

image  Dei

CHURCH

Raleigh, North Carolina

PROSPECTUS





Why Church Plant in Raleigh?

The potential and need for gospel growth in Raleigh are enormous. Raleigh is the fastest growing metro area in the country and is home to those who work in the cutting-edge Research Triangle Park (RTP).

In addition, three major universities are located in close proximity to the Raleigh area. People are moving from all over the world to work and live in the Triangle area, and to study at these universities. There are several strong churches in the area, however the rate of growth demands many more.

We believe that a strong church presence in Raleigh will be a catalyst for the gospel to expand to the nations through the discipling of the men and women who will be sent out from Imago Dei. That is why after many months of prayer we firmly believe that God is calling us to reach the unreached of Raleigh and to train up future missionaries and church planters to go to the ends of the earth.

Therefore, Tony Merida, former pastor of Temple Baptist Church in Hattiesburg, MS and former dean of the chapel at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, has transitioned to the Raleigh area to plant Imago Dei Church. Joining Tony in this venture will be Nate Akin and Matt Sigmon. Nate will serve as the Disciple-making Pastor at Imago Dei and Matt will serve as the Administrative Pastor.

Raleigh is the fastest-growing major metro in the nation, with a 37% annual growth rate.

The Raleigh metro area is at best 16% evangelical Christian (this includes many who we would not consider to be evangelicals), and many of those moving to the area are not believers. That means there are almost 700,000 people in the area that are without a saving faith in Jesus Christ.

Imago Dei Vision

What is our vision for Raleigh and the world? Simply put,

We desire to see lives changed by the gospel.

We desire to see people from all nations, who are created in the Imago Dei (Latin for “image of God”), be transformed by the gospel into the image of Christ through redemption. That’s why we’re planting a church in Raleigh, where only 16% of the nation’s fastest-growing area have embraced the gospel.

It is our aim to keep the gospel central in everything. In the words of the Apostle Paul, we believe that the gospel is of “first importance.” We should constantly reflect on it and base our lives and ministries around it. There are a lot of things people seek in a church, and there are a lot of things we could do, but we have purposed to keep the main thing, the main thing:

“Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance to the Scriptures”

1 Corinthians 15:3-4

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Our message is clear and simple. We believe that the hope for Raleigh and the nations is the gospel. We believe that it is the “power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes.” We desire to saturate the city and the world with the good news by proclaiming it with clarity and love, and by practicing good deeds that glorify Jesus. We desire to be a blessing to the city and to the nations with our actions and our words.

Gospel-Centered Name

We believe that this theological phrase, Imago Dei, calls our attention to the storyline of the Bible, which may be put in four sections:

- **Creation**
- **Fall**
- **Redemption**
- **New Creation**

In creation, God formed humanity in His image. But sin entered the world and now all people have fallen short of their purpose as God’s image bearers: to glorify God. We believe that God sent Christ to redeem us; to rescue us from our sin by dying in our place. Now God is at work transforming His redeemed into the image of Christ, so that they may glorify Him. We believe that we will one day gather with every tribe and tongue to glorify Jesus in the new heavens and new earth, or the new creation, forever. This is the story of the Bible. This is the story of the gospel. And this will be our story at Imago Dei Church.

And they sang a new song:

‘Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals,
for you were slain, and by your blood
you ransomed people for God
from every tribe and language and people and nation.’

Revelation 5:9

Imago Dei Mission

It is our hope to accomplish this mission by creating a church devoted to a Global P.E.A.C.E. Plan—

- P** – Plant Churches
- E** – Evangelize the World
- A** – Aid the Poor and the Sick
- C** – Care for the Orphan and the Oppressed
- E** – Equip People through Biblical Teaching



Imago Dei Process – Know, Grow, Go

We hope to accomplish this plan through Corporate Worship, Small Groups, and Missional Living.

KNOW – CHRIST as Savior and Treasure
GROW – in His Image
GO – Make Disciples of all Nations
... all to the Glory of God

KNOW CHRIST AS SAVIOR AND TREASURE

To “know Christ” in the Scriptures means more than merely attaining information. It has to do with both understanding and experience. We want people to understand the gospel and experience the life-changing power of Jesus. We believe that this pursuit of more intimate knowledge of Christ never ends, since the riches of Christ are “unsearchable” (Eph. 3:8). We want unbelievers to come to know Christ as Lord and Savior and for the believer to press on to know Christ more (Phil. 3:10).

Every week we will gather for corporate worship, the study of the Scriptures, prayer, fellowship, taking the Lord’s Supper, and the giving of our offerings – all of it – that we may know Christ more and more. We also want to help people know Christ more intimately through daily spiritual practices.

GROW IN HIS IMAGE

We long to see believers grow into the image and likeness of Christ. To accomplish this, we are committed to helping form healthy “Growth Groups.” These Growth Groups are sermon-based small groups which will meet weekly in homes to live out the “one anothers” in Scripture. The groups will practice the following:

- Fellowship
- Sharing
- Study and discussion of the previous Sunday’s sermon
- Prayer
- Worship
- Local ministry projects

GO MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS

We believe that Jesus calls every believer to be a missionary. Together, we are to “go into the world and make disciples of all nations.”

Our method for engaging the world is the proclamation of the good news and the practice of good deeds. As a community and as individual believers we hope to accomplish this through our P.E.A.C.E. Plan.

It is our desire to equip our people to fulfill their role as missionaries in the culture. We want to live out this plan daily and take trips through the year to live it out globally.

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Imago Dei Leadership

Tony Merida, Lead Pastor

tony@idcraleigh.com

Pastor, professor, and author, Tony Merida is the founding pastor of Imago Dei Church. He serves as Associate Professor of Preaching at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, and also has written two books—*Orphanology* and *Faithful Preaching*, as well as numerous articles. Tony has a PhD in preaching and a masters of theology from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and a bachelors degree in education from the University of the Cumberland, where he played baseball. Tony and his wife, Kimberly, have five children.

Nate Akin, Disciple-Making Pastor

nate@idcraleigh.com

Nate Akin is the Church Partnership Liaison at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary and the Director of Baptist21. He previously served as the College Director at Open Door Baptist Church. Nate has a masters of divinity from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary and a bachelors degree in political science from Murray State University, where he played basketball.

Matt Sigmon, Administrative Pastor

matt@idcraleigh.com

A Carolina native, Matt graduated from Clemson University with a bachelors degree in chemical engineering. Matt and his wife Shauna were married in 1995; since then God has blessed them with four children: Gabrielle, Grace, Caleb and Abraham. Matt holds a masters of divinity degree from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary and continues to work as a manager for an engineering company. He also served as a pastoral intern at Open Door Baptist Church.

Donnie Hollis, Worship Leader

donnie@idcraleigh.com

Donnie Hollis has served as a musician in many capacities, both in secular and Christian settings. Donnie has volunteered in the orchestra and led worship for Temple Baptist Church in Hattiesburg, MS. He has also been involved in student ministry through the years playing music for summer camps, DiscipleNow, and youth retreats. A graduate of William Carey University, he is married to Meghan, and they have one child named Judah.



VALUES & GOALS

We are driven by the following passions to achieve the following goals:

1. THE GOSPEL

Teaching that is rooted in the gospel of Jesus – the central message of God's Word.

- Goal: To teach the Scriptures faithfully every week, pointing people to Jesus. To sing the gospel every week with passion and humility, and to see the gospel weekly through the ordinances. Our aim is to see people see all of life through the lens of the gospel.

2. DIVERSITY

Reflected in leadership, the congregation, and our love for the nations.

- Goal: To develop a multi-racial, multi-generational leadership and congregation united around the gospel.

3. MERCY MINISTRY

Ministries that meet the urgent spiritual and physical needs of our city and the world and that reflect the grace and mercy of God.

- Goal: To impact the world through ministries of word and deed. We do not exist to develop programs for people to attend in a building, but rather to equip people to serve others in the city and the nations.

4. MISSIONAL COMMUNITY

A church where gospel-centered relationships are formed.

- Goal: For small groups to gather weekly in homes for sermon application, prayer, fellowship, discipleship, and ministry in the city.

5. TRANSPARENCY

Honest questions and humble repentance, not pharisaical legalism.

- Goal: To cultivate a church that is authentic, where seekers, doubters and Christ followers are welcomed.

BELIEFS

Imago Dei is first Christian, second evangelical, and third Southern Baptist.

Imago Dei affirms the Baptist Faith and Message 2000: <http://www.sbc.net/bfm/bfm2000.asp>



PHILIPPIANS 1:5 PARTNERS

In order to make our mission, vision, values, and goals a reality, we will need to lean on gospel partners. In the New Testament, Paul rejoices at the gospel partnerships that he shares among the churches. He writes in Philippians 1:3-5, "I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now." The Imago Dei team has assessed our need for the first three years of our plant and we will need to lean on partners for three things:

First, we desire at least 100 prayer partners. We need prayer for unity among the team, wisdom, financial partners, and most of all the Spirit to show Himself strong on our behalf. We would be extremely grateful if you would partner with us in this way.

Second, we will need churches to partner with us by sending people to help us in planting Christ's Church. This could be in sending people to be a part of our plant or sending teams to help us through missions efforts.

Third, Imago Dei needs financial partners. As we have assessed the demands of the city and the needs of our people, we have developed a preliminary budget of \$150,000 for the first year (see more detailed budget below). It is our hope to find at least 15 churches through our Philippians 1:5 Project that will pledge \$10,000 each to reach our budget goal of \$150,000. These churches will be our financial gospel partners who help establish Imago Dei as a mobilizing church to reach the nations with the gospel of King Jesus. We would be delighted if these churches would commit to being three-year partners with Imago Dei. Please consider being one of these partners in the days ahead.

However, even if you are not able to partner with us in this way we welcome any support you can provide, especially your prayers. We see any partnership you provide over the coming years as evidence of God's grace to us, and we thank you for any commitments you make to Imago Dei in the future.

Preliminary Budget

Personnel	\$70,000
Facilities & Administration	\$35,000
Ministry & Missions	\$25,000
Worship & Discipleship	\$15,000
<u>Miscellaneous</u>	<u>\$5,000</u>
Total	\$150,000

Financial Support and Contact Information:

Please make checks payable to Imago Dei Church (all contributions to Imago Dei Church are tax-deductible charitable contributions). Contributions can also be made electronically through Imago Dei's secure PayPal account. Please visit <http://www.idcraleigh.com> for details.



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