

Some Things Just Don't Seem to Make Sense

by Sonny Culp

Chairman, Board of Directors

After each visitor's luncheon there is an opportunity to tour the school. In doing so, we spill out onto the alley where the elementary school stands on what was once the parking lot for the church itself. You may not know that back in 1999, Restoration Academy was located in the Woodlawn area and had lost its use of an educational wing of a church. Members of the Church of the Reconciler CEC heard about the dilemma, which ultimately led to an invitation to Restoration to move to Fairfield and build a school in their church parking lot. The only problem was that the school had no money to initiate such an undertaking, much less complete it. Amazingly, a gift came in that covered the down payment to begin the building. I don't think you will find in any church growth manual the idea of giving away 100% of your on-site parking, especially to an organization that might not even be able to complete its project. It certainly doesn't make sense, but that's just the first part of this story.

Next to the elementary school sat a 4,500 square-foot former medical clinic in decaying condition. This was also owned by the church and was its only other asset. The church only used a corner of it for a pastor's office - until another opportunity came along. Dr. Tom Edwards founded and operated a clinic on the east side of town, and he too found himself losing his facility lease after almost ten years. Again, Reconciler CEC members heard about the situation and after prayer and discussion offered their old medical building to Dr. Edwards for free. The doctor accepted and his Board raised the money for a first rate renovation, bringing quality medical care to Fairfield. Hope Medical Clinic has a Christian counselor on staff, offers wellness classes, part time dental care, and recently a second doctor has just come on staff.

In these two examples, I am reminded of Jesus' description of the fourth seed in the parable of the four soils. The decision of this small church to give away all of its excess real estate has indeed produced a fruit that is far beyond what we can even imagine. The lives that have been impacted through what would be called a radical decision is just astounding to me, but this is truly the Kingdom of God.



The Hope Health Center with the Restoration Academy Elementary Building on Carnegie Avenue in Fairfield.