

January 5/6, 2002

The State of the Church

Lincoln Berean Church

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[Pastor Mark Heilman, Builders Pastor]: “We have a variety of ministries here at LBC that span the generations. This past Tuesday we welcomed into our church family our newest addition, Emily Grace Webb, who was born on New Year’s Day. And tomorrow, our oldest member, Isabelle Lampshire, will celebrate her 99th birthday. We believe that we have the same commitment to both Emily and to Isabelle to present every person in every generation complete in Christ. So that you can get some of that picture, I’ve asked Nikki Smith and her grandfather, Vernon Smith, to share about how God has ministered to them through this church and opportunities that they’ve had to minister as well.”

[Nikki Smith]: “A couple ministries that have really impacted me and I have been thankful for have been the Jr. High and Sr. High ministries which I’ve been involved in. In the Junior High Ministry, Paul Lucks made it important that we develop a personal relationship with Jesus after we ask Him to be our Savior. He taught us how to do that and encouraged us in that area. And John Matzke does the same thing in the Senior High. John is just very real with us and shares the struggles that he’s having and encourages us. I’ve really been blessed to be a part of those two ministries.

Another ministry that I work with right now is Honeybees (3 yr. olds) on Wednesday nights. I’ve been amazed by these kids as they show unconditional love. They don’t care about who I am outside of Honeybees. They don’t care about my social status or anything like that. They just love me and they grab my hand and want to be with me. It has really taught me a lot, especially as I go to school with whomever I come in contact with throughout my day—just to try to look at them through the eyes of a little child. Children don’t judge people; they grow up and learn to judge people—we all do. So it’s been good for me to be with these kids and learn, again, to love people with the same unconditional love that these kids have shown me.

[Vernon Smith]: Bonnie and I have been at Lincoln Berean Church for the past seven years and we’ve learned to love the church. We love every part of the church—the sermons, the fellowship, the friendship, the way God is working here. Souls are being saved and people are accepting Jesus as their Savior. The work of missions, both foreign and home missions, is being put at a high priority level. The spiritual needs of every part of the church are being met. My wife and I belong to the YAH’s (the Young at Heart group). We meet in probably the nicest room in the whole new part of the building [the Fellowship Hall]. We can’t figure out why you’ve done that, except maybe to put us near the kitchen because you know we love to eat.

We struggle to stay busy. Our value to the church, we acknowledge, and our energy levels are much diminished—we agree to that. But some of us are singing in the choir; others are in growth groups; and a team from our class goes to Lancaster Manor to minister there by holding a church service. We do what we can. We’re very acquainted with the city hospitals—either we’re in the hospital or we’re visiting a friend who is. But life is good and we enjoy one another and we love our Lord. We appreciate so much you folks, as we toddle up the aisle and out into the foyer the best we can. Our knees are not the best anymore, but you’re patient with us and you love us the way we are. We appreciate that. But we do like our rocking chairs. And, Nikki, when you see us in the rocking chair and our eyes are closed, it’s because our arthritis doctor said, “Stay off your knees.” So we pray in our rocking chair. Or if you see us out walking, that’s a power time when we pray. We love this church. It is God’s family at its best.

Pastor Bryan Clark’s Message

We are the church—the Body of Christ established to represent Jesus to the world. One of my favorite images in the Bible is that we are a bride, being made ready for her bridegroom. I have seen it many times when that bride appears in the doorway adorned to meet her bridegroom. That is what we are preparing for.

The church is a family—it’s young and old coming together to accomplish the mission. There is not another organization that features such diversity of people coming together as one to accomplish a common purpose. The church is unique and it is special

This past week and a half I have sat by the bedside watching an 8 1/2 year old boy with cerebral palsy slip into eternity. I’ve watched as streams of people have come through to acknowledge how this boy, who can’t speak words, doesn’t see or run, doesn’t play as other children, but has touched their lives deeply. How can you explain how Matthew DeBoer, who has little value to the world, has been so profoundly used to introduce God to others? It’s because the Kingdom of God has a different value system. To the world he is a tragedy... to God he is fearfully and wonderfully made. He is here on assignment with a calling and purpose, and if you sat in that hospital room with me the past several days you could not deny that Matthew’s calling has been accomplished in remarkable fashion.

That’s the miracle of the church in the world today: Everyone called...everyone important...everyone necessary and useful for eternal Kingdom purposes.

We want to give you a state of the church report and seek to better inform you what lies ahead in 2002, and what areas will be of special focus this coming year. As we continue to grow, keeping everyone in alignment and knowing what’s happening and why is a great challenge. Our goal is to inform you where we’re at and where we are headed as we begin 2002.

LBC Ministry Plan

Each area on the pie chart (below) represents a different ministry area of our church. Inside each pie wedge is a financial figure representing what portion of the budget basically goes to that ministry area. You need to understand that the figure for each ministry area includes not only the budget for that ministry, but also salaries, building costs, building usage, utilities, and all of the things which it actually takes to make ministry possible.



Each month you will hear from the various ministry areas, represented in the pie chart, to learn more about what God is doing in the lives of people. We want you to celebrate with us what God is doing to change lives through the ministries of Lincoln Berean Church. We want you to see that your service and your giving translates into changed lives, as people are in the process of becoming complete in Christ.

Whether you mow the lawn or work in the nursery or are a greeter or a red vest team member, the things you will hear in these reports are part of the greater ministry of the body which you serve. Therefore, you will share in the rewards. In other words, every time you hear an encouraging Loop story you can say with confidence, "I was a part of that" because you served the body.

As with any organization, leadership is a key in accomplishing the mission. It's not that leaders are more important. They are *not*. It's just that leaders bear the responsibility of creating an environment where everyone can flourish according to their calling and giftedness. Over the last several years we have been reorganizing ourselves internally to best address the growth now and in the future. We would like to explain how our ministry staff is organized.

LBC Leadership Structure

Our desire is to experience authentic Christian community at every level of ministry, creating a team-based ministry. The lone ranger was nonexistent in the New Testament church, therefore that style of ministry should not be encouraged here.

(See the LBC Leadership Structure chart on reverse side)

Our Official Board is at the top of the structure. Out of the Official Board flows the Staff Directional Team, who are members of the Official Board. The Staff Directional Team oversees the daily management responsibilities of the church. Each staff directional team member has a specialty area of service in the body. That staff directional team member then resources the body in that specialty.

For example, Mark Kremer's specialty area is small groups. He is the small group resource throughout the body to train leaders and give direction to small groups in our church. Donn Stoner does teambuilding; Dick LeBlanc does administration and service network; Jeff Petersen does missions and outreach; and I, myself, oversee the Staff Directional Team. It is also our commitment as a Staff Directional Team to model authentic Christian community and a team-based ministry. Our desire, then, is to create the same authentic community among the rest of the ministry staff.

To accomplish this, each staff directional team member shepherds a grouping of ministry area leaders or staff. For example, Mark Kremer shepherds the Men's Ministry, the Children's Ministry, the Whole 'n One Ministry, and the Adult Education Ministry. These ministry area leaders, in turn, create this shepherding environment among their leadership teams throughout the ministry area. This is our strategy for putting into place much of what we learned in 1 John about community. It must start with the leaders. Not only does this keep ministry healthy, but it also keeps all ministry areas aligned with the whole of the church.

North Church Plant Target Area

As we begin the new year, there are a number of areas that we want to focus our attention on in 2002. The first area of focus I'd like to address is the north church plant. We believe God is leading us to hive off several hundred people from this body to start a significant work in north Lincoln. We have formed a North Church Plant Directional Team, which has met monthly since

September. This team is made up of men and women who have committed to go with the north church plant. Our first order of business was to define our target area.

For our north church plant project, we have targeted those living in the area from Adams Street north, from NW 56th street on the west, to 120th St. on the east, and north to Bluff Rd. and beyond. The demographics and needs for the neighborhoods between “O” Street and Adams Street are very unique and would require a different approach to ministry. We are not neglecting that area, but working through City Impact to plant churches in that area as well. This past Christmas Eve you generously gave over \$10,000 to get that church planting effort off the ground. Thank you for your commitment to build the Church in our inner city.

As for our north church plant, we’ve gathered the basic demographics of who lives in this target area. The north church will be similar to LBC, but will also reflect some differences to more effectively reach unchurched people in north Lincoln. In the foyer there is a map that shows how many households from north Lincoln currently attend LBC. The number is significant. Let’s hear why one long-time LBC couple is committed to going with the north church plant:

Video tape of Pastor Mark Kremer interviewing Rod and Jeannine Moore:

[Pastor Kremer] “I’m sitting with Rod and Jeannine Moore, who are great friends at Lincoln Berean Church. How long have you attended Lincoln Berean?”

[Rod] “We started attending Berean in 1986, when we moved here from Curtis, Nebraska, transferring from the University out there to the campus here in Lincoln.

[Pastor Kremer] “What kind of things have you been involved in at LBC?”

[Jeannine] “Growth groups, Sunday School class, other activities such as Greeters.”

[Pastor Kremer] “I know I’ve met you at the door ... a number of times. You’ve been part of the directional team for the new north church plant. After all these years here at Lincoln Berean and the involvements you’ve had, what is it that is motivating you to be a part of this team?”

[Jeannine] “I hope to retire from the University of Nebraska this year, and I’ve asked the Lord, ‘What would you like me to do?’ And He said He wanted me to help plant this church in the north part of Lincoln. It really excited me, because I just think it will be so great watching boys and girls, men and women, who have not been involved in a church in Lincoln, come to know the Lord Jesus Christ. And it’s also something that Rod and I can work together on in this team.”

[Pastor Kremer] “Is there anything in particular that you’re very excited about, when you think about the north church plant and the opportunities that it presents to us?”

[Rod] “The demographics of north Lincoln indicate that there are a lot of unchurched families. For some reason or other, a lot of people in the north part of Lincoln will not cross ‘O’ Street to go to church, so they are unchurched. And if Berean had a presence in north Lincoln, I think we’d be attractive to people who are unchurched. We also know there are a number of people who are currently attending Lincoln Berean who already live in north Lincoln and would consider becoming a part of that congregation. So, I think I’m looking at it from the need of going after the unchurched people in north Lincoln and giving them the opportunity to sit under some good, strong Bible teaching and become involved in a good Bible-based church.”

[Pastor Kremer] “Absolutely. And that area of the city is growing, as well. There is a lot of new development and a new high school going in there. So, again, really our motivation in doing all of that is to reach people for Christ and have a presence in their community. We are very excited about the fact that you two, at this point in your life, are stepping out by faith to be a part of this. And Rod, you’re on the search committee for the new Senior Pastor for that church plant, so we’re going to be spending a lot of time together over the next few weeks as we go through the resumes we have.”

[Rod] “Yes, that’s exciting.”

[Pastor Kremer] “It’s going to be very exciting over the next months, just to continue to see God’s hand in the whole thing. Thank you so much for your willingness to be a part of it.”

Losing a couple the quality of the Moores is a significant loss to Lincoln Berean Church, and there will be many like them whom God will call to go. But in the greater vision for the Kingdom of God we consider it a privilege to send them out to establish this significant new work. God will be faithful to replace what we lose as we take this significant step of faith.

Our next critical step is to hire the church plant pastor. Our search committee has collected many resumes so far and will begin to make contacts and narrow the potential pastors to a short list this month. Please pray with us as we take this critical step of selecting a pastor for this new church. In addition, in the next weeks we will be contacting all households north of “O” street who currently attend Lincoln Berean—to encourage them to begin now assembling in small groups to create a base from which the church plant can build. Please understand no one is obligated to go with this church plant regardless of where you live. We only want people to go who feel God has called them to be a part of this new work. However, even if you live north and plan to continue to attend LBC, we would still encourage you to become part of a small group. That is our next focus area.

Small Groups

While we’ve had small groups in the past, we are bringing them much more front and center as a key element of our strategy to accomplish our mission. We will become a church of small groups, as reflected in the following statement:

Our Small Group Vision Statement:

- **To see all regular attenders at LBC connected in a small group where they can share their lives in Christ together in intentional authentic relationships with others.**
- **To see every small group become an effective laboratory for helping people live out our seven core values, becoming a primary expression of authentic Christian community.**

As you can see, our vision is to see everyone connected to a small group of some type. This may be a service team, a support or recovery group or simply a growth group. Another way of saying this is that we desire to see that every person who regularly attends Lincoln Berean is shepherded and disciplined. We don’t want anyone falling through the cracks, which is a concern in a church our size. Small groups are the best way to see this doesn’t happen.

One question I often receive is: What is the next step for someone who is an attender and wants to go the next step in his or her spiritual journey? There are three core classes that everyone needs to be aware of. Getting these classes firmly established will be a strategic area of focus this year.

Discovery Class

The first class is the **Discovery Class**:

“Discovery” is a six-week spiritual journey into the mission, core values and people of Lincoln Berean Church. It is the primary place of connecting in relationships with others and discovering what God wants to do in your life.

Discovery is the starting place for most new attenders. This is the class for those interested in pursuing church membership. It is the class for all who want to move from an attender to the next step in their spiritual journey. Here are some quotes from people who have taken the discovery class:

“Thank you so much for helping me understand what it means to become complete in Christ and how that can happen here at Lincoln Berean.”

“Discovery has given us the big picture of what Lincoln Berean is all about.”

“We’ve really enjoyed making new friends through this class. We feel more at home here now.”

Everyone at LBC needs to be aware that the first step beyond merely attending a worship service is the Discovery Class. This way you can help direct others who are ready to take that next step. If people ask you where they need to go to get beyond just attending church, your answer would be: Discovery! Our goal is to offer the Discovery Class at different hours on a regular basis as one of our core classes.

Journey Class

The second core class is the **Journey Class**:

“Journey” is a small group environment for exploring the basics of what it means to have a personal relationship with God. It will help you take the first steps on your journey of faith with Jesus Christ.

Some of you are in the process of trying to figure out what’s true and what it means to become a Christian and have a personal relationship with Jesus. For those of you, the Journey may be your first step, even before the Discovery class. Many have taken this class and found it to be very helpful in sorting out various issues on their spiritual journey. Again, our desire is to offer this core class at multiple times on a regular basis for those who are still in the seeking phase of their spiritual journey.

Connections Class

The third of our core classes is the **Connections Class**:

“Connections” will help you discover how God has called you to serve, based upon your interests, your giftedness and your personality.

We believe that every believer is called to a significant role of service in God’s Kingdom. This class is designed to help you identify that calling. You may have taken other classes in the past, but this class is new, fresh and highly recommended. Our desire is to have you serve in such a way that you feel fulfilled and fruitful. This class will help get you there.

Here are some quotes from people who have taken the Connections Class:

“It was fun watching God reveal more of who He has created me to be and discussing in our small groups ‘where and how’ He wants to use me.”

“I liked the very logical and methodical way in which the class led us to identify our area of passion, our giftedness and our personal style of serving.”

“The biggest help for me was recognizing the biblical truth that ministry doesn’t have to equate with office or position. Many gifts are not up front and center. Thanks for making this class available.”

“All attenders at Berean should be encouraged to take this class.”

Again, we hope to make this class available at multiple hours and offered regularly to serve as many people as possible.

Discovery ... Journey ... Connections. These are three core classes for assimilating into the life of the church here at LBC.

Multiple Worship Teams

Another area of focus this year will be multiple worship teams. One person recently told me they’ve never seen another church with as much musical talent as we have at Lincoln Berean. God has truly blessed us here. Some of the reasons for creating multiple worship teams are...

Calling and giftedness: The role of pastors is to equip the saints to do the work of ministry. There are those called and gifted in our body to lead in worship. Our desire is to create an environment where they can fulfill their calling as God intended. To do this we need to continue to create multiple worship teams to serve the body.

Diverse congregation: We are a very diverse gathering of people. We want our worship teams to reflect that diversity. Because we are diverse, each of us will more easily connect with a particular team for a variety of reasons. However, we don’t want to become consumers who demand things our way, but we want to grow and learn to appreciate the differences in our body reflected in diverse worship teams.

Creative cycle: Having one team crank out creative and meaningful services week after week is unrealistic. The creative cycle does not lend itself to seven days. Multiple worship teams will allow for greater planning, creativity and freshness to our worship.

Multiple services: We currently offer five weekend services. We will need to consider adding more services as we continue to grow until we have a new auditorium. This will take multiple worship teams to make this happen.

We are considering circulating all the worship teams through the auditorium and the upper room, so everyone is experiencing all the worship teams on a regular basis. While all teams will follow the same philosophy of worship, they will each have their own distinct styles. I urge you to learn to appreciate each for who they are, as we grow together in our worship and appreciation for our diversity as a church family.

World Missions and Outreach

Another key area of focus is world missions and outreach. Recently Paul Lucks, our Jr. High pastor, was sharing his excitement over the ways the Junior High students are reaching their peers for Christ. It was obvious from Paul that there is great excitement among his leaders and students to accomplish the mission of the church. I see this passion in many areas of our church ministry.

This is true not only next door but around the world. God is sending people from our body around to world to accomplish the mission. We are very excited about God sending short-term mission teams, like the college trip to China this coming year and another team to Spain. We’re also excited to reach our adopted people group, the Tai Dam of Southeast Asia. God is raising up full time career missionaries from our body. So much so, that we are only taking on missionaries

these days from Lincoln Berean, because of the number of career missionaries God is raising up among us.

One of those home-grown missionaries is my long-time good friend, Glenn Ashcraft. Glenn and his wife, Sue, have been missionaries in Spain for the last 16 years, and Glenn and I have been good friends ever since we were born. We grew up just a block apart from each other and we went through grade school, junior high and high school together, and I would consider Glenn a very special friend.

One of the things I always find humorous is that when Glenn and I were at Lincoln High together, both of us took Spanish and were in the same class. It would be fair to say that we weren't exactly at the top of the class. In fact, we were "down there." We figured out other ways to get our grades up, like just being nice to the teacher and some other things. But, only the sovereignty of God could take Glenn, then, and place him in Spain. When I now hear Glenn rattle off Spanish like he was born in Spain, you just have to see the sovereignty of God in all of that. I can honestly say that in those years growing up that Glenn was a rock solid influence in my life. In those difficult junior high and senior high years, where there are lots of temptations and it's sometimes difficult to take a stand, I don't ever remember a time when Glenn wavered. He was just a rock, and he was a significant encouragement and influence in my life growing up.

Bryan Interviewing Glenn Ashcraft:

[Bryan]: "Glenn, it's been great having you back on furlough and around the building and getting to know each other again. When you were growing up in this church, especially through children's ministry and junior high and high school, how did the church impact your life as a believer?"

[Glenn]: "First of all, I'd say that one of the influences starts with my family. My parents never thought of church as an option. Church was something just like work or school that you do. Whenever it's open you're there, and you participate. My parents were involved, at one time or another, in just about every ministry the church had. I saw them, and I also saw Pastor Lehman and many different Sunday School teachers who faithfully were there—they cared about me and gave freely of themselves. I knew that every time I came to church I was going to hear the Word of God and learn about how to live. All the way up, I saw faithful men and women who were willing to give of their time and their energy and their love to teach me about God.

[Bryan]: "Glenn, I think about ever since I can remember, you've had a heart for world missions. I remember your desire to be a missionary, even back when we were in Jr. High. How did the church impact your vision for the world and your calling to be a career missionary?"

[Glenn]: "I decided I wanted to be a missionary and dedicated my life when I was 13. Although that happened out at Maranatha Bible Camp, I feel that my time growing up in the church led to that decision. Every year we had a Missions Conference when several missionaries would be here and would share their goals and their ministries. Also, three, four, or five times during the year missionaries would come through and they were always treated as honored guests. They would come up and share their ministries, and we often had them in our home. Pastor Lehman emphasized strongly the need to reach out to the world—to reach out to those around you, but to also be willing to go to anywhere in the world that God would have you to go. So, every year growing up, that was an emphasis several different times a year.

[Bryan]: "Glenn, you and Sue and your family have been missionaries in Spain now for 16 years. How does Lincoln Berean continue to be a part of your life as a family?"

[Glenn]: "I did grow up here in the church; I started when I was about three. One of the things that we had to do in Sunday School was to invite visitors, and one of the first visitors I invited was Bryan—in order to get points. And he's still here!"

[Bryan]: "You're not making points now!"

[Glenn]: "We have a number of churches that support us, but none in the way that Lincoln Berean does. Growing up here, and now being sent out by this church, we are supported in so many ways. Obviously there's the financial support that you give us, but to us that's just a small part, because more important is the love that we feel from this church. There are pastors and individuals who minister to us, who come up to me

and are willing to talk and to recommend books that I should read—looking out for our spiritual needs. Also there are individuals in this church who look out for our physical needs. They send care packages; they write us letters; they're aware of when our birthdays are. Many people here are faithful prayer warriors, and I would say we owe a lot to the fact that we're still on the field, to this church and the faithful people who have supported us and stood behind us over the years."

God is raising up many people, just like Glenn, in our congregation that He is calling to go. The challenge that lies before us is whether or not *we* will be willing to sacrifice in order to get these people to the field. As we think about world missions this year, there are two areas we are focusing on:

Commitment to Lincoln Berean missionaries in the field: One of the great challenges ahead is to get these LBC missionaries supported and on the field. What a tragic thing it would be if God were to call someone from our body to go and we failed to sacrifice by faith to help get them there. May it never be so.

Reorganize for maximum effectiveness: With Jeff Petersen now on board as full-time Missions Pastor, we will be evaluating and assessing what needs to happen at Lincoln Berean to be as effective as possible in seeking to present every person complete in Christ.

World missions has been a significant part of our mission for 40 years, and I see it only increasing in the days ahead.

Intergenerational Community

Another key area of focus for 2002 is intergenerational community: intentionally blending the generations together. One of the unique distinctions of the church is the blending together of generations. In the past we've focused a lot on age level divisions. While we plan to continue to organize that way, there will be much more emphasis on not limiting our ministry to those distinctions. We want to be much more intentional about following the biblical mandate for the older to teach the younger the things of God. We desire our ministry to better reflect a family, which includes the blending of generations together in a more intentional way. How to best do this is still under discussion, but it will certainly be a focus of our attention in the coming year.

Debt Elimination in 5 years

The next area of focus is financial, but with strong ministry implications. We did a good job of raising upfront money for the D wing. Now we need to attack what debt we have and eliminate it in 5 years. This cannot be something we *might* do. It is something we *must* do, and I invite each person to consider giving over and above regular giving to general and missions to make it happen. Every small gift added together makes for one large gift to accomplish our goal. If we accomplish our goal it will **save \$1.5 million for ministry**. We are convinced God would rather have this money in ministry building His Kingdom than in interest payments. I would strongly encourage each household to join us in making this happen. Our goal for this year is \$400,000 of debt reduction. This is a one-year goal in a five-year plan to eliminate our debt.

Additional Ministry Staffing

Finally, I'd like to talk about additional ministry staffing. Sometimes people comment on all the pastors we have and they wonder why we need so many. It's important to remember the ministry of the church is people. People are our product. We are called to see to the care and discipling of people. Just imagine the needs of a small group of 10 people you know. Imagine their family needs, health needs, spiritual needs, discipleship needs, the needs of their children or their aging parents or maybe their financial needs. Then imagine those same needs for well over 3,000 people, and you have some idea of the scope of ministry of Lincoln Berean.

Most experts suggest it takes 1 full-time staff pastor to care for 150 people. At 151 people, they recommend a second pastor should be hired. Conservatively speaking, there are 3,000 people who attend weekly that call this church home. If everyone who calls Lincoln Berean Church home attended on a given Sunday, that number would easily be between 3500 and 4000 people. Figuring that number conservatively at 3500 people, that would be 24 full-time pastoral staff. Currently we have 15 full-time staff with a few part-time ministry staff. Obviously we are not as over-staffed as some people may think.

This year we added Mark Kremer to our pastoral staff. However, it's important to remember we also lost 3 positions this past year. Doug Shada moved to Kearney, Robin Smith resigned and Jeff Petersen moved over to full-time Missions Pastor from Assistant College Pastor, leaving a hole there to be filled.

With this in mind, our goal is to hire some positions in 2002. We want to hire another full-time Children's Pastor. Currently we have one full-time pastor and two part-time ministry staff who are ministering to over 1000 kids and over 400 children's workers. And they do a tremendous job. Often times when you pull into the parking lot, you'll see something for children's ministry being built in the grass down below the parking lot. A couple of weeks ago when I pulled in, the walls of Jericho were going up. And a couple hours later they all came tumbling down. One week the smaller children were learning the concept of God as a shepherd, so one of our members brought in sheep. The sheep were in the parking lot for the kids to pet and interact with, in order to better understand what it means that God is our Shepherd. These kind of things go on every week, and our children are very fortunate to have what they have. But they need help, and our goal this year is to get them help.

Second of all, we hope to hire a Pastor of Counseling and Care. This is not a pastor who will do a lot of counseling; this is a pastor who will equip the saints to do the work of the ministry. This is a pastor who will primarily focus on training people in our body to care and counsel for people within our body and beyond. Also, he will oversee various care ministries, such as hospitals, shut-ins, and those type of ministries. Again, he won't *do* all this, but he will equip people (teams) to do this in order to make sure we are a caring, loving body.

Another position will be the Worship Ministry Area Leader. Our worship area is huge. We have people in specific areas. Kevin Wissink is over the music area. Suzanne Geist is over the drama area. We have lay people over the technical area and over the School of the Arts. This person will be over all of that. He will be responsible basically to pull that all together, to cast vision, to build teams, and to be the leader of that area. This is not someone you will see on stage. This is someone who will work behind the scenes in order to make possible what you will see on the stage.

And, finally, we need to hire an Assistant College Pastor to replace Jeff Petersen, who moved from that position into the full-time Missions Pastor position.

Ministry Plan for 2002

These areas of focus for 2002 translate into our ministry plan. This includes, then, a budget of \$3.9 million, which is an 8.5% increase over last year. We believe this is a reasonable stretch of faith. A year ago we stepped out by faith and God has wonderfully provided through you, His people. We had a strong December and fell just short of all our budget projections for the year. Final numbers will be available soon, but we know now both general and missions ended in the black. This year we can do the same, as we step out by faith and trust the Lord to provide.

As mentioned before we also have the \$400,000 debt reduction goal. We've done this in the past and should be able to do it this year as well.

Financial Commitment Card

This brings us to the financial commitment card. I ask you to be a part of what God is doing here at Lincoln Berean Church. Your giving goes to far more than merely paying for buildings and utilities. Your gifts go toward changing lives for eternity. Each opportunity for ministry, each life changed, each marriage saved, each prodigal son brought home, each person cared for in their hour of need, each soul saved for eternity both here and around the world, has been made possible by generous people like yourselves who have been willing to sacrificially give so the mission can be accomplished. Words cannot express my deep appreciation for how you have responded year after year to build His Kingdom and accomplish the mission.

I would like to ask you to consider filling out and turning in the financial commitment card. We started this card several years ago, as a way to encourage people to be very thoughtful and prayerful in their giving. We believe that biblical giving is prayed through and is thought through. You, as a family or as a single, need to come before God and decide what you are going to give this year. The portion that you turn in does not have any dollar amounts on it. We don't need to know that information. That's between you and God. The only thing we want is for you to mark on that card that, "Yes, we are committed to the ministry of Lincoln Berean, and we will joyfully support the General Fund, the Missions Fund, and the Debt Reduction Fund." We would encourage you to consider all three of those funds, as they all are a part of the life and ministry of Lincoln Berean. When you turn your card in, it will also give us a way to be more accountable to you, as we update you through the year in terms of how things are going. I should also mention that if you just turn in a gift, it automatically goes to the General Fund, unless you clearly mark it specifically for Missions or for Debt Reduction. So you need to make sure that you clearly mark your giving, either on your check memo or on the envelope that you turn in. If you have old envelopes which say something about the Loop project, you can cross that out and write Debt Reduction, which would be the third category. The three categories are: General, Missions and Debt Reduction.

Thank you for your continued commitment to Lincoln Berean as we seek to present every person complete in Christ.

Our Father, we are thankful this morning for the church. We're thankful that Christ is the head of the church and that you've called us to be a part of something that is significant for eternity. Lord, I thank you for these men and women and these boys and girls who have so faithfully been a part of the life of this church. Lord, they have sacrificially served and they have sacrificially given, that the mission might be accomplished. Lord, continue to enlarge our faith. Lord, continue to stretch us to trust you to be faithful to accomplish the mission until the day you return. In Jesus' name, Amen.



Mission Statement:

To glorify God by seeking to present every person complete in Christ.