

6560 Prince of Wales Drive,
North Gower, ON,
K0A 2T0
15 May 2011

Re: An open letter to friends and family

Dear friends and family,

It is with mixed feelings that announce that my family and I are leaving Cornerstone Wesleyan Church, North Gower, and Canada.

Sense of sobriety

I feel foremost a sense of sobriety as we take this most final of steps. It heralds the end of an era in my life, and that of my family. Having been part of the Cornerstone family for 7 years, it is not easy to write this letter. Neither is it simple to communicate just how much my Cornerstone family has meant to me or what an honour it has been to serve the local church as Assistant Pastor. I could not begin to recount the impact that my brothers and sisters at Cornerstone have had on my life, or that of my family. It would be impossible to list the experiences we've had and memories we've made, not to mention the friends we've gained along the journey!

I could not do justice to the manner in which Pastor Craig has modeled compassionate and authentic leadership, and the friendship that he has extended to me that has repeatedly transcended that of a mere working relationship.

Since arriving in Canada, we have always known, and have never concealed, the fact that we wouldn't be here forever. Mission is what drew Wendy and I together, in our time aboard the Logos 2, and has always been an invisible current keeping us with one eye on the future even as we have invested ourselves fully in the present ministry at Cornerstone.

I can say without one word of exaggeration that the Dan Wallis leaving Cornerstone is not the same Dan Wallis that stepped through the doors at 6556 Prince of Wales for the first time in 2004. (And it's not just because I now have a "Reverend" preceding my name!) I have been part of a church that believes in allowing people to discover and hone their gifts under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and I have been the most grateful recipient of this ministry mind-set.

When the leadership at Cornerstone accepted Wendy's and my application to come on staff back in 2004, we knew that they were taking a big risk hiring us, a young couple fresh off the mission field with lots of passion and no qualifications! Cornerstone has been the most gracious greenhouse in which we've been blessed to grow into who we are today (and that growth is far from over!) So it's with a heavy heart that my family and I plan to take our leave of you.

Sense of anticipation

It is also, however, with a sense of optimistic anticipation that we take this most foundational of steps. The question marks hovering over the horizon, beckoning my family forth, hide the very definite period marks of God's will. The future that is not known to us is, however, known to our great Jehovah who has promised to guide us as pilgrims through this barren land. Though we love our life here, according to the leading that we feel we've received, Wendy and I both feel that to stay in Canada would be an act of disobedience on our parts; we would be stepping out of God's will. God is drawing us forward; we just don't know, as yet, where. Wendy and I both believe that I must tender my resignation without waiting for any further illumination to be forthcoming from God. So forward we must go, trusting that both the Wallis family and the Cornerstone family are held in God's unwavering grip of grace.

The time we set aside during Lent, for waiting and praying, served to confirm this sense of leading. Scripture after scripture undergirded this guidance we were receiving; this, combined with comments I jotted in my journal, emails we received and sermons that we've sat under, means that it could not be clearer to us: God is calling us out. Following this letter is an Appendix: a compilation of many of the scriptures and thoughts I've been led to over the past weeks. None of these have been "sought out" by Wendy or me. They have come to us purely through God's orchestration, just as we have been going about our lives, or reading the Bible. I trust that this affirms in your mind and heart that we are indeed following God's revealed will, and are not just seeking to put a spiritual façade over a human decision. Wendy and I feel confident that we have the support of Pastor Craig and the leadership of Cornerstone as we take this next step.

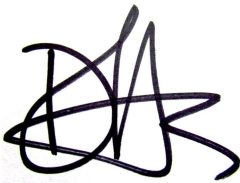
Though we face the future with some trepidation, any fear is smothered by an overwhelming confidence in our God of Hebrews 11; our God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; our God of Gladys Aylward, Adoniram Judson, Amy Carmichael and CT Studd.

Time line

On Friday May 13 the LBA of Cornerstone received my letter of resignation. On Sunday May 15, I announced my resignation to the church family during our Sunday morning worship gathering. I intend to use the remainder of my time at Cornerstone to tie up loose ends and attempt, with the grace of God, to focus on leaving the ministries which I oversee in a strong and healthy state to move forward. As a step of faith, Wendy and I plan to leave Canada at the end of August, before the school year and fall season at Cornerstone begin. This will allow us enough time to get our affairs in order, in addition to allow us sufficient time to say goodbye to those we need to. I think it is also beneficial to Cornerstone that we leave at this juncture, rather than later in the year at which point ministry programs and other church activities will be in full swing.

Our plan is to move to my parents' house in Aberystwyth (Wales) after leaving Canada at the end of August and wait on God for our next step, unless He chooses to show us His desire before then. My family and I covet your prayers during this time.

In the name of, and service to, Christ



Pastor Dan Wallis
(and Wendy, Enya, Ariana and
Maya)



Appendix: Some of the scriptures and thoughts I've been led to over the past weeks:

"Who foretold this long ago?
Who declared it from the distant past?
Was it not I, the LORD?
And there is no God apart from Me,
A righteous God and a Saviour;
There is none but Me" (Isaiah 45:21-22)

LORD, as Wendy and I look to the future, our greatest desire being to serve You, may we take comfort in Your foreknowledge, sovereignty and declaration of what is to come

(From my journal, 22.03.11)

After my 3 week preaching stint, when Pastor Craig was on vacation, and I had a couple weeks of pretty bad stuttering, I felt weak and inadequate. I was led to 2 Corinthians 12:6-10: Paul's explanation of his thorn, and God's final statement, eliciting faith from Paul: "My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness".

Though it's not directly correlated to 'the future', this incident and its impact on me, emotionally and spiritually, drove me back to a place of deep faith in God, trusting Him and His will for my life, regardless my ability or lack thereof. This motif has continued throughout the season of Lent, constantly reminding me that God will lead, despite my natural stutterer's fear of being thrust into a new situation and having to do something as basic as introduce myself, over and over again, to a whole group of new people!

(23.03.11)

May I follow Abraham's example of willingness to offer all that I have to You, holding nothing back and trusting in Your character and in Your promises (Gen 22:2-12, 16)

(From my Devotional Book, 26.03.11)

"The LORD is my portion and my inheritance" (taken from Number 18:20)

"The steps of a man are established by the LORD, and He delights in his way.
When he falls, he will not be hurled headlong, because the Lord is the One who holds his hand"
(Psalm 37 23 NASB)

I continued to write:

YHWH, as You establish my steps, You delight in my way, my life, my path.
Is it the joy of a guide who leads? The joy of an artisan who creates? A father who loves?
What I think is clear is that You take genuine pleasure out of seeing Your plan for someone unfold. It's like You can see around the corner / into the future...or like a parent who's watching their child unwrap their gift that they have bought: the excitement, anticipation and joy. You delight in my path!
Thank you God for this guidance, this clarity, this reminder from Your word.
My future, and that of my family, is in Your hands!

(from my journal, 28.03.11)

⁷ Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?

⁸ If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

⁹ If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea,

¹⁰ even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast" (Psalm 139)

(28.03.11)

If the Lord our leader be,
We follow without fear;
East or West by land or sea
Home, with Him, is everywhere...

Should they traverse earth around
To the ladder they still come;
Every spot is holy ground
God is there and He's their home

(Jacob's Ladder by John Newton, read on 14.04.11)

Christ, as you tell me, "Let us go to the other side" (Mark 4:35), let me not doubt but trust in You, no matter the storm in the crossing. But let me take your lead and rest in peace, knowing that what You have spoken, You will make good (*from my journal, 29.04.11 at the Men's Retreat*)

²⁷ "Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ²⁸ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith! ²⁹ And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. ³⁰ For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. ³¹ But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well. (Luke 12:27-31)

Observations recording in my journal re: Luke 12:27-31:

1. I concern myself with God's things (kingdom and righteousness)
2. God concerns Himself with my things (food, drink and clothing)
3. The BASICS, for me, in God's economy, are His kingdom and His righteousness. What the world perceives as basics (food, drink and clothing) are in fact *added* to the true basics (kingdom and righteousness)

"Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand"
(Prov 19:21)

"I blessed the Most High, and praised and honored him who lives forever, for his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom endures from generation to generation;
³⁵ all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, "What have you done?" (Daniel 4:35-35)

(07.05.11)

Come follow me: All of this past Sunday's scriptures during the sermon: Matt 4:18-22, Matt 8:18-23, Matt 9:9-13, Matt 10:37-39, Matt 16:24-26, Matt 19:27-30, John 8:12, John 10:4-5, 27-30, John 21:15-19. Craig planned his sermons weeks in advance; God had arranged this, not any human agency.

(08.05.11)

"Behold, I will do a new thing... I will even make a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert."
Isaiah 43:19 (NKJV)

God is not only the rear guard in our lives, protecting us from attack.

He is also the vanguard - going on ahead of us.

As you look into the future, you try to imagine what it will be like. Well, I have news for you. God sees problems of which you are totally unaware coming your way. And He will always lead you through those problems, smoothing and straightening out the road ahead of you.

God is our leader. He takes action, quietly, subtly, but strongly; He directs and molds and shapes events so that the right solutions become available to you at the right time. He is prepared even before you are aware of the problem. That is the kind of God you and I have - the vanguard moving on ahead. Some of us look ahead and see little hope as we imagine our futures. If that's the case in your life, don't ever lose sight of God. He is there constantly ahead of you. Give your life completely to Him. His plan for you is to guide you and lead you.

Is there some sin hidden inside of you blocking that vision? Drop it.

Do you have a dream? Hold on to it.

Is there some goal? Reach for it.

God is with you. NOW is the time to move out - today!

(from an email forwarded to Wendy by someone without knowledge of our situation on 10.05.11.

Wendy opened this email about 5 minutes after a lunch conversation in which we aired some of our fears about the future to each other)