

June 2009

Dear Harvest Hickory Family,

We are thrilled to be partnering with you. When you decided to become part of Harvest Bible Fellowship we requested, and you granted us, the privilege of taking the lead in finding your new Senior Pastor. It is a most significant decision, and we have approached it in that way.

Much prayer and energy has gone into this search. We know many of you have been fervently praying about this also. After looking at and speaking with a number of qualified candidates, we are excited to put forth Kurt Gebhards to lead the church in Hickory.

Kurt is currently serving on the staff of Grace Community Church in Panorama City, California. For detailed information on Kurt, view his attached resume and his vision and practice of ministry. Also attached are personal recommendations from the Senior Pastor of Kurt's church, Dr. John MacArthur—one of the most recognized and highly regarded Bible teachers of our era and Dan Dumas, Executive Vice President of Southern Seminary and Pastor-Teacher of Eastside Community Church.

And why does Harvest Bible Fellowship believe Kurt is the right man for Hickory?

He has proven the necessary godly character, communication gifts, leadership skills, shepherding passion, people skills and disciple-making abilities to make a dynamic impact for Christ's kingdom in Hickory.

At 37, Kurt is a passionate theologian, devoted family man, and vibrant people person. He has been married to his lovely wife, Julie, since 1997 and God has blessed them with six (wow) beautiful children. His combination of experience and youth translate into great energy and enthusiasm.

Kurt will be in Hickory the weekend of June 12-15. He will be meeting with your leaders and staff, and will preach on Sunday, June 14. All in attendance are invited to **join us for a buffet lunch after the service** in the school gym, where you can meet and talk personally with him.

Obviously, Kurt's becoming the Senior Pastor is not a done deal yet—he has never been to Hickory and you haven't met him. But we are excited to introduce him to you and believe that if he is God's man it will become abundantly evident to all. We look forward to seeing you on June 14.

Bill Molinari
Director of Operations
Harvest Bible Fellowship

Kurt Gebhards

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JOB OBJECTIVE

I desire to find a church where I can invest my life as a senior pastor. For me there is no joy as serving the Lord through shepherding the flock and preaching the Word of God. I desire to find a congregation that is eager to learn and apply the Word of God and that is desirous of godly shepherding. God's great glory is the exciting purpose of all things especially the ministry of the church.

CURRENT POSITION

Pastor of the young professionals' ministry (The Foundry) at Grace Community Church (GCC) since 2002.

Pastor of Children's Ministries at GCC since 2006.

Ministerial service at GCC since 1994.



MINISTRY SYNOPSIS

- Enjoyed the privilege of preaching every week to adults for 10 years.
- Privileged to shepherded 2 groups of 100-200 adults for 10 years.
- Energized by developing leaders for 10 years.
- Asked to bring renewal and revitalization to 3 ministries at GCC.

MINISTRY EXPERIENCE

All ministries are at GCC unless otherwise noted.

The Young Professionals Ministry (The Foundry) 2002 to present

- Preaching and teaching weekly
- Shepherding this precious flock of 200 godly saints
- Casting vision for a brand new ministry
- Training leadership and curriculum
- Leveraging the opportunity of a ministry that features 65% turnover per year

Children's Pastor and Parenting 2006 to present

- Revitalizing and refocus a ministry to 2500 kids
- Steering cautiously a large ministry through a season of philosophical change
- Training and discipleship of 30 top-echelon leaders
- Encouraging and inspiring a multi-tiered staff
- Leading and managing a paid staff of 40
- Stewarding a \$500,000 budget

Elder at GCC 2003 to present

- Preaching in GCC Pulpit
- Serving as a staff elder

Leadership and Influence Training 2001 to present

- Developing a 30-lesson biblical theology of leadership
- Teaching leadership in The Foundry, Childrens Ministry and a Logos class
- Leading a class of 25 lay and staff members to maximize leadership effectiveness
- Discipling leaders to manifest Christ-likeness and biblical wisdom in ministry

Logos Equipping Ministries 2003 to 2006

- Adjusted the entire Logos curriculum to meet current needs at GCC
- Spearheaded a \$90K budgetary reversal in the first fiscal year
- Rebranded Logos Equipping Ministries
- Hosted large Life Application Conferences with internationally known speakers

Shepherds Conference 2003 to 2006

- Served on the leadership team for 3 years
- Created the Shepherds Shoppe to encourage pastors in their ministry

Youth Pastor at Valley Sa Rang Church 2000 to 2005

- Led worship service including all aspects
- Discipled junior high through college-aged students

Shepherd of the College of the Canyons Study 1999 to 2002

- Conducted all aspects of pastoral ministry and teaching for a Bible study of 150
- Evangelized and discipled college-students and lay-staff

EDUCATION

1993 B.A. in Economics Liberty University

1998 Masters of Divinity The Master's Seminary

2007 Masters of Theology: New Testament The Master's Seminary

MINISTRY PASSIONS

My great heartbeat is to **communicate the Word of God** to people in such a way that they are better equipped, more encouraged and inspired to magnify and worship God. I feel no greater joy than to **preach and teach God's perfect Word** to God's people.

It is a privilege to labor as a **shepherd**, counseling and caring for sheep. To **lead and guide** the entire flock is a challenging and extremely rewarding task.

I also have a strong desire for **leadership development**. It is also an interest of mine to develop ministries. To capture ideas and thoughts and to implement new concepts is an ongoing pattern of my ministry. Another personal passion is **to maximize the potential of the church** for the glory of God.

I have been asked on three occasions by the leaders of GCC to come into a ministry and be an agent of change, **to bring about renewal and a renewed passion and direction**. In each of these cases that change has included casting a **fresh vision**, defining a new ministry culture and promote positive change.

Writing is another interest of mine. I am thankful for the opportunity to contribute a chapter to two of John MacArthur's books *Fool's Gold* and *Right Thinking in a World Gone Wrong*.

FAMILY

Kurt Hinricks Gebhards	37	09/15/71
Julie Ann Gebhards	33	05/04/75
Reilly Hinricks Gebhards	9	09/25/99
Shea Elizabeth Gebhards	7	06/20/01
McKinley May Gebhards	6	12/30/02
Camdyn Kya Gebhards	4	03/23/04
Macy Ann Gebhards	2	02/16/07

Married on November 22, 1997



Vision and Practice of Ministry

What is commonly referred to as a philosophy of ministry, is actually a theology of ministry. Ministry is complex and all pastors and churches are unique. That is why ministry style and dynamics are important considerations when matching up candidates and churches. Below is a condensed version of my philosophy of ministry. I hope that this document honors Scripture since it is God's ministry that we conduct, and it is He who has made me who I am.

The first section is, "A Vision for Ministry." This first section asks the question: "What do I dream of when I consider the church of my future?" This section gives a vision of the church and a vision of my pastoral ministry.

The second section is, "The Practice of Ministry." This section answers the question: "How is that vision accomplished, using what spiritual practices?" This section begins with a discussion of the great tension within evangelicalism between grace and truth, and continues with the practices of both an maximized church and the practices of my pastoral ministry.

A Vision for Ministry

A Compelling Vision of Christ's Church

Consider a place where joy, humility and love sprout from wellsprings of conviction and trust. Picture a place where a vision for God's glory is growing within and resonating without (1 Thess. 1:8). Envision a church where Jesus' compassion is extended to all and generosity is witnessed in acts of joyful sacrifice and service (Col. 3:12-16). Think of a vibrant spiritual home where the emotional hurts and temptations in life are cared for by godly friends who intercede in prayer and in extending personal help (1 Pet. 4:8-11). Contemplate a community of unity where truth and grace glorify the Savior and resonate in evangelism (John 17:21-24). Imagine a place where burdens are shared by Christian brothers and sisters who encourage you while joys are multiplied as Christ changes lives (Gal. 6:1-2).

This is the church of my dreams. This is the picture that the New Testament paints for us and I know that it is still possible today (Acts 2:41-46). The church is not a perfect place, but in a sense it reaches to heaven's gates. The church I dream of is inspired by a clear vision of her Savior and the cherishing of His gospel.

My Personal Vision of Pastoral Leadership

I want to live and die shepherding God's flock. As a Christian leader I have a joyous accountability to God for the condition of His church on earth. My capacity to perform the work of a shepherd comes from the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. My entire life can be condensed into one simple statement: I was put here on earth to be a strong lover of Jesus Christ and to spread a passionate zeal for the glorious God of redemption.

To help accomplish that goal, I believe God has placed within me three particularly strong desires: 1) to preach the Word of God, 2) to inspire the church to be all that it can, and 3) to develop the next generation of Christian leaders so that they always seek to glorify God and magnify the Savior.

1) I have never wavered from God's gracious call to me into the preaching ministry. God loves mankind and has mercifully given all things that pertain to life and godliness in His Word (2 Pet. 1:3). It is a privilege to dedicate myself to the craft of preaching, seeking to improve and develop my ability to reach people with the entire counsel of God. In my preaching, I always desire to be dependent upon prayer, the Holy Spirit and the perfect Word of God.

2) I am excited to live for the glory of God by helping to build His church (Eph. 3:21). The church glorifies God as His church's shepherds tend to and feed the flock with great care and sacrifice. Spiritual oversight includes not only preaching but also shepherding and counseling. One key way to maximize the effectiveness of the church is to train all in the church to be disciplers who serve in an atmosphere of

openness, trust, sacrifice and love. The products of such an environment include unity (Eph. 4:1-6), love (1 Pet. 4:8), and grace (2 Pet. 1:2). This is how the glory of God is seen in His bride.

3) I strive to improve the quality of the leaders around me. Through active discipleship and targeted teaching, leaders are trained up in the ministry (2 Tim. 2:2). Leadership grows as people are instructed about its importance and inspired concerning its impact. The Bible speaks directly and extensively regarding leadership, and some of the essential pillars of Christ-honoring leadership that I seek to reproduce in others include striving after Christ, humility, wisdom, and love.

The practice of ministry is a joy for believers. However, its enjoyment involves many different facets and features. This second section seeks to address some practical dynamics in ministry. First, for both believers and churches, there is a tension between grace and truth, and this is an issue which I wish to navigate smoothly. Second, flourishing churches tend to exhibit certain characteristics, and I provide a list of ten. Third, every pastor brings personal ministry dynamics and traits to the church he pastors, and there are certain traits and spiritual gifts that I want to use and continue developing in order to build up God's church.

The Practice of Ministry

A Great (and Unnecessary) Tension

The church of Jesus Christ is designed to be a difference-making institution. Her posture is not merely defensive (Matt. 16:18). The church's stance is one of eagerly spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ, which is an assault on the very power of spiritual deception (2 Cor. 4:8).

One challenge that Christians often face in the battle for lost souls is how to be discerning without being combative. It is detrimental to fruitful ministry for a church to be perceived as combative, self-righteous or judgmental. Since all earnest Christians look to the Bible and desire to understand it accurately, a leader and pastor must be careful not to send harsh signals. The key to avoiding the perception of combativeness is humility, joy, integrity, grace, compassion, vulnerability, and being approachable. One challenge that a pastor faces is to know the Scriptures enough to speak with God's authority, while knowing Christ enough to walk in His humility.

Ultimately, there should be no tension between grace and truth. They complement each other perfectly when we walk the path of faithfully following Christ as our example.

Ten Priorities of a Flourishing Church

These ten virtues and practices describe a flourishing church. If these ten practices are maximized by the church, she will glorify God.

- 1) Worship—A high view of God and a passion for the Savior (Psalm 63:1-5).
- 2) God's Holy Word—Prioritizing the Word of God (Psalm 138:2).
- 3) Prayer—Dependence on God's power through prayer, the believer's lifeline (Heb. 4:16).
- 4) Gospel-centered—Gospel saturated environments that draw sinners to salvation (Rom. 1:16-17).
- 5) Humility—Vulnerability and openness as difficult but necessary aspects of ministry (2 Cor. 6:11-13).
- 6) Commitment—A flourishing church with active and enthusiastic involvement by all (Eph. 4:12-16).
- 7) Holiness—Integrity before God and men (Heb. 12:14).
- 8) Sacrifice—Living out the gospel as a motivation for people to live sacrificially (Phil. 2:3-4).
- 9) Zeal—A zealous heart of desire for the Savior, for Christ deserves nothing less (1 Pet. 2:7).
- 10) Leadership Development—God's purposes rise and fall on the godliness and effectiveness of leaders (Mark 10:35-45).

My Pastoral Leadership, Values and Spiritual Gifts

The glory of God is the driving motivation for my life. I am ready to make the greatest difference that I possibly can for His great name (2 Cor. 12:15). I desire to serve at a church whose goal is to make a difference for Christ in the world and is eager to run the race with hearty endurance.

We have been told by demographers and statisticians that the 80/20 rule, where 20% of the people do 80% of the work, is inviolable. Well, these people were not thinking of a fully-functioning church where the Lord is honored with glad-hearted and grace-motivated servants. These people were not envisioning a kingdom where the King's subjects joyfully seek to please the Master with their entire being. I want to go to the grave fighting to break the 80/20 rule.

One of the keys to accomplishing this, and one of the first tenets of Christian ministry, is that relationships are the basis of all ministry. We must humbly relate to those in our care. Accordingly, the church should be a loving and welcoming place, where visitors should expect a warm and genuine reception of grace.

There are of course other tools that help accomplish Christian ministry, and below is a list of ministry values and spiritual gifts that mentors and leaders in my life have affirmed as established and growing.

Personal Ministry Values

- 1) Humility—I strive to keep myself in check always, reminding myself daily of my sin, weakness and desperate need of a merciful Savior (1 Pet. 5:5).
- 2) Authenticity—By recognizing who I really am, a sinner redeemed only by the grace of God, I seek to assist others by genuinely relating to them with empathy (1 Tim. 1:12-15).
- 3) Integrity—I am who I am wherever I go and whoever I am with, and God is ever before me (2 Chron. 16:9).
- 4) Community—It is critical to develop a body of believers which is passionate about unity and corporate worship.
- 5) Development—Personal growth is essential to my race in Christ (2 Pet. 1:5-8).
- 6) Vision—To consider what God has prepared for His saints is to envision an incredible future beyond our wildest redemptive hopes (1 Cor. 2:9-10).
- 7) Accountability—I constantly seek wisdom from mentors and confess to them my sin and my struggles (Prov. 11:14; 15:22).
- 8) Outreach—Evangelism and the warm reception of visitors are strategic dynamics with respect to outreach and church development (1 Pet. 3:15).

Spiritual Gifts and Strengths

- 1) Expository preaching that inspires and challenges Christian growth.
- 2) Theological teaching that instructs the mind.
- 3) Practical and helpful shepherding that expresses care and develops mature believers.
- 4) Leadership development that builds the future of the church.
- 5) Vision that provides clarity for church ministries.
- 6) Motivation for others to serve the Lord with gladness.
- 7) Discernment to assist with the Word of God.
- 8) Equipping God's people for lives of fruitful ministry.
- 9) Reaching and speaking to young families.
- 10) Careful counseling from the Word of God to people who are hurting and in need.

May 2009

To Harvest Hickory Family from Dr. John MacArthur:

It is my privilege to be able to recommend Kurt Gebhards as a faithful and gifted man of God who has given evidence of a true pastoral call and heart for expository preaching. He is also very gifted in administrative skills with attendant blessing.

He has served the Lord well in his various ministries at Grace Community Church for several years. He has been involved in a leadership and shepherding role among the people of our congregation as an elder, pastor-teacher of a large singles group, and periodic pulpit supply for me when I have been away. Kurt also ably and creatively provided oversight of our Children's Ministry that has served the needs of literally thousands of parents and children at our church. He loves Christ, has a passion for God's Word, and is fully committed to biblical ministry.

Kurt is an exemplary Christian in every respect of his life. He is happily married and enjoys the full support of his wife, Julie. The passion of their hearts and positive outlook on life are both evident as well as a pleasure to be around. I believe that Kurt's life and priorities are such that bring honor to the Lord.

In closing, there is a warmth about Kurt that is attractive and winsome. His eagerness to be a faithful servant of the Lord is a quality that I am confident will result in much fruit in the service of the King. I would encourage you to freely seek the Lord in regard to his involvement as the Senior Pastor of your church.

Yours for the Master,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John MacArthur". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

John MacArthur
Pastor-Teacher

JM:pr

May 2009

To the Harvest Hickory Family from Dan Dumas:

Having served along side of Kurt for many years I would strongly recommend him for a pastor-teacher position anywhere on the planet.

Kurt is an energetic, character-qualified, ministry-minded, content-driven leader as well as a loving husband and diligent father.

Kurt is best described as a lover of the local church with a passion to explicate the Scriptures, disciple others, deploy his strong gifts of ministry innovation, the discipline to work hard and a thorough grasp of a team-ministry philosophy.

I cannot commend him enough as a fellow brother and good gospel soldier of Jesus Christ.

Dan Dumas
Executive Vice President Southern Seminary
Pastor-teacher of Eastside Community Church
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