

A Letter to the Congregation of West London Alliance Church from the Board of Elders February 2009

Greetings and love from the elders of West London! For years now, we on the Board have been trying hard to follow the Lord's leading of West London so as to provide godly leadership to the church. The details of that challenge have been to avoid surging ahead of his leading or failing to keep up with it. We are hopeful that our success in this challenge is the explanation of why we have been working away on the idea of renovation and expansion since 2006 and have not yet begun the work! This letter is being sent to the West London church family between the congregational meetings of Sunday, January 11 and Sunday, March 1 (our **Annual Meeting**). We would like to encourage attendance at the Annual Meeting by explaining the challenges and opportunities before us and the implications of these to all of us.

For starters, we wish the whole church family to be clear on our direction for the future, a plan which was previewed on January 11 and will be detailed in the Annual Report soon to be published and then discussed at the Annual Meeting. **This new five-year plan** is an extension and expansion of the plan presented in 2004 under the title "*The future of West London as we see it.*" We want you to know that the three parts of the new plan are built on the main three points of the 2004 plan in recognition of the Lord's blessing upon the efforts of our ministry leaders and the measure of success that has been the result of their labours. The three parts of this new plan are entitled "*More involvement in missions,*" "*More impact on London*" and "*Discipleship deeper and higher.*" While we mean to "forget not all his benefits," we also intend to "press on to lay hold of all that for which Christ Jesus has laid hold of us." For this reason, our intention is to challenge our congregation to stretch forward and to reach up to new levels of effectiveness and fruitfulness in making known the greatness of God. In order to meet the needs of our growing congregation and this extended vision, both renovation and expansion have become necessary. We invite you to prayerfully consider the details of the latest DRAFT of our planning document which is included in this mailing.

Secondly, we write to ensure that you are aware of the congregational decision that was made on January 11 to (finally!) begin the **renovation of our well-used building** with \$220,000 of the money already given to our Expansion and Renovation projects. The first work you will see will be the closing off of the auditorium balconies to create two large "attics" for the storage of ministry equipment and supplies and to create a large "office area" for new part-time personnel (in the "middle third" of the balcony) and the conversion of the gym shower rooms into large storage closets. We are planning to begin renovation work on the kitchen and the present Youth Room on the first week of March. The kitchen will be expanded into the present gym storage room and the Youth Room will be repainted and carpeted. New paint and carpeting is planned for the rest of the building and will be added "strategically" to avoid interfering with our ongoing ministries as much as possible.

In the third place, we write to explain the rest of our ideas for **renovation and expansion, including enlarging our front foyer and paving or re-paving our parking lots.** The expansion plan is to build a new place for youth ministry on what now is our south parking lot. We have a 4,000 square foot (370 square metre) construction planned which includes a 2,000 square foot ((185 square metre) "meeting area" for our youth groups. (*How big is that?* The current Youth Room is about 1,000 square feet (93 square metres). The gym is about 4,000 square feet (370 square metres)... so the new meeting area will be twice the size of the "old youth room" and half the size of the gym.) This new construction will not only permit our current youth ministries and children's ministries to develop by providing them both with more room in the form of "a place of their own," [This new plan includes renovating Rooms 6, 7 and 8 to become a "brand new" 1,800 square foot (165 square metre) room designed for Children's Ministry] but will provide us with suitable space to develop new outreach initiatives to youth (and other age groups) in our neighboring communities as part of our five-year plan for "More impact on London."

Please be clear on the fact that no formal decision has yet been made about this plan to expand ... and that is the fourth important reason for this letter. We want the entire church family to know that our deciding whether or not to go forward with this expansion will take the form of the congregational vote on **West London's Budget for 2009**. The budget that we will present in the upcoming Annual Report

will include the assuming of a mortgage of approximately \$1,000,000 in the second half of 2009, permitting us to proceed with the remainder of the renovations, the paving of the parking lot and the new construction. We intend to challenge the church family to give generously this year to these plans. If those of us who are able to give more than we are presently giving will respond positively to this challenge, the money given will reduce the size of the mortgage from the outset.

The details of the budget will of course be printed in the Annual Report but the “punch line” is that it calls for an increase in offerings from \$566,088 in 2008 to \$653,000 in 2009 (which includes the new mortgage for the second half of the year: in total an increase of 15.4%) and to \$724,400 in 2010 (with the mortgage in place for the entire year: in total an increase from 2008 of almost 28%.) The Board of Elders is confident that, with the Lord’s help, our congregation, at its current size and strength, will be able to manage this responsibility. However before we proceed we will be asking the members and associates of the church for **a 66% vote in favour of accepting this challenge**. So we ask you to pray and seek the counsel of the Lord in preparation for the March 1 meeting.

As was mentioned at the January 11 meeting, “the fields are white for harvest” (maybe a happier thought than “white with snow”!) May the Lord be with us all as we strive individually and as a church to follow him as he leads us.

Sincerely,

Sheldon Dyck (Chair)
Steve MacDonald
Ron Standish (Treasurer)

Peter Ferguson (Vice)
Dwain Murphy
Mike Wilkins

Steve Gaunt (Secretary)
Kevin Shoemaker

APPENDIX 'A'

Notes to the following two tables:

Appendix 'B' is a table that highlights the actual general offerings received in comparison to the budget and the total income from 1997 to the present, plus the projected budgets going forward to 2013. **Appendix 'C'** shows the same in a chart form.

It is the belief of the Board that while we are responsible to plan, it is the Lord who directs our steps (Prov.16:9). We hope that this is evident in the way we have prepared the budget for congregational approval. Our Lord has seen fit sometimes to bless us with more and sometimes with less than we have asked for, but He has always shown Himself faithful over the fifty-six years that West London has been in existence. By His faithfulness, we have never been found wanting and have always been enabled to do the work that He has had for us to do.

While we usually focus attention on the General Offering, our total income actually also includes money from other revenue sources such as income from ministry programs, camps, retreats, mission trips and the giving that is received for capital projects such as this current building project, for which we received \$29,717 in 2006, \$230,663 in 2007 and \$95,050 in 2008 for a total of \$355,430. This is reflected in the total income received for those years and explains why our overall income peaked in 2007 and shows a drop in 2008.

As noted in the letter above, the projected budgets for 2009 and 2010 assume a \$1,000,000 mortgage over an amortization period of 20 years at an interest rate of 6.75%. This translates to principal and interest payments of approximately \$90,000 per year. Any fund raising and any continuing receipt of pledges will enable us to reduce these mortgage payments and in turn reduce the anticipated budgets for the years ahead.

We are encouraging each member and adherent to pray as we approach the March 1st Annual Meeting, seeking God's leading as to whether or not this plan best satisfies God's call to us to make known His greatness in London and throughout the world, as set out in our five year plan. We believe that if it is, God will faithfully provide through each one of us doing our part to make this vision happen and to God will be all the glory.