

# HOME BY ANOTHER WAY

10 January 2010

## 1. "The Backside of the Desert"

Pastor Duke

### INTRODUCTION

A. On September 7, 2008, I concluded the opening sermon of a series called "Building A Church" with these words:

"Beloved, I am calling you to serve in this church. I am exhorting you to make some personal sacrifices in order to participate in a great movement of the Church of the Saviour:

- from where we are, to where God would have us be;
- from our safe, secure confines here in the Myersville School to a new building and a new horizon;
- to new possibilities, new responsibilities, and new realities;
- to a step of faith fraught with challenges and risk;
- to a new day for this church, with the help of God and to His glory."

When I said those words, I was certain – we were ALL certain – that the next move for our church would be to a new building on the property we own on Route 40, just outside of town. We had been in Myersville since 1994, after all, and it seemed entirely logical that here, or NEAR here, is where we would, in the will of God, remain. There followed a full year of busy and expensive – but ultimately frustrating – efforts toward that end, an exercise which left us so discouraged that I felt compelled this past fall to begin a short sermon series called "Overcoming Inertia" – an attempt on my part to encourage this church to continue to trust God, to NOT lose heart, to NOT give up. "God is faithful", I proclaimed. "He will guide us."

Then, in early November, a series of events began to unfold which would result in our church's receipt of the gift of a church building – NOT a new building on the Route 40 property – but an OLD one (a VERY old one) far away from Myersville, in the tiny hamlet of Rohrersville, twenty miles south of here. It is not what we expected, nowhere near that bold sign on Route 40 announcing our intentions had been erected, not anything like that to which our hopes and prayers had for so long been directed.

Exciting? Absolutely. Surprising? You bet. Perplexing? Yes, a little. Rohrersville? *Really*, Lord? Are You really directing us to *Rohrersville*?

B. I'll admit that I've thought of little else since this process started. Four more substantial questions have been swirling around in my brain, and I'd like to share them with you this morning.

1. **Q: Should we accept this gift?**

**A:** The COS Leadership has voted unanimously: YES!  
Settlement is scheduled for Tuesday, January 20.

2. **Q: When will be moving?**

**A:** Pastor Vic Moon of the Central United Brethren Church has told me that his church has scheduled a special "last service" in their building for February 14. It seems, then, that we can hold our first service there on February 21..

3. **Q: What shall we make of this surprising turn of events?**

a. in light of Christ's **commission** to His church?

- **more** disciples; **better** disciples

b. in light of the stated **mission** of this church?

- to **equip** disciples to pursue Christ's commission

c. in light of our **vision** for this church?

- that we accomplish our mission by means of the faithful **ministry** of the **Word** as we experience authentic Christian **fellowship**, sharing the **love** of Jesus Christ in **covenant** community, living under the **authority** of the Scriptures in the enabling **power** of the Holy Spirit and according to the **principles** of the kingdom of God, *solī Deo Gloria*.

Indeed, and I repeat: **What shall we make of this?**

a. I believe this represents a new **movement** of God in our midst – one we did not expect, one we did not see coming.

*ref: Isaiah 43:18-19*

b. I believe this movement of God is a divine **alteration** of our **course**, but not of our **destination**. I believe that God is directing us “**home by another way**”, a way we might never have explored, since it runs so far off the course we had planned in a direction that seems (due to the decided limitations of our earthly minds) sideways, if not backwards. Perhaps God is leading this church through what one writer calls “**the backside of the desert**”, a route which He has designed specifically for the sacred journey of the Church of the Saviour (formerly “of Myersville”; now, perhaps, the Church of the Saviour of **Central Maryland**).

(1) like **Abram**, who was called from his ancestral home to a new homeland which God would show him after he left home (!);  
*ref: Genesis 12:1-5*

(2) like the nation of **Israel**, consecrated by God for suffering, delay (which lasted 400 years!), and *winnowing* before receiving His promise of a new homeland;  
*ref: Genesis 42 – 46*

(3) like **Moses**, directed by God – and through his own impulsive behavior – into exile for the purpose of learning how to be a husband and a shepherd (for 40 years!) before leading God’s people to a country prepared especially for them;  
*ref: Exodus 2:1 – 4:29*

(4) like **David**, who – though he had already been anointed as God’s chosen king – would first be tempered for leadership as an “outlaw”, relying solely on the guidance and provision of God as he ran for his life from the murderous intentions of King Saul;  
*ref: 1 Samuel 16:1 – 2 Samuel 2:7*

(5) like the **Magi**, who were warned by God in a dream that they should return home by another way;  
*ref: Matthew 2:1-12*

(6) like **Philip**, who was called by God away from a successful evangelistic campaign in Samaria and sent to the middle of nowhere in order that one solitary man might find Christ.  
*ref: Acts 8:26-27a*

4. Q: **How shall we prepare?**

A: We shall consult the divine record of the people of God

- to **learn** from their experiences;
- to **ready** ourselves in light of what we learn;
- to consider anew our **vision** for this church in light of this divine course adjustment and make the necessary modifications;
- to **commit** our journey along this new way to the guidance and direction of our heavenly Father by means of earnest **prayer**;
- to **trust** Him with the outcome;
- to make a new **covenant** to these ends with one another;
- to rely entirely on the enabling **power** of the Holy Spirit to accomplish these things, *solī Deo Gloria*.

C. LESSON

1. **Exodus 33:12-15** \_\_\_\_\_

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2. **Philippians 3:10-16** \_\_\_\_\_

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