

**FINAL REPORT OF THE BODY BUILDERS TEAM
SUBMITTED TO THE SESSION
OF NORTH LAKE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,
LADY LAKE, FL**

May 29, 2018

But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love. Ephesians 4:15-16 (NRSV)

Team members: Bob Collins
 Jeff Hosmer
 Sue Kirkpatrick
 Mike Snow
 Dottie Wise
 Dick Young

Table of Contents

	Page
ABBREVIATIONS	3
LIST OF FIGURES	3
INTRODUCTION	4
CHAPTER 1: DISCIPLESHIP IS OUR CORE PURPOSE.....	8
CHAPTER 2: GROWING WITH OUR STRENGTHS.....	10
WORSHIP AND MUSIC	10
CONGREGATIONAL CARE.....	11
COMMUNITY IMPACT	11
CURRENT FACILITIES.....	12
LEADERSHIP	12
CHAPTER 3: RESPONDING TO OUR LIMITING FACTORS	13
PARKING.....	13
LACK OF FOCUS AND COHERENCE.....	14
COMMUNICATION.....	14
BUILDING NEEDS	15
CHAPTER 4: OUR MISSION PORTFOLIO	16
(INCLUDING THE BIG 3 OF LITTLE BLESSINGS CHILD-CARE CENTER, OPERATION HOMEBOUND, AND THE CHRISTIAN FOOD PANTRY)	
CHAPTER 5: PROPERTY OPTIONS.....	19
CHAPTER 6: FINANCIAL PLANNING	21
CHAPTER 7: THE BODY BUILDERS TEAM PROCESS	23
CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS	25
AFTERWORD BY THE REV. BOB COLLINS	26

Appendices

	Page
APPENDIX A - BBT CHARTER	27
APPENDIX B – THE CASE FOR DISCIPLESHIP AT NLPC	28
APPENDIX C – CONGREGATIONAL SURVEY SUMMARY	32
APPENDIX D – SAMPLE POSITION DESCRIPTION FOR DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS	33
APPENDIX E – COMPILATION OF IDEAS HARVESTED BY BBT	34

Abbreviations

BBT	Body Builders Team
CFP	Christian Food Pantry
LB	Little Blessings Child-Care Center
NCD	New Church Development
NLPC	North Lake Presbyterian Church
OHB	Operation Homebound

List of Figures

Figure	Page
NLPC Organization	7
NLPC and the Big 3 in our Mission Portfolio	18

Introduction

In October, 2017, the Session of North Lake Presbyterian Church concurred with the recommendation of Moderator Jeff Hosmer to establish a Body Builders Team (BBT), an ad hoc group to prepare a comprehensive, strategic plan to build up the Body of Christ at NLPC. The BBT was chartered, based on Ephesians 4:15-16, to speak the truth in love and to discern how we shall grow up into Christ, increasing our capacity and impact for the Lord.¹ Team members were selected by the Moderator and their names were presented to Session on November 28, 2017, a week prior to the first BBT meeting on December 4.

Through six months of meeting at least weekly, the BBT sought to fulfill their discernment task. The steps in the BBT process are described in chapter 7 of this final report. The full report also includes many more details of the findings. But here are the key conclusions of the BBT.

1. The clear mandate for NLPC is to fulfill the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20) and to make disciples. *The Case for Discipleship at NLPC*² had been first presented to Session on February 10, 2016. The BBT endorses **disciple-making as our core purpose**. Everything that we do as a church should align with this objective: making disciples who make disciples for Jesus Christ. Chapter 1 explains this core purpose in greater detail.
2. Sunday morning worship is deemed the leading strength of NLPC. The recent congregational survey³ reflected a hearty approval of worship messages, music, and style. Worshipping God is a central function of the church, essential for making and growing disciples. At NLPC **the worship services are a strength upon which we can build** for the future. This is explained further in chapter 2 of the report.
3. Several factors constrain the growth of NLPC but none more so than our parking capacity. From the congregational survey and anecdotal evidence the BBT verified that **parking is the #1 limiting factor for our effectiveness and future**. The congested parking lot is most evident between the 9:45 and 11:15 services, and the problems are magnified during peak attendance seasons and Sundays. The difficulties and possible remedies for parking are covered in chapter 3.
4. **The assessment of our current campus and facilities uncovered several other needs that limit our effectiveness or growth**. The office space for congregational care is insufficient and poorly designed. Someone going to see the Associate Pastor needs to walk through another office for access, essentially eliminating a confidential space for the Director of Congregational Care or Visitation Pastor to meet with persons in their shared office. NLPC also lacks a conference room for meetings with families to plan a funeral or memorial service. Given the number of these services and the importance of this ministry and witness with persons grieving, NLPC is also missing a chapel for the many smaller

¹ See the BBT charter – Appendix A, p. 27.

² See Appendix B, pp. 28-31

³ Administered by the BBT in February, 2018. See Appendix C on p.32 for summary.

services that are “swallowed up” in a 1200-seat sanctuary. The observations and recommendations for our existing building are in chapter 3.

5. **The Little Blessings Child-Care Center (LB), Operation Homebound (OHB), and the Christian Food Pantry (CFP) are the three major, thriving missions of NLPC.** All three commenced in 1998 and are observing their 20th anniversary. They have a unique and indispensable place in our NLPC mission portfolio. As we continue to focus and refine our mission rationale and objectives, we are committed to planning a sustainable future for their Christ-centered witness and impact in our community. This probably requires a separate non-profit corporation status for each of them, a change that would not break ties with NLPC, but would be advantageous for risk management, for fundraising potential, and for staffing and benefits flexibility. This is covered in further detail in chapter 4.
6. **Little Blessings has emerged as a focal point for NLPC strategic planning.** While the BBT was commissioned for a comprehensive look at the NLPC future, a separate group began to examine the immediate and short-term needs of LB. The in-depth look at LB was triggered by financial and staffing concerns that became apparent in 2017. Representatives of the LB team met with the BBT before they submitted their report to the Session. The BBT response to their report is a part of chapter 4, envisioning a new and exciting future for LB.
7. **The most strategic staffing need is a Director of Communications to coordinate and enhance the communications within and beyond NLPC.** Our NLPC communications are delivered through many channels: written (bulletins and newsletters), digital (emails and on-screen visuals), videos, website, social media, advertising, etc. Currently the communications tasks are handled by various persons with minimal coordination. A full-time staff position coordinating and sharpening communications is essential for a dynamic and growing NLPC, “making disciples who make disciples.”⁴ Chapter 3 provides more details concerning this need and proposed remedy.
8. The vision that the BBT has glimpsed leads us to **consider changes at several levels.** Some changes are relatively straight-forward and easy to implement. For example, an adjustment of Sunday morning worship times, shifting the first two services fifteen minutes earlier, would alleviate the parking lot congestion between the second and third services. Or, a new plan for parking lot flow (entry and exit) and signage could be fairly simple and inexpensive. Other changes are much more complicated and far-reaching. The BBT believes that the current location of LB (in a modular building with a limited life-expectancy) hampers both the LB development and NLPC parking. The space occupied by LB represents at least 44 parking spaces in a prime location, spaces which—if available—could allow for approximately 200 more people to attend on Sunday mornings. A relocation of LB could also provide a future facility with the capacity and design for an excellent 21st century Christian pre-school, including a safer, more efficient arrangement for dropping-off and picking-up children.

⁴ See sample position description in Appendix D, p. 33.

9. While the BBT was underway gathering data and considering options for the future, two nearby properties were listed for sale. Questions and ideas pertaining to these properties are included in chapter 5. **One property is an 8.5 acre lot that fronts both Griffin Road and County Road 25 just 0.7 miles from NLPC.** With proper zoning clearance, that land could be an ideal location for LB, as well as overflow parking for NLPC on high attendance Sundays (using our two busses as shuttles). The acreage would also provide beautiful grounds for church picnics, recreational ministries, Easter sunrise services, and other special events. The potential NLPC uses of that property (and the anticipated appreciation of the land value in an area rapidly developing) make a strong case for exploring a purchase. Currently the land is being used for grazing cattle, for storing recreational vehicles, and for the office of an irrigation business. The property consists of four separate parcels which the owner would like to sell together. If Session agrees that this property merits consideration, NLPC will want to deploy a “rapid response team” to research, negotiate, and pursue steps to acquire that property.

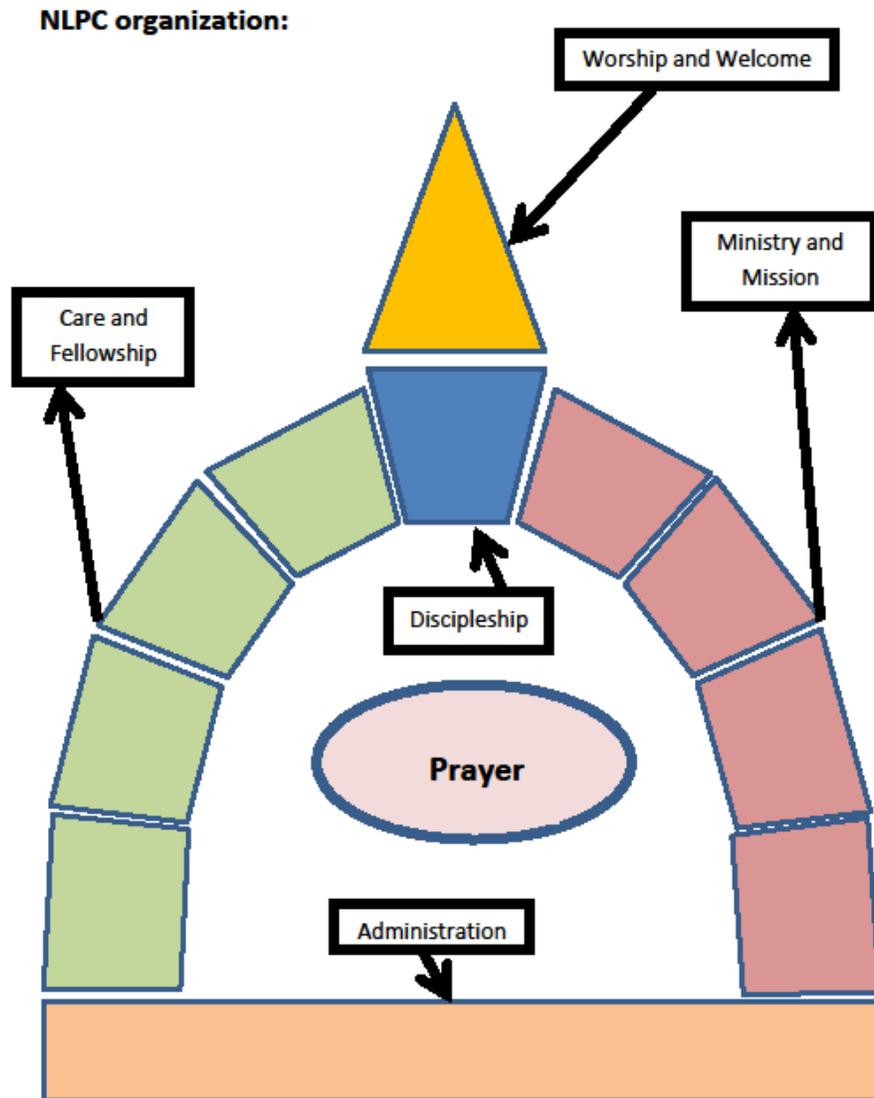
10. **The other available property is a condo in the medical/professional complex across Rolling Acres Rd where we are permitted to use the parking lot evenings and weekends.** The purchase of a condo unit would address two NLPC needs. First, it would alleviate some of the office congestion by providing additional space across the street. For example, the finance and administration offices could be relocated to the condo unit. Second, the purchase would provide a voice and vote in the condo association to address any concerns about our future use of the parking lot. While we have no indication that our NLPC use of the 200 parking spaces is in jeopardy, we are entirely dependent on the goodwill of an organization with which we have no official connection. The ongoing, precarious nature of our parking privileges might be mitigated somewhat by having ownership of one of the condos. Again, the “rapid response team” could be assigned to research, negotiate, and pursue steps to acquire that property.

11. In addition to the consideration of new property, **the BBT encourages a feasibility study by an architectural firm to consider changes to our existing building.**⁵ This would be an action step and follow-up to paragraph #4. The investment of working with an architect/consultant would likely yield new suggestions and remedies for limiting factors in our current facilities. It would also provide some cost basis for planning any future improvements.

12. The BBT acknowledges the potential cost implications of these recommendations. In the near future (perhaps immediate future), **NLPC should consider a capital campaign for debt reduction, campus improvements, land acquisitions, etc.** For the long-term financial health of NLPC it would be advantageous to create an endowment fund and to encourage deferred or estate giving. A fuller treatment of the financial findings and recommendations is in chapter 6.

⁵ The BBT report does not tackle questions pertaining to church security. We realize that they are very important concerns on the minds of many at NLPC. However, we are aware that another team is focused on that work. Their security findings and recommendations can also be incorporated into future consultations about the building and campus improvements.

The BBT recognizes the looming challenges inherent in this report to the Session. The Team also sees tremendous opportunities for a vigorous future of making disciples for Jesus Christ. The recommendations are bold and far-reaching, intended to make a substantive difference for the next twenty-five years. This report is submitted, as it has been created, with steadfast prayers that God will guide our NLPC discernment and decision-making.



Chapter 1: Discipleship Is Our Core Purpose

The future of North Lake Presbyterian Church hinges on our clear, consistent commitment to make disciples for Jesus Christ. Nothing else we do is as important. We can be an excellent venue for concerts and community events. We can prepare and deliver hundreds of meals a day. We can fund the construction of a health clinic in Africa. We can succeed in countless programs and objectives, but if we are not helping people to find and follow Jesus Christ, then we would fail as a church.

The Church exists to fulfill the Great Commission of our Risen Lord: “*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age*” (Matthew 28:19–20⁶). That is the original charter for every congregation. We commit to discipleship as the core purpose of NLPC. Everything we do flows from that commitment and intentional focus. Discipleship is the keystone of our church organization and planning for the future.⁷

Developing followers of Jesus is the underlying purpose for all NLPC activities. This permeates not only our classes, small groups, and retreats (explicit efforts at growing disciples), but also worship services, fellowship, and mission activities. The objective of disciple-making shapes the way we approach and design our ministries. It is the basis for our new member process and curriculum development. It also prompts us to decline or discontinue activities that do not fulfill the discipleship function in some way.

At North Lake we define discipleship as follows.

Discipleship is

- 1) an intentional decision to accept the grace that God offers in Christ
(love, forgiveness, salvation, eternal life)
and
- 2) a life-long journey in the Jesus direction.

Therefore, NLPC provides opportunities for persons to discover and express new faith in Jesus Christ. The Alpha course, for example, is geared for inquirers or new believers. Worship services should always be mindful of newcomers who are still undecided about Jesus, providing a welcome atmosphere where they can consider and accept God’s offering. Baptism (or baptism renewal) symbolizes the grace that God pours out in Jesus Christ. For an adult or older youth, baptism signifies the believer’s reception of that grace. For an infant or child, baptism emphasizes the grace that God promises even before they are mature enough to grasp its meaning. We want everyone to know and accept the love, forgiveness, salvation, and eternal life available through Jesus Christ.

⁶ All scriptural quotations in this report are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise indicated.

⁷ See simple diagram of church organization on page 7.

When someone says “Yes” to the Lord, we want to do everything possible to cultivate that faith, to help it take hold and flourish. 2 Peter 3:18 tells us to “***grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.***” That growth is a life-long journey, and Jesus delights in making the journey with us. When he gave the Great Commission he promised to be with us always, through all the discoveries, joys, and challenges. Our message to everyone who enters NLPC is **CONNECT ... GROW ... SERVE**. From the youngest among us in the nursery or at the Little Blessings Child-Care Center ... to the eldest and most seasoned Christians in our ranks, we believe growth is possible and essential on this journey with Jesus.

We seek to “present everyone mature in Christ” (Colossians 1:28). Not everyone who is mature in years is also mature in Christ. And some who are mature in Christ are not mature in years. But our aim is to present everyone mature in Christ. When a student grows up at NLPC and heads off to college or into the working world, we want to present that young man or woman mature in Christ in their new adventures and responsibilities in the adult world. When a member leaves NLPC to move closer to family back north or for some other reason, we want to present that member mature in Christ to his or her next congregation. And when one of our beloved at NLPC finishes their earthly course, we want to present him or her mature in Christ and ready for kingdom-living in God’s eternal presence.

Followers of Jesus growing to a mature faith at NLPC will

1. **Worship God regularly**
2. **Grow in understanding and applying scripture**
3. **Serve with the gifts the Holy Spirit provides**
4. **Give generously to support God’s mission**
5. **Bless others with Kingdom actions and attitudes**
6. **Share God’s Good News**
7. **Help others grow in faith.**



***Seven
Practices***

This is our core purpose: making disciples who make disciples for Jesus Christ.

Chapter 2: Growing with Our Strengths

Since the beginning of North Lake Presbyterian Church in 1992, the congregation has grown alongside The Villages and other burgeoning retirement communities. For many years NLPC reflected the explosive population growth in the vicinity. More recently, that trend has leveled off and NLPC has held steady in membership with a decline in worship attendance since the peak in 2009. The contemporary worship service at 9:45 has grown slightly, while attendance has declined at both traditional services. Hopefully that trend is levelling off and we can reverse it entirely. Overall, NLPC is still very healthy numerically, financially, and spiritually. Our prayerful relationship with the Lord is apparent and widespread. Discipleship is gaining momentum. Faith, hope, and love abide at NLPC. Congregational enthusiasm and confidence appear high.

Our surrounding community still represents potential for numerical growth. “The fields are ripe for harvest” (John 4:35). While much of the major new development (in The Villages, for example) is more than ten miles from NLPC, the nearby pockets of development and high rate of property turnover still bring many newcomers close enough to consider NLPC as their church home. We will need to be more intentional and effective to achieve numerical growth than was necessary in years past. And the “future of the church” is still based on retirees moving into the area. We should be especially eager and energetic to reach the younger retirees (55-65 year olds) arriving in the area.

NLPC made an early significant decision to be located outside The Villages proper, hoping to have an extended reach to persons who live elsewhere and to families with children in the community. With the addition of the Little Blessings Child-Care Center and programs like Logos, NLPC has drawn more children and young families to the campus. The ministries with children, youth, and young families reflect our mission to reach all ages for Christ. However, our growing edge has still been with retirees moving to this part of Florida for the climate and recreational lifestyle. The BBT expects that to continue for the foreseeable future. Our numerical growth depends on effective ministries with older adults.

NLPC has many established or developing strengths upon which we can build. This BBT highlights five of them because of their strategic importance: worship and music, congregational care, community impact, current facilities, and leadership. Each of these warrants a paragraph or more of fuller explanation.

Worship and Music

The congregational survey pointed to worship as the top reason people continue to connect to NLPC. “Worship messages” was selected by 75% of respondents. Worship music was chosen by 39%. Another 33% named order and style of worship. All other factors trailed these worship categories by a wide margin. Since worshipping God is central to the life of disciples and the Church, this affirmation is most encouraging.

The BBT recommends that NLPC find ways to build upon this strength. If the messages are one of the top strengths, perhaps they can be produced in a written form so they can be more easily

distributed for those who request them or want to pass them along. We want to continue to invest in more instrumentalists and special music features in the Sanctuary services. The experience of the past couple years has shown the effectiveness of video used for announcements and other brief segments in worship. We should be building our capacity for video production in terms of equipment and staffing or volunteers. And if our worship is a strength, we should consider new ways to extend the reach of worship, such as livestreaming on our website and adding another weekend service outside of Sunday morning.

Congregational Care

Over the past several years our congregational care is a developing strength. This is essential to our discipleship and witness, as Jesus said, “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:35). The quality of our love and care for one another reflects how well we are following Jesus. Congregational care is also strategically important for the demographics of our church and community. With many members facing medical crises, grief, depression, and other age-related challenges, we want our congregational care to be deemed a strength of NLPC.

NLPC is blessed with a great team of Stephen Ministers, trained and deployed for one-on-one, confidential caregiving. And our care ministries include small groups for support for persons facing specific circumstances like grief. The recent creation of the Board of Deacons has added nine compassionate men and women, devoted to care, initiating contacts, and supplementing what the pastoral staff is able to do. After a couple years we will assess their impact, and we always have the option of adding to their number. Perhaps the most significant breakthrough has been the new staff position: Director of Congregational Care. This role has been wonderfully filled so that our care coordination and support is reaching new levels of organization and effectiveness.

To build on this momentum we probably need to add administrative support staff, dedicated to congregational care. We should reconfigure the offices of the pastoral staff and create a conference room for appointments or meetings with families, for example, for planning a funeral. Our commitment and development of a first-rate funeral/memorial service ministry represents care for our NLPC constituents as well as our witness to the broader community through all who attend those services. This points us in the direction of a chapel, a new space sacred and suitable for smaller services that are overwhelmed in a 1200-seat sanctuary. These building considerations are detailed further at the end of chapter 3.

Community Impact

This year is the 20th anniversary for Little Blessings Child-Care Center, Operation Homebound, and the Christian Food Panty. Over two decades those three missions alone have had a colossal impact on our community. Almost 2000 children have progressed through LB, and now some of the first students have enrolled their own children in LB. OHB began serving fourteen meals; today more than 200 are served daily. Over 750,000 meals total have been prepared and delivered. The CFP assists approximately 400 households every month with 28–30 lbs of food provided per visit. Already in 2018 more than 80,000 lbs of food has been donated and

distributed through the CFP. Individuals and families are blessed. NLPC, through these “Big 3” and many other initiatives, loves the community. The missional footprint of NLPC is large and leading the way; hundreds of volunteers from other churches come aboard to help. Certainly our community impact is a featured strength to build upon for the future.

Current Facilities

Our NLPC campus has been lovingly developed and maintained over the years. While the BBT proposes some improvements to our building and grounds, we feel tremendous gratitude for our current facilities and all the efforts from our predecessors to create this capacity for ministry. The main building has grown through three major construction periods, including the most recent that produced the Fellowship Hall, the new entrance and gathering space, and the expanded kitchen particularly for Operation Homebound. We are equipped to handle large worship services, special events, speakers, classes, meals, and ministries with all ages. The architecture and interior aesthetics are inspiring and welcoming. The structure was designed to meet the needs of persons with disabilities.

The Memorial Garden is beautiful, perhaps one of the best-kept secrets of NLPC; however, we hope it does not remain a secret. The modular building for LB was put in place in 2005. Although it has a limited life expectancy and does not match the magnificence of our main building, it has been a highly functional and well-used investment in LB. The CFP on a separate property near the center of Lady Lake has also fulfilled a great missional purpose. Collectively, our current facilities represent the excellent, cumulative work of the first quarter century of NLPC, a tremendous strength upon which to build.

Leadership

God has bestowed visionary leadership upon NLPC. Such leadership launched the church and built a sanctuary while some wondered if it could ever be filled. Faithful leadership a couple decades ago set in motion the mission and ministries that are flourishing and making an impact in our community. Courageous leadership undertook an ambitious campaign to create a multi-purpose space that would suffice for our contemporary worship service.

At NLPC we are today making disciples for Jesus Christ because of the leaders who preceded us. It is easy to look backward and affirm the leadership and decisions that produced our current vitality and witness for the Lord. It is more difficult to face forward and declare what God is asking us to do.

NLPC has a superb corps of leaders (staff, officers, and other volunteers) who are prayerful, committed, and receptive to God’s direction. Our leaders are responsible, talented, and experienced. The BBT believes we are in a season of strategic leadership with the right people in critical roles willing to tackle the big picture questions. Visionary leadership constitutes a strength to be acknowledged and exercised.

Chapter 3: Responding to Our Limiting Factors

NLPC has grown to one of the largest congregations in our area, developing many strengths such as those discussed in the previous chapter. The Presbytery of Central Florida and several neighboring Presbyterian churches sponsored our start in 1992. They helped with the initial purchase of land and provided appropriate support for a New Church Development (NCD). Today NLPC is twice as large as any of the other churches in the Presbytery. It would be natural to settle into some complacency, content with our worship attendance, ministries, mission impact, and facilities. However, our leaders do not lean in that direction. The Session specifically asked the BBT to consider ways to grow the Body of Christ that we know as NLPC.

Growing in faith, growing in spiritual maturity, growing in Christ—as discussed in chapter 1—is our primary objective. However, we also seek to grow our capacity for serving the Lord and to grow numerically the number of disciples at NLPC. To do so requires an honest examination of the factors limiting our numerical growth.

The location of NLPC on Rolling Acres Road has a number of limitations. First, the location lacks visibility on one of the major traffic arteries in our area. Although we are only a few hundred yards from US 441/27, the church itself is obscured by the businesses that have been built up in that direction. The thousands of people who pass by everyday could be entirely oblivious to the existence of NLPC. Second, the location lacks golf cart accessibility which is preferred by many living in retirement communities. Congregations in The Villages, for example, can all be reached by golf cart. Third, the location is entirely landlocked. We have no room for campus expansion in any direction surrounding the church. These are three limiting factors over which we have no control.

One possibility is to establish a satellite campus in another area where neighborhoods are rapidly growing, for example at the southwestern edge of The Villages. While this merits consideration, the BBT does not regard this to be the leading strategy for the NLPC future. A satellite church or NCD would need to be carefully coordinated with the Presbytery and would necessarily involve congregations that are geographically closer to the areas that are candidates for a new church. NLPC could participate in Presbytery discussions and collaborate in a NCD, but that in itself would not remedy some of the other constraints we are facing.

Instead of focusing on an entirely new location or satellite church ten miles away, the BBT encourages responses to four limiting factors: parking, lack of focus and coherence, communication, and building needs. Each of these is covered in the following paragraphs. Some of the proposals or remedies point to the property options discussed in chapter 5.

Parking

The congestion in the parking lot, especially between the 9:45 and 11:15 services, has created frustration for those circling and searching for a parking spot, or sitting in gridlock when the flow pattern is overwhelmed by the number of cars arriving and leaving at the same time. When this congestion happens, as it often does during the peak attendance season, it is a deterrent to growth. The congregational survey verified that parking concerns are highest among the 11:15

attendees. We know of instances when persons have given up looking for a spot and have driven away from our Sunday morning services without ever getting out of the car.

First, we want to do everything possible to make sure the parking situation does not worsen. We have some vulnerability with parking across Rolling Acres since that property does not belong to NLPC. It is provided on a voluntary basis by the owner and condo association. One possible strategy is spelled out in chapter 5 on page 20.

To remedy the current parking congestion the BBT recommends a multi-pronged approach.

1. Adjust Sunday worship times to create better margins between services:
8:00 AM 9:30 AM 11:15 AM.
2. Improve promotion of parking available in the lot across Rolling Acres Rd.
3. Implement measures to improve flow through the parking lot. This might involve hiring a consultant with some expertise. We anticipate this would create Sunday AM entry and exit points as well as improved signage.
4. Hire police help at the Rolling Acres entrance to direct traffic and assist people crossing the road.
5. Purchase a golf cart and recruit volunteers to offer transport to persons parking at the perimeter of the lot.
6. Purchase nearby acreage and run a continuous Sunday morning shuttle service with the two NLPC buses. This would be particularly helpful on high attendance Sundays.
7. Relocate Little Blessings to reclaim another aisle for parking (44 spaces per service).

The BBT does not believe any single measure will suffice. But a combination of steps will vastly improve the parking situation on Sunday mornings. The majority of these recommendations can be implemented fairly quickly and in place by the next high attendance season.

Lack of Focus and Coherence

Through the years of rapid growth, NLPC undertook many new ministries and supported many new mission requests and partnerships. On the one hand, this is impressive and commendable. NLPC has celebrated the sheer number of ministries and initiatives on our campus. On the other hand, the number of ministries, classes, collections, “asks” and invites can be confusing for newcomers, perhaps even for long-time members. When too many programs are undertaken simultaneously they cannot all be done with excellence. Some suffer from a lack of support from an overstretched staff or congregation. Author Jim Collins warns growing, successful organizations about “the undisciplined pursuit of more”⁸ which can dilute effectiveness in the core purpose and precipitate decline.

A stronger future at NLPC does fewer things with greater excellence. This requires an ability to decide what NOT to do or what to discontinue. Such decisions must be based on coordinated goals, priorities, planning, and evaluation. The decision-making processes need to be transparent and trustworthy. We continue to work toward internal clarity, focus, and collaboration within our leadership corps (including staff, officers, and ministry leaders). We seek to develop an

⁸ How the Mighty Fall, pp. 45-64 (2009).

increasingly coherent system that fits a large church. The attention to organizational health is largely behind-the-scenes work, but it makes our ministries more fruitful and our communications more effective.

Communication

Reducing the number of items we try to promote or support will improve the quality of our NLPC message. This is why we want to be clear and repetitive that our core purpose is making disciples for Christ. However, we still have a very complex task of communicating with over 1500 members and more constituents who attend for portions of the year. Our communications are delivered through numerous channels: written (bulletins and newsletters), digital (emails and on-screen visuals), videos, website, social media, advertising, etc. The internal and external communications for NLPC are currently handled by an assortment of persons with minimal coordination.

The BBT recommends creating and filling the position of Director of Communications.⁹ A full-time staff position coordinating and sharpening communications is a strategic step for a dynamic and growing NLPC. Although our physical location is not highly visible, we can still have a much higher profile in the community with enhanced communications. We propose that there is great value in having someone on staff devoted to assessing the effectiveness of our internal communications and advertising dollars, updating tactics to reach a changing culture, pursuing new ways to connect with prospective members, promoting NLPC through news releases and feature articles and other avenues of free publicity, and maintaining a robust message that we are committed to “making disciples who make disciples” for Jesus Christ.

Building Needs

The input provided to the BBT from various ministries, volunteer leaders, and staff has identified building factors that limit our effectiveness as a church. Some suggestions are straight-forward, like, “Can we please have hot water in the women’s restroom?” Others are more complicated, such as, “Could we create an inspiring chapel suitable for small funerals, special services, and prayer?” The BBT recognizes that the choir is making do in cramped quarters and with inadequate storage. The church office space poses some awkward problems, such as the walk through one pastor’s office to get to another pastor’s office. Several staff members need to move to the lobby or elsewhere to have a confidential conversation. The lack of a conference room is readily apparent when a pastor needs to meet with a family to plan a funeral or memorial service.

These examples prompt the BBT to recommend that Session hire an architectural firm to complete a feasibility study, considering changes or additions to our existing building. Consulting with an architect would help to focus the various projects and to consider alternative solutions and cost estimates. Some smaller items might be undertaken soon and within the church budget or available reserves for capital projects. The larger challenges could be incorporated into a longer-term plan for capital improvements and funding. At this moment we can articulate a list of building needs or desired improvements, but much more information and expertise is necessary to develop possible plans.

⁹ Appendix D on p. 33 is a sample position description.

Chapter 4: Our Mission Portfolio

NLPC has an impressive history of supporting mission in the community and around the world. The “Big 3” of Little Blessings, Operation Homebound, and Christian Food Pantry has already been cited on page 11 for their impact on the community. NLPC was instrumental in the launch of Love, INC (In the Name of Christ) and continues to support those local efforts. We are helping to feed students in nearby schools, as well as provide backpacks and school supplies. We have a long-time partnership with SOZO and ministry with children in the Ocala National Forest.

Meanwhile, NLPC has a sister congregation in Caibarien, Cuba, a growing involvement in Haiti, and a major mission investment through the Presbyterian Outreach Foundation in Mozambique (where we are currently funding the construction of a health clinic). The list of missions and missionaries supported—either through our operating budget, special funds and collections, or NLPC classes, small groups, and women’s circles—is tremendous.

The list, in fact, is so long that it is difficult to communicate and comprehend. Some newcomers have commented how difficult it is to grasp all that NLPC is doing in mission. Many long-time members or attendees are surprised to learn that we own and operate a food pantry. Frequently we have had special offerings that overlapped and diffused the congregational commitment to any of them.

A common concern is the relentless “ask” for more mission giving. That critique has come from Presbyterian Women participants, Sunday School class members, and persons attending FAB dinners. The recent practice of a monthly mission focus in the Second Mile Offering (SMO) is not to add another offering; the intent is that exact opposite – to plan, limit, and focus our special mission collections. We are learning that when we do that well the NLPC response is sensational. So the SMO is a step in the right direction and has given us much to celebrate in the past year.

The principles discussed in the chapter 3 section regarding focus and coherence apply also to our mission portfolio. We need to concentrate on fewer mission targets with greater effectiveness. More mission recipients do not necessarily equal better mission support. The number of requests for help will always exceed our capacity to respond, because many worthwhile enterprises or missions are underway in the name of Christ. We need to be clear what NLPC is uniquely called to support at this time.

We want to be focused enough so that a simple booklet or brochure can tell the story of our mission portfolio, so the average member can grasp our key connections and commitments. We should be able to articulate the history, rationale, and objectives for each mission supported through NLPC giving or volunteers. When we are clear about what we are saying YES to, it is much easier to say NO to new requests.

We are already trying to control the rate of fundraisers and special collections that pop up throughout the church. We are gradually shifting to a coherent portfolio that puts us in a better position to coordinate the mission giving that occurs throughout the NLPC organization. Our

annual planning will foresee the timing of the special offerings and incorporate them into the SMO, publicized for the year ahead.

A thoughtful portfolio contains a balance of local, national, and international mission. We will have a certain percentage that reflects our Presbyterian partnerships. Our portfolio is diversified in terms of Christian witness, health ministries, disaster relief, etc. Our major themes have been hunger and ministries that affect children. LB, OHB, and the CFP are the three “Big 3” in our mission portfolio. All three are observing their 20th anniversary in 2018. They are uniquely connected to—and dependent upon—NLPC. They warrant our strongest commitment. We will work aggressively to focus resources for the Big 3 and to make sure they are sustainable and effective for Christ, continuing their impact in the community. Saying YES to these signature missions may mean saying NO to some other requests for funding and support.

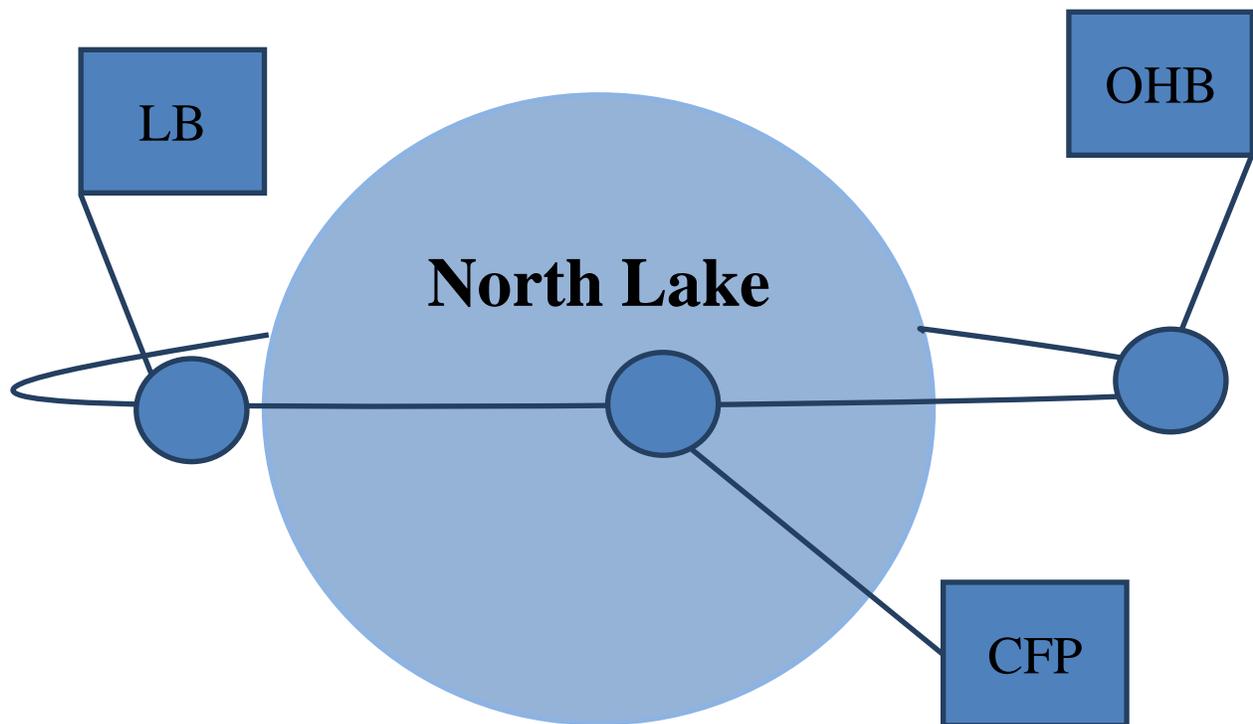
During the deliberations of the BBT a separate team was asked to take an in-depth look at the immediate and short-term needs of LB. The catalyst for their study was an elevated concern in 2017 about the financial and staffing viability of LB in their current model of operation. Indeed, for an assortment of reasons, LB has emerged as a key factor in NLPC strategic planning. The report of the LB team is detailed, ambitious, and encouraging. Representatives of the LB team met with the BBT before they submitted their report to the Session. On behalf of NLPC, the BBT wants to express profound thanks to the persons who did the research and formulated recommendations pertaining to the next three years at LB.

The LB team proposes three specific next steps on page three of their report. The BBT agrees completely with two of the three. First, we concur that LB should proceed with a plan to shift from a Christian Child-Care Center to a Christian Pre-school. We believe that is an important distinction and transition, as they have spelled it out in their report. We applaud the intentional effort to make disciples for Jesus during the earliest years of the children entrusted to LB. Second, we concur with the recommendation to hire an independent consultant who specializes in Christian Preschools “to provide an overall assessment that will help to grow” LB in the best practices available. Third, the LB team recommends we create a scholarship program to offset LB expenses absorbed in the NLPC operating budget. This is a well-intended fundraising suggestion. However, the BBT does not believe this is the highest priority or right approach at this time. Given the probability of another capital campaign in the near future, the scholarship fundraising would deflect attention and support from a more strategic goal.

The LB report advances other questions and considerations for the future. For example, the section on liability and risk management makes a compelling case for a separate, non-profit corporation status for LB. That change would not break ties with NLPC, but could be mutually beneficial. NLPC would see advantages in risk management; LB would have some added flexibility for fundraising and for staffing and benefits options, if they are not directly under the “ownership” of NLPC. Based on what we’ve learned so far, the BBT looks favorably at this option and believes it should be fully researched and pursued if the way is clear. Depending upon what is learned and the LB experience, NLPC may want to pursue a similar approach with OHB and the CFP. They would still have a unique and indispensable place in our NLPC mission portfolio.

Another aspect of the LB report pertains to the accounting for LB expenses embedded in the NLPC operating budget, such as payroll services, utilities, insurance, building maintenance, etc. All this infrastructure is absorbed by NLPC. If a fair market rental value is added to the equation, LB is provided well over \$100,000 in support that is unintentionally concealed in the way it is accounted. The LB team requested a clear allocation of these NLPC services and various forms of support, in order to have a more accurate picture of the true cost of their operation. Their initial analysis is helpful and illuminating. A similar process should be followed with OHB and the CFP. Although this is not urgent from the standpoint of a financial crisis, it is important data for understanding our partnership with these missions.

We are truly blessed at NLPC to have such a strong legacy of mission upon which to build. We envision an exciting future for LB that extends beyond the current facilities and constraints. We see all of the Big 3 thriving and meeting important needs in the community. With our mission portfolio we want to assess our ongoing involvement, not simply by dollars contributed, but by lives impacted. We want to recognize, celebrate, and give thanks for the ways that God is using NLPC for Kingdom work.



Chapter 5 – Property Options

Chapter 3 has already noted the limitations of our current location and property. The most glaring weakness is our parking capacity. NLPC can actually seat more than 2,000 people for worship at the same time, if both the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall are in use. However, we have only 395 parking spaces on our campus. Across Rolling Acres in the medical/professional complex we are permitted to use another 200 spaces on evenings and weekends. That additional parking is provided as a courtesy by the owner and the condo association. We have no control or guarantee over that parking for the future. Without it we would even lack the space to fill the Sanctuary for worship or a concert.

The LB location represents at least 44 prime parking spaces. If those spaces were available for all Sunday morning services, our parking capacity would expand for approximately 200 more attendees. The BBT believes that the current location of LB (in a modular building with a limited life-expectancy) hampers both the LB development and NLPC parking. A relocation of LB would address two long-term needs. It would provide an 11% increase of parking spaces on our campus. It would also provide a space for LB to grow. One of the immediate benefits would be a safer, more efficient arrangement for dropping-off and picking-up children, as well as suitable space for outdoor recreation. In the short run the existing modular building could be moved and slightly expanded to meet immediate growing needs for the LB. The increased enrollment would also improve LB's economic viability. In the long run a site-built structure could be designed with the capacity and features of an excellent 21st century Christian pre-school.

The BBT spent months gathering data and reflecting on the NLPC future before any attention was given to new property. However, the BBT was also aware of long-time leaders and members sharing regrets that NLPC missed earlier opportunities for property surrounding the campus. The church is landlocked today because the adjoining properties seemed impractical or out-of-reach at the time. One of the developments within the BBT was a collective resolve that NLPC should be alert to new possibilities so that the church is not in the same position ten years ahead, still regretting missed opportunities.

The desire not to miss an opportunity, coupled with the challenges raised by parking and the LB future, prompted the BBT to look beyond our campus. While the BBT was underway gathering data and considering options for the future, two nearby properties were listed for sale.

One property option is a condo in the medical/professional complex across Rolling Acres Rd where we are permitted to use the parking lot evenings and weekends. Currently two adjoining units are for sale with a combined asking price of \$525,000. The purchase of one or both condo units would address two NLPC needs.

First and foremost, the purchase would provide a voice and vote in the condo association to address any concerns about the NLPC use of the parking lot. We are dependent on the goodwill of an organization with which we have no official connection. While we have no indication our parking arrangement is in jeopardy, and there is no guarantee that condo ownership would secure the needed parking for the future, this would be a due-diligence investment to protect usage of 200 critically important spaces available for evenings and weekends.

Second, the condo purchase would alleviate some office congestion by providing additional space across the street. For example, the finance and administration offices could be relocated to the condo unit, allowing for a reconfiguration of our current main office. Already the BBT and the Session have walked through the units to inspect their potential. If this option seems feasible and desirable, the Session could assign a “rapid response team” to research, negotiate, and pursue steps to acquire that property.

Another option is an 8.5 acre lot that fronts both Griffin Road and County Road 25 just 0.7 miles from NLPC. With proper zoning clearance, that land could be an ideal location for LB, as well as overflow parking for NLPC on high attendance Sundays (using our two busses as shuttles). The acreage would also provide beautiful grounds for church picnics, recreational ministries, Easter sunrise services, and other special events. A site development plan could help us envision how that campus eventually features our ministries with children and youth and young families, while serving the entire congregation in an assortment of ways.

The potential NLPC uses of that property—both short-term and long-term—make a strong case for exploring the purchase. The risk is minimal because of the anticipated appreciation of the land value in an area rapidly developing. In recent months a large opening has been cut between US 441/27 and CR 25 for a commercial development. The bridge overpass of US 441/27 over CR 25 is going to be eliminated with the work funded and scheduled to begin in 2020. The relocation and redesign of the intersection of US 441/27 and CR 25 will increase the traffic flow, visibility, and value of the property that is for sale.

Already the listing price has been raised from \$799,000 to \$950,000, spurred by interest from NLPC and at least two other parties. Currently the land is being used for grazing cattle, for storing recreational vehicles, and for the office of an irrigation business. The property consists of four separate parcels which the owner wishes to sell together.

Session members, advised of this property option, have had an opportunity to walk the property. BBT team member Dottie Wise (a realtor as well as a current elder) and Church Administrator Dennis Heasty have met with the appropriate government office in Lady Lake to begin researching steps and costs anticipated with the annexation of one of the parcels, zoning changes, impact fees, and other development matters. Our Building Director John Bros has begun to research the costs associated with relocating and possibly expanding the LB modular building.

The BBT recommends that Session approve the submission of a sales agreement, with appropriate contingencies, to begin the process of negotiating a purchase. At the same time BBT recommends appropriate written notification and further explanation to the congregation and the Presbytery of Central Florida. Their approvals are required for such a purchase. Moreover, their support is essential in the discernment process, assessing if this is genuinely the direction God is guiding NLPC.

Whether or not these property options are right and available for NLPC, the BBT urges Session to remain vigilant looking for nearby property that could remedy our parking congestion and provide long-range, strategic possibilities for NLPC.

Chapter 6 – Financial Planning

The consensus of those managing the NLPC finances is that the church is financially healthy. Congregational contributions have been strong. 2017 finished with a favorable balance because giving to the operating budget exceeded the projection by 4.2% and increased 7.3% over the previous year. An additional \$437,000 was designated giving, primarily for mission. We are blessed to be part of a church that has responded generously to numerous challenges.

The church mortgage from previous building projects was renegotiated in 2017 for a lower rate of 4%. The loan extends to 2040 with a current balance of \$2.8 million. The monthly payments of \$21,450 total 12.4% of our annual budget. The reserves for designated accounts are fully funded; however, the amount available for capital repairs and replacements is less than desirable.

The BBT recommends a long-term goal of unrestricted reserves equaling three months of the budget. This is a common rule-of-thumb and good stewardship to handle many contingencies.¹⁰ A gradual, disciplined pathway to that level of reserves should not neglect current obligations or ministries.

The BBT also recommends the establishment of an endowment fund. NLPC members and friends can be educated and encouraged to include the endowment fund in their deferred giving or estate planning. Even a gentle promotion of this can yield a new source and target for generosity that builds over time. The creation and administration of an endowment fund is a fairly simple and common practice for churches that can buttress NLPC financial stability for decades to come.

As mentioned in chapter 4, the BBT recommends an effort to probe and pursue a transition for LB to become a separate, non-profit corporation. This is generally referred to as a 501c3 organization from the US tax code. The apparent advantages relate to risk management, flexibility in options for staffing compensation and benefits, and potentially widening the reach for fund-raising. If this shift is successful with LB, it may be logical to pursue a similar course with OHB and the CFP.

Also, the BBT agrees with the initiative of the LB team to clarify and quantify the in-kind or infrastructure contributions made by NLPC to LB (payroll services, utilities, insurance, building maintenance, fair market rental value, etc.). This is helpful analysis to understand fully the nature of our partnership and the full cost for the LB operation. We encourage the Finance Office to develop a similar analysis for OHB and the CFP.

Of course the BBT acknowledges the potential cost implications of recommendations contained earlier in this report. The possible campus improvements or property acquisitions would require extraordinary funding, dollars that are not available in the operating budget.

¹⁰ <https://thomrainer.com/2015/07/should-a-church-have-financial-reserves/> - retrieved May 24, 2018
<https://www.agfinancial.org/blog/cash-reserves-how-much-does-your-ministry-need/> - retrieved May 24, 2018

Depending on what Session decides regarding other recommendations, NLPC should consider a major capital campaign with clear objectives and timetable. Most effective capital campaigns are spread across a three-year giving period. Some projects or purchases, if undertaken, would require a bridge loan to move forward while campaign pledges are fulfilled. The BBT believes that a well-conceived comprehensive plan will be adequately supported if the congregation is informed and able to see the long-term advantages. The campaign could also include an objective of mortgage reduction or building the reserves to a targeted level. That would position NLPC even more strongly for the future while other big steps are accomplished to enhance our capacity and ministry for the Lord.

Chapter 7 – Body Builders Team Process

The Session of NLPC approved the charter of the Body Builders Team on October 17, 2017, and gave permission to the Moderator to recruit team members. The BBT met for the first time on December 4, reflecting on the charter, studying Ephesians 4:15-16, sharing previous leadership experiences, anticipating steps for NLPC strategic planning, and praying for the work ahead. The subsequent weekly meetings (skipping Christmas week!) included time for team development and prayers, as well as the various work assignments.

The BBT regularly sought the Lord’s guidance for the critical process of discernment. We recognized that we are not making decisions for NLPC, but providing a strategic overview and analysis to help the Session and others make the key decisions. Like most groups involved in planning, we have hoped that our efforts will contribute to action, not simply be added to the shelf of good ideas. We have trusted that will occur if our recommendations are “*good and acceptable and pleasing to God*” (Romans 12:2).

We described our process and timetable as follows:

December/January	January/February	Mar/April	May/June
Getting started	Going deeper	Seeing what the Lord wants us to see	Finishing the report
Departing	Data-gathering	Discerning	Delivering

Our initial phase included team-building exercises and articles to sharpen our focus, a preliminary SWOT assessment (to identify the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats of NLPC), an evaluation of the current NLPC Vision and Mission statements, and a review of “The Case for Discipleship” that had been presented to Session two years earlier.

During the data-gathering phase the BBT prepared, administered, and analyzed the results of a congregational survey with 568 respondents. The process also included key questions submitted to staff, elders, and ministry leaders. Their written responses were collated and analyzed by the team. The categories of inquiry were divided into a) programs or ministries; b) communication; c) campus and facilities; d) finances, and e) staffing.

In the third phase the BBT was distilling a huge amount of input and trying to discern what the Lord is saying to us. We interviewed a number of leaders to ask follow-up questions. For several weeks the BBT met two or three times, depending on the availability of persons interviewed. During this phase we began to review input from the LB team and met with representatives of their group about their pending report to the Session. Midway through this phase we also began to investigate other property options. Meanwhile, we were assembling preliminary conclusions to share with the Session. This was done during a Session/BBT retreat on Thursday, May 3.

The final phase has continued a fairly intense meeting schedule and accelerated work assignments to finish the report. Because of the travel plans of several BBT members and the timetable for the emerging property options, the BBT suggested to the Session an extra meeting

at the end of May. The penultimate draft was delivered digitally to elders on Saturday, May 26, and then presented at the special meeting on May 29, 2018.

Over the course of six months, the BBT has attempted to keep the congregation apprised of its work, sharing the charter, a brief report at the congregational meeting, results of the survey, and other basic information in bulletin covers and newsletter articles. The intent is for the full BBT report to be available to the congregation on the website or by requested copy. The BBT is willing to participate eventually in question and answer forums for those interested in learning more or discussing the report. This would be at the direction of Session, depending on the elders' decisions and determination of next steps.

Chapter 8 – Conclusion and Summary of Recommendations

With the submission of this report to the Session, the BBT hopes to fulfill the charter for which we were commissioned. This comprehensive, strategic report attempts to:

- Clarify our purpose and vision for the future
- Identify core ministries, mission commitments, and objectives for the coming years
- Assess our campus, facilities, parking, and other assets that support our ministries
- Develop plans to improve our capacity and impact for Christ.

Many questions, decisions, and details remain. But this is the collective, ambitious, and prayerful result of the BBT's efforts for the past six months. As team members we have cherished the trust of the Session and the high privilege of reflecting upon key issues for NLPC and the future.

Along the way we have repeatedly sensed the presence of the Lord in our deliberations.

Although we make no claim to speak for the true Head of the Church, we humbly submit this summary list of specific recommendations drawn from the preceding pages.

#	Recommendation	Page reference
1	Affirm that “making disciples” is the core purpose of NLPC	8-9
2	Adjust Sunday worship times to create better margins between services	14
3	Hire a parking lot consultant to improve the Sunday AM flow	14
4	Hire police help to direct traffic, etc. for the peak attendance season	14
5	Purchase a golf cart to transport persons from outlying parking spaces	14
6	Support a principle of doing fewer things with greater excellence	14
7	Create and fill the full-time position of Director of Communications	15
8	Hire an architectural consultant to consider changes to existing building	15
9	Affirm NLPC “Big 3” and commitment to their long-term effectiveness	16
10	Approve LB transition from child-care to Christian Pre-school	17
11	Hire a consultant to assess and guide LB plan for future	17
12	Commence process to establish LB as separate non-profit corporation	17
13	Continue to research and consider condo purchase across Rolling Acres	19
14	Submit a sales contract to purchase Griffin Rd property	20
15	Research and pursue steps to develop Griffin Rd site	20
16	Research and pursue steps to relocate LB to Griffin Rd site	20
17	Establish a long-term goal of a 3 month financial reserve for contingencies	22
18	Establish an endowment fund and encourage deferred giving/estate planning	22
19	Develop a capital campaign to support steps outlined above	22
20	PRAY!	1-36

One priority is clear, regular communication with the congregation. Each step needs to be communicated transparently and managed carefully. If a property purchase is anticipated or pursued, communication with the congregation should commence immediately. The BBT stands ready to assist with this and the other work ahead.

To God be the glory!

Afterword

by **Bob Collins, retired Presbyterian minister**

It was approximately five years ago that Ann and I attended North Lake Presbyterian Church for the first time. As we got out of the car and walked toward the entrance, I said to Ann, “We don’t know one person in this church. But, if we get involved here, it won’t be long until folks in this church are our best friends.” And that is true. Ann and I walked in and members welcomed us. We sat down in a beautiful sanctuary that someone else had built. After worship, we enjoyed coffee which someone else had prepared. The next Sunday, we attended Sunday school class in a room we did not build and taught by a teacher we did not know!

Your story is the same. When you came here for the first time, someone had prepared a beautiful place for you to come and worship God. They did it because someone had prepared a beautiful place for them going all the way back to Jesus who has, “prepared a place for you” (John 14:2).

As the BBT members have listened to people telling us about how our church has arrived at this point in our history, names have been mentioned that many of us had never heard before. But these were the people who have given sacrificially of their **time, talent, and treasure**, so that we might worship God in this place. In response to the command of Jesus to **make disciples** of all nations (Matthew 28:19) people in the past have had a **vision** of what could be done so that the people of this church could make a great witness for Jesus Christ.

Now it is our turn. Over and over again, members of the BBT have asked in our discussions, “What is God calling our church to do in our time? What can we do so that we can have an even greater impact on our community and our world? How can we prepare, so that North Lake’s greatest years are ahead of us?”

Some of the ideas proposed in the report you just read will require a lot from us. That’s O.K. Remember how God kept telling one of his judges, **Gideon**, to send more and more of his army home lest, after the victory, the people might say, “The strength of my own hand has accomplished this” (Judges 7:2). Is not God calling us to do some things so difficult that we will look back and say, “**God gets all the credit.** We could not have done this on our own.”?

God has blessed this church with great leaders, and they are great leaders because they are constantly praying, “What is God calling us to do?” God has blessed this church with many lay persons who say, “I want to do my part to make this a great church, even greater than it has been in the past. And **Jesus Christ** is way out ahead of us preparing the way for us. Pray that we will **make decisions** about our future that God wants us to make, and that He will bless.

And remember also that those whose names we do not know, who have given so much so that this can be a great church, who have gone on to be with the Lord, are cheering us on from the balcony of heaven!

“We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us” (Philippians 4:13).

Appendix A

Body Builders

Ephesians 4:15–16 (NRSV)

¹⁵ But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, **promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.**



The *Body Builders* will be the team assigned by Session to prepare a comprehensive, strategic plan for North Lake. Their basic charter includes:

- Clarify our purpose and vision for the future
- Identify our core ministries, mission commitments, and objectives for the coming years
- Assess our campus, facilities, parking, and other assets that support our ministries
- Develop plans to improve our capacity and impact for Christ
- Provide ongoing reports to Session and a final report by June 19, 2018.

Ephesians 4:15-16 will guide the *Body Builders* to:

1. Speak the truth in love
2. Remember we are to grow up in every way into the head, into Christ
3. Consider the whole body and how it is knit together
4. Emphasize the importance of each part working properly
5. Promote the body's growth, building itself up in love.



This team has a vital responsibility that will require intensive work, regular meetings, the ability to listen and discern, and the commitment to seek God's will.

Visits to the fitness center and the use of dumbbells are optional!

Appendix B

The Case for Discipleship at NLPC

From: Pastors Jeff Hosmer and Mike Smith
To: Session

February 10, 2016

Should making disciples for Jesus be the central, driving purpose of NLPC?

Yes, because DISCIPLESHIP is the ...

1. **Biblical mandate** of the Church
 - a. The Great Commission: *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.* Matthew 28:19–20a (NRSV)
 - b. Make disciples who make disciples
2. **Essential function** of the Church
 - a. If we are not making disciples, we are not truly the Church.
 - b. Sine qua non - Latin, literally "without which not," an indispensable condition
3. **Spiritual domain** of the Church
 - a. Present persons mature in Christ (Colossians 1:28)
 - b. Prepare followers for life and eternity
4. **Unique responsibility** of the Church
 - a. We do many things that duplicate the broader culture (host concerts and entertainment, provide numerous fellowship activities, etc.), but making disciples for Christ is a purpose solely fulfilled by the Church.
 - b. If we don't do this, who will?
5. **Effective focus** of the Church
 - a. Churches that are committed and focused on making disciples are vital and growing; churches that are not making disciples are struggling in decline.
 - b. SIMPLE CHURCH, Thom S. Rainer and Eric Geiger, 2011
"First, as we interacted with vibrant and growing churches, we observed that these churches had a clear process for discipleship. They were streamlined and simple. Conversely, the struggling churches we observed had no clear process. They were complex and cluttered with programs." p. 63

Appendix B continued

6. **Neglected work** of the Church

- a. THE GREAT OMISSION, Dallas Willard (professor in School of Philosophy @ University of Southern California), 2006
“For at least several decades the churches of the Western world have not made discipleship a condition of being a Christian.... Contemporary American churches in particular do not require following Christ in his example, spirit, and teachings as a condition of membership—either of entering into or continuing in fellowship of a denomination or local church.... So far as the visible Christian institutions of our day are concerned, *discipleship clearly is optional.*”
- b. Needs to be reclaimed by the Church

7. **Cultural contribution** of the Church

- a. BAD RELIGION: HOW WE BECAME A NATION OF HERETICS, Ross Douthat – NYTimes columnist in – 2012
“America’s problem isn’t too much religion, or too little of it. It’s *bad* religion: the slow-motion collapse of traditional Christianity and the rise of a variety of destructive pseudo-Christianities in its place.”
- b. Failure to do quality Christian discipleship has left a vacuum filled by numerous undesirable alternatives. Sincere, thoughtful followers of Jesus have always had a positive impact in the cultures in which they reside.

8. **Vision statement** of the Church (NLPC)

- a. “To grow the community of Christ followers”
- b. Cannot grow the community without growing Christ followers (discipleship)

Appendix B continued

If Session agrees that making disciples for Jesus is the central, driving purpose of NLPC, what will that look like?

1. **We will have a clear commitment that making disciples is the primary work and goal of NLPC.**
 - a. This will be the WHY of NLPC, our reason for being.
 - b. Having received the love and life that are ours in Christ, we are singularly committed to share and grow that discipleship with others.
 - c. Presenting persons “mature in Christ” to the community, to the broader Church, and to the Kingdom of Heaven will be our objective.
 - d. This objective will be recognized church-wide.
 - e. It will be impossible for newcomers to sample NLPC without perceiving this commitment and the fruits of growing disciples.

2. **We will have a clear description of what a follower of Jesus growing to mature discipleship looks like.**
 - a. This description will clarify expectations for church members.
 - b. This description will be the basis for welcoming and guiding new members.
 - c. This description will inform the way we do ministry from the youngest among us to those who are already most mature in years.

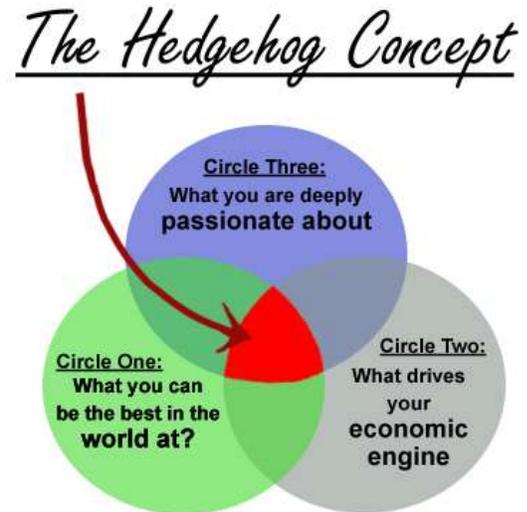
3. **We will have a clear and simple pathway for growing disciples.**
 - a. The pathway will begin with basic discipleship building blocks for everyone.
 - b. The pathway will have enough variety and flexibility to allow disciples to grow as guided by the Spirit.
 - c. The pathway will include ways of serving and helping others to grow as disciples.

4. **We will have a clear criterion for decisions: does this _____ promote the making of disciples for Jesus?**
 - a. All NLPC planning must begin here, either implicitly or explicitly.
 - b. Everything we do (including, for example, congregational care, mission, fellowship events) will in some way correlate to, or support, our core purpose of making disciples, *or we don't do it.*
 - c. Discipling will be the lens through which we see our schedule, staff, budget, facilities, and infrastructure of NLPC.

Appendix B continued

Can we and will we have this singularity of purpose for making disciples?

- Author Jim Collins (in his book GOOD TO GREAT) calls this “the Hedgehog Principle”
 - In a famous article "The Hedgehog and the Fox," British scholar Sir Isaiah Berlin divided the world into hedgehogs and foxes, based upon an ancient Greek parable: "The fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing."
 - Collins uses this to challenge organizations to greatness through FOCUS.
 - He describes the Hedgehog principle as the convergence of three factors:
 - passion,
 - capacity for excellence,
 - and what propels an organization forward to success.



- German poet and statesman J. W. Goethe wrote:
 - To live within limits. To want one Thing. Or a few things very much and love them dearly. Cling to them, survey them from every angle. Become one with them—that is what makes the poet, the artist, the human being.
- “A simple church is a congregation designed around a straight-forward and strategic process that moves people through the stages of spiritual growth.”
SIMPLE CHURCH: RETURNING TO GOD’S PROCESS FOR MAKING DISCIPLES, Thom S. Rainer and Eric Geiger, B&H, 2011

If the answer is “yes, let’s commit to this singularity of purpose for making disciples,” then we have a lot of exciting work to do.

If the answer is “no” or “we’re not sure about that,” then we are probably content with holding on to the status quo and the maintenance of many divergent activities, each of which has been selected and legitimated at some time, but not with a coherent or central purpose.

Appendix C*

Quick observations from the NLPC Survey administered by the Body Builders Team (BBT)

March 27, 2018

1. **565 respondents**
 - a. 66% female
 - b. Age groups –
 - i. 75+ (46%)
 - ii. 66-75 (41%)
 - iii. 56-65 (10%)
 - iv. 55 and under (3%)
 - c. Service attended
 - i. 8:15 (35%)
 - ii. 9:45 (31%)
 - iii. 11:15 (34%)
- 307 persons took the time to write specific comments or suggestions in response to the open-ended question. The responses were overwhelmingly positive and edifying. We are sorting through the ideas and questions submitted. Thanks to all who helped with this survey!
2. **9:45 worshippers** tend to be slightly younger and newer to North Lake
 - a. 20% of 9:45 attendees are over 75 years old, compared to 55% and 61% at the sanctuary services.
 - b. 46% of those who have been attending NLPC for 2 years or less have connected with the 9:45 service.
 3. **43% were looking for a Presbyterian church** when they came initially to NLPC. That factor has continued to be prominent for those who started at North Lake in the past 2 years, but it is less significant for those attending the 9:45 service.
 4. **27% first came to NLPC because of “word of mouth” encouragement** (recommendation or personal invitation of a friend or neighbor).
 5. **Worship was by far the top reason the respondents continue at NLPC.** *Worship messages* was selected by 75%. *Worship music* was chosen by 39%. Another 33% named *Order and style of worship*. All other factors trailed these worship categories by a wide margin.
 6. **The #1 item that people want to see improved is parking.** The concern about parking rises through the morning, as reflected in this breakdown by service.
 - a. 24% of 8:15
 - b. 31% of 9:45
 - c. 45% of 11:15

In addition to the survey results, the BBT asked staff and elders to complete longer questionnaires. We are sifting through a large amount of input and asking some big questions about the future. The BBT was commissioned by Session to work intensively for a little more than six months and to submit a report in June. The overall purpose is to “build up the body of Christ” at North Lake and to think more strategically about the coming years. We are asking the Lord for guidance in this season of discernment and we welcome your prayerful support.

Rev. Bob Collins
Rev. Dr. Jeff Hosmer (staff)

Sue Kirkpatrick
Mike Snow (staff)

Dottie Wise (elder)
Dick Young (elder)

*Full 17 page survey report is available upon request.

Appendix D

Director of Communications North Lake Presbyterian Church May 2018 (SAMPLE)

The Mission of North Lake Presbyterian Church is:

To make disciples of Christ.

Job Description

The primary function of this position is to (in coordinate and lead the internal and external communication efforts of North Lake.

This position is full Time with benefits.

Accountability

This position is directly responsible to the Church Administrator.

Qualifications:

- Christian with experience/skills in traditional and digital communications
- Understands internal organization communications and external promotions
- Church experience preferred

Responsibilities:

- Work in a Christ-like manner helps develop disciples of Christ
- Be the point person in developing an effective overall strategy for North Lake Presbyterian church to communicate its purpose and ministries
- Establish systems and procedures to facilitate internal and external communications working with Staff Leadership Team and North Lake Session
- Coordinate the communications efforts of various ministries
- Work with various ministries on strategies to most effectively communicate their purpose and work
- Help create communications and promotional materials
- Coordinate with various external communications avenues
- Coordinate with various ministries by attending Staff, Staff Leadership Team, and Session meetings among other
- Occasionally assist in Sunday worship with announcements

Appendix E

COMPILATION OF IDEAS HARVESTED BY BBT

PROGRAM:

Classes that teach stewardship, volunteering, end-of-life gifts, spiritual gifts
Mission programs at the local level
Follow up with new members in 2 years to determine involvement
Ability to change programs/worship with the changing demographics
More deacons
Administrative help for care ministry
Need more men's ministries
Program in place to contact inactive members
Determine skills/interests of members and establish a data base
Bring in well known Christian speakers
Develop a Tech Class—online directory; Right Now; classroom equipment
Be able to address concerns other than food of our Homebound clients
Expand FAB to invite the community
More organized program to develop ministry leaders
Better coordination of the many ministries
Re-evaluate the benefits of Christmas Night at North Lake
Make young families a mission (adopt families/provide food baskets, etc)
Classes on what it means to be and how to become a good disciple
Encourage members to invite people to church
Have a Volunteer Fair to encourage more involvement
Add a Saturday evening worship service
Use instrumental music with choir on a regular basis

FACILITY:

Signage to direct people to additional parking across Rolling Acres
Increase security
Make the main entrance more visible to visitors (possibly signage overhead)
Need conference rooms for private meetings
Choir room changes, including additional storage space
Lunch area for staff (with refrigerator)
Lobby re-design: Discipleship counter too crowded; possibly use Children Sign in counter for additional space
Monitor in the Cafe area

Appendix E continued

- Update hearing aid equipment
- Increase WIFI capacity in church
- Expand/redesign office area
- Construct maintenance garage by dumpster to contain hazardous equipment
- Need a chapel for funerals; small worship times; private prayer
- Need more parking, especially handicap parking
- Use golf cart in parking lot to bring people in from their cars
- Have wheelchairs available at drop off area
- Add benches to walkways into church
- Have police control traffic on Sunday mornings
- Change service times to alleviate parking problem
- Improve access from lobby to classroom area

FINANCE:

- Provide a “giving” seminar with information on wills/trusts and Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) contributions
- Create an Endowment Fund to provide financial stability
- Provide financial information to congregation on regular basis
- Reduce mortgage debt
- Improve contingency/emergency fund
- Develop salary structure and job descriptions
- Control health care costs
- Financial reports to be transparent on costs devoted to Operation Homebound, Little Blessings and Christian Food Pantry
- Be able to donate from phone app

COMMUNICATION:

- Need to improve coordination of communication
- Communicate in a fashion that meets needs of different age groups
- Improve advertising/more ads
- Communicate discipleship better
- Describe classes more fully
- Improve website and encourage use by members

Appendix E continued

Improve consistency of internal communication

Develop ways for the congregation to communicate with staff electronically

Redesign communication cards

Create a church app

Consistent process for communicating with people who have stopped attending

Create a “brand” for North Lake (discipleship) and communicate it to the community

Use surveys with the congregation to determine needs/information

Increase communication through social media