



March 22, 2008

Dear Hope family:

As all of you know, we have spent the last nine months in a discernment process regarding whether God is directing HCC to plant GENESIS as an independent church. A Taskforce was established, made up of members of the Hope and GENESIS congregations. It presented its report on February 12. Independently as elders, we have spent many hours in prayer and discussion seeking God's voice into this same question. Furthermore, the Hope and GENESIS communities have each gathered for corporate prayer (and fasting) on numerous occasions. Finally, we have sought the input from members of both congregations throughout the process. The period of discernment is now concluded.

We are delighted to inform you that, as elders, we believe that God very much wants us to plant GENESIS as an independent church. One of the major recommendations of the Taskforce was that GENESIS continues to meet in our building for a further period of time, until it is fully prepared for launch. In the course of our independent deliberations we have taken into account the readiness of both Michael Davis and the GENESIS community to strike out on their own. What follows reflects these deliberations.

It is our view that we should launch GENESIS as an independent church by September 1. August 31 is the end of our current fiscal and ministry year and should provide ample time for preparation. It would be our expectation that over this five month period, GENESIS would find a location/premises to gather, whether for temporary use or for the long term. The actual launch of the new church would coincide with its stepping out from under our roof. There are many implementation issues to resolve, some of which are of vital importance to the viability and health of the newly planted church. It is these latter issues that we as elders will want to speak into most clearly, while the remainder of issues can easily be planned by those that will constitute the new church.

In order to launch GENESIS as an independent church, we have resolved the following:

- **GENESIS Launch Team** will be created and led by Michael Davis. Its job will be to do the heavy lifting of all that is required to ensure a smooth start up and health of the new community. The Launch Team will be given the green light to proceed with full authority towards full independent status on or before September 1.
- GENESIS will become a full member of the **Acts 29 Church Planting Network**. Acts 29 is about ten years old and is a peer-to-peer network of churches numbering over 200 currently that seeks to plant churches that have church planting as a part of their DNA and ethos. It is not a denomination and has no full time paid staffing or organization (affiliates include churches from over 20 denominations at present). Acts 29 was started by Mark Driscoll and his ministry partners at Mars Hill church (Seattle, WA).

Acts 29 places great emphasis on its affiliates having a "missional" mindset, and a predisposition towards further church planting. It is a network that has strong emphasis on Biblical adherence and doctrine (with a Reformed Theological view) and shares our

view that the Biblical model for leadership is a plurality of male elders. All applicants are thoroughly screened (including multiple tests and required written submissions). Only one in four applicants are approved. Those who meet the standards and are approved gain access to a large body of tools and resources, email and telephonic advice on all matters relating to church planting plus the provision of a personal coach for the church plants.

At the recent “Boot Camp” conference that Todd, Paul, Iain and Michael attended (along with six men from GENESIS), Michael and Kyla were interviewed and approved two weeks later. We are impressed by the Acts 29 Network and believe that an affiliation between GENESIS and Acts 29 will bring vital support and assistance to GENESIS, much of which is not easy for HCC to provide. To learn more about the network, go to www.acts29network.org.

- HCC will continue to **support the GENESIS community** in a spirit of prayer, love and unity. Specifically, it shall continue to fully fund GENESIS through Launch Date and provide some level of financial support, yet to be determined, for the first year of operation.
- GENESIS will continue to operate under the **authority of the elders** of HCC through the Launch Date.

When HCC was first established, our ethos included a bias towards church planting rather than growth in buildings or campus. When we recruited Michael Davis in 2004, we knew that one of his hopes and dreams would be to one day plant a church. While we did not specifically establish GENESIS in 2007 with a view to church planting, it is fair to say that the possibility was always there. We have seen the Lord bless its establishment and growth. Today GENESIS is comprised of about 100 people with a desire to reach out for the kingdom in New England.

It is, therefore, with great joy that we continue what the Lord has started by helping plant GENESIS as an independent church. It is our hope and prayer that each of you will take great joy in this also. It is certainly humbling to know that the Lord is using Hope church to foster the planting of a new church.

We invite you all to join us next Sunday, March 29 immediately following the service for a lunch. This will give us the opportunity to give you greater detail on the plans for the church plant and some of the thinking behind them. Please plan to come if you can.

There is much to be done in the coming months, some of which you may be willing to assist with. We would encourage all of you to **prayerfully** consider any role that the Lord would have you play:

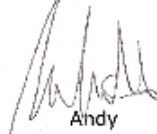
- Consider going with the church plant, permanently or for an initial launch period
- Provide a pledge of financial support for the first year or two of operation
- Offer your gifting or expertise as needed through launch or beyond
- Pledge to pray regularly for GENESIS for a set period of time

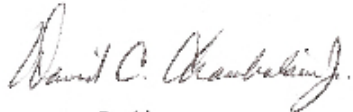
You will be hearing more about this in the coming months but please start to think about what the Lord would have you do, if anything, to help plant GENESIS as an independent church reaching New England for the growth of the Kingdom.

May the Lord bless the work of His church.


Paul
Flemming


Todd
Cravens


Andy
Mills


David
Chamberlain


Doug
Simpson


Michael
Davis


Iain
Whitfield