



Written By
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Our constitution mandates I, as the Senior Pastor, take one Sunday in the first month of the new year and give you, the church, a sermon on how we are doing, what our needs are, and where we are going in the year before us. Believe me, this is an important endeavor because the larger the church the more difficult it is to make sure important information like this is disseminated to everyone. With this venue, the majority of our church body will be brought together so we can head out together ... like a team.

And speaking of a team, I want to approach our State of the Church this year like a coach of a pro football team speaking with his players. Metaphors are great, instructive, and helpful tools in teaching, are they not? Jesus employed them; therefore, it doesn't hurt to tap into His pedagogical and proven model. So, in our metaphor, I'll play the head coach, we'll make the other pastors and directors the assistance coaches, the elders will be the board, you'll, of course, be the team, and the Trinity will be the franchise owners.

Back in the 70s when I played high school football my freshman year in High School, I vividly remember the old Chalk Talk from the head coach. Now teams have all kinds of slick technological devices to spruce up this powerful method of talking to the team, but back then we just had an old, black, dusty chalk board. Somebody wheeled it into the room where the team was sitting, the coach grabbed a piece of white chalk, and then he'd start in, drawing all kinds of circles and x's to let us know how we were doing on a given play and what we needed to do better. The visual, coupled with his insights not only got our attention, but helped us see how to function more effectively, and how to play to win more often than not.

So today, picture yourself sitting in a locker room. Each of you represents a player on this particular team called BCC. You're suited up, you're in shape, and you're ready to go, but before we hit the field for the next big game, we need to have an old fashioned Chalk Talk to make sure we are playing in order to bring glory and honor to the Franchise owners.

Where do we start? Good question. I'd say we first need to talk about how we know whether we have a strong, winning team, or a team needing a lot of work. Stephen A. Macchia's insightful book called *Becoming A Healthy Church: 10 Traits of a Vital Ministry* gives us ten traits to consider and compare ourselves too, as a team. This discussion could, ideally, involve several lengthy chalk talks; but for our purposes we'll have to limit our observations. Here are Macchia's big ten followed by my succinct thoughts:

- *God's Empowering Presence*. Check. Regarding the winning team called the early Church, it was said of them: "And everyone kept feeling a sense of awe ..." (Acts 2:43). The awe of God permeated their team. You couldn't go to a game and not sense Him. You couldn't talk with team members and not sense the presence of the loving, mighty, and living God they played for. Such is what is going on around here. God's not just in the building, He's living in and through His players who are collectively seeking to know Him and mature in their faith.
- *God-Exalting Worship*. Check. We all know there is a vast difference between a worship production and a worship service. Pastor Darren and his team know that too and guide us each Sunday into the presence of God, the franchise owner.
- *Spiritual Disciplines*. Check. Just as any winning team hits key and rigorous drills over and over again, we, too, provide training, at all age levels, for how to daily and personally get to know the One who owns this team. Whether you are in our innovative, creative children's program, or a team member of our high school program, you'll be taught the disciplines of a team member.
- *Learning and Growing in Community*. Check. One of the late, great players of our team, the Apostle Paul, (jersey number 77, which has long since been retired) once gave this advice to the team: "Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification" (From the playbook called Romans 14:19). We've taken his teaching to heart by creating a team where all team members are constantly encouraged to grow up in their personal relationship with God.
- *A Commitment to Loving and Caring Relationships*. Check. We're serious about implementing all the drills other inspired players of old gave us based on the direction of the Franchise owner, regarding loving one another (1 Peter 1:22), caring for one another (1 Corinthians 12:24-25), bearing one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2), encouraging and building up one another (1 Thessalonians 5:11) to name a few. Sure, we're not perfect, but we're serious about these life-giving, health-giving drills, and we have high expectations that you'll work on and master them too. I'd dare say, as your coach, that this is one major reason our team has grown so quickly over the last few years. It's because love, real Christian love is experienced here.
- *Servant-Leadership Development*. Check. Again, I quote from number 77, Paul, "From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work" (Ephesians 4:16). Ah, there it is in that last clause ... the key to a strong,

- maturing team: every team member is doing his/her part to meet the needs of the team, and they do it sacrificially around here. As a church of 2,900, as of last Sunday, we have many needs to play effectively, and I am pleased to watch the majority of your step up and serve as our Franchise Owner, Jesus, would. Take this verbal statement as a solid and affirmative slap on the shoulder pads.
- *An Outward Focus.* Check. We aren't just concerned about our team. No, we, based on the direction of the Franchise Owner, are deeply concerned about those who are not on this winning team, who are really on the losing team of our Adversary. Based on this, we take our Franchise Owner's Son's model seriously, "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost" (Luke 19:10). This is why we see so many people, of all ages, are trading teams. They are trading because we are faithful and strategic in calling them to place their faith in the Son of God who can and will save them and place them on His team of all teams. It is, however, complex and difficult to share with you all the amazing stories in such a large church. But rest assured there are many. Just two weeks ago a young man, from an atheistic family I spoke with several times between services trusted Christ as His personal Savior with one of our men. He is but one illustration of many.
 - *Wise Administration and Accountability.* Check. Show me a healthy church and I'll show you one which runs like a well-oiled machine. It's the kind of church which has clear operational systems, clearly defined job descriptions, strategic planning and implementation, goal setting, ample and comfortable facilities, and a commitment to excellence. With so many highly skilled leaders among us, who've been trained by the military, the government, or business, we have a team which knows all about the importance of administration and accountability, and it's just one more reason we qualify as a healthy team.
 - *Networking with the Body of Christ.* Check. One of our Franchise Owners, Jesus, prayed for us to be unified and to work together for the common good of the team (John 17:23), and we do, more often than not. We collaborate with each other, we share our vast and vital resources freely, we reach from one team unit to another to give help and assistance when we can, we reach out to our team members playing on foreign fields to assist them, and we know what or who needs prayer and we pray. This team talks, so if you just want a comfortable seat to sit in and then go home, this might not be the team for you. We have high expectations that you will purposely connect your life to that of other team members for the maturation of the team.
 - *Stewardship and Generosity.* Check. Again, we're a team committed collectively to the wise counsel of number 77, Paul: "Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously" (2 Corinthians 9:6). Because of your generous giving over the last six years, we've seen budget surpluses ranging from \$300,000 to \$800,000, we've paid off our last two building programs, and just before Christmas we paid off our last remaining debt on our youth building program. We are now

debt free. Amazing. Way to go team. And don't forget to give the Lord the praise for this accomplishment.

I wholeheartedly agree with Macchia that these are ten biblical earmarks of a healthy, winning spiritual team. Numbers can be deceiving. Sure the New Testament team kept track of them because they represented lives being impacted by the gospel of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:41,47; 4:4). But this wasn't the main criteria God used to determine the health of His team. He looked beyond the numbers, as we do, to the ten things we just talked about. Granted, we have grown, by God's leadership, in an amazing fashion over the last six years, moving from 900 total active congregants to 2,900; however, we know the numbers are not as important as the ten earmarks of a healthy team. I don't know what you are focusing on, but we, as coaches, are keeping our eyes on the proven concepts Franchise Owner says builds a winning team.

We are, in my estimation, a great team, one of the best I've ever coached. We have amazing talent, passionate players, and a wonderful sense of team spirit. But, as with any organization, there is always room for growth and change to make sure we remain this kind of healthy team and are, also, positioned for another winning season. Based on that, it's time to get down to the nitty, gritty of our Chalk Talk.

Chalk Talk Talking Points

Team Organization

Knowing how to build the organizational structure of a fast-growing team is no easy quest. We've changed and modified it a few years ago as we added more coaches and support staff to our team; however, even when we did it we knew two things: one, it wasn't a perfect structure, and two, it wouldn't be a forever structure. Since then, we've been studying how to best structure ourselves to maximize leadership cohesion, leadership mentoring and management, communication, decision-making, and the like.

After speaking with two consultants from the Sling Shot organization a few months ago, we learned, based on their analysis, that we were structured as a team with 600 team members. Naturally, we asked for their advice related to their personal expertise in large team environments, coupled with their exposure to large teams around the country. Their seasoned counsel said we need to limit the number of people our Executive Coach, Darren, oversees by forming an executive team, comprised of two key coaches who not only report directly to him, but who are responsible for other coaches and their respective teams. We believe this is a viable, helpful structure for us, so presently we are working on crafting it so we can, then, implement it.

By organizing our team in this fashion, not only will we be better positioned to achieve some of the goals I just mentioned, but our Coaches will be able to give more time and attention to other Coaches and their teams, there will be greater opportunity for sharing ministry needs between the various teams, and we'll be positioned to expand this model as the overall coaching staff expands. Instead of our Executive Coach being overwhelmed and overworked with his many ministry and leadership responsibilities because everyone reports directly to him, now that coaching model will be shared by other gifted Coaches/Pastors.

In addition to re-structuring the organizational structure of our team, we will work harder this year at building an even more unified, productive, and progressive team. To accomplish these goals, we've already instituted several changes. At the coaching level, we will

meet two times a month instead of four, giving us more time to mentor our team leaders and to have a larger group team time at a stated time during a given month. Our meetings have also been re-vamped. We've purposefully built in more study and prayer time, coupled with giving assignments for shepherding needs in our growing body and reports from the various ministry departments. We'll also be planning director level leadership retreats, and we'll have our customary Dream Days where we work specifically on forward planning.

We've also established a monthly general team meeting (Directors and support personnel) where we will pray for each other, and study the art of leadership. For part of this year we'll be studying John Maxwell's *The 17 Indisputable Laws Of Leadership*. We're also planning team-building full staff outings, we've created lunch times to get various team members together for fellowship, and we've instituted a Monday morning prayer time.

Team Finances

The annual budget for our franchise for 2015 is \$4,084,480. This means we will need \$340,373 monthly or \$78,548 weekly. Where do these monies come from? They come from you, the team members, as you are obedient to give to support the team. Currently, we average 725 who support the team during each quarter. I commend each of you for your sacrificial and planned giving. You positioned us last year to have another winning season for the Franchise Owner, but now another year is before us with new goals and needs. We know we can count on you for remaining obedient to sowing generously so you, along with this team, can reap generously.

I, on the other hand, challenge the rest of our team to prayerfully consider the biblical model of giving. My parents challenged me years ago, as a young team player, to give at least 10% of my earnings to God right off the top. Since, then, I've learned that while 10% is a good rule of thumb, it is not mandated by God. Paul gives us a glimpse at biblical giving when he writes:

Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also. ² On the first day of every week let each one of you put aside and save, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come (1 Corinthians 16).

From this inspired text we learn several things about giving. One, it is to be periodic and planned as opposed to haphazard and unplanned, viz., "on the first day of every week" or Sunday; two, it is for all team members, viz., "let each one of you put aside ...;" three, it is based not on a percentage but upon the degree of how God has prospered you. Logically, this means we are not to restrict our giving to a 10% figure, but should be open in our hearts before God to give more or less based on how we see Him working in our financial lives. Pragmatically, this means you could give 25% one year, and 8% the next year. It all depends on you and your relationship with the Lord, and is not, and should not be tied to a fixed percentage. That would be legalistic. Giving, on the contrary, is all about grace and freedom.

And let me say from experience, the maxim is true: You cannot out give God. It's equally true He will bless you when you give. Take, for instance, what happened to me as a new youth pastor at my first church. I made \$20,000 a year. It was tough. I had two children, a car payment, rent, utilities, and so forth. Really, we lived from check to check, but we still remained obedient to give ... and God always provided as we supported the team.

At the time, we drove a four-door Chevy Caprice Classic. At one point, I needed new tires but couldn't afford them, so I took the car to Big-O Tires for one more rotation. When I picked up the car later and returned to church, I got a call from the manager.

"Say, are you the guy with the Caprice Classic?"

"Yes, I am," I answered. "What do you want?"

"Well," he replied, "We are a test center for Michelin Tires, and we've been looking for a car with your wheel base for some new tires Michelin wants to market in the U.S. Would you be willing to have these new tires put on your car at no cost to you? We'll rotate and balance them for the life of the tire for free, and all you have to do is come in every 5,000 miles for us to take some measurements and readings. So, what do you say?"

I drove back to Big-O smiling all the way because God had honored and supported us as we had honored and supported the team. Such are the ways of God.

Now it is your turn this year to trust God with your finances and to step up and out to support the work of this winning team. Now it is your turn to receive your own God-stories as He blesses you for sowing generously based on how He has prospered you.

Team Leadership

As with any team, there is always a time for coaching transition, and we are in one of those times, as you know, for a variety of reasons. For our coaches who will be transitioning this year, we thank them for their sacrificial, loyal, and creative service to this team, we support them as they transition, and we now look forward to securing new coaches to lead these thriving ministries with the help of Sling Shot, one of the leading professional pastoral placement services in the United States.

Leadershipwise, here are the coaching positions we are currently looking for in 2015.

- *Children's Ministry.* We're looking for an individual who shares our ministry vision and mission, who holds to our stated ministry values, who will honor the great ministry DNA this ministry possesses, who is skilled at building and leading leaders, who possesses sound organization and administrative skills, who is a gifted and creative teacher, and who, of course, loves children.
- *Discipleship Ministry.* We're looking for an individual who possesses many of the concepts I just mentioned, plus one who has strong preaching/teaching gifts, coupled with the proven ability to lead many leaders in a large organizational ministry structure, and who possesses real strengths as an administrator and manager.
- *Multi-site Ministry.* We're looking for an individual who is a real lover of people, is skilled at teaching, is a leader who empowers leaders, one who knows how to oversee a diverse program, and who knows the value of teamwork within the context of a larger pastoral team.
- *Women's Ministry.* We found out recently that Deborah Shiess, our great Women's Director, will be moving in May. Her husband, who is currently in Qatar, will be receiving his own base command in Colorado, and she will be logically joining him. Deb had the hard job of following Pam Sanders, a real gifted women's leader among us, but she has taken this significant ministry to a whole new, creative level. We will truly miss her impact on the 500 women

on our team, but understand it's time to turn her loose to where God is leading her. Soon we will be launching a new search to secure another gifted, godly woman to guide this important ministry among us.

Securing the right leaders is one of the more important quests for our team this year, and we will be pouring a lot of quality time into this to make sure we isolate our Lord's chosen candidates. Please, be in prayer for us. Pray for wisdom, clarity of thought, and discernment. Pray also for those who will be moving on that God will bless them and open many wonderful doors for them to use their gifting to impact teams elsewhere in our country.

Team Needs

Most teams have players suited up two and three deep on any one given position. That's a great model, and one we need to continue to develop to make sure our ministry needs are staffed well. As you can imagine in a team this size it not only takes many team members to play in a game, there are also a plethora of needs. Here are some needs we have that we'd ask you to suit up for in 2015:

- *Children's Ministry.* Each Sunday this facet of our team needs 120 volunteers to play effectively. Currently, they need twenty-six people with a passion for building core essentials of the faith during our four worship services into the lives of children. Refer to the bulletin insert to isolate an area where you can serve, and you can also look at the posters in the children's wing for precise info on openings. Talk to Pastor TJ if you desire to get plugged into this area (703.425.0205, extension 143).
- *Youth Ministry.* As their attendance has also mushroomed, their need for workers on Wednesday and Thursday nights and Sunday mornings has also grown. Folks, these are exciting times. What better thing could you do than pour your spiritual life into that of a teen who is either searching to know God or desirous of walking close with Him. Give Pastor Matt (extension 145) or Pastor Dan (extension 125) a call if you feel led to assist them.
- *Life Groups.* Currently, we have 500 people in 55 Life Groups. Of these, eight are open to all; however, of these two are open for married couples, one is for young couples without children, and one is for wives of military/civilian employees. What this means is we need more small group leaders to accommodate all the people who want to be part of an all-important group. On Sunday, February 8 at 11 a.m., there will be a new leader interest meeting in M3-B. I'd encourage you to attend if you sense God leading you. Also on February 8 at 5 p.m. we have a Linked-In Life Group meeting in either the Student Aud or our new lobby. This is an excellent way to meet other Life Group leaders so you can find a group to plug into if you aren't currently in one. Life Groups are absolutely vital to the health of our team. Make 2015 the year you either join one or step into becoming a pivotal leader. Talk to our Life Group coordinator, Ramona (formally called our Assistant Director of

- Discipleship Ministries) if you need further assistance (730.425.0205, extension 136).
- *Van Drivers.* With almost 3,000 in attendance, we've really maxed out our parking lot, forcing us to establish a shuttle service from the Park N Ride on Old Keene Mill Road by Shoppers and Staples. Will you commit to taking the shuttle during either our second or third services? Sure, it's a little hassle not having your car with you in the lot, but it works great. I never have my car and I always take the church shuttle, as we challenge the rest of our staff and key leaders. To accommodate our growth and to continue to grow the shuttle is our only answer; therefore, I challenge you to leave your comfort zone and make this necessary sacrifice for the sake of a newcomer. And while we're talking about parking, I'd also counsel you to bring one car to worship if you can. We will offer this service during the second and third services. Look for our signage when you park your car at this location. Additionally, will you step up and become one of our much needed drivers? We estimate we'll need forty per Sunday in order for it to operate effectively. If you would like to volunteer, give Steffani, our Director of Operations a call (extension, 131).
 - *Worship Movement.* Because of space limitations during the two middle services, we are challenging those who can to start worshipping either in the first or fourth services. Since it is difficult for those with children and teens to make this move, we challenge those who have more flexibility in this area to consider one of our bookend worship services to free up space for others.
 - *New Servants.* With all this talk about serving, I must stress we need new servants, not old servants just shuffling from opportunity to opportunity. The last thing we want to do is get our team tired and burned out. Isn't that what opponents attempt to do in a game? Don't they try and keep the game pace going so fast they exhaust their opponent, making them prone to making mistakes. We want to circumvent this negative reality by challenging new team members to jump into the game and begin using their God-given spiritual gifts (Ephesians 4:11ff).
 - *Satellite Church.* Once we launch this much needed site in a good target area, we'll need a whole new group of servants and leaders to build and run it. That means we'll need to basically reduplicate all the great teams we have now in another location in our area. Be in prayer about how you can step into one of the key roles when they become available.
 - *Worship Ministry.* We're always in need of ushers, greeters, coffee team leaders, and audio and visual techs. If you have experience or ability in these areas, we'd love to hear from you.

Perhaps the easiest way to get ready to get plugged in to our team this year is to get a copy of our Go Opportunities form, available at the welcome desk. Fill it out, turn it in, and someone will follow up with you to assist you in being where God needs you on this team.

For all those of you who are working hard at making our team successful, I thank you. For all those who sense the Spirit nudging you to greater service in 2015, I say you won't be disappointed for getting off the bench and into the game.

Lastly, we need to talk about ...

Game Venues

In order to accommodate our rapid growth and to provide quality ministry at the same time, your Elder Council and pastoral staff, combined with the Master Planning Committee, and the Capital Campaign Committee believe we need to create two new game venues, or worship environments.

Game Venue #1: A New Worship, Youth, Educational, and Office Facility. The best way to show you what we are proposing is to show you a computer generated fly-through created by Intec, our architectural team. [Show video]

The project will double our existing combined square footage by giving us 50,000 more square feet. It will give us a larger lobby to accommodate more worshippers, a baptismal for intimate services, a larger worship environment, an office complex for our entire team to be in one location, a new and much larger kitchen, a state of the art new youth facility which will be in our existing worship space, plus much, much more.

The cost of the program is estimated at \$13 million. Presently, through the fine leadership of our Capital Campaign team led by Keye Sabol and Steve Cantrell, we have received \$2,005,205 in pledges from 182 people. Of this figure, we have received \$853,099 in cash since the first of October. In order to begin building, we need \$8 million in hand given our current giving and financial status, so we are well on our way. What we are asking is that you prayerfully consider how you can support this important effort to reach even more people for Jesus Christ. Some can give a one-time lump sum figure, while others will want to give on a monthly basis. Regardless of how God moves you, please realize we are working within a three year window; therefore, time is of the essence.

"Just how much should I give?" I've been asked several times. If you break it down based on the giving units we have, it amounts to between \$8,000-\$10,000 per giving unit. Many can do this, and have. Many can do more than this, and they have. Other can do less, but together we can all realize the worthy endeavor God has put before us. For my family, we are simply doubling our yearly giving to the Lord. Perhaps this can serve as a helpful guideline for you, too.

Game Venue #2: Satellite Worship Venue. I'm sure this conjures up many questions. I'll pose the key ones:

- *What is this?* It is a re-duplication of our ministry DNA, of our mission, of our vision, and our values in a key target area in Northern Virginia.
- *Where will it be located?* We don't know yet, so be in prayer about the process we will go through to isolate where God would have us.
- *How will it function?* It will have a site Pastor, along with a full ministry team. Messages will be video in nature and will be projected on a large screen with great sound. Another live worship team will guide this church in their worship of the Lord.
- *How will we populate it?* We will be challenging a core group of you to become part of this new ministry.

Over the last year, your Elder Council and pastoral leadership team have been studying this revolutionary, creative, and powerful ministry form for growing churches like ours. There is much more to learn, so we covet your prayers, but we are firmly convinced that this is the way God wants us to go in order to reach more people in Northern Virginia for Him and to train them to grow as His disciples.

As you can see, God has blessed us in a big way and He has given us a big work to do. We've got great coaches and a great team so I know we can and will rise to the occasion before us. So, before we leave this Chalk Talk let me encourage you: *Let's go get 'em team.*