

FIRST NAZARENE CHURCH

NOTES from Q & A with Pastor Galen

June 26, 2022

Notes are in the order presented that evening.

Introduction to Evening by Dr. Larry McKain, District Superintendent

3 Scriptures Guide this Process

- Leadership Transition - Psalm 75:6-7...but it is God who selects a leader. This is different from the world.
- Acts 1:24 - the early church trying to select a replacement for Judas - used a very human process. Then they prayed, O Lord show us, which of these You have chosen - and then used their human process. Our process is anchored in scripture and prayer.
- Acts 15 - just like in scripture, when we get to the end, it needs to seem good to the Holy Spirit and to us.

Prayer

Background of work by Dr. McKain & First Nazarene Church Board

- Looked at 111 Nazarene churches in US with pre-covid attendance above 500. Studied their website and base knowledge about the church/ministry of Lead Pastor. Chose 15 churches and had conversation with each pastor. Chose 4 pastors plus Galen.
- Sent Board to prayer and study. Which pastor would we interview first - vote was 13-0 to interview Galen. Followed by 2-hour interview with Galen/Justean. Prayed then voted if this is right couple or go to candidate #2. 13-0 to move forward and recommend Galen to the congregation for consideration.

Questions / Dialogue

1. Dr. McKain answered a question about the process within our representative structure. Board works, then recommends to congregation... announcement of a vote. Over 30,000 Naz churches use this process.

2. Why do you want to pastor here?

Before we first came, we felt God shifting our hearts. We prayed and said that we'd go anywhere, but please not IL. When I received a call from Pastor Brian, I immediately fell in love with history and missional moments...what God has accomplished through this church, throughout the years. As we first arrived, we noticed FAMILY. There were generations here. There were not many young families when we first started coming here, but now there are a lot, we've seen 60 new kids in the last 6 months here. This church to us went from somewhere we felt like God has called us to serve in, to becoming a second family for us. This church has a family-like atmosphere whether your family attends here or not, that once you become a part of the place, you are in the family. First Naz is attractive for many reasons...debt-free, and positioned to do whatever is "next."

3. Leader leads through personality and strengths...what are your's?

It's funny... I actually don't prefer this kind of gathering, where I answer your questions from a stage and don't get to hear any feedback from you...I like to hear from people one-on-one. But, for me, my mind always comes back to John 1 for a ministry philosophy - 'the Word moved into the neighborhood.' To me, ministry should be done shoulder to shoulder - person by person - that is where we share life together and life change happens. I love people and want to be with people and the more that we as Christians share life with others, the more they should see Jesus through us.

4. With all other options available to you, why stay here?

There are churches back home that are open now, and we probably could go home. Honestly, when we first moved here, we didn't make too many connections. Both our second child and covid came about 9 months into our time here and it was difficult to be isolated away from family and the church community, and not really able to get to know others more. But now, a few years in, knowing the people of this church and knowing what God has done in and through this place, and what he could do next, we are at a point where we love this place and want to raise our kids in this kind of community/church. It's a weird feeling to know that "going home" might actually be more difficult than staying around 10 hours away from family because of the calling and community of God.

5. How would you respond that you are too young or inexperienced for this role?

I am 30 and recognize it, and there is nothing I can change about that. On one hand, I realize that I've never sat in the lead pastor's chair before. I know I will need to learn new things and learn quickly from the failures that I will make. On the other hand, I am not sure if there's anything from my experience that could have better prepared me to lead. I've received both educational and practical ministry experience under some of the best leaders in our denomination including working with Brian, going through our seminary, leading on a staff of 28 people at a multi-site church of 1300, and now finishing my doctorate in this next year. Even the experiences of leading here through pastoral transitions, handling the political hot topics of the last few years, covid, etc., with Brian and Phil have helped me grow.

Here's the way that I look at this - each generation in the church must hand off the baton to the next generation at some point. If we don't the church will die. So, *when* we hand off the baton, we have to decide - who do we want to hand it off to and in what kinds of conditions? It may not be me that the church chooses and that is fine, but the conditions right now may be the best kind of environment for a hand-off. I believe our current board has 10/13 people over 50 who are wise, mature leaders, that can help guide a younger pastor. Our staff is rock steady with people like Phil Kizsee who would hold this place together no matter who the new pastor may be, and people like JM McGinnis (new youth pastor) who is a long-time ministry veteran. The staff culture right now is tight-knit and looking for what is next. If there were ever a time to trust a younger leader with the mission of reaching the young families around us and in our building, this may be a good time.

6. Will you continue your education?

Yes. I want to finish my D.Min. I've completed half of the degree program.

7. How will you balance work, life, education, etc.

Justean - she is staying at home and balances this with the schedule. Being a stay-at-home mom allows him to be able to participate in more ministry. He knows Justean holds a veto card to let him know if he's not home enough because his tendency is to be out and about with the people in the church.

8. Who is your favorite person in the Bible?

Justean - Jesus.

Galen - well that's a good answer I guess! Honestly, I think it changes based on what I'm preaching about...but right now as I prepare for my son's arrival, I think David. David was a man after God's heart. Great leader, took them places but was also flawed. At the end of the day, he was still a man after God's heart. As he looks at his son, that was his prayer for him as well - "My Son, learn to know the God of your ancestors intimately. Worship and serve him with your whole heart and spirit. Seek him and if you do, you will find him." That's the kind of leader and dad that I want to be, just coming out of that prayer for my son and for myself too.

9. Are you considering the model of Executive Team that currently exists, a flat or other staff structures?

I saw the value that the Executive Team brought. It freed Brian up to do what he was called to do and brought opportunities for others on the team. I'm not exactly sure what the structure will look like in time with staff growth and development and the potential addition of another pastor, but I like the concept of decentralized leadership and the team approach.

10. Next steps after small groups and commitment for young families and new members.

Sign up for a group. Yes. Do it. I am finding that groups are great to connect people and church life happens in groups. But also, I know that families struggle to be in groups because of a variety of barriers - babysitting, content, the night of the week, others in the group like them, etc. Groups are good - but I'm looking more and more at serving. What I've noticed is that when someone finds the purpose and meaning that comes when you serve others, they buy in at a different level. When we serve in ways that really make a difference, then we begin to have ownership from saying "this is the church I go to", to "this is *my* church." If people stay long-term, it's not because of Pastors or this and that, it's because of the people they have connected with through groups and through meaningful service.

11. When new pastor is called, people leave the church. Anything you or we can do about this?

This church is resilient. They stick together. Pastor Martin was Chicago First's first pastor - the church grew to 700 in one year - then he left. The church has always been strong and faithful through many short pastorates and difficult times. Think about this - the church has survived the world wars, the depression, and every decade since. Throughout history, pastors haven't stayed here a long time here. We are all passing the baton - but what keeps churches together is one another, the people of the church. Not everyone will connect with the Lead Pastor every time, but I encourage people to lean into their community here, because the people are the church and the people we have here are incredible. I have also encouraged anyone who wants to have a conversation to come to my office and chat, I've got an open door. If people are on the way out...I would want them to know my heart - I would want to have a conversation with them - don't leave on your own.

12. How long do you see yourself in this LP position?

Justean - In our next move/job, I would love to raise our family. I want this to be our home and our kids also - and I NEVER wanted IL to be our home. Know it is home when it hurts more to leave here than to leave Kansas. We could see our kids graduating schools here.

13. How has pandemic prepared me for ministry?

Learn to use the entire team to get some place together. Also watched how Brian led the Board to wrestle with what to do.

14. How long have you been in ministry?

10 years

15. What other positions held?

- Youth Ministry as intern
- Youth Pastor in Nebraska
- Youth Pastor in Ottawa, IL...they had 16 kids when he came and 4 different campuses of youth ministry when he left.
- Have been at First Naz 3 years.

16. What ministry would you call your specialty.

Communication and connection. I am called to preach. I am wired to see people make connections.

17. Is it a Naz polity to vote and keep a pastor every 5 years?

Dr. McKain answered - Board meets with DS 2 years after a pastor begins at a church; then meets every 4 years to review the pastoral relationship and church's vision for the future.

18. Could we vote on return of the passion play - choir - reinstate altar call - say the Lord's prayer during every service - communion more often.

- Passion Play - voting on something like this is not an approach I would use. Rather, we would ask what the best way is to reach people for the Kingdom.
- Refocus decisions were made for a reason. The church was doing lots of programs - the church board called for this refocus. They began to ask the question, is First Naz a church that does things or actually reaches people for Christ? They focused on "Clarify, Simplify, Multiply." The clarifying and simplifying work was seeing what was actually reaching people for Jesus. In one sense, your question was asking, can we go back and do a bunch of stuff again? I think we should not "go back" quickly or at all - rather we should be a people who "move forward." In all honesty, I've seen the numbers, we may not have been doing big events that we used to love to do, but more people have made decisions for Christ in the last 8 years than before. The refocus worked in that regard. My perspective on these kinds of decisions is this:
 - If things are going well, we begin to create events around it. It is a fun and exciting time. But, if we are not careful, the longer happens...the more we drift to create things and programs and lose sight of the original focus, reaching people for Jesus. They subtly turn into events that end up entertaining the insiders that are already here, but they aren't reaching anyone new anymore. They are hard to stop doing because insiders have come to love it, even if it's not reaching anyone for Jesus anymore. But the church doesn't exist for insiders, so then, we refocus. As we have refocused, I think the church is actually just now seeing some of the fruit. We tilled the soil, made changes, and fostered an environment where new life could come and now, it is starting to sprout - we've had 60 new kids in the last 6 months. (applause) Instead of going back, we need to ask, "What will reach people today?"
- Church choir? - same answer as above
- Altar Call - church I grew up in had this 3x a week. I think we have had a helpful turn - different messages should have different responses. And when people respond personally after the service (instead of altar call), it allows our Pastors to actually have time for a conversation with those people about what moved them and help them take their next step.
- Lord's Prayer - we have and do...sometimes through song, prayer, other ways
- Communion - we plan at least 1x a series.

Quite a few fun things have been removed - would you bring things like this back?

See previous answer. In our context here, we can do here about whatever you want to do. But we need to ask - "Did someone find Jesus here?" Do our events accomplish *both* - new people getting connected and our people finding purpose through serving? If the answer is yes, that is where we need to be.

19. What do you see to support Timberline Knolls? [Celebrate Recovery at local treatment center]

Our role as Pastors biblically is to equip saints to do the work. Cathy can do ministry like that, where probably no one else including myself cannot. And thank God for all the women that Cathy has been able to lead to the Lord doing the ministry there. Our role is to support area ministries - and the people that can do it. More than *places*, we need *people*. We need to develop leaders to go into places like this.

20. What do you see to support Celebrate Recovery? [CR]

I'm hesitant to speak long into the future. Here's what I know about CR today - there are people that are new and here in this room tonight because on one Friday night they came here for CR. I think we've had 4 baptisms in last 2 years from CR? Every ministry ebbs/flows has seasons of large numbers and small numbers, but God has been using CR.

21. What role will Justean play?

Justean answered - I don't play piano. I help and support Galen. Raising family - volunteering in NazKids. Lead a mom's group.

22. Are you going to gradually look for someone to replace your current role?

I don't think "replacing" people in ministry is a great way to go about finding someone new. Every staffing decision is an opportunity and a great chance to look at what is most needed during this season of the church and make strategic shifts as needed. I will look for someone, but not too quickly. Then we'll go after what we think would best serve the church.

23. Are you willing to make tough choices. Staff, format, new things? What process - how will you lead our staff?

- Tough choices - Yes of course. I'm not sure if you know this but in ministry, even small choices are tough choices because as a pastor - and think about this for a moment - you will never fully satisfy anyone with the choices you make. Someone is disappointed at every decision you make. But yes, I know what you're asking and yes, we've got to make tough decisions if we want to see the mission go forward.
- New things? One part of my personality is that I am a creative innovator. I like to try new things and experiment. I believe that if we aren't experimenting, we've already shifted into complacency.
- Staff? I've learned to live into the African proverb I learned while running the Chicago Marathon with my wife in 2016 with Team World Vision - "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." What we want to build here is long-lasting and going to take time, so we need to use the entire team, make decisions together, and go into the future, together.
- All church direction - When it comes to things as large as all church direction, this is not an area where I can go alone. I would trust the church leaders to have key conversations. My staff often finds me saying, "I have this idea, tell me what I am missing," and we talk about it. Brian used the metaphor that I now love: "Shoot bullets, not cannonballs." Essentially, in the church world, we often get really excited about something and then load up the cannonball, go all-hands-on-deck and pull off something big; sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. Instead, we should try a bunch of smaller things (bullets) and see what works and hits the target. Then when we know something works, we bring out the cannonballs.
- Staff members - Some of you may not know this but as a part of our Executive Team, I have already been leading some of our staff...meet in different cycles depending on our structure: weekly, bi-weekly, monthly. I ask them what they are doing, planning, and need to do. Development for each one of them looks different - key conversations, books, etc. I ask each one of them at the end of our time together - 1. How are you with Jesus? 2. How are your disciplines, Prayer and Bible reading, because you can't lead others where you aren't going yourself, and 3. How can I support you?

24. Lords Table - Communion - add it to the website?

Board has talked about how often we receive communion. For our local context, we decide together as leadership how often, where to promote, etc.

25. Will you preach truths from Bible, address difficult themes like gender confusion, trinity? If you are faithful to preach the gospel, then yes, all these things and more will come up. I'm not sure how many of you realize how even the smallest things we say from up front can convict someone. I see it week in and week out where one phrase will come out and the Spirit has people shifting uncomfortably in their seats. Ultimately, as we preach, we trust the Spirit to speak, move, guide, teach, and convict. But yes, of course.

26. How can we better reach the community?

I see the "Community" in 2 ways

- o Geographically - Homer Glen, Lemont, Orland Park, Lockport are where most of our people live. I would want us to be known because we care. Known for serving. I want our communities to know us as the church that showed up because we care and serve, not necessarily the church that does the big thing for itself.
- o NazRec / Preschool Communities - average person on Sunday do not see either of these ministries. Hundreds come here daily. That is our unique opportunity to love that community. What does it mean to reach them? Last week (Sunday) I had 3 conversations with people who had come from the rec community in last 3 weeks. This is our unique target that is the "community" that God has given us to reach.

27. Prayer Meetings - Is there a plan to consider weeknight for prayer?

- We have to be a people of prayer. Did you know that the number one job description in the Nazarene MANUAL for a pastor is not to preach? Instead, it's prayer. So, YES - prayer, generally we need to do it. In the past, we have done what you're talking about, an all-church prayer meeting and participation has not been great. What I will say is that prayer is happening in 25 different life groups. I say that to say, people are praying together, just not in some of the same ways we may have experienced it in the past. I think there's an opportunity for all church prayer focuses in the future too.

28. What is the process we follow, the polity in pastoral transition; what is meaning of this gathering?

Dr. McKain answered - This is a way to educate and inform anyone who is interested in the thinking of the candidate.

29. What is the most important thing you have learned about the process of current church ministry?

- At the end of everything we do, we all essentially ask the question, "Did this work?" Yet, before we do something, we must learn to ask the right questions like, "Why are we doing this in the first place?" "What are we trying to accomplish by doing this?" "Who is this for and who are we trying to reach?" etc. If we clarify this target before we begin, then we can know if it did, in fact, accomplish its purpose.
- Just as important to do an "after-action report" to see if something hit the mark, reached the target, etc. I've learned from Brian that the after-action report may be more important than asking the questions at the beginning because if we never do the follow-up questions, then we just repeat an event the next year without considering if it was effective.

30. How have you modified your leadership style since you have been here?

When I came in, I had the disposition to work through teams without too much input. But as my role grew, it led me to ask for more feedback from ministry groups and then run those teams through those that were giving helpful feedback.

31. Why does it seem we don't like to do many traditional hymns?

At the end of the day, yes, the goal is participation, but worship must always be diverse. The hymns were not the beginning of worship music and won't be the end. At the end of the day, we must be diverse in how we worship, and we have room to grow in this area.

32. We have enjoyed team preaching approach. Will this continue?

The goal for bringing me here was to add a young face so that when younger families come, they might connect quicker. We learned along the way that the variety of voices was important. I am trying to discern what this might look like. I do feel a call to preach - I believe consistency helps momentum grow because people know what to expect and feel safer inviting their non-churched friends. The more it's inconsistent, typically the more hesitant people are to invite. I do not want to preach 48x a year. We can use our staff here and other key trusted voices. Not going to commit to a # of weeks at this point, but overall, I know a variety of voices adds value.

33. Are all staff required to resign?

Dr. McKain answered - All pastors on staff do this by policy. Board made decision to retain staff during this transition. New pastor has 90 days to retain staff if they choose.

34. What is your vision for the church as it moves forward?

- My mind goes to mission first. The church exists for those outside of the church, to seek and save the lost. Wherever and however we can do that, we should.
- When I think about vision - down the road I see small groups close and far from here as we grow leaders. I can see a family network springing up and accomplishing the mission of the church both here and far away.
- For here in five years, I see this place as young and vibrant. I see both young and old coming together as a people who are on mission with Jesus, just like the disciples were. I see a new generation that rises up and becomes the next generation of First Naz leaders who serve on the board, in ministry positions, etc. I see people growing into their gifts and being developed as the new leaders who are reaching young families too.
- Here's the thing, we know our WHY - reach people who are lost with the gospel of Jesus. We know our WHO - our community as defined earlier, geographical and Rec and Preschool. The HOW and WHEN we reach them will always change and I think we can discern those things together as we move forward.

35. Close in a more personal way. A question from the DS for both Galen and Justean to answer - What are the 4/5 characteristics that you appreciate about Justean and Justean to Galen.

Galen - she embodies what a Christian should be for me, offering grace, forgiveness, showing up, speak the truth when it is needed. She serves and loves our family. I love the way she shows up for everyone and cares for them.

Justean - I love that he is a learner, he leads our family well, he always cares about getting better; he is passionate; empathetic, and truly cares about people. You all don't know how often he comes home burdened by what individuals are facing and wants to help them in any way he can. And he is a great hands-on supportive dad that makes time for his kids.

**If you'd like to respond to Pastor Galen in any way or ask any questions, he's made his email address available and is open for any communication:
gryman@firstnaz.cc**