

Trinity Church and 2013 – *Gen 12:1-3, 13:14-17, Gal 3:5-9, 26-29, Acts 13:1-3*

Introduction – Looking ahead to life in our local body, expect 2013 to be a year of changes, of new and continued growth and some new directions. The directions are not coming out of thin air. They are the culmination of decisions made over the course of years at Trinity. They are also rooted in the biblical teaching of church growth, the centrality of local church ministry, and the promise of the Holy Spirit's work.

Overview of the Texts –

Gen 12:1-3 – God set aside Abram and promised that he would be great and that he would be a great blessing to all nations. Abram's mission was to go to a land promised to him by God.

Gen 13:14-17 – The promises to Abram (later Abraham) is given multiple times. Now, in the land he is promised, God again tells him of innumerable descendants and hints at worldwide dominion (see Rom 4:13). Later, the promise of Isaac is given, Abram believes in God, and his faith is accounted to him for righteousness. Entrance into these promises is revealed.

Gal 3:5-9, 26-29 – The applications of these promises are all over the New Testament. In Galatians, Paul shows Gentiles that the Holy Spirit of Pentecost was that promise and that the worldwide church is in fact the manifestation of those promises. Faith is the same instrument – the faith which Abraham had been given is the faith which the church is given.

Acts 13:1-3 – The book of Acts is the story of the Holy Spirit, the story of the church, and the story of the promises spreading to the whole world. In this passage the church, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, selects men to take the gospel and establish new churches. This is multiplied over and over again as apostles and other ministers establish new churches (i.e. 1 Tim 1:3, Titus 1:5). It is always done with and by the same Spirit and with the same faith.

From Acts Until Now – This has been the ongoing story of the Church. We understand that Christ's world conquest is complete (John 12:27-33, Col 2:15) and is being completed (Matt 28:18-20) and Trinity Church was planted with that biblical optimism and hope. According to the promises, it has been our prayer to see multiple like-minded churches planted (or reformed) throughout our region and across the nation and to the world. In God's kindness, we were able to be one of the three charter member churches to form the (now) Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches. Trinity Church will celebrate her 20th anniversary this summer and so we are still a young mission church of sorts. But God is growing us up.

The Next Thousand Years – This was the title of a series of discussions we had at Men's Meeting during the 2011-12 year. We re-examined our distinctives in light of God's Word and our own sense of calling. Even though we live in what could be called a "post-Christian" nation, we are not to believe this is the long-term plan for the Church or for the world (Isaiah 11:9, Psalm 110:1). We are called to live with faith, hope, and optimism and we are to live it out like that. Our Lord's Day worship is God's first means, a battering ram, against the darkness of unbelief through which we ask Him to shake the heavens and the earth mightily and for His glory (Heb 12:18-29). We are a people who worship with this anticipation and expectation. We are to then prepare accordingly and reflect regularly, watching with eyes of faith. Our practical vision is to see Christ-centered Homes, Christ-centered Churches, and Christ-centered Cities more greatly manifested, even significantly manifested in our own lifetimes.

Church-Planting 2013 – With an abysmal political election behind us, we are reminded to turn to Christ for all things. In His providence, he has raised up and equipped another full-time minister in our midst whose vision is with us and for our cities here. And so, if the Lord wills (James 4:13-16), we intend to plant another church in our area, begin the process of finding a permanent home for Trinity Church, and support a like-minded mission church and pastor in Gdansk, Poland. We aren't intending to start a huge giving campaign; we believe that faithful tithing and Spirit-led offerings will provide us with all we need. We are intending to inform you, let you know where and why you can give, and seek your prayerful commitment to the work before us.

From Acts 13 and On – In the beginning of Acts 13, Barnabas and Paul are set apart for the work of church-planting. They probably had no idea where this would go. Throughout Acts, Spirit filled preaching grows the church. At Pisidian Antioch, Paul preaches in the synagogue in the power of the Spirit, people hear and want to come back for more (Acts 13:42), and the next Sabbath nearly the entire city comes out to hear (v44). Word, worship, and evangelism feed into one another, and this is what we are praying to see more and more. Faith produces hope, and hope produces love.

The Role of Members – Everywhere there is a church there is the body of Christ. He is the head and we are the body, filled with multiple gifts and callings (1 Cor 12). Within that context, God is calling each of us individually, and as the church and churches corporately, to invest in the next thousand years with the time, talents, and treasures He has given.