

An Open Letter from KEN IDLEMAN

February 20, 2016

A Time for Everything

"There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot... a time to tear down and a time to build up, a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance... a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing, a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away, a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak..." [Ecclesiastes 3:1-7]

Today is a time I need to speak; but, to be honest with you, it has a 'bittersweet' feel for me to announce... **After careful thought and prayerful consideration, Kaylene and I have decided it is time for me to retire as Senior Pastor of Crossroads Christian Church.**

When I was called to serve at Crossroads in 2007, the elders and I were aware that there were some special facets to our partnership ... First, I was coming from a long tenure as president of a Christian College. How would my spiritual leadership transfer from the context of the college community to a local church family? Second, I was 59 years old at the time. So, I knew from the start that I would need to evaluate my ministry after a decade or so of service. Well friends, this March 27th will be our 10th Easter with you. [From our standpoint, the time has passed all too quickly.] For the past three years, I have had, in the back of my mind, a plan forming that would insure when it came time for me to hand off the 'shepherd's staff' of pastoral leadership at Crossroads, it would be a seamless, momentum-producing, and most of all, a God-honoring transition.

A little over a year ago I shared my thoughts with the elders about the next season of my life and my desire to pursue God's best to insure the health and growth of Crossroads into the future. **It is important for you to know I initiated the succession process that we, your leaders, have been cooperatively pursuing.**

From the beginning, it has been my desire to finish well and to step away from senior leadership when the time was right. By God's grace we have come to that time. There is growing excitement among our elders, leadership team, pastors and staff about what is ahead with our growing missionary partnerships among unreached peoples, our multisite outreach in the Tri-State area and our campus/facility expansion. Clearly, God is at work among us as He is leading Crossroads into a bright future. I deeply desire to see the church thrive in the years ahead and for this next season to be especially vital. Kaylene and I will continue faithfully serving God's purpose through His church, although I will no longer serve as a senior leader. I have done that consistently for almost 50 years. And remember?... "There is a time for everything, a season for every activity under heaven." Presently, we do not have a definite kingdom assignment, but we do know that, as the Apostle Paul said in *Philippians 1:22*, "As long as I am alive... there is good work for me to do."

You should know that this transition will happen gradually and strategically over the next 3-4 months with my final weekend being May 21st -22nd... as I move from being 'a pastor-in-charge' to 'a pastor-at-large.' Kaylene and I are grateful beyond words for the genuine love, the practical kindness and the deep respect you have shown to us... and the leadership you have entrusted to us. I have said it to our leaders and I want to say it to all of you today...

It will be harder for us to say goodbye to you after nearly 10 years than it was to say goodbye to the Bible College after 34 years. And it is because of the special ties that bind a shepherd to his flock... a pastor/teacher to his church. We humbly thank you for granting us the privilege of serving you and serving Jesus with you... we love you all and Crossroads will always have a very special place in our hearts!

Grace and peace,



Ken Idleman
Senior Pastor, Crossroads Christian Church



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An Open Letter from THE CHAIRMAN OF THE ELDERS

February 20, 2016

A Time To Embrace

Allow me to first simply acknowledge, on behalf of the Crossroads elders, staff, and the entire Crossroads body, that we respect the prayerful consideration that Ken and Kaylene have made to reach their decision to retire. Furthermore, we completely honor that decision. Reaching this planned retirement in God-honoring fashion, after running a gallant race is a remarkable achievement in and of itself!



Secondly, we want to acknowledge the faithful service of Ken Idleman, as Senior Pastor of Crossroads Christian Church. We have benefited tremendously from his investment into our body and in our community. We have all profited from his steady and confident leadership. Ken was God's chosen man to bring stability to Crossroads, at a time when our leadership was in transition. He led us to a deeper walk with the Lord, as individuals, and corporately, through his preaching and teaching from God's Word. Our body has been richly blessed with Ken as our shepherd over the past decade. In a few months, we will have an opportunity to formally celebrate with Ken and Kaylene, and to demonstrate our appreciation in a fitting and well-deserved fashion. Drawing from Ken's reference to the passage in Ecclesiastes 3, "this is a time to embrace, and a time to cheer" (v 2-8, The Message).

If you know anything about Ken, you know that he would not announce his retirement until there was a thoughtful and detailed plan in place for Crossroads moving forward. As a member of the elders, Ken has been a part of the succession planning. Together we have been working on this plan for nearly three years. The elders have spent much time praying and fasting, as we considered the timing of, and the person to be called as Ken's successor. Ken has been providing developmental and mentoring input to the candidate during the process.

At the same time, all the Crossroads elders have been thoroughly investigating, studying, interviewing, mentoring, and largely "investing in" the candidate that we want to put forward today. This candidate has been found to be worthy of the call, when considering his faith heritage, his dynamic home church, his exemplary marriage and nuclear family, his strong sense of God's calling, his collaborative approach to leadership, and the fact that he has served as a 'second voice' in our pulpit. The elders are united in our conviction of God's leading.

And so it is with great pleasure and anticipation of God's blessing that we call Patrick Garcia as the future Lead Pastor of Crossroads Christian Church! Two weeks from today, March 5-6, there will be a congregational vote to affirm the elders' unanimous decision.



Grace and peace,

Paul Speciale

Paul Speciale

Chairman of the Elders, Crossroads Christian Church



ELDERS' LETTER to the Congregation

February 20, 2016

Dear Friends and Members of Crossroads Christian Church,

"Your greatest authority is moral authority."

"Always serve two churches... the one that is and the one that can be."

"Speak the truth in love."

These are just a few of the encouraging phrases that have become part of the fabric of Crossroads thanks to Ken Idleman's leadership and vision. In recent months he has also talked off-line to our church leaders about the seasons of life; and specifically, he has been open with our elders about his desire to prepare for his own transition into 'retirement' in a way that would insure that the best for CCC is yet to be. To this end, Ken and the elders have been praying about and discussing a plan for his succession.

Dr. John Walker of Blessing Ranch says that the majority of ministry leaders do not finish well. Ken wants this season in the life of our church to be exceptionally positive. With his characteristic good humor, Ken has suggested that there are three ways to go. You can be carried out [die in harness], you can be forced out [fired], or you can walk out [retire]. Obviously, he is doing the latter... choosing to transition at a time when Crossroads is strong... spiritually, relationally and financially... with a united leadership vision for the future.

According to Dr. Henry Cloud in his book, *Necessary Endings*, three questions need to be asked: 1] Is it the right time? 2] Is the right team in place? 3] Is there an obvious successor? As the Lord has lead Ken and our elders in this process over the past several months... clearly, the answer to all three of these questions is 'yes!' For the next three months, there will be strategic steps taken to insure a succession that is seamless, momentum-producing and God-honoring. God's favor has surely been on the Crossroad's ministry for nearly 50 years! We ask for your prayers, trust, confidence, good will and support as we move forward believing that 'the best is yet to be.'

Loving and serving Jesus with you,

The Crossroads Christian Church Elders



SUCCESSION PLAN FAQ'S: Crossroads Christian Church

1. How long have the elders been discussing pastoral succession?

Answer: For three years the Crossroads elders have had a documented plan in place for both an unexpected/emergency transition or a planned/orderly succession. During this same time, there has been a strategic effort to add to our pastoral team some younger men who have a lead pastor calling and gifting.

2. Who initiated the current plan?

Answer: Pastor Ken introduced the topic of pastoral succession at an elder's retreat in 2014. He had been reading an excellent book entitled, *Necessary Endings*, by Dr. Henry Cloud. That book was helpful in prompting Ken and the elders to embrace the inevitability of necessary endings and the opportunity of new beginnings.

3. How long will this succession process take?

Answer: Because of the foundational work that has been done over the last three years, we are able to move forward quickly... with Ken's retirement announcement taking place on February 20-21, 2016 and the formal handing off of the shepherd's leadership staff 3 months later on May 21-22, 2016.

4. Do we have a serious candidate?

Answer: Yes, many conversations have taken place over the past year with our Evangelism Pastor, Patrick Garcia. He has served as a 'second voice' in the pulpit, preaching a dozen times last year. His 4 consecutive messages in November 2015 resulted in over 50 baptisms. His faith heritage, his dynamic home church, his exemplary marriage and nuclear family, his strong sense of God's calling, his collaborative approach to leadership and his commitment to grow as a preacher/leader have infused our elders with the confidence to unanimously recommend him to our congregation for a vote of affirmation on March 5/6, 2016.

5. What is the difference between the designations 'senior pastor' and 'lead pastor'?

Answer: A senior pastor is typically older in years and experience. A lead pastor is typically younger in years and experience. In practical leadership function, there is little difference.

6. When and how will our new lead pastor be introduced to the church?

Answer: Assuming Patrick is affirmed by a congregational vote the first weekend in March, Ken and Patrick will be scheduling visits to our small group communities and as many other venues as possible from March through May. In addition, they will begin sharing the preaching duties 50/50 with Ken's last scheduled preaching date on May 21/22, 2016.

7. Has the current Senior Pastor had any voice in this process?

Answer: As defined by church by-laws, this is an elder-lead process, but Ken is an elder at Crossroads and it was Ken who initiated bringing this to the elders for consideration. Ken made it clear from the beginning that he wants to be helpful and supportive of the process, but that he has no desire to direct it.

8. Are the elders united?

Answer: Yes, both the lay elders and the staff elders are in complete unity with each other. All are confident that exciting days are ahead for the ministry of Crossroads Christian Church in the Tri-State area and the world.

9. Will there be any continuing relationship with the outgoing Senior Pastor?

Answer: Yes. The new lead pastor and the elders would be open to a continuing relationship, with the form and frequency to be determined. Pastor Ken is also open to adding value to the ministry of Crossroads into the future.

10. What can we do?

Answer: Please pray that this process will be a God-honoring witness in our community which so desperately needs to see a model of healthy church leadership succession! In addition, 'talk up' this season of new beginnings in your circles of influence and acquaintance so there will be the creation of a Kingdom-building momentum.

"Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future."

Ephesians 4:3-4



SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE Ken Idleman

February 22, 2016

At the close of all three worship assemblies at Crossroads Christian Church this past weekend, I announced my planned 'retirement' as Senior Pastor, followed by Chairman Paul Speciale's announcement of the elder's decision to call Evangelism Pastor Patrick Garcia to serve as the next Lead Pastor, subject to a vote of affirmation by the congregation scheduled the weekend of March 5-6. In recent years, the elders and I have prayed over and discussed a succession plan that would be seamless, momentum-building and God-honoring. By God's grace it has come together and will unfold strategically over the next 3 months, with my final weekend on May 21-22, 2016. [In addition to my public announcement, there is information available in hard copy at the Crossroads Connection Center and online at cccgo.com/staffannouncement.]

According to Dr. Henry Cloud in his book, *Necessary Endings*, three questions need to be asked when approaching such a season of change: 1] Is it the right time? 2] Is the right team in place? 3] Is there an obvious successor? The answer to all three questions is a resounding 'yes!' The time is right. Crossroads is strong... spiritually, relationally and financially... with a united leadership vision for the future. The right team is in place. The elders, pastors, directors and staff are all together on the same page with Crossroads recently being recognized as a Certified Best Christian Workplace.

The obvious successor, Patrick Garcia, has been on our pastoral staff for 3 years. His faithful family of origin, his strong sense of God's calling on his life to preach and lead, his dynamic home church, his undergraduate [AB at Cincinnati Christian University] and graduate [MA at Lincoln Christian Seminary] education, his marriage and family, his experience working pastorally in two different mega-churches, all more than qualify him for this role.

Though younger in years, Patrick has the maturity of a much older man. And of course, with a younger lead pastor, there is the likelihood of a longer tenure, which typically serves a church well.

Personally, I am glad that it was a unanimous decision by our elders to bypass doing a national search for my successor. I don't have to be concerned that Patrick Garcia is Biblically sound and that he lives a life of integrity. I know what he believes theologically. I have watched him act and react in discharging his day-to-day ministry responsibilities. I have observed him as a husband and father. I have seen how he responds with humility in his successes and how he confronts challenges with God-confidence. Preparation for trustworthy leadership involves a season of demonstrated followership. As one of our staff pastors, Patrick has been a conscientious follower and he will be an exceptional leader.

In the book, *Transition Plan*, authors Bob Russell and Bryan Bucher assert, "Resumes, degrees, interviews, ordination papers, references, and trial sermons may tell us some things about a potential candidate for the ministry. But when it comes to really understanding that candidate – his character, his work habits, his personality traits, and his family relationships – there is no substitute for working alongside that person over a period of time."

The Bible reveals the fact that the Kingdom of God is blessed by prayerful, thoughtful transitions... Moses to Joshua, Elijah to Elisha, Jesus to the apostles and Paul to Timothy. It has been the prayer of our leadership at Crossroads that the Tri-State area and the world will be blessed for many years to come by the leadership succession that is happening in this corner of God's global Kingdom. As a church, today we lift up our united prayer... "Lead on O King Eternal."



