1986 **Parkway Christian Center** (A/G) Revere, MA
Assignments: Youth Bible Study Leader, Counseling, Visitation, Sunday School Teacher

PRESENTATIONS

First Congregational Church, Bradford, MA (2007)
True Life Christian Church, Lynnfield, MA (2003-7)
King of Grace Church, Methuen, MA (2006)
Community Church of Edgeworth, Malden, MA (2004-5)
New England Bible Church, Andover, MA (2001-03)
Andover Baptist Church, Andover, MA (2001)

secular chronicles:::

Qualifications	Expertise acquired throughout 20+ years in public relations/customer service capacities. Proven success in mechanical and administrative positions. Creative problem-solver. Excellent organizational abilities. Versatile and motivated visionary in the human relations field.
Work History	<p>Merrimack Valley Planning Commission, MA 2000-Present <i>Field Services Specialist:</i> Perform data collection operations including, Global Position Satellite / GIS mapping, Traffic volume counts and Community correspondence. North Andover Asset Inventory Project, I-93 Corridor Study Technical Committee, Mass Highway Traffic Volume Program.</p> <p>Allstar-SAB Pacific, HI 1998-1999 <i>Construction Technician:</i> Perform projects for 29,000 military housing units. Oversight of main apartment function systems including carpentry, plumbing, HVAC, and electrical.</p> <p>Medical Diagnostics and Rehabilitation, MA 1996-1997 <i>P.T.Aide, P.R. and Marketing Assistant:</i> Therapy modality set up. Strength training. Cold calling, mass mailings, presentations to personal injury attorneys, and follow up assignments. Expedite requests for medical records, office notes and case reports.</p> <p>County of Orange, CA 1990-1995 <i>Working Supervisor/Liaison:</i> Organize crews in asphalt paving, road stenciling, and landscape maintenance. Coordinate with subcontractors in related projects. Liaison for the County of Orange and Dana Point, CA Public Works Department.</p>
Education	Springfield College, MA Athletic Training/ Physical Therapy 1987-1988 Calvary Chapel Bible College, CA Biblical Studies, Pastoral Ministry, Public Speaking and Counseling.
Presentations	Merrimack Valley Planning Commission Medical Diagnostics and Rehabilitation



Daniel Arthur Ovalle

DOB: October 23, 1961 Birthplace: New York City, New York

Conversion: June 6, 1982 Billy Graham Crusade, Boston, MA

Parents: Arthur and Frances* (Grote) Ovalle

Siblings: Regina, Josephine, Victoria, Frances, Michael, Steven, (I'm last!)

Married: Cyndie Ann DelOrfano, Everett, MA

Date / Place: February 21, 1999 Honolulu, HI

Children / DOB: Samantha (8/28/2000), Emma (2/7/2003)

Interests / Hobbies: My wife, daughters, family & friends, FL in the winter, "Red Sox Nation", NFL (Minnesota Vikings), bold coffee, blogging, apologetics.

Personal Web log: [Project 66](#) & [Ministry Portfolio](#)

Church: [theocentric](#) Haverhill, MA

A Useful, Free Bible Study Software Program: [E-sword](#)

Must Reading:

1. Martin Luther, [Commentary on Galatians](#). Kregel
2. John Calvin, [Institutes of the Christian Religion](#) (2 vol). Westminster, 1960
3. George Whitefield, [Whitefield's Journals](#). Banner of Truth, 1738-41
4. Gerhard Forde, [Christian Spirituality: 5 Views of Sanctification](#). IVP, 1989
5. John Piper, [Desiring God](#), Multnomah, 1986

"The greatness of the things which follow death makes everything that goes before it slip into nothing". – George Whitefield, evangelist

- *To depart from the body is to be present with the Lord!* (12/28/1995)

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A MINISTERIAL EXAMINATION
OF:

DANIEL ARTHUR OVALLE

A decorative flourish consisting of two parallel horizontal lines with ornate, symmetrical scrollwork at both ends.

CONDUCTED BY:
HAVERHILL COMMUNITY CHURCH
HAVERHILL, MA

SEPTEMBER 20, 2008

ποιμαίνω

poimainō

poi-mah'ee-no

to *tend* as a shepherd: caring, feed, rule.

κηρύσσω

kērussō

kay-roos'-so

to *herald* (as a public crier), especially divine truth (the gospel): preach

CONTENTS

I.	DEDICATION / INTRODUCTION	3
II.	ONE RAINY SUNDAY	4
III.	DIVINE PROVIDENCE IN THE CALL TO MINISTRY	5
IV.	AT CORE: A STATEMENT OF FAITH	6
V.	APOSTLES CREED: AFFIRMATIONS / DENIALS	7
VI.	REFLECTIONS	
	A. ON BIBLE EXEGESIS: BETWEEN TWO WORLDS	8
	B. ON THE <i>EUAGGELION</i> ... THE GOOD NEWS	9
	C. ON THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL	10
	D. ON "CHRISTIAN HEDONISM"	13
	E. ON A VISION FOR MISSIONS: LOCAL, GLOBAL	15
	F. ON A CLOSED FIST & AN OPEN HAND	16
VII.	SOLI DEO GLORIA!	17
VIII.	END NOTES	18

Please note: electronic version contains audio & video web links. These are [underlined blue font](#).

I. DEDICATION

With exultation in my God: The Father and The Son and The Holy Spirit.

Now unto Him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of His glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen. –Jude 24,25

With heartfelt thankfulness to:

Cyndie, my wife.

Samantha & Emma, our daughters.

Arthur & Frances Ovalle, my parents.

Regina, Josephine, Victoria, Frances, Michael and Steven, my siblings.

Billy Graham, Randy Cahill, Chuck Smith, Chuck Swindoll, Richard Goswiler,

Anthony O’Sullivan and John Piper, my contemporaries.

Martin Luther, John Calvin, George Whitefield, Charles Spurgeon, and

D.Martyn Lloyd-Jones, who, even though dead, still speak.

INTRODUCTION

Solely and completely by the raw grace of God I am a Christian. One justified, sanctified, glorified and brought back to God (that is, saved) by God’s grace alone, through faith alone in the doing, dying and rising of Jesus Christ alone, to the glory of God alone!

“My sin...not in part but the whole is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more!”

ABSOLUTELY INCREDIBLE!

Perhaps even more miraculous is the calling of God to be an under shepherd of and spokesperson for Jesus! In the spirit of Mephibosheth I too ask: *“what would you have with a dead dog like me”*(2 Sam 9)? By the grace of God I am what I am.

In this paper I desire to briefly and clearly set forth and defend my core Christian beliefs. Since others have written more extensively, eloquently and with greater impact, why not then whole-heartedly affirm their contributions to the body of Christ throughout the ages? This I do with a clear conscience and full conviction, although not at every single jot and tittle.

I also desire to highlight those distinctives of the Word of God that receive lesser recognition in our time and culture. I am persuaded that these Biblical categories are essential and necessary to combat the rampant famine of hearing the words of the Lord (Amos 8.11). I do not see these categories as auxiliary to core Christian teaching, but in fact, its very exegesis, meaning and substance.

II. ONE RAINY SUNDAY¹

On a rainy Sunday, June 6, 1982, while attending the Billy Graham crusade by the urging of my two sisters, I “felt my Lord’s atoning blood, close to my soul applied. Me, me, He loved, the Son of God, for me, for me He died.”² Thus began my new life in the Christian faith. For the previous 20 years of my life, being in an unconverted state, I grew up thinking myself to be a good kid. And by all accounts of those around me, I was. That’s right. *Compared to those around me*, I was a good kid.

I was raised as a (nominal) Roman Catholic, being baptized as an infant and in time, receiving my first holy communion, confirmation and the coveted Pope Pius XII award by the time I was 13 years old. Perhaps I could more accurately be classified as a “practical atheist”, for my religious convictions had little association with the life I was living. The two, in my mind, were for occasions of their own. Me, myself and I owned 6 days and 23 hours of the week. Religion possessed a mere hour on Sunday mornings, if that. Besides all that, my reigning philosophy about religion was to pick any religion, then be the best person you can be and you’ll make it to heaven. In those days it never entered my mind that if you can make it to heaven by being a good person, then Jesus Christ died in vain! Not until that rainy day in June, as I sat in my seat listening to the preaching of Billy Graham, did it dawn on my soul that before God I am not so good. That’s right. *Compared to the Holy and Righteous God* how could I ever stand with my head held high? For the first time in my life I was measured up against One of Infinite Goodness, Holiness and Justice and immediately my badness was shown for what it really is...sin. Under the weight of this realization my heart was crushed. For the very first time in my entire life I *realized* that I was sinful to the very core of my being, as I *tasted* it and knew this was true of me as I was now standing before Almighty God and not anyone else. Previous to that evening I would admit to my sisters that “Yea, yea I’m a sinner, you’re a sinner, we’re all sinners”, but I never tasted the reality of it. You see, that night, as I sat in my seat, long before any choruses of “Just As I AM” were sung or any decisions were made God revealed something to me, something of my sin before a Holy God. And I was granted to see myself as God truly sees me...and it was heavy! Well, while under this burden of conviction of sin and heaviness of heart, the preacher continued. God, in His sheer mercy, then revealed to me that even as sin-sick as I am, Jesus Christ loved me and gave Himself for me, took away my sin, forgave me, in order to bring me back to God! For the first time in my entire life this reality dawned upon my understanding and my soul! Such love melted my heart, with tears streaming down my face for hours afterward! Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who lived a sinless life, took on Himself the wrath of God due me, died on a cross, in my place, for my sin, rose from the grave three days later to give me new life...real life...Life by, in and for God!

...And on top of all that, beyond my greatest imagination, all this taking place while sitting next to my Dad, who was undergoing the very same conviction of sin and tasting for the first time the love of God in Jesus Christ too! Spiritual twins undergoing the new birth! Wow! What rarities: converted in a memorable point in time, side by side with my father and now possessing an audio copy of that particular message preached by Billy Graham on that rainy Sunday in June, 1982.

Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift (2 Corinthians 9:15)!

III. DIVINE PROVIDENCE IN THE CALL TO MINISTRY

Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. (2 Corinthians 3:5-6)

I am truly humbled and mystified by the call of God to preach His Word and shepherd His people.³ This providential call to ministry began just shy of a year after my conversion, as I lay on a hospital bed suffering from a knee-shattering collision with the 6'6"-280 lb. Ovi Garcia at second base, when a pastor came to visit me, bringing a Bible and his counsel to read the NT books of Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians. Somewhat strange counsel, perhaps. But for me it was food for my hungry, thirsty and wayward soul. I must have devoured those books a hundred times each during that 2 week stay. The evidence of God's providence was all over the affairs of my life in the tearing down of self as well as the building up in Jesus Christ. From then on since 1983, I would discover God's incredible orchestration of His call for me to enjoy being much with Him in His word and prayer, combined with countless unsought, unsolicited, surprising opportunities to simply communicate those glorious realities that were freely lavished upon me in Jesus Christ! The thread of this fabric began to be woven together producing appropriate feedback from those to whom I ministered, confirming what God had put in my heart to do for the glory of His Name and the good of His people. The very first message I gave was to a youth group as I was filling in for the Youth Pastor who had gone on vacation. Because I had simply been around during the youth meetings sharing in conversation with these younger kids what I was learning in the Word of God and what I was going through in life, I was asked to step in. Ephesians 2.1-10 was beating in my heart, so I let it rip! In the years to follow, this call of God to minister manifested itself in several opportunities to be involved in church planting ventures in MA and CA, one of which (Coram Deo) I was fortunate and blessed to co-pastor for 5 years. God, in His providence, was not only giving me opportunities to preach and shepherd His people, but also magnificently provided so that I could attend Calvary Chapel Bible College under Chuck Smith. Now, in 2008, I look back on 26+ years of God's faithfulness in granting me multiple ministerial roles within a wide spectrum of Christian expression, I have great confidence standing on the threshold of a pastoral call to Haverhill Community Church. As I consider the days ahead and the spiritual landscape here in New England, my heart is increasingly burdened for the cause of Christ, especially toward the maturing of believers and reaching out to the masses of people who know next to nothing of the infinite glories of God in Jesus Christ! As I have wrestled through the call of God for this task, at this particular hour, in this particular place, I sense the timing of God to be coming together. With a strong internal conviction, coupled with historical evidence and concomitant external witness, the passion for pastoral ministry echoes Jeremiah, who said: *If I say, "I will not mention Him, or speak any more in His name," there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot. (Jeremiah 20:9)*

May I only be found faithful, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to His call:

For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. (1 Corinthians 2:2)

IV. AT CORE: A STATEMENT OF FAITH⁴

The scriptures ~ I believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the verbally inspired word of God, the final authority for faith and life, inerrant in the original writings, infallible and God-breathed (2 Tim 3.16, 17; 2 Peter 1.20,21; Matt 5.18; John 16.12,13).

The Godhead ~ I believe in one Triune God, eternally existing in three persons-- Father, Son, and Holy Spirit--co-eternal in being, co-eternal in nature, co-equal in power and glory, having the same attributes & perfections (Deut 6.4; 2 Cor 13.14).

The Person and work of Christ ~ I believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God became man without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful man (John 1.1,2,14; Luke 1.35). I believe that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His obedient life and passive death on the cross as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice; and that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead (Rom 3.24; 1Peter 2.24; Eph 1.7; 1Peter 1.3-5). He fulfills the ministry of Advocate Representative, Intercessor (Acts 1.9, 10; Heb 7.25, Heb 9.24; Rom 8.34; 1 John 2.1-2).

The Person and work of the Holy Spirit ~ I believe that the Holy Spirit is a person who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; and that He is the Supernatural agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ, indwelling and sealing them unto the day of redemption (John 16.8-11; 2 Cor 3.6; 1Cor 12.12-14; Rom 8.9; Eph 5.18).

The total depravity of man ~ I believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God, but that through Adam's sin the race fell, inherited a sinful nature, and became alienated from God; and that man is totally depraved, and of himself utterly unable to remedy his lost condition (Gen 1.26,27 Rom 3.22, 23, 5.12; Eph 2.1-3, 12).

Salvation ~ I believe that salvation encompasses the entire scope of God's saving work: justification, sanctification & glorification and is the accomplishment of the Father electing, the Son accomplishing and the Holy Spirit applying this free gift of God brought to man by grace and received by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, who died on a cross, in our place, for our sins. (Rom 4; Eph 2.8-10; John 1.2; Eph 1.7; 1Peter 1.18-19).

The Church ~ I believe that the church, which is the body and espoused bride of Christ, is a spiritual organism made up of all born-again persons (Eph 1.22,23; 5.25-27; 1Cor 12.12-14; 2Cor 11.2). I believe that the establishment and continuance of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament scriptures (Acts 14.27, 18.22, 20:17, 1Tim 3.1-3 & Titus 1.5-11). I believe in the autonomy of the local churches, free of any external authority and control (Acts 13.1-4, 15.19-31, 20.28; Rom 16.1,4; 1Cor 3.9, 16, 1Cor 5. 4-7, 13; 1Peter 5.1-4). I recognize believer's baptism and the Lord's Supper as scriptural means of testimony for the church. (Matt 28.19,20; Acts 2.41,42; Acts 18.8; 1Cor 11.23-26).

Last Things ~ I believe in the personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of His kingdom (Mk 14.62; Ac 1.11). I believe in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, the eternal joy of the righteous and the endless suffering of the wicked. (Phil 3.20; 1Thes 4.15; 2Tim 4.1; Ts 2.13; 1Cor 4.5; 1Cor 15; 2Thes 1.7-10; Rev 20.4-6, 11-15)

V. THE APOSTLES CREED

***I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
the Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord:***

I AFFIRM: The Trinity. God is Real. He is Infinitely Glorious. He is the starting, sustaining and ending point of Christianity. God is God-centered in everything!

I DENY: The Big Bang Theory. Mother Nature. All False gods. God worships man.

***Who was conceived of the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third
day He arose again from the dead.***

I AFFIRM: Jesus is the God-Man, a real, historical figure. Born unlike all other humans. Really lived, died, rose again. Really lives today in His people!

I DENY: Jesus was a myth. Mary is co-redemptrix. Swoon theory.

***He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty,
whence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.***

I AFFIRM: Heaven is a real realm. Jesus is Lord! He will Judge all soon!

I DENY: Heaven/Hell is here on earth. Jesus is not coming back. He is only love.

***I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy universal church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting.***

I AFFIRM: The global body of Christ of all ages. Sinners become saints. Forgiveness is final, free and forever! We need a new body fit for glory! Life is in God!

I DENY: The Holy Spirit is a force. Saints are only the “real holy people.” Forgiveness by merit. “This is all there is to life...so eat, drink and be merry.”

Amen.

I AFFIRM: This is TRUTH! This is worth living / dying for. Others need to hear about Jesus!

I DENY: Christianity is a man-made religion.

VI. REFLECTIONS

A. ON BIBLE EXEGESIS

BETWEEN TWO WORLDS⁵

Today is August 28, 2008. I hold in my hands an English translation of a collection of 66 writings, originally penned in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek in lands far, far away and in times long, long ago – some 2-4 thousand years ago! That's right, I said *thousands!* Consider the gaps: language, time, culture, geography, history...gaps galore to bridge. What in the world are we to do? We really have our homework to tend to, don't we, if we want to properly understand and interpret this massive anthology? After all, aren't we after a faithful "photocopy" of what was originally said to a certain people at a certain time in a certain place? Don't we want to rightly interpret their writing for our time? Don't we want to discover and "take out" of the text what is there and let that shape us? This is the function of exegesis⁶. Certainly we do not want to "read into" the text of scripture our biases into their world. That's eisegesis⁷. We don't want that. To do that would not only be a serious injustice toward them, but more tragically, it would leave us misunderstanding what God has spoken. And the consequences are fatal, spiritually fatal!

This book, the Bible, is God's inspired, inerrant, infallible word. It is our plumb line for all that we believe and do as Christians. Therefore, it is incumbent upon us to do all that we can to interpret it soundly with the use of a literal, historical, grammatical and contextual analysis (hermeneutic⁸) that recognizes and respects the various types of literature before us in this vast book.

It is my heartbeat to ask two foundational questions along the way, as we build together @ H.C.C.:

1. What does the scripture *actually* say (Rom4.3/Gal4.30)?
2. What does the scripture *actually* mean by what it says?

They read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people could understand what was being read (Neh8.8).

With the help of the indwelling Holy Spirit, our ultimate teacher and guide into all truth that will glorify Jesus and not Himself, we will answer these two questions with wisdom and insight as we continually grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus.

Though the mountain may look high...and it is...

And the consequences are great...and they are...

We are soberly summoned to this task...so we gladly, earnestly comply...

We don't need a seminary degree to pull this off. Jesus called ordinary men and women to follow Him and learn of Him. Many of us are already approaching the scripture in this manner, realized or not; and the call to Christian maturity comes down this path of prayerful Biblical reflection. May the tribe of the Bereans increase!

B. ON THE *EUAGGELION*... THE GOOD NEWS

In the sixteenth century, Martin Luther once counseled his friend's troubled conscience saying '*the gospel is outside of you*'⁹. This is the essence of Christianity. The gospel, the good news, declares the doing, dying and rising of Jesus Christ. Christianity is indeed a religion of merit, and merit alone! The question is "whose merit"? If it's mine, then all hope is lost, for I am sin. If we're talking about Christ's perfect obedient life, sacrificial death and bodily resurrection (1Cor 15.3,4), then there is good news indeed and reason for much rejoicing!

In the law, God only and always demands obedience of a perfect sort (is there any other?), internally as well as externally, physically as well as spiritually - all the time. No sliding scale here. How do I measure up to that? This is the bad news for me that accentuates the good news. Contrariwise, in the gospel, God only and always gives, never demands! This is true good news, for what God demands, Christ provides. Yes, Christ provides, by His death, to take the Father's wrath and my sin upon Himself and by His life, to give me His very righteousness...and all this to bring me to God(1Pet3.18)! Ala... Gospel, good news!

In this day of navel-gazing - a looking within oneself, it must be said that the gospel is not about me, or even how God is working in my life. Surely the effects of the gospel will touch upon these issues, for it is the fount of sanctification as well as justification(Gal2.20). Surely to the one God cleanses from sin He also gives a new heart & spirit (Ez36.25-28) so that we walk in the "obedience of faith" (Rom1.5, 16.26)! So to be crystal clear, the gospel is about the objective, finished work of Jesus Christ. It is about the "great exchange". He took all my sin upon Himself on the cross to bear the guilt and wrath of God in my place. He lived perfectly; thus His righteousness is credited, imputed, reckoned to me (2Cor 5.21). Both **pardon** and **perfection** are mine, founded on the life and death of Jesus Christ...on my behalf. Praise God for the "double cure". My sin - credited to Him. His righteousness - credited to me. Reconciliation with God! This comprehensive redemption affects the whole of the person and the entirety of life.

In Jesus Christ there is all joy, hope, forgiveness, righteousness, redemption, grace, mercy and peace with my Maker – the fractured relationship is finally fixed! Truly good, great news! By this gospel, and this gospel alone, the soul of man is at peace with his God, joy and contentment abound, and hope in this life becomes the anchor that makes life worth living! Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

A Debtor To Mercy Alone:

*"A debtor to mercy alone, of covenant grace I sing,
Nor fear with His righteousness on, my praise and offering to bring,
The terrors of Law and of God, with me can have nothing to do,
My Savior's obedience and blood hide all my transgressions from view."*

C. ON THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL

If I were to point to something outside the Bible that has most impacted me I would immediately go to The Commentary on the Book of Galatians, by Martin Luther, especially his Declaration¹⁰. It has been a filet mignon for my soul. As I first read it in 1992, I was immediately arrested by what I reading:

“The greatest knowledge and the highest wisdom of Christians is not to know the law and to be ignorant of works, and of the whole active righteousness, especially when the conscience is wrestling with God. Contrary, among those who are not of God's people, the greatest wisdom is to know and to urge the law and the active righteousness. But it is a strange thing and unknown to the world to teach Christians to be ignorant of the law and to live before God as if there were no law; notwithstanding, except you be ignorant of the law and be assuredly persuaded in his heart there is now no law, nor wrath of God, but only grace and mercy for Christ's sake, you cannot be saved; for by the law comes the knowledge of sin. Conversely, works and the keeping of the law is strictly required in the world, as if there were no promise, or grace.”

(I later came to learn that John Bunyan said: “I do prefer this book...excepting the whole Bible, before all books I have seen.”)

The Bible speaks of two “doers”. There is man “doing” and then there is God “doing”. The former reaching up (***you shall***) & the latter coming down (***I will***). Let's investigate...

We see in the words of Jesus:

*And ***you shall*** love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these.” (Mark 12:30-31)*

And from the Prophet Jeremiah, uttering one of the classics “Thus Saith The Lord”:

*Behold, ***I will*** gather them from all the countries to which I drove them in My anger and My wrath and in great indignation. ***I will*** bring them back to this place, and ***I will*** make them dwell in safety. And they shall be My people, and ***I will*** be their God. ***I will*** give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me forever, for their own good and the good of their children after them. ***I will*** make with them an everlasting covenant, that ***I will*** not turn away from doing good to them. And ***I will*** put the fear of Me in their hearts, that they may not turn from Me. ***I will*** rejoice in doing them good, and ***I will*** plant them in this land in faithfulness, ***with all My heart and all My soul.****

(Jeremiah 32:37-41)

Here we see within the same Bible two distinct categories being revealed: one is the Law, or command/prohibition and the other the gospel, or good news. As Theodore Beza wrote:

We divide this Word into two principal parts or kinds: the one is called the 'Law,' the other the 'Gospel.' For all the rest can be gathered under the one or other of these two headings...Ignorance of this distinction between Law and Gospel is one of the principal sources of the abuses which corrupted and still corrupt Christianity.¹¹

(LAW & GOSPEL CONT.)

We see this clear distinction all the way from Genesis to Revelation.

God through law speaks of His commands / prohibitions that man is obligated to perform. Blessing upon obedience and curse upon disobedience. Simple. His standard is high, comprehensive and rigorous holy, for **in law God only and always demands, never gives** any help whatsoever! The law is written on every heart (Rom2.14,15) as the conscience standard. The relentless demands of law-keeping, like Inspector Javert in *Les Miserables*, are seen in the 613 OT commands (summarized into 10 @ Sinai and 2 by Jesus) and the staggering 1,050 “do’s and don’ts” in the NT. Why has God spoken in terms of law & law-keeping? What is the God-given purpose of this category? What was Jesus really after with the rich, young ruler in Mt19? Why the law, then? (Gal3.19)

First and foremost, God reveals something of His Holy Self here and His will for all mankind as His creation. God, and everything about Him - including His creatures - is holy, holy, holy! Second, this “part” of the Word of God is given because of transgression, so that through the commandment of what is good (law) sin might be shown to be sinful beyond measure. That as light dawns on marble head, we might realize the utter sinfulness of our own sin! (See Romans 7 closely) So to awaken conviction of sin God has given law. This applies to our doing, which if we’re honest, we don’t really pull off very well, do we? So that we see our desperate need for Jesus, what He has done on our behalf, we are brought to despair of our own self-righteousness – which is no righteousness at all!

As Charles Spurgeon once said:

“Sometimes we’re inclined to think that a very great portion of modern revivalism has been a curse rather than a blessing because it has led thousands to a kind of peace before they’ve known their misery. Restoring the prodigal to the fathers house and never leading him to say “Father, I have sinned.” How can he be healed who is not sick, or be satisfied with the Bread of Life who is not hungry? The old-fashioned sense of sin is despised and consequently religion is run up before the foundations are dug out! Everything in this age is shallow. Deep sea fishing is almost an extinct business as far as men’s souls are concerned.”

We are truly sunk by the law, under the just wrath of God that is attached to law-breaking, thus we are full of fear, sin, death, hell, the grave, judgment, curse, condemnation, demons and the devil. Perhaps J. Gresham Machen is correct when in 1925 he said:

“A new and more powerful proclamation of law is perhaps the most pressing need of the hour; men would have little difficulty with the gospel if they had only learned the lesson of the law. As it is, they are turning aside from the Christian pathway; they are turning to the village of Morality, and to the house of Mr. Legality, who is reported to be very skillful in relieving men of their burdens... 'Making Christ Master' in the life, putting into practice 'the principles of Christ' by one's own efforts-these are merely new ways of earning salvation by one's obedience to God's commands.”¹²

For if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died in vain" (Gal2.21)!

(LAW & GOSPEL CONT.)

The other part of the Word of God is the gospel, the good news. Here God, in the gospel, speaks in His graciousness of forgiveness of sin and His gift of righteousness. Final, free and forever forgiveness! For **in the gospel God always and only gives, never demands**. It is not written on our hearts by nature but comes from the outside, by God's sovereign, unconditional, free, grace promise that is received by faith alone.¹³ This is nothing less than a new birth and a new creation. Now, freely justified by His grace, we are fit to worship, obey and serve God for time and eternity. This work of Jesus on our behalf is the total package of salvation: our righteousness, sanctification and redemption. (1Cor1.30) Christ is His gift to us! Here God opens our blind eyes, deaf ears and resurrects our dead hearts. Just as God called forth light out of darkness (Gen1.3/2Cor4.6) and raised Lazarus from the dead (Jn11.43), so likewise He brings forth His light and life to our dark, dead, sin-sick souls! (Jn5.24/Eph2.5) This is real, true, good news: we are free from God's wrath, forgiven our sin, peace w/ God & man, given life, joy, hope, love, mercy, grace, blessing, resurrection, angels and God Himself – our very Gospel!

In our day, these two parts of the Word of God are confused and as sharp as gumdrops. In the Bible they are crystal clear with sharp edges, as C.F.W. Walther proclaims:

“The true knowledge of the distinction between the Law and the Gospel is not only a glorious light, affording a correct understanding of the entire Holy Scriptures, but without this knowledge Scripture is and remains a sealed book....The Word of God is not rightly divided when the law is not preached in its full sternness, and the gospel not in its full sweetness, when, on the contrary, gospel elements are mingled with the law and law elements with the gospel.”¹⁴

Christianity, at its spearhead, is concerned with portraying Jesus as The Substitute Savior, who died on a cross, in our place, for our sins. Apart from this truth, following Jesus solely as example and attempting to live like He did is woefully futile. A mere moralistic perspective of Christianity – attempts at moral improvements by “doing better” or “doing the right thing” apart from the personal reality of the new birth of the gospel will only bring about serious frustration in this life...and judgment in the next! A proper distinction between Law & Gospel will provide sure, eternal and God-honoring fruit.

As the Word of God comes to us in these ways, true conviction of sin (repentance) and true persuasion of God's gracious promise (faith) are powerfully produced. The former is the result of the work of law, the latter is the revelation of the Divine promise in Jesus Christ. Here we see that the gospel is indeed the power of God to save those who believe (Rom1.16,17).

D. ON “CHRISTIAN HEDONISM”¹⁵

Because there is nothing new under the sun (Ecc1.9), “Christian Hedonism” is a modern expression of an ancient Biblical truth, which articulates:

God is most glorified in us, when we are most satisfied in Him.

This anthem takes into serious consideration the bedrock Biblical perspective of the Triune God in such grandiose terms as God’s supremacy and value and therefore our ultimate satisfaction in Him. The glory of the Person and works of God – this weight, this splendor of God is central, as it is in the pages of the Bible. God is portrayed in the greatest or highest degrees of superlative expression. (Note the use of superlatives in Ps 145). In other words, is there anything in all of existence more supreme, valuable and therefore more satisfying than God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit?

Three primary choruses of Christian Hedonism are:

1. **God is a God-centered God.** The starting point in all of Christianity is to ask what God Himself, in His own Word thinks about Himself! What does the Bible tell us about what God thinks of God? For all of His thoughts are infinitely pure, as are His words and actions. This may be a radically new starting point for you, but not for God! Spend some time to consider this.
2. **God is God Most High.** Since God is Most Supreme and Most Valuable, shall we not find Him to be the Most Satisfying Reality in all that is real?
3. **The Love of God in Jesus is His sharing that with us!** Jesus accomplished what is necessary to remove the obstacles that keep us from God’s love. (1) He removes the Father’s Just, Righteous wrath! (2) He freely forgives our sin! Thereby bringing us *back to God* (1Pet3.18)!
So that He shares with us the knowledge He has of the Father (Mt11.27) and the joy He has in the Father (Jn15.11)! This is crazy of a good sort, because the knowledge He has of the Father and the joy He has in the Father are of infinite and eternal proportions. As John Piper exults:
*We cannot conceive of a happiness greater than the happiness of infinite power delighting infinitely in infinite beauty in the personal fellowship of the Trinity.*¹⁶

...and it is this that He dies to share with us! ABSOLUTELY STUNNING!!

To think that the Son of God, in His great love, really and truly shares with us the depth and degree of the love and joy He has with the Father is staggering...so why not swim in this ocean of delight! How can we not, if we’re to see this:

**For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God...
(1Pe 3:18)**

(CHRISTIAN HEDONISM, CONT.)

The voices of ancient past also testify to this grand anthem in God! Consider:

Jesus: *"Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am." (Jn 8.58) and "And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent." (Jn 17.3)*

Moses: *"Tell the people, I AM. (Ex 3.14) and "Who is like you, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders? (Ex15.11)*

Isaiah: *"...everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made." (Isa 43.7)*

Jeremiah: *"I will rejoice in doing them good, and I will plant them in this land in faithfulness, with all my heart and all my soul." (Jer 32.41)*

Paul: *"Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ..." (Php3.8)*

Augustine: *"How sweet all at once it was for me to be rid of those fruitless joys which I had once feared to lose . . . ! You drove them from me, you who are the true, the sovereign joy. You drove them from me and took their place. . . . O Lord my God, my Light, my Wealth, and my Salvation." (Confessions, IX, 1)*

C. S. Lewis: *"If there lurks in most modern minds the notion that to desire our own good and earnestly to hope for the enjoyment of it is a bad thing, I submit that this notion has crept in from Kant and the Stoics and is not part of the Christian faith. If we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it seem that our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but much too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased." (The Weight of Glory)*

Jonathan Edwards: *"So God glorifies Himself toward the creatures in two ways: 1. By appearing to . . . their understanding. 2. In communicating Himself to their hearts, and in their rejoicing and delighting in, and enjoying, the manifestations which He makes of Himself. . . . God is glorified not only by His glory's being seen, but by its being rejoiced in. When those that see it delight in it, God is more glorified than if they only see it. His glory is then received by the whole soul, both by the understanding and by the heart." (The Philosophy of Jonathan Edwards, Harvey G. Townsend, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press Publishers, 1955, Miscellanies, #448, p. 133; see also #87, p. 128, and #332, p. 130 and #679, p. 138)*

You: ???

E. ON A VISION FOR MISSIONS: LOCAL, GLOBAL

“a vibrant, holistic, biblical 21st century church”

*...to know God (Father, Son & Holy Spirit) better than we know anything
AND to enjoy God more than we enjoy anything!*

to see...This is *faith* in Jesus Christ
to behold The Lord and Savior of the world – who He is, why He came and how
He impacts every aspect of life!
to savor...This is *worship* of God
to contemplate the glorious splendor of His majesty - to exult in and enjoy the
profound wonders of His eternal glory!
to show forth...This is *love* for man
to creatively demonstrate to others the manifold ways that God has expressed His
goodness, mercy and grace toward mankind!

This community of Christians will hold the Bible in high regard as the spiritual
foundation to all we believe and do. In particular, we will focus upon the
doctrines of grace¹⁷, in which Jesus Christ is *always* and *in all ways* both central
and supreme - that is, eternally matchless! Therefore, since He is the greatest
reality in the universe, He is worthy of our deepest passion to enjoy, worship and
serve to the utmost!

We will approach our cultural context with godly sensitivity, creativity and
uncompromising convictions, by both living out and proclaiming the timeless
message of a *real* God who has provided a *real* Savior for *real* sinners, lest one
face *real* judgment. Our contextual approach will, under God, be free from self-
righteous judgmentalism and free from pretense of all sorts, accepting people
from all walks of life - *just as we are* - and introducing them to a God who cares
enough not to leave us there!

Therefore, by cultivating theological precision (*orthodoxy*) that produces
heartfelt worship (*orthopraxy*), the pulse of this community will be founded
upon a vibrant, comprehensive, Biblical discovery of...

“Jesus Christ, who loved me and gave Himself for me”

Under God, and by His grace we shall seek to be involved, by way of church
planting and support of other like-minded missionaries, so that the glorious
gospel of Jesus Christ reaches those in our city, region, country and world.
Our passions of Biblical fidelity, rich friendship and fellowship in Jesus,
involvement in our community and a huge Christian worldview shall be passed
on from generation to generation, by the grace of God.

F. ON A CLOSED FIST & AN OPEN HAND

Rightly did Augustine proclaim:

“In the essentials, unity—in the doubtful things, liberty—and in all things, love.”

Christian doctrine and Christian practice forever go hand in hand. The former creating, informing and driving the latter; never reversed. Sound theology produces exuberant doxology. Here light and heat are inseparably connected. And in both of these headings, there are considerations of a closed fist and an open hand: the rigid and the flexible, non negotiables and negotiables, absolutes and non-absolutes when it comes to both doctrine and practice. There exists in the Biblical record the revelation of those things which are to be held on to like a ravenous black bear clenched to a juicy piece of meat, while there is also the flexibility of an Olympic gold medal gymnast! How can we discern the difference between what is in the closed fist and what is in the open hand? How do we comprehend that which God has revealed in terms of doctrinal essentials, like the inspired Bible text, the Trinity and justification by grace alone through faith alone as distinct from the manifestational gifts, end times theology and missional directives? And how do we discover those things which are practical in nature which God has prescribed as unchanging and those that are adaptable, like what we find in Acts 2.42?

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Where did the disciples meet to devote themselves to these things? On what days/times did they gather, for how long and in what order? This verse speaks of the non negotiable practices of Christians of all times, but doesn't necessarily answer many practical questions that appear very negotiable throughout the NT. So this all shapes up as another one of those monumental tasks before us! I do not intend to address these issues here, but only seek to propose this issue as one very important for me and necessary for the building of a healthy, God honoring, local congregation that never flexes in essentials, yet is rubber band like in cultural expression for our time, especially when we consider that our world *“is more pluralistic, more diverse, more multi ethnic, multi cultural, multi perspectival.”*¹⁸

As Gene Gets explains:

*“I am convinced that both the average church as well as the average parachurch organization definitely lacks a clear grasp on what the Bible teaches about the church. We still confuse function and form, principles and patterns, absolutes and nonabsolutes and that which should be supracultural and that which is strictly cultural. Many Christian leaders have no clear-cut philosophy of ministry based on an adequate ecclesiology that emerges from a careful study of Scripture. Without this foundation, many Christian leaders evaluate success based on personal and corporate experience rather than on Biblical theology. Furthermore, quantitative responses still seem to be the bottom line”*¹⁹

So, I suspect our sights are set toward really taking the Bible seriously - *joyfully seriously* - as we do church together! By the grace of God we will hunger and thirst together to learn of our God and His great love for us in His Son as the only Savior there ever was, is or ever will be. Period! And we will accomplish this among ourselves and share this with our community with freshness of expression that does not compromise the glorious Gospel Truth one iota!

VII. SOLI DEO GLORIA!

Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! "Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?" "Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?" For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.

(Romans 11:33-36)

A Puritan Prayer...

○ God, my exceeding Joy, singing thy praises uplifts my heart, for thou art a fountain of delight, and dost bless the soul that joys in thee. But because of my heart's rebellion I cannot always praise thee as I ought; Yet, I will at all times rest myself in thy excellences, goodness, and loving-kindness. Thou art in Jesus the object of inexpressible joy, and I take exceeding pleasure in the thought of thee. But Lord, I am sometimes thy enemy; my nature revolts and wanders from thee. Though thou hast renewed me, yet evil corruptions urge me still to oppose thee. Help me to extol thee with entire heart-submission, to be diligent in self-examination, to ask myself whether I am truly born again, whether my spirit is the spirit of thy children, whether my griefs are those that tear repenting hearts, whether my joys are the joys of faith, whether my confidence in Christ works by love and purifies the soul. Give me the sweet results of faith, in my secret character, and in my public life. Cast cords of love around my heart, then hold me and never let me go.

Alay the Saviour's wounds sway me more than the sceptre of princes. Let me love thee in a love that covers and swallows up all, that I may not violate my chaste union with the beloved; There is much unconquered territory in my nature, scourge out the buyers and sellers of my soul's temple, and give me in return pure desires, and longings after perfect holiness.

END NOTES

¹ See video testimony @ [SoulFest 2008](#)

² “*And Can It Be*”, Charles Wesley, 1738

³ See video: “[The Call of God](#)”

⁴ [Creeds/Confessions](#) ~ Nicene Creed, Augsburg Confession, Belgic Confession, Canons of Dort, Heidelberg Catechism, Westminster Confession of Faith, London Baptist Confession 1689, Cambridge Declaration, [The Gospel Coalition Confessional Statement](#), 2000 Baptist Faith and Message.

⁵ [Between Two Worlds](#), John Stott, Eerdmans, 1982

⁶ **exegesis** draws out the meaning from the text. As a result, exegesis tends to be objective when employed effectively. The moment the Bible student has in his own mind what was in the mind of the author or authors of the Biblical books when these were written, he has interpreted the thought of the Scriptures.

⁷ **eisegesis** occurs when a reader reads his/her interpretation into the text. As a result, eisegesis is regarded as highly subjective.

⁸ **hermeneutics** “Looking Closely at God’s Word”

- **Definition:** The science and art of how to interpret the Bible. Special attention given to a literal, grammatical, historical and contextual method.
- **Description:** We will examine the nature of the Bible, principles for sound interpretation and the qualifications & tools of the Biblical interpreter.
- **Demand:** God gave His word to man a long time ago, in distant lands, in foreign cultures. This demands interpretation into modern language, theological concepts & common understanding.
- **Direction:** “Someone can fish & feed you for a day, or teach you to fish & feed you for a lifetime.”

⁹ “*Most Americans believe that their problem is something that has happened to them...and their solution is found within. In other words, they believe they have an alien problem to be resolved by an inner solution when the Bible says we have an inner problem needing an alien solution.*”
– Albert Molher, Together for the Gospel address, 2006.

¹⁰ [Declaration](#), Commentary to the Galatians, Martin Luther

¹¹ **Theodore Beza**, The Christian Faith, 1558

¹² **Gresham Machen**, What Is Faith?, 1925

¹³ Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. (Hebrews 11:1) “*We shall now have a full definition of faith, if we say that it is a firm and sure knowledge of the divine favor toward us, founded on the truth of a free promise in Christ, both revealed to our minds, and sealed on our hearts, by the Holy Spirit.*” (John Calvin, Institutes 3.2.7)

¹⁴ **C.F.W. Walther**, Law & Gospel, 1884

¹⁵ “**Christian Hedonism says:** We exist to spread a passion for the supremacy of God in all things for the joy of all peoples through Jesus Christ. Pastor John Piper, Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis, MN. Vast audio and written resources can be found online at: http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/TopicIndex/85_Christian_Hedonism/

¹⁶ [Together for the Gospel 2006 message](#).

¹⁷ **God** -a high view of the sovereignty, holiness and glory of God.

Guilt -a truthful view of man's state before his Maker.

Grace -a clear view of the "unmerited" nature of Christ's love.

Gratitude -a comprehensive view of true good works.

¹⁸ [The White Horse Inn interview with Pastor Mark Driscoll](#), Mars Hill Church, Seattle, WA

¹⁹ [Sharpening the Focus on the Church](#), Gene Getz, Victor Books, 1988. p.24

PROSPECTIVE PASTOR QUESTIONNAIRE

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QUESTIONNAIRE INTRODUCTION

So much could be written in response to each and every question posed here. There are so many angles and levels of interaction with each question, therefore consider this is merely a starting place. It has been a joy to prayerfully work through each of these questions. Although my answers are brief, they are loaded with vision and hope for the H.C.C. family. Please note that I have included several links that may be of interest and add dimension to the answers I have presented.

Over the course of time, and in the context of doing life together at H.C.C., more questions will surely be asked, more prayer and wisdom from God will be required and more grace and mercy from God will be necessary...so that we will walk together in full faith, knowing, enjoying and sharing The One who loved us and gave Himself for us, rose from the dead and is the True Shepherd of the sheep – Jesus Christ.

*For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be glory, forever.
Amen! (Romans 11.36)*

Your brother and servant, for Jesus' sake,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Danny".

[DAO Ministry Portfolio](#)

[Project 66 \[genesis to revelation\]](#)

[A Crumb From The Master's Table](#)

1. Describe how you came to trust Jesus Christ as your Savior.

“We shall now have a full definition of faith, if we say that it is a firm and sure knowledge of the divine favor toward us, founded on the truth of a free promise in Christ, both revealed to our minds, and sealed upon our hearts, by the Holy Spirit.”

–John Calvin, *The Institutes* 3.2.7

On a rainy Sunday, June 6, 1982, while attending the Billy Graham crusade by the urging of my two sisters, I “felt my Lord’s atoning blood, close to my soul applied. Me, me, He loved, the Son of God, for me, for me He died.”* Thus began my new life in the Christian faith.

For the previous 20 years of my life, being in an unconverted state, I grew up thinking myself to be a good kid. And by all accounts of those around me, I was. That’s right. Compared to those around me, I was a good kid.

I was raised as a Roman Catholic, being baptized as an infant and in time, receiving my first holy communion, confirmation and the coveted Pope Pius XII award by the time I was 13 years old. Perhaps I could more accurately be classified as a “practical atheist”, for my religious convictions had little association with the life I was living. The two, in my mind, were for occasions of their own. Me, myself and I owned 6 days and 23 hours of the week. Religion possessed a mere 1 hour on Sunday mornings, if that. Besides all that, my reigning philosophy about religion was pick any religion, then be the best person you can be and you’ll make it to heaven. In those days it never entered my mind that if you can make it to heaven by being a good person, then Jesus Christ died in vain!

Not until that rainy day in June, as I listened to the preaching of Billy Graham, did it dawn on my soul that before God I am not so good. That’s right. Compared to the Holy and Righteous God how could I ever stand with my head held high? For the first time in my life I was measured up against One of Infinite Goodness, Holiness and Justice and immediately my badness was shown for what it really is. Under the weight of this realization my heart was crushed. While under this burden of conviction of sin and heaviness of heart, the preacher continued. God, in His mercy, then revealed to me that even as sin-sick as I am, Jesus Christ loved me and gave Himself for me, to take away my sin, to give me His very own righteousness in order to bring me back to God! Such love melted my heart, with tears streaming down my face! Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who lived a sinless life, took on Himself the wrath of God for me, died on a cross on my behalf, rose from the grave three days later to give me new life...real life...Life by, in and for God!

* *From the hymn: “And Can It Be”, Charles Wesley, 1738*

2. What steps are you taking to cultivate a deeper relationship with the Lord?

I take much comfort in realizing that God has committed Himself, thus taking the initiative, to conforming me into the image of His own dear Son.(2 Cor 3.18) In light of this surety, reading holy scripture, prayer, meditation, listening to various sermons, reading time-tested classic Christian authors, attending conferences, seminars, sharing life with my wife, children & friends are means of God accomplishing His work in me.

3. Describe your call to the ministry and what motivates you to stay in ministry.

“The greatest call of the Pastor is to know God more than we know anything and to enjoy God more than we enjoy anything.”

– John Piper, 1998 ETS Address

Let me begin by stating that I am seriously humbled and mystified by the call of God to preach His Word and shepherd His people.

Having said that...

Just shy of a year after my conversion, as I lay on a hospital bed suffering from a knee-shattering collision with the 6’6”-280lb Ovi Garcia at second base, a pastor came to visit me, bringing a Bible and his counsel to read the NT books of Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians. Somewhat strange counsel, I’d say. But for me it was food for my hungry, thirsty and wayward soul. I must have devoured those books a hundred times each during that 2 week stay. From then on since 1983, I would discover God’s incredible orchestration of His call for me to enjoy being much with Him in His word and prayer, combined with countless unsought, unsolicited, surprising opportunities to simply communicate those glorious realities that were freely lavished upon me in Jesus Christ! The thread of this fabric began to be woven together producing appropriate feedback from those to whom I ministered, confirming what God had put in my heart to do for the glory of His Name and the good of His people. In the years to come, this call of God to preach manifested itself in 3 opportunities to be involved in church planting ventures in MA and CA, one of which (Coram Deo) I was fortunate and blessed to co-pastor for 5 years.

Now, in 2008, I look back on 26+ years of God’s faithfulness in granting me multiple ministerial roles within a wide spectrum of Christian expression*, I have great confidence standing on the threshold of a pastoral call to Haverhill Community Church.

As I consider the days ahead and the spiritual landscape here in New England, my heart is increasingly burdened for the cause of Christ, especially toward the masses and masses of people who know squat of the infinite glories of God in Jesus Christ! As I have wrestled through the call of God for this task, at this particular hour, in this particular place, I sense the timing of God to be coming together. With a strong internal conviction, coupled with historical evidence and concomitant external witness, the passion for pastoral ministry echoes Jeremiah, who said:

If I say, "I will not mention him, or speak any more in his name," there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot. Jeremiah 20:9

* See the “Chronicles of the Christian Faith” in my [Ministry Portfolio](#)

4. To the right of each category, evaluate yourself. On the left, number in order of importance (1=most important, 10=least important) according to your philosophy of ministry: ***Much overlap/Ethos within each**

Preaching / Teaching / Discipleship / Evangelism

Building Relationships / Motivating others

Counseling / Visitation

Dealing with interpersonal differences / Administration

5. My greatest personal strengths are:

Biblical exposition, encouragement, networking, brainstorming, team development and evangelism

6. My greatest personal weaknesses are:

The world, flesh, devil, doubt, darkness, ignorance, doing ministry alone.

7. How do you maintain your professional skills?

By being a lifetime learner. Take online courses, attend conferences, seminars, and maintain relationships with friends at G.C.T.S.

8. Do you have plans regarding future education? What role do you believe the church should play in your continuing education?

I would love the opportunity to work on an M. Div. Continuing education would benefit all! The church should not only support it, but cultivate it for as many as possible. Beneficial conferences to attend: [DGM Pastors Conference](#), [Together for the Gospel](#), [The Gospel Coalition](#).

9. Describe your personal vision for ministry. Is there any particular congregation presently reflecting this vision of ministry?

**A gathering of multi-generational, multi-ethnic, multi-socio-economic peoples who believe Jesus Christ to be the greatest reality in all life, walk humbly with Him, serve one another and the community and beyond. See [Vista Mars Hill Church](#), WA
[Redeemer Presbyterian](#), NY
[Capital Hill Baptist](#), DC
[Bethlehem Baptist](#), MN**

10. How do you identify the need for and go about developing a new area of ministry?

Measure what we are experiencing as a local church to the Word of God. Prayerfully, sensitively, collaboratively, creatively, humbly according to Scripture, with leadership leading, communicating a clear vision, provide open forums for discussion, being an example to the flock, look for congregation consensus.

11. How do you facilitate change?

With an open Bible and serious unction of the Holy Spirit! I cannot overstate my view of the role of God, through His word, by the power of the Holy Spirit to facilitate change of all sorts: personal, family, congregational, regional. Who could forecast or program changes experienced by those in the gospels? Acts? Throughout the entire Roman Empire? Across the span of land and time? Some changes come gradual, some accelerated. Who can predict which?

Under the grace of God, we who have been “changed” know the will of God to be best and the power of God unstoppable to accomplish change. As we concern ourselves more with Biblical fidelity than with men’s traditions and modern, popular pragmatic trends we will see God’s changes come on multiple levels. We must seek to walk together in wisdom, humility and great patience, being thoughtful and careful where we sense God’s will. Pathways to Christ-like change shall come by discoveries of truth in God’s word and through congregational open forums, discussions, questions and answers - building greater unity and a strong body ministry ethos together.

12. What do you see as the primary purpose for the Sunday morning service? (evangelism, equipping, worship, etc.)

We are primarily gathered together by God to worship Him. Our time together has elements of equipping saints and addressing the lost (evangelism) but all of life is about Him! The Christians worship their God and the unbeliever visiting is allowed to eavesdrop.

13. Describe your philosophy of worship.

All of life is worship. Who is worth adoring in all of life? The Father, through Christ, by the Holy Spirit.

As for specific gathered “worship services” I am interested to discover together the differences between Biblical “absolutes” and “non-absolutes”. Asking questions like:

- **What elements are absolute concerning Christians gathered times? (Apostles teaching, breaking bread, fellowship, the prayers -Acts 2.42)**
- **What elements are not absolute? (Day / time of meeting? How long? Where? What order was their service?)**

Absolutes do not change. Non-absolutes are adaptable to context & culture.

14. Describe your leadership style. To what extent are you self-directed in your ministry responsibilities?

So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. (1 Peter 5:1-3)

Careful shaping by the text of scripture, as an under shepherd of Jesus, lead by example with God-given confidence. I am big on collaborating and discerning ideas within a group context. Combine oversight with delegation, relying on God's grace and gifting in the lives of others. I seek, under scriptural direction, to be shaped in proper ministry priorities and responsibilities. The input and wisdom of others, especially leaders, will assist me in this and bring great encouragement in building together. Along the way we must avoid the misconception that the pastor "does it all."

15. How do you supervise, motivate, and develop staff and lay leaders? Describe your vision for leadership development.

My vision for leadership development is priority #1, along with the overall feeding of the body in preaching and teaching. As God leads, I would seek to further cultivate genuine friendships as a foundation for co-laboring. Built upon authentic Christian *agape* and selfless giving, I envision identifying those possessing various motivational gifts and graces (Rom 12.3-8 and 1Pet 4.8-11) and manifestational gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor 12). Leadership development is accomplished by gift identification, study of leadership scriptures, good leadership materials, conferences, seminars, discussions, as we assist one another in discerning God's calling on each others lives. Supervision and motivation of staff and lay leaders requires frequent communication, access to pastoral staff, and a vision to walk together in the 101 NT uses of "one another".

16. Describe your routine process of preparing sermons.

Read the Bible, Read the Bible, Read the Bible. Pray and consider what God desires to say to us where we are at. Consult with leadership. Utilize hermeneutical tools, discourse analysis, saturate in the text, pray and think, outline texts, consult commentaries, use useful technology and talk things through with my wife and children.

17. How much time would you devote each week to sermon preparation? How should that compare to time spent in counseling, visitation, or administration?

A good proportion, this is a biblical priority for these who serve the body in this way. Caution to pastors not to be consumed with the “tyranny of the urgent”. Pastoral duties of more closely tending to the sheep are also very important. Consideration must be exercised in a bi-vocational situation.

18. More recently, sexual misconduct within the church has become a more visible issue. What safeguards have you initiated to protect yourself and the church from such misconduct?

Maintain a healthy marriage! Cultivate genuine and honest friendships where authentic accountability can be experienced. We take off the masks by highlighting our utter weakness, in and of ourselves, and that we are trophies of the grace of God, from beginning to end. We are simultaneously saint and sinner. We are desperate for God’s help.

19. Describe the role of accountability for a pastor and how that has been a part of your life.

Again, real genuine relationships, rooted in magnificent grace, accepting one another, challenging and encouraging one another. Nothing is worse than a mere professional approach to ministry with others. I am thankful that God has given me many close friends over the years, several of whom I am still involved with in mutually accountable relationships.

20. What accountability should exist between the deacon body and the pastoral staff members?

Hopefully these are people who are friends who are sharing in the Christian life together. In many cases, this isn’t so. Pastors oversee and give account for the scope of ministry in the local church. While there is mutual accountability between these offices, pastors are the ruling body in the local NT congregation.

21. What accountability would be expected among staff members?

Similar as above

22. Describe your view of church discipline; its importance, what it looks like in real life.

Out of honor to Christ and love for His bride, the elders, the body and the individual members of such body are called to humbly and wisely exercise discipline as a means of grace and restoration. This is very lacking in our day, therefore of utmost importance. Matthew 18 and 1st and 2nd Corinthians and pastoral epistles among others give specific instruction. In real life this looks like people are *really* involved in each others lives, *really* care and *really* love each other and desire to see the most incredible reality- namely, God in Christ, as an ever increasing reality in one another's lives. This grace is a mark of a true church.

23. Describe your ideal model of education for the church.

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."
(Matthew 28:19-20)

For Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the LORD, and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel. (Ezra 7:10)

I desire to outline a vision for an experientially academic education. Head & heart, light & heat! A theologically informed experience. This is accomplished through:

- A orderly, comprehensive, cohesive exposition of scripture
- Age appropriate SS & home Bible lessons (K – Senior Citizens)
- Hands-on discipleship training & body ministry
- Establish & cultivate mentors / internships
- Develop library complete with computers / Bible software programs
- Seminars and local conferences
- Establish a Bible School, local seminary
- Open forum, discussion, Q&A, formal debates

At every opportunity we must seek to educate, train and disciple one another as Jesus did, with heart, mind, soul and strength.

"You can fish and feed someone for a day; teach others to fish and feed them for a lifetime."

24. What types of outreach programs do you feel are important and relevant to this congregation? Describe your plan of evangelism.

What programs do we find in the NT? Equipping saints to be sent into their communities to make a difference. Invite atheists, agnostics, skeptics in for Q&A's apologetics, etc. Encourage people to get involved in their communities, in the networks they are already part of. Light shines, words are spoken, actions are demonstrated according to the gifting of God. An ethos of love for our neighbor paves the way for such expressions desiring to share Jesus with others.

Evangelistic oriented questions like these need to be asked:

- **When is the last time you invited unbelievers (besides family) over for dinner?**
- **Do you have unbelieving friends?**
- **Do you know your neighbors names? (both sides)**
- **What is the extent of your involvement in your community?**

A relevant (audio) discussion on the subject: "Reaching Out Without Selling Out" [An Interview With Pastor Mark Driscoll](#)

25. What is the primary role of the Pastor/elder? What responsibilities, priorities or boundaries should the Pastor/elder have in defining our church ministry? What training and orientation would you provide for Pastors/elders? Describe your view of church government.

A. Within a plurality elders. Oversight of souls as an under-shepherd of Jesus. Speak, live model for others "[Christian Hedonism](#)" Teaching/Preaching/Prayer governing are primary, contenders/defenders for sound doctrine, proclaimer of the one true gospel of Jesus Christ and Him crucified and raised to save sinners and bring them back to God – from beginning to end!

B. Elders /Pastors are entrusted by Jesus to have responsibility to oversee, direct and cultivate the God given vision of the congregation. Just as each individual believer is graced in certain ways, so too collectively, each congregation is graced in different manners. What is the heartbeat of HCC, for our day, in our city? For our context, biblical exegesis in plain language is a high priority. Close, serious, joyful investigation of the whole of the sacred text is priority number one. This is done within the context of genuine friendships and extends beyond the four walls of Newcomb street and beyond Sundays and Wednesday. A passion to experience "[the life of God in the soul of man](#)" in every area of life. (Henry Scougal).

C. Training/Orientation for pastors/elders and deacons:

Serious study of scripture, hermeneutics, discourse analysis, homiletics, church history, Biblical and systematic theology. Provide opportunities for discussion, Q & A, listen/read biographies of "redwoods" in church history, attend conferences, preach to one another in small groups, disciple by leading and example....to hands-on application in matters dealing with our people.

D. My view of church government is elder-led, consensus building, body affirming congregational government. The church is a family not a political nation.

Leadership is more parental than mechanical. Love rules. Elders are not deacons, yet with much overlap

26. What is the primary role of the deacon body? What responsibilities, priorities or boundaries should the deacon body have in defining our church ministry? What training and orientation would you provide for deacons?

To lead along with and under the oversight of the elders, by way of service, example and selfless giving to the flock. These men are also entrusted with great responsibility to tend the flock in similar ways as elders/pastors except for the calling to teach in an oversight manner so as leading the congregation. There is a distinct role of the deacon to tend in oversight to the physical needs of the congregation. Deacons are not elders, yet with much overlap.

The subject of elders/deacons/church government will be a great study, as high priority is reflected on scripture to this assignment in local churches.

See [Nine Marks Ministries](#) of Capitol Hill Baptist Church (S.B.C.)

27. How do you balance your life between family and ministry?

With Spirit-led, Bible informed common sense. Input from family and friends are good gauges. We must not sacrifice our wives and children on the altar of Christian service. Being bi-vocational my employment with MVPC is another time factor. We can do what we can do for the day by the grace of God.

28. What is your wife's attitude toward your ministry?

Cyndie is behind God's calling on my/our life. Thus far she has really enjoyed the people at HCC and is excited about the future.

29. What things would you like the church to do to provide support to your family?

Genuine friendship, encouragement and authentic humble input. Realize we are not Jesus in the flesh, but saint/sinners who are being worked on, just like all of us.

30. How familiar are you with the history of our church? Do you have any questions about our past?

I am somewhat familiar.

31. Are there any points in our doctrinal statement that you would not or could not affirm?

No

32. How familiar are you with the current life of our church? Do you have any questions?

I am becoming more familiar. I would like to know what internal, spiritual challenges we are facing. What issues? What people? Any among us who have been power brokers? Exhibiting selfish ambition, pride, etc.

I would be interested to meet over the course of time, with members to get to know them, answer questions and discover how we may better serve them. I see doing this side by side with Mike and the deacons.

33. What do you see that you like about our church?

Openness to learn about Jesus. Friendliness, meekness, humility concern for the poor, hungry to reach out and lastly location in our community. Hearty singing on Wednesday nights!

34. What questions do you have about this position that have not been answered?

Position description, salary, benefits, and previous 3 years financial statements. I would like to meet specifically with Mike, Russ, Bob and Mark around these questions.

35. Are there any concerns about which we have not asked, which might be of a sensitive nature for you or our church?

No

36. Describe your plan for pastoral care and visitation.

Conduct updated membership discussions with each current member. I am more keen about equipping our folks to visit along with providing example while down-playing the perception that the pastor is the only one who visits the flock. One on one pastoral care is essential. Office hours will be provided, yet considering time constraints.

37. What importance should world missions have in local church life? Describe how you would promote missions in this church.

Help people see the bible equates Christian with missionary, be it local, regional, national or international. Many tribes are all around us who we desire to reach with the good news of Jesus. Promote missions by doing it, understanding "missions exists because worship doesn't."

As a congregation we need to discover afresh what the Bible says about ecclesiology and missiology. We are missionaries to Haverhill. We desire to be involved, as light and salt, in the affairs of the city where we reside, so much so that if we were

somehow removed from the city, they would actually be saddened – even though there may be differing opinions on many matters.

We promote a vision for our city, region and our world.

38. Describe your convictions regarding local church engagement with the poor of the community.

Creative, Spirit-led, serious, joyful engagement with the poor, meeting the physical and spiritual needs of the unfortunate, mentally ill, and special needs of our community. The breakfast for the homeless has been a beautiful expression of the love of Jesus.

39. Describe your convictions and pastoral practice relating to divorce and remarriage.

Matters are to be investigated carefully and wisely. Nothing hasty here. We must hear from all parties involved, weighing all things by the Word of God. Marital reconciliation is the first goal.

40. What are your convictions on the use of alcoholic beverages?

Drunkenness is sin. As directed by Romans 14 & 15 on matters indifferent (*adiaphora*), the use of alcohol in our day requires a sensitive, others-centered balance. In itself, there is no Biblical mandate to abstain from alcohol (DT 14.26 and many NT usages), yet there are parameters of its use only within a clear conscience and not hindering the conscience of the weak in faith. Liberty and wisdom in this are pleasing to God.

41. Describe your view of the role of women in the local church (Can a woman teach a mixed class of adults? Can a woman lead worship in a service? What office can a woman hold?)

The role(s) of women in the NT church are essential. Teaching younger women, children, helps, wisdom, organization, atmosphere setters, hospitality and love are just to name a few of the critical contributions of women in the church. Exegesis of the texts of scripture will limit the offices of elder/pastor and deacon to males, underscoring theological and not cultural reasons. Also males being managers of their own households are closely connected to such leadership in the church, both for elders/pastors and deacons.

At this point in my life, my conviction for male elders is in a closed fist. As for male/female deacons, I would enjoy further discussion and exegesis.

42. One commonality that growing, healthy churches have is vibrant ministries to youth and children. Describe how you would go about developing effective ministry to our teens and children.

Taking our cue more from scripture than from our culture, we would seek to minister the life of Christ to our youth and children in ways they understand and can relate with. We must discern what “programs” are outlined in the NT. Much of the influence upon our youth/children takes place in the home and in the context of church relationships.

I would seek to cultivate the reality of Christ to the souls of all ages, raising up those who would more closely oversee and be burdened for those in these ages. Caution must be exercised against creating age/gender/marital distinctions apart from the whole local body of Christ.

43. What is your position on the recent movement in churches to become “Seeker Sensitive” or “Seeker Driven”? Describe your vision for church growth.

Healthy sheep give birth to healthy sheep. Growing in the grace and knowledge of Christ, despite numbers, is the first growth interest. This growth in Christian maturity is by grace, as is numerical growth.

“God has called me to focus on biblical depth with my people He will take care of the breadth” -John MacArthur

44. What changes may be in store for our congregation if you become our pastor?

My greatest desire for the entire H.C.C. family is to become increasingly more Christ-like in spiritual maturity. Any changes that are proposed would be accomplished within a body context, given due diligence in vision-casting, discussion, questions and prayer. Some issues I am eager to discuss are:

- **Affirm a cohesive preaching and teaching vision, build symmetry in SS class, Sunday AM/evening and Wednesday nights**
- **Create a Sunday evening service: Public reading of scripture, prayer, praise, testimony**
- **Re-tool Wednesday nights**
- **Institute weekly communion: reasoning**
- **Revamp website / add blog / sermon audio / church videos**
- **Periodic seminars**
- **Local conferences**
- **Music nights**

There is a ton of potential at our doorstep. Lots of group brainstorming needed here!

45. Describe your operational strategy during the first 6 months with this congregation. (What would be your most important priorities?)

- **Getting increasingly acclimated and familiarized with each other, meeting much with elders and flock.**
- **Prepare a preaching schedule for the coming year.**
- **Leadership orientation, discussion and development. Attend business meetings.**
- **Assimilating into the life and flow of HCC. Seeking to discern how I might best serve the flock. Glean the greatest needs.**
- **Discussing what we discern as God's vision for HCC, hearing from leadership what necessary short range changes are needed.**
- **Mid and long range goal assessment.**

46. What would you identify as your passion in ministry?

A passion from God:

**To behold the Glory of God in Jesus Christ, in all things.
To enjoy the real fellowship with Jesus and the redeemed.
To share the life of Jesus with others in our city, region, world.**

A passion from the Holy Bible:

**To know God through Jesus as the focus of the entire Bible.
To enjoy serious, joyful study of the Bible.
To share what we learn of Jesus with others.**

A passion to see this fleeting, short life matter for the kingdom of God!

*"The greatest call of the Pastor is to know God more than we know anything
and to enjoy God more than we enjoy anything."*

– **John Piper, 1998 ETS Address**

Signature: 

Date: August 28, 2008