

The Bridge's Annual Plan: 2004-2005

Introduction

Throughout this year, the Leadership Team has been prayerfully working on a long-term strategy for where we sense the Lord is directing The Bridge in the next five years. The strategic plan describes how The Bridge intends to be evangelically rooted, relationally focused, generationally broad and centered on making disciples.

It is vital that a core group of people from Shakopee exist within The Bridge to ensure that we will become firmly established in the near future. In the past three years, the Shakopee contingency of The Bridge has grown from only three of 13 family units to 13 of 24 family units. These stats indicate that we are drawing locals into our community but that our core group is still relatively small. To become firmly established in Shakopee, we must focus on four key areas in the next 12 months. The purpose of this document is to clearly delineate what The Bridge's focus needs to be during those months. [To more completely understand the annual goals listed in this document, refer to the strategic plan that will be available soon.]

Goals

Goal 1: Community Life Groups

We will effectively establish four adult Community Life Groups that will focus on the nurturing of believers and intentional relational outreach to unbelievers.

These groups will be the main place for believers to connect with and grow alongside other believers. Each group will focus on six key functions: prayer, study/application, group building, shepherding care, outreach, and mentoring of leaders for the creation of new groups. Each group will determine the focus of study it will pursue.

The Community Life Groups will intentionally be involved in relational outreach by discussing and praying for those within our relational sphere of influence, seeking to fill the "open chair," and corporately participating in outreach activities. Every Community Life Group will plan and implement regular cultivating activities to which group members will be prayerfully inviting those from their spheres of influence. These cultivating events will be planned throughout the year and will be each group's main focus during the 2005 summer months. We will encourage every Community Life Group to put on three events during the summer and continue to meet on an every other week basis for event planning and prayer. The EFCA church in Montrose has successfully used this model to bring newcomers / unbelievers into the church using backyard BBQs as their summer cultivating activity.

The spiritual growth of believers to maturity best takes place through mentoring relationships. The Community Life Groups will play a large role in this process for it is within small groups that spiritual developmental needs often surface. Some needs will be addressed through study within groups, while others need to be approached individually. New believers will be encouraged to participate in Community Life Groups and also may require one-on-one discipleship from a more mature believer. We desire to provide group environments in which believers of all maturity levels participate in the building up of the body to maturity.

Goal 2: Expansion Events

We will hold two expansion events during which the gospel is clearly shared with unbelievers.

These church-wide events will provide an opportunity for the members of The Bridge to invite those with whom they have been building relationships to hear the gospel presented clearly and personally. A key to making these events effective is to tie them into the Community Life Groups as part of their thrust in outreach. The strategy is:

- Community Life Groups make us contagious Christians, eager to share Christ with others.
- The Community Life Group cultivating events focus on providing a means by which personal relationships with unbelievers can be developed.
- The expansion events provide an opportunity for unbelievers that we have relationally been pursuing to clearly hear the gospel message. This is a door of opportunity in the process of leading others to Christ.

A team of volunteers will plan and implement each expansion event.

Goal 3: Weekly Worship Celebration

We will strengthen the worship celebration so that believers devote themselves to corporately connecting with God each week.

Worship is something that goes beyond music. We worship through prayer, music, service, hearing and responding to God's Word, welcoming newcomers and fellowshiping with regular attendees. We will improve existing ministries, and remove barriers that prohibit us from experiencing a focused worship celebration. We will do this through:

- **Welcoming new people.** At the moment someone pulls into the parking lot of Pearson Elementary, they need to know that God loves them personally through us. This means we must make the first impression a positive one. People who are greeting must be engaging and informative. Greeters should offer visitors not only a cup of coffee, but also be willing to show families where the children's areas are and meet any other expressed needs. Greeters dedicated to this ministry will be recruited by 12/1/04 and trained to ensure consistency in the welcoming process by 1/1/05.
- **Prayer.** In our effort to bathe all things in prayer, we will develop a prayer team that will be responsible for:
 - Pre-service prayer
 - Quarterly concerts of prayer in which prayer will be the key focus of the morning
 - Prayer during the service that flows naturally with the other parts of the service and allows prayer leaders to come alongside those desiring the support of another believer
- **Care and training of children.** With the beginning of another school year, The Bridge established the following services for children/families:
 - **Nursery** - Nursery care is provided during the entire service. This will enable parents with newborn / preschool age children to better interact with each other and with the Lord through the service.
 - **Elementary classes** - The elementary age training time has been expanded into two classes (k-3; 4-6 grades). This allows the children in these ages to experience teaching from the Word of God on a level appropriate to their development and to engage in fellowship with other children their age.

- **Family Sunday** - On the third Sunday of every month, the elementary children will remain in The Bridge's worship gathering for the entire service. This service will encourage children to both understand and be engaged in worship. The structure of this service will include the involvement of families and children in the music, collection of the offering, greeting, scripture reading, etc. The celebration of communion will also take place in this service.

Goal 4: Leadership Development

To develop leaders within The Bridge, we will establish and implement an intentional plan using appropriate training materials that address areas of knowledge, skill, and character.

The two primary objectives of leadership development will be: 1) to come alongside leaders / potential leaders and provide them encouragement and the appropriate resources to see them grow both spiritually and as ministry leaders, and 2) to help them evaluate the ministry areas for which they are responsible.

The following groups of people will be involved in leadership development activities in 2004-05:

- **Ministry area leaders** - Darrell Cox will continue to utilize the SWOP ministry assessment to help ministry area leaders evaluate their ministry area and to set goals for developing their respective area.
- **The Leadership Team** - Pastor Mike will mentor members of the Leadership Team. Leadership Team meetings will concentrate on strategic planning and training rather than the status of ministry activities.
- **Future Leaders** - This will take place between the current leadership (pastor, staff and lay leaders) and others in the congregation who God is preparing to be in leadership. Darrell Cox will develop a plan for equipping future leaders in the areas of character development (character traits that are associated with godly leaders), roles of a leader, and functions of a ministry leader.

Summary

The ministry goals mentioned in this plan are not by any means the limit of the ministries that The Bridge will engage in during the coming year. They are, however, the most vital areas in which we must place our efforts during the next 12 months. In the development of this plan, we have endeavored to remain faithful to the mission and core values of The Bridge while at the same time responding to some of the immediate needs of the congregation so that it becomes firmly established in Shakopee. We desire to glorify God through our lives, both as individuals and as a corporate body. We believe that we need to be Christ-centered first and then to move outward to those in our circles of influence. It is for these reasons that The Bridge's ministries are focused on relationship – for the growth of believers and salvation of unbelievers. Christ is the bridge between man and God. Let us be an example of that bridge in our community!