

June 30, 2018

Dear Deacons,

When a politician gets a letter, they know it represents a huge number of other people. I know I am not the first person to send my sentiments to you but I hope you realize that the others and I represent many people who will not take the time to write. Also true is that many people are quietly leaving Bear Valley.

I wrote Pastor Adam a few weeks ago and had a meeting with him. I had some specific questions about two statements he had said in a sermon. They were: "There are a lot of things about what we believe in that keep people from getting to the person who we believe in." and "Faith traditions that are barriers for new people coming to faith in Jesus must be removed." Both of these are strong statements and I wanted the blanks filled in. What beliefs and what traditions? I was only given evasive answers. That was very discouraging. Why no transparency?

I went to one of the Thursday meetings so I know the whole small group thing. I have no problem with small groups but something is wrong when they are emphasized out of proportion. Some time ago, Adam said that when people ask about what is going to happen with various ministry needs they are told that the answer is always small groups. I think that is very shortsighted and is an attempt to cram everything into a one-size-fits-all mold.

Over a year ago, we were told how important it is to be ready to minister to the next generation and so the ministry to kids was going to be emphasized. And here we are now with MOPS and Awana being canceled. I can't imagine a better ministry than Awana for discipling children. Adam's answer to people wanting Awana is that there are other churches who offer it. Really? So what is going to happen to all of the women and children who went to these groups? It's silly to think that small groups are going to fill that void.

Another question: was the cancellation of MOPS, Awana, etc., a decision of the deacons or was it an executive decision?

It seems to me that there is small group tunnel vision. Are we really going to sacrifice everything else for this? Is there a delusion that if we cancel Awana and MOPS that all of those leaders will become small group leaders? Are we going to remodel areas so that there are more small spaces and no more large meeting areas? How long will it be until all Sunday school classes will be done away with so that those people can be forced into small groups?

Is the deacon board being pressured to go along with these things because the “Holy Spirit” is leading someone and we just need to trust them? To be honest, at this point I will say that I do not trust Pastor Adam to do what is best for Bear Valley. What I see is that there are some things that may have worked somewhere else and those things are being forced on Bear Valley Church without regard to the possible bad outcomes.

It seems that the supreme goal is increasing numbers. Some people would say that Bear Valley is stagnant because it has hovered around the same attendance numbers for years. What that doesn't take into account is all of the ministry that goes on by Bear Valley people that cannot be counted by attendance numbers. Multitudes of ministries have come out of Bear Valley and many or most of the people who go here are involved in ministry inside and outside of the church walls. That is how I measure growth and health but that is not good enough if what you really care about is numbers. From learn, grow, go and do, we end up with come inside the walls and be a number.

In one of the Thursday meetings, Pastor Adam said that discipleship is measured by growth in numbers in the small groups. I disagree. Discipleship is teaching people to do all that Jesus commanded them to do. That is not a given outcome of a small group.

I have included two pages from the Bear Valley website. (Hopefully they will not disappear from the website now.) They show what the heart of Bear Valley has been for decades. I hope you will take some time to ponder what they say and how that has led to so much ministry and discipleship through the years. A main point is: "We are dedicated to Kingdom Growth more than to Church Growth." That has been true for many years and now we see that the new "vision" is to flip that.

So to sum up my thoughts: I think Pastor Adam is pushing the church away from the mission, vision, and values that have guided our church for decades and that have produced kingdom growth in and out of the walls. What he seems to want is more countable numbers and is willing to sacrifice the foundation of Bear Valley to get that. I think his domineering and heavy-handed leadership is stifling the wise voices that could counter his plans. If the deacons are unable to bring an end to this destructive direction then I think it would be better to release him and begin the search for a pastoral leader who understands a unique church like Bear Valley.

With a heavy heart,

Philip Faustin

# Beyond the Church Walls

Bear Valley Church was founded in January 1959, and we have more than five decades behind us of serving locally in Lakewood, in the greater Denver metro area, in the state of Colorado and all over the world.

Early in our history, renown Christian speaker, author, and then Bear Valley Church Pastor, Frank Tillapaugh, wrote *The Church Unleashed* and modeled for the nation what was truly possible when [a church empowered its people through a series of simple principles.](#)

We have been in our current building overlooking the beautiful Kendrick Lake Park in Lakewood since 1991. It's always been an important part of our church DNA to focus on Kingdom of God growth rather than building a Bear Valley Church kingdom.

## Recent History

Jim Walters, who retired at the end of 2015, after serving as Senior Pastor since 2001, was only the third senior pastor in 30 years.

Over 1,000 people call Bear Valley Church their church home and approximately 850 attend each Sunday. The congregation is comprised of new families frequently choosing to call this their church home while other families have called it home for many years. Bear Valley Church has an excellent Sunday School program for newborns through high school. Adults from college-age to post-retirement choose from numerous educational and fellowship opportunities offered on Sunday mornings and throughout the week.

Bear Valley is a very diverse, multi-generational congregation. On average 250 children enjoy age-graded Sunday classes. As many as 70 youth and nearly 600 adults participate in [Sunday classes and groups](#) through the course of a year.

In 2015, 96 new members joined Bear Valley Church and 56 children and adults were baptized into Christ. Last year, over 150 men, women and youth helped change the world through 14 short-term domestic and international mission trips.

[Our vision is to Connect, Mature and Unleash](#), and this continues to influence everything we do as a church. To [unleash ministries](#), to set individuals free to listen to and follow the Holy Spirit's leading and start new ministries that God is inviting them to take part in, has always been an important part of Bear Valley Church.

Below are a few words and some direct links to some of the different ministries that Bear Valley Church has helped start throughout our history. We count these ministries and churches ([along with many others at BVC](#)) as vital parts of our current church family. We have volunteers from BVC serving in most of these different ministries, and we continue to support a majority of them financially.

(Mentioned ministries not included on this copy)

<http://bvchurch.org/our-history>

# Bear Valley Church Unleashed

The Church Unleashed philosophy of ministry is still a large part of the DNA of Bear Valley Church. The following are a few of the basics of this approach:

1. We are dedicated to Kingdom Growth more than to Church Growth. The church invests time, treasure (money), and people into causes beyond its own walls. We believe in building the Kingdom of God, not the kingdom of Bear Valley. We prefer to remain a large church investing large percentages of its budget in local and global mission causes.
2. Pastors Equip and Members Minister. Members of the church are empowered to do anything God calls them to do – no one has to be ordained, licensed, or even an official member to be able to minister. People serve with their gifts, talents and skills both inside and outside the church.
3. Simple Structure, Easy Permission. Simple structure means few committees. A Board of Deacons handles the business of the church. Our people serve on actual ministry teams doing the work of the ministry. Easy permission means anyone with an idea for a new ministry can be unleashed to serve by following a few simple steps and guidelines.
4. Multiple Services, Multiple Pastors. Currently Bear Valley Church has three nearly identical Sunday morning worship services plus a concurrent youth service. Our team of multiple teachers work together as a team. Multiple services and multiple teachers allow us to minister to more people.
5. Maximum Use of Minimum Facility Bear Valley's facility is built on just 3.3 acres and is debt-free. Our building is used by many of our own groups and classes throughout the week, and it is open to use by the community.
6. Authority and Responsibility Go Together. The Church Unleashed philosophy grants responsibility and authority to ministry leaders to lead their ministries as the Holy Spirit directs. There is always accountability but there is no committee dictating what must or must not be done. For example, adult Bible classes and other ministries are self-governing.