



**Our Own Place: A Proposal; Review: The Clanking Chains; “Everson” Enables Individual Rights to Trump Community Standards**

**OUR OWN PLACE: A Proposal  
Sunday, 4 August 2002**

At the Congregational Meeting held on June 3, 2001, I presented a proposal to the congregation and the Board of Deacons. This proposition asked the Board to contact the appropriate businesses, firms, and organizations in order to produce a report to the congregation that outlined the feasibility of obtaining Our Own Place.

This church is in its twenty-seventh year. I have been its pastor for over 17 of these. During this time the subject of acquiring our own building has come up from time to time. It has never gone further than idle conversation except on one occasion when the search itself upset nearly everyone in the congregation.

Over the past four years the idea has surfaced again. With past experiences in mind I feel it necessary to again make clear my position as your pastor on this subject.

I have personally remained neutral on this idea throughout my tenure here. I have neither supported nor opposed it. The reason? I will teach whoever shows up no matter where we meet. However, I have always supported the idea of this church having its Own Place.

What do I mean by Own Place? First of all, Chesterfield Day School is not Our Own Place. It belongs to a private organization and we are tenants and thus remain here at their good pleasure. The relationship has remained cordial over the years but we are not autonomous as a result nor are we perpetually insulated from any future set of circumstances that might lead to the cancellation of our lease.

As I expressed at the 2001 meeting, Our Own Place could include the following: (1) a certain number of square feet in a convenient location that we could rent or lease. This could be a strip center, an office building, even a large house. (2) A church facility that is being vacated because of certain circumstances. For example, the church folds, it can't pay its mortgage, or it has built a new building. (3) A new building that we would construct from the church's general fund.

In June 2001, I observed that the church's general fund was around \$225,000.00. It is approximately the same today. This is obviously not enough cash on hand for us to consider a new facility or the purchase of an existing facility. Joe Hunt who chairs the church's Feasibility Committee has recently completed his investigation and learned that a facility that would accommodate a seating capacity of 300 on the required 3 acres of land plus furnishings would cost around 3-million dollars. It is apparent that unless God knows things we do not currently know, this is out of our reach.

Consequently, we are presently taking a look at an existing facility: Lafayette Bible Baptist Church located at 929 Big Bend Road between Missouri Highway 141 and Hanna Road. Weldon Schott, the Chairman of our Board of Deacons, John Brunner, former Chair of the church's New Facilities Committee, and I toured this church last week. Joe Hunt's schedule did not allow him to join us.

Lafayette Bible Baptist Church is located on three acres of land. It consists of a church building that seats an estimated 200 with the possibility of expansion for over 100 more. It has an adjacent building that is used as a private school. This building has adequate space to house our Prep School's Visual Aids Workshop and Media Ministries. It also has a kitchen. The church building was built in the 1970s but renovated in 1997. The school building was built in 1992. Also on the property is a three-bedroom house that is used as a parsonage.



The asking price for this facility is 1.2-million dollars. Obviously we do not have the cash on hand at present to seriously consider even acquiring a mortgage to purchase this property. Should our financial condition change significantly over the next several weeks then we might be in a position to seriously entertain the idea of purchasing these facilities.

Questions always arise when the subject of a church building is broached. Over time I have discovered that there are good and bad reasons to remain where we are and also there are good and bad reasons to have Our Own Place.

First of all, let's take a look at the good reasons to remain in status quo. The church pays Chesterfield Day School \$600.00 a month rent. Not bad. That's \$7,200 a year. There is no building maintenance, no upkeep of facilities, no lawn care, no plumbing or other utility problems. If the fact we have a cheap place to meet is the *only* consideration worthy of discussion then the case is obviously closed at this point.

However, there are a number of problems associated with our meeting here that, taken individually, are tolerable but, taken together, create a major reason to at least look at alternatives. Here are a few of those problems as I see them and the solutions to them.

- 1-Every time we meet someone must come here early to set up chairs, sound system, pulpit, and Prep School. Over the years a very small number of men have agreed to take on this responsibility at the level of chairman. This does not cast aspersions upon those who for whatever reason do not function on the facilities committee but it does point out that, over the years, this major burden has been assumed by a precious few. Whenever they are unavailable we have other problems that are obvious.

Solution: With Our Own Place all furniture, electronics, facilities, et al., would be permanently set up.

- 2-One of the dangers from constantly moving electronic equipment around is that wires and connections break. Over the course of the last five years the major impact by this ministry has been toward our invisible congregation. There are more people who listen on tape or the Internet than show up at the live assembly. Many in this invisible congregation are members of the church who are taking advantage of these services. This is good because the primary reason for the tape and Internet ministries is to assist members of the local congregation to stay current. So the membership, as well as those who join us from afar, is at jeopardy of being disconnected from doctrine if the equipment goes down.

Solution: These electronics and their wirings are protected if they are installed in a permanent and stable location.

- 3-All of our missions are designed to promote and provide the Word of God to whoever is positive. Our first obligation is to our own, especially to the children who meet here with their parents. Prep School teachers have an ongoing problem dealing with classrooms that are the property of Chesterfield Day School. As a result visuals and teaching aids must be brought in and out every Sunday. Nothing can be permanently displayed nor filed or stored on site. Constant attention must be paid to assuring that none of the school's belongings are move or damaged.

Solution: Our Own Place would provide rooms that could be organized in the manner that the Prep School teachers believe would best enable them to communicate doctrine. Their materials, equipment, and visuals could be set up permanently and the room decorated to stress the current study.



4-Current Prep School rooms are adjacent to the gymnasium and thus are a source of constant distraction to the congregation. Likewise the nursery, which often has a baby uncomfortable with the fact that he is hungry, wet, or both.

Solution: A Prep School and nursery that is not adjacent to the auditorium but close by would prevent this distraction.

5-Our Bible classes are repeatedly intruded upon by CDS faculty and students, children of Day School teachers, and rank strangers who feel free to come into the gymnasium. It used to upset me that these people had so little respect for the Word of God that they would so casually wander through our services. But I finally realized that it was simply another drawback from not having Our Own Place and that I must simply endure it. It still doesn't make it right.

Solution: Our Own Place would forever eliminate this ongoing problem.

6-Occasionally throughout the year we are asked to cancel our classes because of some project here at the school. These cancellations are caused by graduations, fundraisers, plays, and refurbishing the gym floor.

Solution: If we had Our Own Place these cancellations would not be necessary.

7-At least once a year, sometimes twice, we have a stage set up behind the pulpit so that the overhead projector either cannot be used effectively or at all. Also, these events seem to always occur when the need for the overhead is at its greatest.

Solution: Our Own Place with the overhead screen permanently in place, the overhead projector permanently focused, and with no reason to move or alter this arrangement would permanently resolve this problem.

8-I have no problem with anyone who makes the effort to come to Bible class but arrives late. However, we have no place to accommodate late arrivals and they are forced to enter into the service as quietly as possible. This is nevertheless a distraction.

Solution: It would be best if we had Our Own Place constructed in such a way that late arrivals could enter without causing any distraction at all to the Bible class.

9-There has always seemed to be a deficiency in our congregation of the Y chromosome and as a result we have quite a number of young ladies who within the next five years or so are going to be looking for a place to get married. In my 17 years at Grace Doctrine I have had no one seriously suggest that they intended to hold their wedding here in the gym.

Solution: Our Own Place would at least provide the option to conduct wedding ceremonies and even memorials in our own church.

10- Presently, the Visual Aids Workshop for our Prep School and the production facilities for the Tape Division of Media Ministries are located in the basement of the Board Chairman's home. This situation was originally intended to be temporary with hopes of eventually acquiring a permanent location. This situation is now in its seventh year and needs to be corrected.

Solution: Our Own Place would provide all the necessary space to accommodate these operations.



- 11- Finally, our church is growing. We are eventually going to be faced with a space problem here at Chesterfield Day School that will be difficult to manage. I am also of the opinion that until we have Our Own Place that it will be difficult to obtain the *exoterike harmonia* we are challenged by the Word of God to achieve. With Our Own Place there would be sense of ownership, the *esprit de corps* of a church home, and the gratification of seeing it develop into a center for the communication of doctrine in the greater St. Louis metropolitan area.

Solution: Our Own Place would facilitate the accomplishment of these objectives.

As you can see, none of these problems, taken individually, is major. But I contend that taken together they are a constant source of distraction to the congregation and to me. Our Own Place would eliminate all of them and thus provide an acceptable environment for learning doctrine. The solutions to all these problems constitute the “good reasons” for securing Our Own Place.

Having toured Lafayette Bible Baptist Church, I can tell you that its facilities resolve all the problems just mentioned.

Some have suggested that no business would put this kind of money into a building that would only be utilized four hours a week. This is true. But a church is not a business. A local church is the classroom for Christianity. It is the spiritual home of its members. It is a place of refuge from *cosmos diabolicus*. It is a neutral site for all its activities. A church building enables its membership not to be dependent upon others for its facilities thus giving it true autonomy. And a church building builds legitimate pride in our ministry by presenting it to the community as a professionally run organization.

I have been told by other pastors who have built or bought church buildings and moved their congregations into them from rented facilities, that the move doubled the size of the church. Not all newcomers will stay but we are told a large percentage will. It is our duty to make doctrine available to others.

Some suggest that if people are positive they will be led to us even if we do meet in a gymnasium. This is true. But there are some who are not positive but become so when they hear the Word taught. Therefore, a church that meets in a gymnasium does so almost in secret and offers no visible inducement to the carnal believer, let alone the heathen, to give doctrine a hearing.

The traditionalism of a local church building removes these barriers and therefore allows the individual to concentrate on the real issue which is the Word of God. From these will emerge many who are positive to doctrine.

We have made significant investments in the distribution of the Word to others electronically. A local church building will be a significant investment in drawing members of our community into the fellowship and opening up the resource of Bible doctrine to the people of the St. Louis area.

Therefore, I propose that this congregation enter into prayer for the divine guidance needed to objectively evaluate the opportunity that has been presented. I suggest that if you are interested in viewing the Lafayette Bible Baptist Church facility that you contact Weldon Schott over the course of the following week, Monday through Friday, August 5-9. He will then make arrangements with the real estate agents in charge of the property to determine the time a tour can be arranged the week of August 11-17, Sunday through Saturday.

I am therefore calling for special Congregational Meetings to take place every Sunday, beginning August 18, until we have come to a final decision about this property.

I have no idea what the outcome of this project will be. None of us do. We are going to trust in the guidance of the Father through His Word and the guidance of the Holy Spirit through His filling ministries to direct us in this endeavor. But this is conceivably a doable project at which we as a congregation need to take a serious look.



We have about four weeks to pull this off. Our Constitution requires that the Congregation vote in secret ballot regarding the purchase of real property. Such a purchase will require finances we do not presently possess. Further, by policy this church operates entirely on grace. Consequently, no one will approach any of you for contributions or donations, nor will anyone hand you a pledge card or offering envelope. One of the ways by which God guides a church in circumstances such as this is by free will giving as is described in:

**2 Corinthians 9:7 - Every man gives according as he has determined by means of doctrine in his stream of consciousness, not grudgingly or of necessity because God loves a gracious giver.**

The answer to the question before us is found in what the Father provides and the guidance from His Word. If He desires this to happen then the resources will be made available and the Board and the Congregation will be shown the validity of going forward. If He does not so provide or direct then we may be confident that this is not His will for this church at this time.

The obligation of this Congregation is to study the information to be provided as it is accumulated over the next week to ten days. Enter into prayerful consideration regarding how you will vote, and let the matchless grace of God take care of the details.

In order to emphasize how God manages His Kingdom with His Own good timing, I'd like to relate to you a true story as told by:

**Hendricks, Howard. "Selling Cattle." From *Miracles & Angels*. (Dallas: Dallas Theological Seminary).**

Shortly after Dallas seminary was founded in 1924, it almost folded. It came to the point of bankruptcy. All the creditors were ready to foreclose at twelve noon on a particular day. That morning, the founders of the school met in the president's office to pray that God would provide. In that prayer meeting was Harry Ironside. When it was his turn to pray, he said in his refreshingly candid way, "Lord, we know that the cattle on a thousand hills are Thine. Please sell some of them and send us the money."

Just about that time, a tall Texan in boots and an open-collar shirt strolled into the business office. "Howdy!" He said to the secretary. "I just sold two car loads of cattle over in Fort Worth. I've been trying to make a business deal go through, but it just won't work. I feel God wants me to give this money to the seminary. I don't know if you need it or not, but here's the check," and he handed it over.

The secretary took the check and, knowing something of the critical nature of the hour, went to the door of the prayer meeting and timidly tapped. Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer, the founder and president of the school, answered the door and took the check from her hand. When he looked at the amount, it was for the exact sum of the debt. Then he recognized the name on the check as that of the cattleman.

Turning to Dr. Ironside, he said, "Harry, God sold the cattle."

We are about to see if God is of a mind to sell another few carloads of cattle.

This church will convene in a special Congregational Meeting on Sunday, 18 August to discuss the possible purchase of Lafayette Bible Baptist Church; 929 Big Bend Road; Ballwin, Missouri. You will be asked to vote on whether or not to allow the Board of Deacons to make an offer to the Board of Lafayette Bible Baptist Church.

If necessary, we will continue to conduct special Congregational Meetings each week thereafter until this matter of business is resolved.



- 50- If the majority in a community wants its youth to appear before the faculty of the local schools under certain sartorial guidelines and dress codes it must be free to do so. If how students wear their hair, how they dress, and how they deport themselves is left to the students then again individual rights trump the rights of the community.
- 51- If the majority in a community wants its youth to be educated in the history and development of our Western European heritage, Anglo-Saxon culture, and Judeo-Christian ethic, then it must be free to do so. If students become offended by this and sue the school board to include instruction in the heritage, culture, and ethics of other nations and peoples then individual rights again trump the rights of the community.
- 52- Our forefathers desired that Western European, Anglo-Saxon, and Judeo-Christian concepts be taught in schools as is evidenced by the widespread use and popularity of the *McGuffey Readers*.
- 53- Subsequent generations practiced this until the illegal ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment set in motion a method for the systematic dismantling of American culture.
- 54- And the *Everson v. Board of Education* decision handed Lucifer the weapon he needed to execute his *coup de grace*. That decision invoked the following obscure comment in a letter Jefferson sent in 1802 to a religious organization in Connecticut:
- In the words of Jefferson, the clause against establishment of religion by law was intended to erect "a wall of separation between church and State."
- 55- This statement has become the rallying cry for the abolishment of all religious discussion outside the walls of church buildings over the past half century. However, in the analysis of manuscripts the original intent of the original must be considered and the context of peripheral commentary must be observed.