



**September 27th, 2007**

### **On a Personal Note . . .**

Nicole and our newest addition to the family, Cassidy, are doing very well. Tomorrow, Cassidy will be two weeks old. She has had her first visit to the pediatrician and was declared to be quite healthy. Colton and Campbell have thus far embraced her, and we have yet to have to deal with any jealousy issues. We were most concerned about how Campbell would handle Cassidy's arrival as there is now another female who is now the baby in the family. However, so far, Campbell loves Cassidy's presence in our home. One evening a family in our church brought us dinner and Campbell pointed at her baby doll and said to them, "This is my baby, and Cassidy is Mommy's baby." I pray the good chemistry continues. Thank you for your continued prayers and encouragement. Lots of people are asking what they can do for us and the answer is simple: buy us bottles of sleep in large amounts.

Nicole is adjusting very well, which is no surprise to me. Let me share with you a personal story. I thought Nicole was beautiful the moment I first saw her on the A&M campus in the early '90's. It didn't take long for me to fall fast for her after our second date--let's just say our first date, a blind date, did not go so well. I loved dating her, being engaged to her, and I love being married to her. What I didn't realize is that I had only seen half of her beauty until Colton was born. There is no question that God's call on Nicole's life is to be a mother. When our kids started arriving, Nicole reached full blossom. She is an amazing mother. She just has whatever "it" is when it comes to the kids. She doesn't get flustered even when the kids are bouncing off the walls. It is no big thing for her to get the kids ready and all their things packed up to go out of town. On Sunday mornings, Nicole is a single mom, but just goes about getting the kids bathed, fed, and dressed and to church and Sunday School on time. When I come home in the evenings, the kids come and greet me at the door and are fairly put together. The kids are able to recite memory verses that Nicole has taught them during the day. I don't know how she does it other than to say it is God's call on her life, and with God's call comes the giftedness to fulfill the call. I just hope that one day I can be as good a father as she is a mother to our children.

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### **Sermon Stories**

I'll be honest with you; this section on spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians is not my favorite part of the book. I am teaching you the spiritual gifts not out of desire, but out of obedience to the Lord's leading. The reason is that I like expository preaching where I simply tell you what the text itself is saying. But, when it comes to the spiritual gifts, it is much more topical than expository. In a sense, I feel like since we got to chapter 12 we have sort of stalled. I knew when I started 1 Corinthians that this section was coming. I

know we need to do it, and more importantly, I know the Lord wants it done and so I am doing it. What I wasn't expecting is the response I have received since we started the spiritual gifts. If I had the time, I could share with you countless stories, but I'll just share with you these two:

Story #1: On Sunday, Sept. 16, I talked about apostleship. I was clear that I don't think the office of "apostle" exists today, but I do think the purpose of the apostle exists today. I believe the Lord has uniquely equipped individuals to pioneer new ministries whether at an existing local church, a new church plant, or on the mission field. After the service, a family of six came up to me. They were first time visitors and as it turns out, they would only be one time visitors. Here is their story. The father and mother are natives to Eastern Europe. Their four children range in age from elementary school to high school. They have attended a sister church in the area for the last 20+ years. Last year, they felt the call of God to move to Slovakia to pastor an existing church that is about to close its doors. They feel called by God to go and revitalize that church and give it new vision and new leadership. By faith, they submitted to the will of God, but they are obviously nervous and experiencing some anxiety. They are set to leave America and move to Slovakia this week. Are you ready for this? They have faithfully attended the same local church for over 20 years. The week leading up to Sunday, September 16, they just felt led through someone they knew to attend NEHBC on that Sunday. They didn't know why but just came by faith. In the midst of their doubt and uncertainty, the Lord had me preach on the difficulty of pioneering new ministry and the provision of God to make it possible. After the service they came up to me shell shocked and told me their story. They were certain the Lord had brought them to NEHBC on Sept. 16 just to hear that sermon. I am always amazed at how the Lord uses His Word. I have their family picture on my office wall, and I'm going to be praying for them regularly over the coming years.

Story #2: A first time visiting family told me this story this past Sunday, September 23. Five years ago, NEHBC began meeting at Timbers Elementary School on Sunday mornings. One week, somebody from our church knocked on the door of a house across the street from the school and invited the family to our church. The father had an extensive conversation with our church member and said he felt like it was the Lord telling him to bring his family to our church. Well, he didn't. Month after month they watched us meeting on Sunday mornings and never came. Then we moved to our permanent location on West Lake Houston Parkway and as it turns out, the father drives past our church every day on his way to work. As he told me Sunday, for years he has been driving by our church wracked with guilt because he knew he was supposed to bring his family to our church. As he told me, for the past four years, our church building has been a symbol of his disobedience to the Lord. Last week as he drove past our church again, he decided enough is enough. He went home and told his family they were going to visit our church this past Sunday. He also told them they needed to start serving the Lord and would have to figure out how to know if they are equipped to serve the Lord. So, they showed up this past Sunday morning and what was I preaching on? Spiritual gifts—how we are equipped to serve the Lord. The whole family came up to me after the service. They could not believe it. I could not believe it. After all these years, the Sunday they finally show up, I am preaching about the very issue to which they were wanting answers. Of course, it was simply the grace and providence of the Lord Jesus.

I could share with you countless stories like these since I started the section on spiritual gifts. By God's grace he continues to change lives through our ministry at NEHBC. The Lord Jesus is deserving of all the glory and honor. May He continue to work through us to influence our community for Jesus Christ.

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## **A word about the Word**

This past Sunday I preached 1 Corinthians 12:28 on the topic of spiritual gifts in general and the gifts of helps and administration in particular. My prayer is that as we explore the spiritual gifts, that the Holy

Spirit would impress upon you your spiritual giftedness and that you would be compelled to use it at NEHBC “for the common good” (1 Cor. 12:7). Over the next couple of weeks, we will continue to explore the 21 spiritual gifts listed in the New Testament. I want to encourage you to come to worship on Sunday so that you don’t miss this important study (1 Cor. 12:1).

Last night I preached 1 Samuel 21:1-6. It is quite an interesting passage. At first glance, it appears to be of little significance, merely describing a small segment of David’s flight from King Saul. However, in Matthew 12:1-8, one can see that the Lord Jesus referenced these six verses during His ministry here on earth. How very interesting. This passage is of greater matter to us today, and I’d encourage you to take the time to listen to last night’s sermon.

Sermons are available on cd for purchase at the sermon booth in the church lobby. You can also find my sermons in MP3 format on our church website [here](#) or via podcast at [www.itunes.com](http://www.itunes.com). Simply search for “Nathan Lino” in the search box of the iTunes store.

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## The Field Project Continues

One can see that parts of the field have come in nicely while other parts are quite barren. In particular, the north side and the east side of the building came in well. The slight crest in the middle of the big field on the south side also grassed over pretty well. But, it is clear there is still more work to be done. Last week we mowed the field and reseeded to thicken the areas that did grass and to reattempt to grass the bald spots. We want new grass to sprout before the first frost when grass becomes dormant for the winter.

For those interested in minute detail, I found it interesting that the grass seed is fine like black pepper, and so the seed thrower can’t throw the seed very far. Therefore, one has to mix in a lot of heavier fertilizer with the seed which carries the seed much further from the seed thrower. The ratio that was used was several hundred pounds of fertilizer to the 25 pounds of grass seed that was thrown.

As exciting as it was to eat hamburgers and hotdogs in the parking lot two Sundays ago, it will be much more fun for our church family to have the same type of event in the field when it is complete. The temperature will be much more bearable because we won’t be sitting on asphalt which radiates the heat, and the visibility without the cars will be much better. Please pray for the field project to be completed.

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## Annual Audit

It is my commitment as long as I am the pastor of Northeast Houston Baptist Church, that we are going to voluntarily initiate an annual, external audit for the purposes of evaluating our internal financial controls, to perform a risk-fraud assessment, and to ensure that our financial matters are squeaky clean. The audit costs us about \$7,000, but it is money well spent. I want our church family to be sure that our financial integrity is intact. Accusations may and will be made about our church along the way, but I don’t want any financial accusations to ever be substantiated. I am confident that the scope of our internal controls are such that financially we are a “squeaky clean” organization.

PickensSnodgrassKoch (PSK) out of Dallas performs our annual audit. Last month, it was time for the audit, and a PSK representative spent two days at our church going through our controls, records, and procedures. Several employees of NEHBC, including myself, were selected at random and grilled about various issues in an effort to identify points of weakness in our controls. The audit is never fun, but I

really believe it is very necessary.

Last week, we received the official response from PSK, and once again we were declared to be exemplary with regard to the finances of our church. It was concluded that our financial statements accurately reflect the financial condition of our church, that we have impressive internal controls for our financial processes, and that the risk of financial fraud at NEHBC is very low. This is a reflection on the performance of our Church Administrator, Bill Campbell, our bookkeeper, Michelle Button, our Trustees, and our Finance Ministry Team. I want to thank all of these individuals for their faithful and sacrificial service in regard to our finances. They are people of integrity who love the Lord and work hard to discharge their duties with excellence. Once again they received an exemplary rating from our external audit, and I want to congratulate them on a job well done.

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## **Oregon Mission Trip**

It is hard to believe, but the NEHBC team leaves to go on the Oregon mission trip one week from Saturday. Eleven of us are going to New Hope Baptist Church in Creswell to lead a 5-service revival. Creswell, Oregon is a bedroom community on the south side of the Eugene, Oregon metroplex.

Please begin praying for our team members as we go. I will be preaching, the band will be leading in worship through singing, others will be sharing personal testimonies, and the ladies are hosting women's gatherings in the mornings at the church. All of us will be going door-to-door distributing fliers. We will work long and hard Sunday morning – Wednesday night, but it will be the best kind of work . . . Kingdom work.

Please pray for the following:

- Wisdom, focus, and energy for me as I preach five times in four days
- Wisdom, focus, and energy for the band as they lead the singing for five services in four days
- Wisdom and courage for the ladies who will lead the women's gatherings in the mornings
- Physical strength and protection as we go door-to-door distributing fliers and inviting people to the revival
- Patience for one another as emotions will be high
- A sense of unity for our team as we work alongside one another to advance the Kingdom of God