

31 May 2011

KCC Question of the Week

Here's the Question of the Week:

Is Kingwood Christian Church's campus going to be the site of a counseling ministry? If so, what is it about?

Here's an attempt at a response:

The short answer is "yes".

After a thorough process of information gathering, conversation, and prayer the Church Board approved a proposal to that end submitted by Joni Adams and a consultation team from Kingwood Christian. The start date has not yet been finalized. I'll attach the full proposal to this email and would recommend anyone interested to give it a quick look. The proposal is well done, and I won't regurgitate it here.

But I will say a few things here.

I think this is really an exciting possibility from a "Good News of Jesus" perspective. In the gospel story, when Jesus started his ministry he said that the Rule of God had come near in him. Then in his ministry he showed people what that Rule looked like. A large part of Jesus' ministry consisted in healing people from brokenness in mind and spirit. This ministry has been passed to the Church through the presence and leading of God's Spirit.

I believe what Joni is seeking to do fits well with this over-arching ministry of the Good News. Joni Adams is a solid Christian, an active member of the congregation, and a licensed counselor with a Masters of Art in Counseling Psychology and over 14 years experience in the field. She has a desire to see people in need of counseling have competent and compassionate support in discovering what type of help they may need. She also has a deep desire for people to have this care regardless of their financial situation.

Christian author Frederick Buechner has said of calling: "The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet." I believe this applies to Joni and this opportunity.

As a pastor I believe that having this counseling ministry will be a great blessing to me. As I do my ministry I talk and pray with people in all sorts of situations, and I serve them in the ways for which I am equipped. But, I have limited capacity to serve them in other ways because I don't have the training or ability. So, I find myself saying to people over and over, "You should really talk to a counselor about this."

Now I can refer them with confidence to Joni for her assessment, expertise, and care. In short, I can say, "We've got someone on campus that may very well be able to help you with that." And I know as a Christian Joni will treat whomever she serves with honor and dignity. But she will not try to duplicate my pastoral care and biblical-based counseling. She will augment it with professional psychiatric diagnostic evaluation and counseling. I sense there is a real need for this, both within the congregation and within the broader community.

I am also excited because I think the congregation can offer some real support to Joni but with little to no risk over the duration of the nine month trial period mentioned in the proposal.

The congregation will provide office space, internet connection, and some publicity through the website and other avenues.

However, Joni provides her own professional liability insurance, does not require start-up funding, and is offering pro-bono sessions to be used at the discretion of KCC for those who need financial assistance. Over time, any funds raised by the congregation will remain under the management of the congregation to scholarship people in need of the service who do not have the resources to pay.

I am really looking forward to seeing what God will do in the near future through Joni and through Kingwood CC. This process of discernment has taken over a year, but I am thankful it has finally gotten to this place. I believe as you find out more you will be thankful too.

Joni will be present at a Town Hall Meeting scheduled after worship on June 5th for folks who want to find out more.

Thanks for the question.

Peace in Christ,

Robert