

A community letter re: Youth 2012



My Heart for Shore Vineyards Youth and Young Adults in 2012

From Calvin Culverwell

Over the past six years I have had the amazing privilege of participating in, leading, and pastoring the youth activities of Shore Vineyard Churches. It has been a real blessing to see young men and women encounter Jesus in a passionate and intimate way, and it is the call on my heart to continue to see young people draw into a real relationship with the living Christ. As Youth Pastor I believe I have a special role to invest in and shape the youth activities to most effectively serve the vision God is calling us toward.

2011 has left me with many sleepless nights as I try to find ways to bridge the ever-increasing gap between our young high schoolers and our amazing young adults. I have seen people experience Jesus at a young age and go on to flourish in their faith all through high school and university, and I long desperately in my heart to see our young high-schoolers have the opportunity to have those same life-changing encounters. Furthermore my heart breaks as I look at teenagers today in a broken world. It is our responsibility to reach out in love to the teenagers in our community and provide them with the opportunity to meet Jesus and explore their faith in a safe, loving environment.

So how do I give our young guys this opportunity, while continuing to walk alongside our young adults?

After much prayer and discussion with leaders, I believe that it is in our best interest to develop and invest in two intentional programs rather than trying to bridge a gap that spans almost a decade in some cases. The high school life is full of unique roads and trials, and I want to afford all high schoolers an opportunity to discover and worship Jesus alongside their peers without the level of intimidation that accompanies hanging out with 19+ year olds.

So it is with a mix of sadness and excitement that I announce Invasion as we know it will change in order to accommodate a new structure. While Invasion has become a great service, it is good to keep in mind that great isn't always God's best, and we need to be obedient and trusting in his plan.

With that in mind, Invasion will move back to Chartwell, have a smaller, more intentional leadership team and will be "high school only". It will start a little earlier, incorporate some more social activities, and look to incorporate more discussion and discovery into the service component of the evening. In this we will be working hard to develop a sense of fellowship and discipleship and a culture of invitation. Invasion-goers will feel safe to express their thoughts, opinions and questions about faith.

Our post high-schoolers are encouraged to attend and serve in our Harbour and North City services, and I will be working alongside leaders to set up several home groups that I will continue to oversee and actively be a part of. The vision for this is that young adults will begin to walk in their own faith and encourage each other. It is the dream of my heart to see these groups embody the Acts 2:42-47 lifestyle of community living.

As I dream about 2012, I cannot help but feel that despite the challenges of change, it will be a time of infinitely exciting journeying, discovery, challenges, community and growth. I believe that this is where God is calling us, and with two definitive areas for me to focus on, I can move forward with vision and clarity to build something better than what we have.

At this point, it is likely home groups will happen on nights that suit the individual groups, and I am having discussions and praying about what night to hold Invasion on. It is crucial that over the next few months, as I begin to shape things for 2012, I receive input from anyone who wishes to give it. It is also important that if there is anger, hurt, or sadness over these decisions, then you call me or contact me to talk about it. My plan over the next few months is to facilitate a smooth transition and walk alongside people through the change. I do not want ANYONE to be left out or feel like his or her opinion is not valued. My goal is to see every person settle into a new-yet-same environment and begin to engage in his or her faith in a whole new way.

I hope that this clearly communicates my thoughts, but if not feel free to contact me so I can elaborate.

Love and Blessings, I look forward to the next chapter of our journey together

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