



# THE CALL

## PIONEERING IN THE 21ST CENTURY

It was back in 2013 that I started putting two and two together. I loved Scripture and wanted to study it, I loved people, and I loved the Church. I started Seminary at Providence on a hunch that maybe these things would eventually converge. But I never dreamed it would lead me here.

I did not grow up seeing people like me leading the church, so I never considered it as a vocation. What I know now is that I had been called to ministry since I was seven, and what I experienced in 2013 was, in fact, a reminder of my true calling. I did not know what it was then. It took me four more years, until halfway through my degree, to see it: God's clear and direct call to preach and shepherd His people. It has been an anchor ever since.

I'm a church planter and lead pastor in Steinbach, Manitoba. Stonehouse Covenant Church started as a seed in my heart in the spring of 2018. That is when I gave God my "yes." If planting a Covenant

church in Steinbach is what God wanted to do through me, I would do it, as long as He would go with me. And here we are.

Now, six years in, I see the Stonehouse that God had in mind when He planted that seed — a congregation that God has formed and is still forming. There are days when I shake my head in wonder and other days when what looms largest is the cost of it; the blood, sweat and tears that have gone into this hard, beautiful process we call church planting. As I think about our congregation and how all of this has unfolded, it is clear that this is something God is doing — this is His church. He has led each of us into it at different times and together we are adding our unique voice to the chorus. Everyone offers their own unique gifts that make Stonehouse "home" to those who settle there, and that shapes what we do, how we think, and how we express our faith.

I carry these convictions about the Church and about Scripture. I think I always have, but they deepened as I made my way through Seminary and the past six years. Scripture is alive, active, and relevant to our lives. God speaks to us through it and we can trust it. Why? Because it has integrity as a text that has been passed down through



generations to us. Because it tells the truth about us, and because it creates room for interpretation. For all of us. It's steadfast and fluid at the same time, like a river.

At Providence, I learned to study it. I learned to read its parts in light of the whole, to see Christ at its centre, and to enter the conversation that has been going on for millennia as we continue to discern what God is saying to us. It was also through Providence, namely my professors and the church where I interned, that I was affirmed in my call for the first time. It took me a while to receive it like I mentioned. Stepping into a vocation where people like me traditionally have not been accepted was challenging. I had to wade through the opposition, come to terms with "the burning in my bones" and then my right to a seat at the table. This remains a challenge for me sometimes, but I can no longer ignore the call.

There is a translation of Jeremiah 6:16 that reads, "Stand at the crossroads and look. Ask for the ancient paths and where the best road is. Walk in it, and you will live in peace." This is a call to the people of God now as much as it was to the nation of Judah when it was first written. It is part of my conviction about the importance of church.

The Church gathered is a crossroads — an intersection for the people of God. In the midst of our busy lives, it is the place where our roads meet. The Church is where we come together around the Word and Table to worship, pray, and hear what God is saying to us. It is the place where the Gospel is proclaimed and from which we re-enter our lives to live and testify to its effects. It's also the community where we practice Jesus' command to love one another as He loved us. Feel free to think through what that entails. Suffice it to say that we are meant to be shaped by the steady rhythm of gathering as a community to do these things.

I never dreamed I would be planting a church in the city I love. I did not know who would be part of it or what the road would look like. I have been asking where the good way is and then taking the next step. It is hard and beautiful, but look at what God is doing!



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