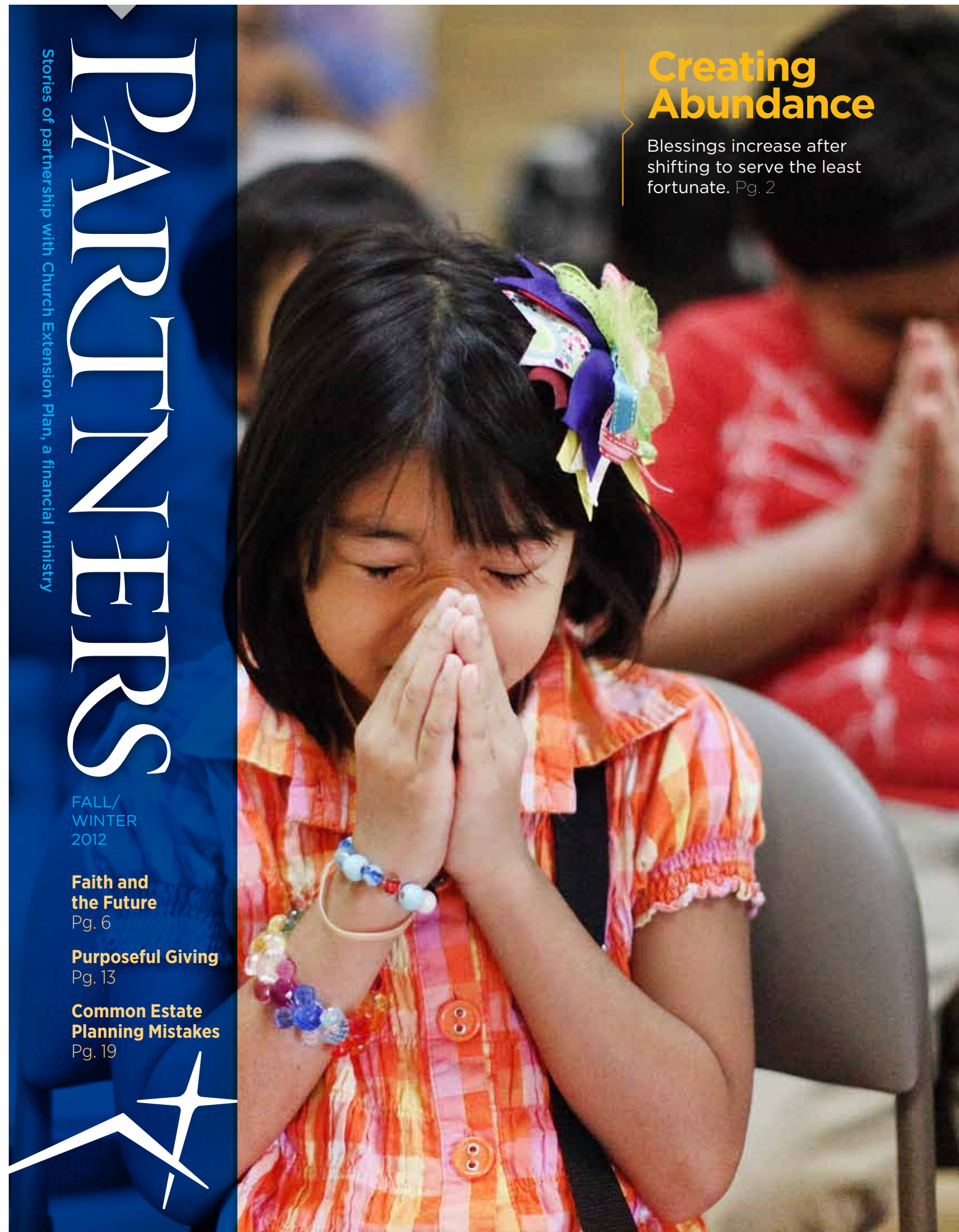


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PARTNERS

Stories of partnership with Church Extension Plan, a financial ministry

FALL/
WINTER
2012

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Church Extension Plan

PARTNERS in MINISTRY®

FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Blessings



Our *Partners* magazine has been a big hit! Thank you for warmly embracing this new communication method. It is our aim in this magazine and in coming editions to bring you “news from the frontlines.” God is moving. Your participation in the ministry of Church Extension Plan as a loan customer, certificate holder, investor, or donor is a key part of some wonderful victories that are being won for God’s glory.

In this magazine, you will meet wonderful people who had life-changing encounters with God in the churches and ministries we have helped. You will be introduced to members of our team who have put their God-given skills and experiences into furthering the Kingdom through the CEP ministry. You will also be exposed to exciting opportunities to say “yes” to God and to become more involved with our forward-looking programs.

CEP has a long history of helping churches and ministries; thereby impacting thousands of lives for good and for eternity. Those involved in our ministry today, starting with me, but extending to our Board and every associate on our staff, believe more than ever that our best and brightest days lie ahead. The fields are ripe for harvest. The Lord of the harvest compels us forward. Partner with us to see His will accomplished.

His/Yours,



Patrick L. Clements
President, Church Extension Plan

Our Services

CHURCH LOANS

Partnership and a ministry focus. We evaluate your church as a ministry and work with you as a partner. Our loan program can help you realize your vision.
cepnet.com/churchloans

REFINANCE

Refinance and expand your ministry. You could reduce your mortgage interest rate, eliminate a balloon payment, and receive additional funds.
cepnet.com/refinance

INVESTMENTS

Your investment helps spread the Gospel. Earn up to 4.0% APR/4.07% APY while saving for college, a home, the future. Every investment expands ministry.
cepnet.com/investment

RETIREMENT ACCOUNTS

Open an IRA or 403(b) and earn a good return. A great way to save for your retirement and support Kingdom growth.
cepnet.com/retire

CAPITAL CAMPAIGNS

We’ll dream the dream with you. Expand your church’s vision. Engage your congregation. Our ministry guides your successful capital campaign.
cepnet.com/capital

PLANNED GIVING

A legacy that grows the Kingdom. Make a plan for your estate that benefits your family and future ministry.
cepnet.com/plannedgiving

NEW GROWTH PARTNERS

Donations that fund expansion. Help ministries gain financial independence with a functional and affordable facility.
newgrowthpartners.org

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—Pastor James Johnson-Hill,
Agape Church, Laurel, MS

PARTNERS

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Email: partnersmag@cepnet.com

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Creating Abundance



BUNDANT LIFE CHURCH
WAS ONE OF THE MOST
ESTABLISHED ASSEMBLIES
OF GOD CHURCHES IN

THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY. BUT WHEN
PASTOR PETER PIÑON DECLARED THEY
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A Texas
ministry
learns less
really is
more

"BEFORE, WE WERE NEVER ABLE TO
ESTABLISH OURSELVES ENOUGH TO
BUILD ANYTHING. BUT WHEN WE
TURNED OUR MINISTRY AROUND AND
STARTED REACHING OUT TO THE
LOST, GOD IS PROVIDING FOR US."

- Pastor Peter Piñon,
Abundant Life Church

When Pastor Peter Piñon and his wife, Estela, became senior pastors at Abundant Life Church in Harlingen, TX, the ministry was staying afloat, but all around it was a sea of unmet needs. Maintaining the status quo didn't feel like the Lord's purpose; the church needed to get their hands dirty and purposefully reach out to their community.

Halfway houses, prisons, and juvenile detention centers in the community housed a large proportion of illegal immigrants; many of these immigrants were only children, abandoned by their parents. And just outside of town were substantial populations living in makeshift subdivisions—*colonias*—which often lacked paved roads or basic municipal services.

None of these communities had a single AG or Pentecostal ministry—and certainly no ministry that could serve the large Spanish-speaking population. No one had stepped forward to bring these people God's message of love. Yet.

Reaching out to the lost

Undaunted by the potential losses in his ministry, Pastor Piñon persisted, focusing first on reaching out to the youth in the community. "Our church was dying, people weren't coming," he recalls. "But once we shifted our focus to the youth, it

affected growth in every service," Pastor Piñon says. Now on Wednesday evenings, the youth pack out the sanctuary.

Next, he recruited volunteers from within the congregation to minister to nearby prisons, halfway houses, and juvenile facilities. They received a cold reception from the inmates at first, but the church's persistence eventually paid off. Now, even the guards attend and participate in the ministry. Over the span of a year, the attendance at the juvenile facility has grown from five kids to more than 45 each week. "It amazes me how the Holy Spirit moves and touches hearts with the message of hope. We see a big change in kids when they realize that God loves them and has a plan and purpose for their lives."

Pastor Piñon and his team expanded their services to the nearby illegal immigrant detention centers. They expected to talk with Spanish-speaking detainees only, but when non-Spanish-speakers, and even people of other faiths—started coming to their services, they realized God was opening the door even wider. "We were surprised Muslims wanted to attend our meetings," Pastor Piñon recalls. "There is just something about the Gospel that intrigues people. We are excited to share it with them and provide materials in their languages as well."

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE >





Pastor Piñon and his wife, Estela, have seen God provide in miraculous ways.

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Abundant Life then reached out to the *colonias*, providing for their needs and even helping those individuals who wanted to attend church services but needed transportation. “We’re seeing God do some wonderful things in their lives,” Pastor Piñon says.

“God is providing for us”

Today, Abundant Life has doubled in size, with 25 ministries, four prison outreach programs, a food pantry serving 500 people a month, and Sidewalk Sunday School for kids on the streets.

Inexplicably, the more Abundant Life gives to those with little or nothing to give back, the more the ministry prospers financially. “At first, it looked like a burden,” Pastor Piñon says about serving the less fortunate. “But in time it has proven to be a blessing. God is providing for us in miraculous ways every Sunday. Sometimes I don’t even know where the finances are coming in from.”

Creating abundance

Their obedience and willingness to reach the less fortunate in their community caused the congregation of Abundant Life to outgrow their current building. Although his ministry seemed more united than ever, Pastor Piñon was nervous about approaching his church members for more support, especially during hard economic times. “I was hesitant at first to even

consider expanding the building,” Pastor Piñon added. Before he became pastor, the church had tried to build twice and had even broken ground, but the finances never came in and construction never started. Pastor Piñon knew in his heart that this time was different. “It is like Esther in the Bible; our expansion project is ‘for such a time as this.’” Abundant Life contacted several lenders about financing their expansion project and Church Extension Plan approved them for a loan.

On the Sunday of the loan and certificate presentation from Church Extension Plan, he was floored by the response. “We had 100 percent participation.”

The completed project will nearly double the building’s original size to provide classrooms for its growing Bible college, as well as a multipurpose room and gym for the youth programs.

“I am excited to expand and even advertise our Bible school,” Pastor Piñon exclaims. With the new classroom space their Bible school will be able to train up even more pastors and ministry leaders to reach their community. “I have a vision to open up more churches around the Río Grande Valley and make an even bigger impact.”

“It’s snowballing as we go. People are having a greater vision to do more for God.” Pastor Piñon says, “We’re becoming a congregation of faith and belief.”



A focus on youth has brought a new vision to Abundant Life Church.

Partnering for the Kingdom



Gene Haraldsen

When Abundant Life needed financing for its expansion, Pastor Piñon contacted Church Extension Plan. CEP Ministry Consultant Gene Haraldsen reviewed the church’s financial position and suggested a certificate-based

approach. Then he visited in person. “What impressed me is that they were intentionally reaching out to people who are unchurched, and making sure they know that God is here for them.” Haraldsen says.

Benefits of certificate-based financing

Because Abundant Life has so many active ministries, certificate sales to the congregation allowed the ministry to expand without creating a large debt

burden and enabling a lower interest rate.. Haraldsen says, “When people realize their personal involvement helps the church save money in the long run, and that they can personally benefit from the

certificate, they are usually very supportive.”

A partner in ministry growth

Even with the added step of certificate sales, Pastor Piñon appreciated the speed of the process.

“Everything was finalized in a month and a half,” he recalls. Before contacting CEP, “We were working with another company for longer than that, and we were still just doing paperwork.”

Haraldsen believes that CEP’s team just has a different perspective. “We’ve been pastors ourselves. We’ve been through the construction process; we understand some of the frustrations. We’re always thinking, ‘What can I do to

make this process easier for the pastor while benefiting the church?’”

Learn more about CEP’s unique certificate-based financing for growing ministries at cepnet.com/financing.

Resources for Ministry Expansion

Partners Plus Loans. If you’re ready to relocate, build a new facility, or undertake a large remodeling project, CEP can tailor a church loan to meet the needs of your congregation. No balloon payments, no prepayment penalties, and no personal guarantors. Our focus is ministry, so we work with you to fulfill the vision you have for building the Kingdom.

Certificate-Based Financing. Our unique approach allows for more flexibility and customized terms. Certificates are available in denominations of \$500 to \$5000 to fit every budget. Church members can purchase their certificate in full or over 50 monthly installments. Demonstrate smart financial stewardship and unite your congregation for a common purpose.

Capital Campaigns. For some ministries a capital campaign is a better way to fund expansion. Talk to CEP about your options.

Share your vision with us. We’d like to hear the plans you have for your ministry. To learn more about church financing with Church Extension Plan, visit cepnet.com/partnersplus.

Faith and the Future

Investors share why they appreciate their investments with CEP

WHEN NEW INVESTORS HEAR ABOUT CHURCH EXTENSION PLAN'S VISION INVESTMENTS, THEY'RE INTRIGUED BY THE UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO HELP GROW THE KINGDOM WHILE GROWING THEIR NEST EGG. FOR SOME, THOUGH, STABILITY IS ALSO A CONSIDERATION. THREE LONG-TIME INVESTORS DISCUSS WHY THEIR CONFIDENCE IN CEP CONTINUES TO GROW.

Tom Roberts, 74: "Above and beyond the call of duty."

Tom Roberts and his wife Dixie had three things to consider before investing with CEP. One was the rate of return; the second was knowing their investment was supporting Kingdom growth. "We're thankful we're able to be a part of that ministry."

The third consideration was confirmed after their initial meeting with CEP: "We felt like they cared about us as a customer," Tom says.

But it's the service that keeps them investing. "They've gone above and beyond the call of duty with the service we've received."

Tom has even recommended CEP to friends and family, "including my sister, who's the vice president of a small bank," added Tom.

Ron Magnuson, 63: "I like what my money is used for."

Ron Magnuson is a retired firefighter. His career taught him to be careful and not rush right in. So he started building his investment with CEP a little at a time. "I started kind of slowly. My confidence built up as my relationship with Church Extension Plan developed."

"Churches can have problems, too. But they're never too big for God. I will have to say this: I do like what my money is used for."

After 10 years, Ron now has most of his investments at CEP. He prefers to access his account online to open new notes for his kids and transfer funds from his bank accounts to CEP. "Overall, I am very pleased with Church Extension Plan."

Ron Gravell, 52: "I believe in the integrity of CEP."

Ron Gravell is a pastor in the Southern California District. He knew about CEP's focus on ministry, and was also attracted by the high rate of return.

But he was concerned about the security of his investment. When he shared his questions with CEP's Investment Manager, he was surprised by her response. "She said, 'You know, Ron, maybe you shouldn't put all your eggs in one basket. Maybe it's wiser to spread it out a little bit, even if that means not using CEP for everything.'"

"That showed me an integrity that most businesses don't have," Ron continues. "I believe in the honesty and the integrity of CEP."

Invest in ministry

Investments with Church Extension Plan are secured by the assets of CEP, including church mortgages. Since CEP is not a bank, investments are not FDIC insured. Although past performance does not guarantee future results, in more than 60 years, no CEP investor has ever lost their money. You should also know, when you invest with Church Extension Plan, you're investing in the growth of ministry, not in the stock market. [P](#)

"CHURCHES CAN HAVE PROBLEMS TOO. BUT THEY'RE NEVER TOO BIG FOR GOD. I LIKE WHAT MY MONEY IS USED FOR."

—Ron Magnuson

*Individuals have unique financial circumstances and needs. Investors should carefully examine the Offering Circular, and rely on its contents to determine if the purchase of a Vision Note would be appropriate.

Investments consists of Promissory Notes and are NOT bank deposits, savings accounts, or checking accounts, and are not FDIC insured. This is not an offer to sell our securities to you and we are not soliciting you to buy our securities. We will offer and sell our securities only in states where authorized. The offering is made solely by our OFFERING CIRCULAR.

Save Now, Save Smarter

IN TODAY'S ECONOMY, MORE FAMILIES ARE DECIDING THAT THE OLD WAY—

SPEND AND BORROW NOW, PAY LATER—JUST ISN'T WORKING ANYMORE.

As Christians, it's our responsibility to be good stewards and carefully manage our material blessings, so we're ready for whatever the future holds.

Jesus states in the Parable of the Talents that "He who is faithful with little, will be put in charge of much." (Lk 16:10, Lk 19:17) It's not the size of our income, but what we do with it that counts.

With a little diligence you can reach your savings goals and start building a more secure financial future.

Add it up

Before you can develop a savings plan, you need

to know how you're spending your money. If you don't follow a budget already, these tips will help you create a realistic one you can stick with.

Start by writing down everything you spend money on for one month. Everything. Once you know where your money goes, you'll be able to make smarter choices.

Small steps, big victories

Managing your spending will be easier if you build on early successes. Look for small changes that will have a big payoff, and build on the momentum as you watch your savings grow.

The savings account you're building can be used for education, or buying a home. Or you can begin building a retirement account. Try our online investment calculators to see how investing just small amounts regularly can build a good amount for your retirement years.



Use Our Tools, Build Your Know-How

The new CEP website offers tools, information and inspiration to help you build your savings smarts. Visit cepnet.com/investments to get started. You'll also find easy-to-use worksheets you can download to help build a personal budget.

Calculators. Try out our investment calculators to see how your money will grow. For example:

- ~ **Interest calculator.** See the effect of different rates of return over time.
- ~ **Now vs. later.** See how saving early—even if you can't save much—benefits you more than saving a lot later.
- ~ **Retirement calculator.** See how much your savings will last in retirement.

Build financial security with a plan, and a little help from CEP

Here are a few simple ways to take a bite out of your monthly budget.

- ~ Review those monthly service fees on cable, cell phones and other conveniences, and look for ways to reduce or combine services.
- ~ Shop with purpose, and begin distinguishing between wants and needs (easier said than done in our consumer culture!).
- ~ Plan your weekly meals and organize your grocery shopping to eliminate take-out dinners and unplanned restaurant visits. Pack a lunch.
- ~ Keep the credit card at home. If you can't afford it with the cash you have, you can't afford it.
- ~ Set a dollar limit on purchases you make independently of your spouse or other members of your household—make sure everyone has a role in building the family nest egg.

Savings Goal #1: Emergency fund

Having a goal in mind makes saving easier. Start with a family emergency fund.

While every family should set aside six months' worth of living expenses in case of emergencies or times of hardship, start with something more manageable at first, like \$1,000 or so. An emergency fund helps you break the debt cycle, allowing you to pay cash for those unexpected expenses instead of using credit cards.

Keep your emergency funds in a savings account or an accessible investment, such as CEP's 30-Day Access Note. 30-day Access is a great fit when you're just getting started, because you can start with as little as \$250, add to it at any time, and get access to your funds quickly (with a 30-day written notice) in case you need them.

Don't stop there

Once your emergency fund is set, keep it up! Put a fixed percentage of your monthly income into either long-term or short-term savings or an investment, and add to it any time you have extra cash.

If you're looking for a way to build your nest egg that supports your Christian values, consider a Vision investment from CEP. You'll earn an attractive rate of return while you support ministry. [P](#)

Save Smarter With Vision Investments

By investing with CEP's Vision Investments, you can meet your savings or retirement goals while your money goes to work building AG ministries across the nation and supporting the values you believe in.

Minimum investment: \$250. Add to your note any time.

Terms: Choose notes to fit your savings goals, with terms ranging from 6 months to 5 years. Or choose the flexibility of a 30-Day Access Note.

IRA Options: Consider the tax advantages of an IRA for your retirement savings. Both Traditional and Roth IRA options are available.

Rates: Earn Up to 4.07% APY (Annual Percentage Yield, 4.00% APR Annual Percentage Rate)

Open your Vision Investment today. Visit cepnet.com/investments to learn more.

Investments consist of Promissory Notes and are NOT bank deposits, savings accounts, or checking accounts, and are not FDIC insured. This is not an offer to sell our securities to you and we are not soliciting you to buy our securities. We will offer and sell our securities only in states where authorized. The offering is made solely by our OFFERING CIRCULAR.

Product information. Learn about Vision investment notes for individuals and organizations, IRAs, retirement plans for ministers, and much more

Investor stories. Read about other CEP investors like you who have supported ministry growth and met their savings goals.

Find investment details, current rates, forms and financial worksheets on our website. You'll have everything you need to open or manage your CEP investments. When you set up a login, you can manage your account online.

Coming soon, a mobile version of our website!



A pastor helps his adopted town reinvent itself

FAITH in love AGAIN

10 - PARTNERS FALL/WINTER 2012

JAMES JOHNSON-HILL WAS RELAXING ON A RARE SUNDAY MORNING OFF WHEN GOD INTERRUPTED HIM: "WHAT DO YOU THINK HEAVEN LOOKS LIKE?".

Pastor James Johnson-Hill, an assistant pastor at a church in California, had been vacationing at his grandmother's home in Laurel, Mississippi. Flipping between televised Sunday-morning church services—an all-white church on this channel, an all-black church on that one—everyone seemed so separate. Isolated.

He forgot all about this until the drive back to California with his family. "My wife Nece said to me, 'James, I think God's calling us. I think we need to plant a church in Laurel.'"

"That question—"what does heaven look like?"—came right back when she said that," he recalls. And the memory of the segregated TV ministries surfaced, too. "Heaven doesn't look like that. People aren't separated from one another. The people genuinely love God, and they genuinely love each other."

"THE BUILDING GAVE US RESIDENT STATUS IN THE COMMUNITY; IT SPOKE LOUDER THAN ANY T-SHIRT OR SLOGAN EVER COULD. IT SHOWED THAT WE WERE HERE TO STAY."

—Pastor James Johnson-Hill, Agape Church, Laurel, MS



Pastor James Johnson-Hill and his wife, Nece, were called to plant a church in Laurel, Mississippi.

Coming home

Pastor Johnson-Hill had never lived in Laurel, but he'd spent every summer of his childhood there, and had deep family roots in the town. Watching Laurel struggle in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and the recession made his decision clear. "It felt like there was something there that I was supposed to come back to finish," he added.

After assembling a team of workers, they all moved to Laurel, where they founded Agape Church. This ministry would demonstrate the selfless, spiritual love for others they hoped to foster in their adopted city.

"The people in Laurel needed an infusion of hope," he says. "Our goal was to make the community stronger."

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE >

(800) 821-1112 PARTNERS - 11



"I HOPE PEOPLE GET THIS—WHAT NEW GROWTH PARTNERS DID WAS CHANGE THIS CITY."

*Pastor James Johnson-Hill
Agape Church, Laurel, MS*



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

Restoring community

The Agape Church team worked to immerse themselves in the Laurel community. Pastor Johnson-Hill met repeatedly with city leaders, asking what Agape could do to serve them and Laurel.

At the same time, Agape's plans attracted the notice of Church Extension Plan. CEP President Patrick L. Clements thought Agape would be a great fit for CEP's New Growth Partners ministry.

With support from Laurel's town leaders, New Growth Partners purchased a long-vacant Woolworth's building—located in the middle of downtown Laurel—as a place for Agape Church to take root.

As Agape began renovating downtown's biggest eyesore, residents took notice. By planting themselves in the center of town, Agape showed people their commitment to the city. "There's a trust factor that we overcame," says Pastor Johnson-Hill.

Just two years later, the former Woolworth's building has been completely transformed. Several vacant buildings nearby have also sold. Laurel's farmer's market has returned on Thursdays. Downtown apartments are full. Businesses—and jobs—are slowly coming back.

Falling in love with Laurel

Agape's ministry to Laurel is not limited to Sunday morning services. Their seven-day-a-week approach to ministry means something is happening at Agape every single day.

Agape Church hosts a Family Movie Night in the parking lot each Thursday in the summer. Crowds have grown from 25 on the first night to nearly 300 today. Their beautifully restored building hosts weddings, training sessions for the local school district, Little League awards banquets, city meetings and a 14-day Community Prayer gathering every August.

Pastor Johnson-Hill and his staff opened a crepe and coffee house across the street, creating a gathering place for people in the community. They host open-mic nights where up-and-coming local musicians can showcase their talents.

"People are falling in love with their city again," Pastor Johnson-Hill says. "To see borderline believers fall in love with the Lord again, and see Him working in their community—it stirs me to the core. What New Growth Partners did was change this city."

Resources to help

If you'd like more information about maximizing the impact of your giving, contact CEP's Planned Giving experts at (800) 821-1112. [P](#)

Bringing Agape to Laurel

New Growth Partners is a donation-driven program committed to helping seven-day-a-week ministries like Agape Church. NGP buys facilities for these ministries to affordably lease, giving the church time to focus on serving while establishing their ministry.

New Growth Partners is supported entirely by donations. You can help buy buildings for ministries like Agape Church by giving to New Growth Partners. Visit newgrowthpartners.org/give

To read more about Agape Church and Laurel, MS, and watch a video interview with Pastor James Johnson-Hill, visit newgrowthpartners.org/laurel

Purposeful Giving

AS THE YEAR DRAWS TO A CLOSE, MANY OF US LOOK FOR WAYS TO GIVE BACK. HERE ARE SOME IDEAS FOR MAKING YOUR GIFTS TO CHARITY GO EVEN FURTHER.

This time of year, we're reminded of the many blessings we've received. As Christians, we love putting a few dollars in the kettle at the mall, or contributing to a fundraiser. A plan helps stretch your giving dollars even further.

Plan your gift

Here are a few options for making year-end donations to your favorite charity or ministry. Consult your tax advisor for further information.

Give Cash. Cash is always the correct size, and never goes out of style! Your gift

to most charities is tax-deductible.

Give Assets. Do you have bank CDs, stocks, or bonds that are producing little or no return? Turn these low-performing assets into a gift, and receive a deduction. You can also give real estate, art, or other property.

Give Assets and Receive Income. If you are looking for future income, why not make a gift of property to fund a charitable gift annuity or charitable remainder trust. Your property can be sold tax free, and you may receive income for

the rest of your life. With a charitable gift annuity, this income is fixed so some of your payments could be tax-free.

Give Later. If you don't want to give away your stock or real estate just yet, you can still enjoy your property while making a gift through your will or trust. A bequest of your property will provide your estate with an estate tax charitable deduction, which means the money saved can go to your loved ones. [P](#)

Charitable Gift Annuity

This is a contract between you and a charity which benefits you. When you transfer assets to us, we will make fixed payments to you (and/or another person) for life. For details, contact Chuck Knox at (800) 821-1112.

Disclaimer: We only offer gift annuities in states where authorized.

Current Rates:

Age 75 – 5.8%
Age 80 – 6.8%
Age 85 – 7.8%
Age 90 – 9.0%

Rates effective 1/1/2012

Gifts that Build the Kingdom

New Growth Partners is a donations-based catalyst for ministry. By purchasing church buildings outright, setting up affordable leasing arrangements while they build their ministry, and providing financial know-how along the way, NGP helps innovative pastors spread the Word of God in struggling communities.

Rev. Patrick L. Clements, President of Church Extension Plan, conceived the idea of NGP more than a decade ago. Thanks to several recent donations, his vision has finally come to light.

"These vibrant churches that are serving people wouldn't have existed without the program, and the support of our donors," says Clements. "These churches are impacting people's lives and making inroads into the real needs of their communities."

Learn about the ministries made possible by NGP. Videos, stories, more: newgrowthpartners.org

 New Growth Partners®

A Place to Call Home

A former drug addict helps save the church that saved him

WHEN ANGELO AUSTRIA WAS IN HIS EARLY TWENTIES, THE DESPAIR, ADDICTION, AND LONELINESS FINALLY BECAME TOO MUCH. HIGH ON CRACK COCAINE AND WITH NOWHERE ELSE TO TURN, HE DECIDED TO END HIS LIFE. BUT JUST BEFORE CARRYING OUT THIS FINAL ACT, HE HEARD A VOICE DIRECTING HIM TO DO SOMETHING TOTALLY BIZARRE.

“Go to the Parkway Mall and buy a Bible,” he remembers the voice saying. “I just thought I was trippin’!” Angelo wasn’t even sure what a Bible was—he had never even been to church—but the voice proved to be just the distraction he needed. He had stopped thinking about suicide for a moment, and that moment changed everything.

Finding a direction

Angelo had always been searching for a place to call home. Born in the Philippines, he and his six siblings were abandoned by their mother. His father brought his family to the U.S. to seek out better opportunities, but worked too much to provide a stable home for his children.

“I pretty much had no direction in life,” he says. “I grew up drinking and partying and doing drugs to a point where it really messed me up.”

The morning after he heard the voice, he went to the bookstore at Parkway Mall and bought his first Bible. “I didn’t understand any of it,” he says, “but that was the beginning of my journey.”

Coming home

A few months later, Angelo accompanied a friend to services at Green Pastures Assembly of God, a tiny church run by fellow Filipinos Salvador and Tessie Casaul. He kept going back—even when he was the only person in the pews. At last, he felt he’d found the home he’d been seeking. “The Casauls took me in,” Angelo says. “They knew I had a calling from God. They mentored me and prepared me for ministry.”

A new beginning

After four years, the Casauls announced they were leaving Reno. Angelo was

completing Bible College in Sacramento, CA and the Casauls thought he would be the perfect person to take their place.

In 2000, Pastor Angelo Austria came back home to Reno and took the helm of the very church that helped transform his life. Quite appropriately, he renamed the ministry New Life Christian Center.

Giving New Life a new home

New Life had never owned its own building—they rented space to hold services—and frequent moves had caused a drop in church attendance. Making matters worse, a bar had expanded into the space next to their most recent facility, and another church had moved in upstairs. Sandwiched between music and noise, and with cigarette smoke coming through the walls, Pastor Angelo was ready to find a more permanent home for his church.

It didn’t take long for the perfect building to turn up. It had the space they needed, but the asking price was far too high. Reno had been hit hard by the recent recession, and many New Life families had moved out of the area to find work.

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE >

“I AM SO BROKEN, BUT YOU AND YOUR CHURCH HAVE GIVEN ME HOPE. I FEEL LIKE A HYPOCRITE WHEN I GO TO CHURCH BECAUSE I AM A METH ADDICT AND PROSTITUTE, BUT YOUR CHURCH SHOWS ME LOVE AND ACCEPTANCE.”

—Angela,
Neighbor of New Life Christian Center

"THIS GARBAGE DUMPSTER SPEAKS MORE TO ME THAN ANYTHING ELSE. IT SAYS THEY REALLY CARE ABOUT THEIR COMMUNITY. THEY ARE CLEANING IT UP AT THEIR OWN EXPENSE."

—Pastor Mark Gunter,
New Life Christian Center

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

Although others had already made full-price offers on this facility, Pastor Angelo felt led to offer half the asking price of the building. His real estate agent unsuccessfully tried to talk him out of making such a low offer, but he held firm ... and miraculously, the sellers accepted his offer.

When another lender asked for 30% down to secure financing, the District suggested he call Church Extension Plan.

CEP is the only church lender to include the sale of certificates to members of the congregation. For small churches that don't qualify for traditional financing, this enables the ministry to receive a lower interest rate and manageable monthly payments. Pastor Angelo's congregation embraced the certificate sales: "They understood that it's their own investment, and it's helping their church. It was a win-win," he says.

CEP helped New Life Christian Center purchase the building for about the same monthly payment as they were paying before in rent—with funds left over to add new classrooms and kitchen facilities. New Life has taken advantage of having their own building and has already become a stable foundation in their community—a troubled area near Fourth Street in Reno. Since moving in, the multi-ethnic congregation is really putting their building to work.

Their new building has made a perfect staging ground for caring for the community. They've put on a carnival for children and families in the area and have been able to feed the hungry. As part of a community clean-up effort, they provided a large dumpster on their property so neighbors could throw away anything they wanted, free of charge. They also had teams canvas the neighborhoods, pulling weeds, picking up trash and making common areas look nice.

Just blocks away from the former location of "Tent City," the congregation of New Life serves the homeless and destitute in their neighborhood by volunteering at the local mission. Once they complete their new kitchen, they will be able to provide meals and groceries to neighbors and host Holiday dinners for the entire community.

"We believe that God called us to bring a light," Pastor Angelo says. "That's why we're intentionally reaching out to this community."

As they reach out to their community and share Christ's love with their neighbors, God continues to bless them. Attendance is increasing, finances are improving and people's lives are being changed. **P**



Pastor Angelo Austria and his wife have brought a light to this church in Reno.



CEP History

FOR MORE THAN 60 YEARS, CHURCH EXTENSION PLAN HAS GROWN BY PROVIDING FINANCIAL RESOURCES—INVESTMENTS AND CHURCH LOANS—THAT BUILD THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

Partners in ministry

CEP was founded in 1950 in the Oregon District of the Assemblies of God by the late District Superintendent Atwood Foster. Thirty years later, under the leadership of current President Rev. Patrick L. Clements, CEP adopted the motto "Partners in Ministry."

Today, CEP continues this commitment to partnership. Unlike for-profit banks, CEP's first focus is ministry—not dollars and cents. Currently, CEP is owned by 59 Assemblies of God member districts, with 25 district superintendents serving on its Board of Directors. In its 60-year history, CEP has helped more than 2,400 ministries spread the Gospel and provide a beacon of light to their communities.

Ministry growth

With the growth of ministry, CEP has expanded its services. Today, CEP offers loans to AG churches and ministries, capital campaigns, competitive investments, retirement account options as well as will and estate planning.

In recent years, New Growth Partners, a donations-based ministry, has been developed to help emerging ministries and church plants to get started.

To learn more about the ministry of Church Extension Plan, and to watch a video from President Patrick L. Clements go to cepnet.com/about. **P**

Watch a video about New Life (left)

Meet Pastor Angelo, and see and hear the miraculous New Life story. Scan the QR code on the left with your smartphone to watch a video about Pastor Angelo and how New Life Christian Center has reached out to their community in Reno, Nevada. Or visit our website to watch the video, at cepnet.com/newlife.

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Common Estate Planning

MISTAKES

Avoid heartache—
learn what to avoid



Chuck Knox

CEP'S CHUCK KNOX SHARES A FEW STORIES FROM HIS 20-PLUS YEARS HELPING FAMILIES WITH THEIR ESTATE PLANNING: "I'VE SEEN THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UGLY."



APPROXIMATELY 70% OF US DON'T HAVE A VALID WILL. MOST OF US PROCRASTINATE, TALK ABOUT IT, BUT NEVER DO ANYTHING. OF THE 30% THAT DO HAVE A WILL, 70% OF THE PEOPLE, WHEN THEY READ IT, DON'T LIKE WHAT IT SAYS. "THAT MEANS YOU ABDICATE YOUR FAMILY'S END OF LIFE STEWARDSHIP ROLE TO THE STATE YOU LIVE IN."

That's according to CEP's Chuck Knox, who's helped Christian families with estate planning for more than 20 years.

The three biggest mistakes? Short-cuts, procrastination, and just plain forgetting whose money it is. "When it's my stuff, I can do what I want with it," Chuck says. "When I remember it's God's, I make better decisions."

Don't take shortcuts. There's no one-size-fits-all approach. Go to someone who specializes in estate planning, and does it regularly. "You wouldn't trust your heart surgery to your family doctor," Knox says. "Choose a person with experience that can help you accomplish your goals."

Stop thinking about it, start doing something about it. Talk to an attorney today and get your will finalized. You can get started by using our checklist at cepnet.com/estateplan.

Be a good steward. Consider the tax implications, and the legacy you leave behind.

As Christians, we need to make sure we're being good stewards of what we have been entrusted, and not leave it up to others to decide how our estate is handled. Read more about how unexpected events or poor planning can affect your legacy. [P](#)

Chuck Knox has seen the impact on families of not planning ahead. These stories illustrate the importance of preparing for the future, no matter what age you are.

Q. I've heard everyone over 18 should have a legal will. Why?

A. It seems illogical, since so few people that age have any assets. But—they do have debts. This family found out why a will should be drafted sooner, rather than later.

Bob and Marcia's son, Carson, was the first in his family to attend college. The proud parents helped their son by cosigning a student loan.

"EVERYONE NEEDS A WILL—WHETHER THEY'RE 18 OR 85."

During college, Carson moved in with his girlfriend Kathy, who had a daughter from a previous relationship. When Carson and Kathy both died suddenly in a vehicle accident, his college loans were due and payable, and his grieving parents faced financial challenges.

When Carson's wrongful death settlement was awarded, the estranged father and grandparents of Kathy's daughter appeared, claiming the settlement. Bob and Marcia had to go to court against total strangers so they could pay Carson's debts.

"With a simple will, they could have had that money in 60 days, rather than waiting two years for the courts to decide," Knox says.

Q. We're not rich. Do people of modest means really need an expensive will?

A. The average will costs \$300-500. But dying without one can expose family tensions and create unnecessary heartache.

"THEY SPENT \$10,000 TO GET \$5,000, AND THEY HAVEN'T SPOKEN SINCE."

John and Donna had three children. They each spoke separately to their "favorite" child about their plans, but never got around to making a will. As their health declined, their third child, Kellie, shouldered the responsibility of caring for her parents, modifying her home and taking them to medical appointments.

When John and Donna left this life, their two other children believed they'd each inherit the entire estate. Kellie hoped to get a small sum to offset the costs of caring for her parents in their final years. Each child hired a lawyer and a battle ensued.

The result? "The value of the estate was \$15,000, and the judge split it three ways," Knox recalls. "They all spent \$10,000 on legal fees trying to get the full estate but ended up receiving only \$5,000, and they haven't spoken since."

Q. What's the big deal about estate taxes? Something's still better than nothing, right?

A. You'd never waste tens of thousands of dollars needlessly. But that's just what Gary and Roberta Kelso did.

The Kelsos had no children. A business owner, Gary saved after-tax income for retirement at a local bank. Roberta had a retirement plan from her job at a university.

"A WILL IS A GREAT TOOL, BUT IT CAN ALSO HAVE UNINTENDED RESULTS."

Their will designated Roberta's \$150,000 retirement would go to their niece, Lauren. They would divide Gary's \$150,000 savings between three ministries they supported.

When they died, it was a \$50,000-plus mistake. As an individual, Lauren inherited the retirement account as taxable income, losing \$50,000.

The non-profit ministries could have received Roberta's retirement tax-free. By flip-flopping—making Lauren a beneficiary on Gary's after-tax savings, and naming the ministries as beneficiaries on Roberta's retirement—both parties would have received a bigger benefit.

"They could have distributed the entire \$300,000 tax-free," Knox says.

Even if you have a will, read through it and make sure it's still accurate and up-to-date.

Have you moved recently? Has a child been married, or had a new baby? Has a relative passed away or a ministry closed? These are important questions to answer when reviewing your will.


If you would like help, we are here to serve you. Let us review your will and help you avoid common mistakes.

Call Chuck Knox at (800) 821-1112 ext. 167 or email cknox@cepnet.com to set up a free appointment.

Or go to www.cepnet.com/estateplan to use the tools we have available for you.

*The names used in these illustrations have been changed for privacy purposes.

Visit our website for a free will planning checklist at cepnet.com/giving.



Rev. Patrick L. Clements

3

Years of Building the Kingdom

WITH THE RIGHT VISION AND LEADERSHIP, A MINISTRY CAN ACCOMPLISH GREAT THINGS FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD. AS REV. PATRICK L. CLEMENTS CELEBRATES 30 YEARS LEADING CHURCH EXTENSION PLAN, A LOOK BACK AT SOME HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR WORK AS PARTNERS IN MINISTRY.

“THE THING I’VE PROBABLY ENJOYED THE MOST IS HAVING THE OPPORTUNITY TO DO LIFE WITH OUR TEAMMATES AND INVESTORS—IN THEIR BEST MOMENTS, AND FRANKLY, SOME OF THEIR WORST. IT’S WONDERFUL TO SEE THE MINISTRY PROGRESS, AND TO SEE THAT LOTS OF PEOPLE AND MINISTRIES HAVE BEEN IMPACTED BY WHAT WE DO.”

—Rev. Patrick L. Clements, President, Church Extension Plan

Timeline: 30 Years of Ministry Growth

1950 Church Extension Plan Established	1982 Patrick L. Clements joins CEP CEP housed in a 4,000 sq. ft. building, 6 team members, \$12.5 million in assets, 8 member districts. An average of 8-9 loans per year. U.S. Prime Rate: 16%	1987 Moves into 14,000 sq. ft. building	Late ‘90s Shorter term notes and IRAs introduced	2001 Life Rewards 403(b) Program debuts	2000 Reaches \$100 million in assets	2004 Opened current 40,000 sq. ft. building in Salem	2005 Reached \$300 million in assets	2006 Capital Campaign Consulting offered	2009 New Growth Partners launched	2010 Planned Giving, Estate Planning offered	Today Patrick L. Clements’ 30th Anniversary \$478 million in assets, 42 team members, 59 member districts, 15+ church loans funded per year, \$425 million in member investments. Current U.S. Prime Rate: 3.25%
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Partnering for the Kingdom

MOST PEOPLE KNOW THAT CHURCH EXTENSION PLAN PARTNERS WITH MINISTRIES, PROVIDING CHURCH LOANS TO BUILD THE KINGDOM OF GOD. IT WOULDN'T BE POSSIBLE WITHOUT CEP'S INVESTORS—INDIVIDUALS WHO HELP SPREAD THE WORD OF GOD WHILE THEY ACHIEVE THEIR FINANCIAL GOALS.

“Investors get a return, but they get so much more than that,” says Rev. Patrick L. Clements. “They are crucial to seeing the Kingdom expanded, to see communities impacted for good. We consider their investment a sacred trust.”



CEP Investment Team: flexible, empowered

The Investment Team is led by Investment Manager Dian McDonald. She oversees the team that greets every investor who calls. “One of the things that really surprises investors is how flexible we can be with our services and products,” Dian says. “We are empowered to make decisions quickly, and respond to special situations.”

Secrets from the Investment Team

According to Investment Customer Service Specialist Tami Weil, few investors take full advantage of the 30-Day Access investment option.

“They can take a withdrawal anytime with 30 days’ notice, and no penalty,” says Tami. “For investors who need to pay quarterly taxes or insurance, they have access to their money but still earn a good rate of return.”

For Dian, the hidden gem at CEP is the ability to build on an existing note. “Most folks don’t know they can add more to their investment over time. You don’t have to open a new note.”

Plus, they can add to their investment 24 hours a day using CEP’s online tools. “You can set up an electronic transfer from your bank account, and do it one-time or recurring. It makes it very convenient.”

“WE’RE WORKING WITH CUSTOMERS WHO APPRECIATE WHAT WE DO. THEY WANT TO INVEST IN MINISTRY, AND WE WORK IN MINISTRY TO HELP BRING PEOPLE TO THE LORD. IT’S NICE TO HAVE THAT COMMON BOND.”

—Dian McDonald, CEP Investment Manager

CEP Investor Service Team



Dian McDonald, Investment Manager

Dian has more than 15 years of experience at CEP, and more than 10 in her current position. She enjoys the personal relationships she’s developed with investors over the years. Her biggest challenge? “Getting all the projects done that we want to do. We put a lot of pressure on ourselves to be constantly improving.”



Tami Weil, Investment Customer Service Specialist

Tami’s been with CEP for nearly 13 years, and her previous positions in finance, technology, and marketing at CEP makes her uniquely qualified to work on special projects. “I enjoy discovering how we can do things better to improve the experience for our investors.”

Visit cepnet.com/investments to compare investment rates, use investment calculators or download useful financial worksheets.

You can open an investment note for just \$250.

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PASTOR JAMES JOHNSON-HILL HAD A VISION FOR A MULTI-RACIAL CHURCH TO BRING HOPE TO A STRUGGLING COMMUNITY. HE STARTED A MOVEMENT.

Johnson-Hill's Agape Church reinvented the city of Laurel, Mississippi in just two short years by taking an abandoned downtown building and creating a vibrant center of worship and a hub for community life.

What he didn't know was that he'd also be part of an ambitious partnership to re-think how ministries are born.

When Pastor Johnson-Hill first heard about the New Growth Partners program to fuel innovative new ministries,

he never imagined his Agape Church would be considered for the initial project. "When you start a program like this, you're going to do a project that will get you noticed," he says. "You're going to choose a city like New Orleans or Los Angeles. You're not going to pick Laurel.

"That's the heart of Jesus," he says, "CEP valued us not because we're large, but because we love the Lord."

READ THE AGAPE CHURCH STORY.
>> SEE THE ARTICLE ON PAGE 10



About New Growth Partners

Agape Church was the initial project funded by New Growth Partners donors. Every ministry is chosen for its innovative approach to serving its community and sharing God's love. See the work of Agape Church, and other ministries fueled by this program, and get involved at newgrowthpartners.org.

cepnet.com
(800) 821-1112

"WITHOUT NEW GROWTH PARTNERS, WE'D STILL BE A PORTABLE CHURCH. ZERO WAY WE COULD HAVE DONE ALL THIS ALONE."

—Pastor James Johnson-Hill,
Agape Church, Laurel, MS