



**The  
Church  
Planting  
Committee**  
of the Philadelphia Presbytery

Dear brothers in Christ:

The Malvern area is one of the fastest growing communities along the fastest growing corridor in the Philadelphia area. According to the 2000 US Census report, the population around Malvern has exceeded 63,000 people. It is an attractive suburban community with easy access to the regional rail system and major highways. The Malvern area is a target-rich environment for the Gospel and a Gospel-centered church.

The Church Planting Committee and Bill Krispin, Executive Director of CityNet Philly, believe that a viable church planted in the Malvern area could be the strategic key to church planting in the western suburbs of Philadelphia, up and down what we call "The Route 202 Corridor," a growing population of nearly 750,000 mostly unsaved, unchurched people. Presently, there are only 3 small PCA churches in this region.

We need a seasoned, veteran church planter like David Swavely to plant a church-planting church in the Malvern area. We believe that Dave is well-suited for the work and the area. He has a passion for Christ and for lost people. And he is committed to reproducing disciples and churches that are centered on the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Please give David and this project your most serious and generous consideration.

Serving the King,

Bruce R. Finn  
Chairman

Hello from Dave Swavely, founding Pastor of Faith Presbyterian Church in Sonoma, CA (P.C.A.), and now a church planter in suburban Philadelphia!

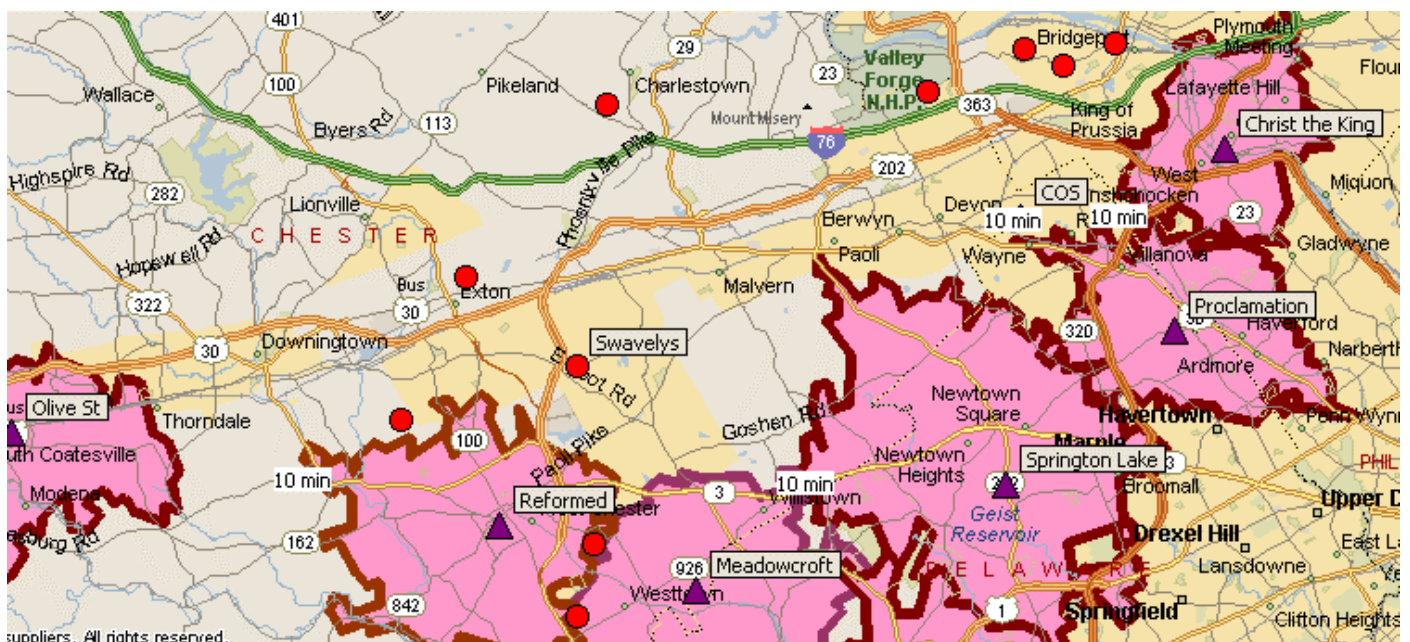


I want to tell you about an opportunity to participate in planting an “epicenter church” in a key, growing “edge city” near one of America’s major cities. This proposal will tell you about the mission field, my qualifications as a church planter, and the financial support needed to make this exciting ministry successful. Thank you for your consideration.

### An “Epicenter” Church

An “epicenter church” is one that, once established, can have an expanding impact or “rippling effect” throughout the region, the country, and then the world. All such churches, whether they are large or small, have these characteristics in common: they are churches that participate in planting other churches, and they are located in an area that is strategic for that kind of ministry.

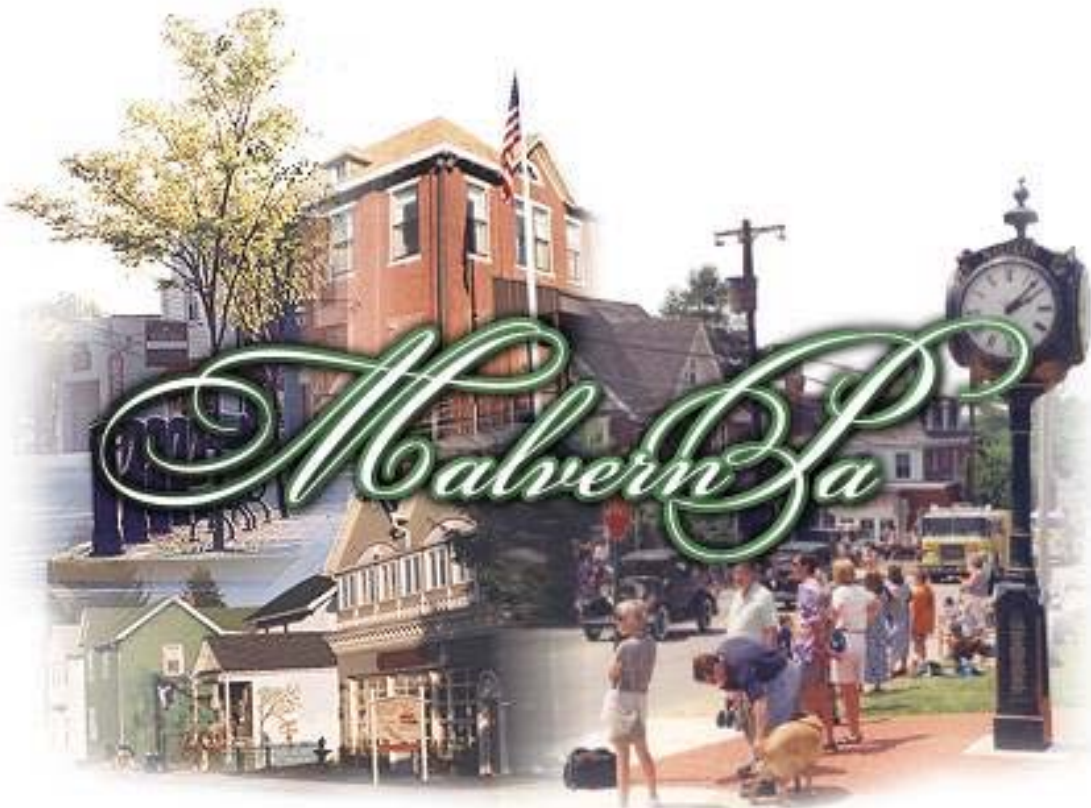
As you can see from Bruce Finn’s letter of recommendation, experienced church planters in the local presbyteries of the PCA. have identified the Malvern area, and the whole “Route 202 Corridor,” as a prime location for a new church plant. The map below shows all the nearby PCA churches, with the pink areas indicating a ten minute driving radius around each of them and the red dots indicating the addresses of those people who have expressed interest in being involved in this church plant. It should be apparent that the Malvern area is strategic in a plan to plant a series of new churches in the region. It is also an area with the kind of people who could provide significant financial resources for the implementation of such a plan, if the Lord wills.



## An “Edge City” Church

A recent trend in urban America is that large metro areas are downsizing into smaller functional units that have been called “Edge Cities.” The Philadelphia area is fast becoming a conglomerate of such suburban centers. An Edge City is perceived by the population as *one place* where people live, work, shop, and play. People commute to these areas from a 20-minute circle around them. They represent at least 250,000 people, and have at least five million square feet of office space and 600,000 square feet of retail space. They contain more jobs than bedrooms, and are found at the intersections of two or more major highways.

The Malvern area is at the *center* of a classic Edge City—one that is growing fast. But it also at the center of a smaller area that has no PCA church, or even any other churches that share our theological and ministerial distinctives. As I remember the area from when I lived there, and have researched it through conversations with other pastors and personal visits, I believe that this new church will have a very unique ministry. We will cultivate the balance of a “gospel-centered” approach to unbelievers, along with an in-depth discipleship of believers (including biblical shepherding, counseling, and accountability). In other words, we will be neither “seeker-centered” nor “ingrown,” but minister in such a way that the church will be rigorously biblical in its worship and work, but also be known as “a friend of sinners,” like our Lord was. This approach has been effective in my former ministry: we had many long-time Christians who say that they have discovered a depth of faith and doctrine that they never knew existed, but we also had many brand new believers who do not know Moses from Adam, yet felt at home in our midst. I believe that this kind of ministry will be refreshing to both non-believers and already-believers in the Malvern area.



## An Experienced Church Planter

By God's grace, I believe that I am uniquely gifted and called to undertake a ministry like this, in suburban Philadelphia. I grew up in this area, and ministered here as a young adult for several years before moving to California to attend seminary. So I understand the culture and the people, and have a personal concern for the expansion of Christ's kingdom in the region. My wife Jill also grew up in the area, and both of us have parents and extended families who live here. This is the initial reason that we began praying about returning here—we loved our life and ministry in the beautiful Wine Country north of San Francisco, but we also love and care deeply for our families, and felt a sense of responsibility from the Lord to honor them by living near them. I say this so you will understand how God has led in our lives, but also so that you will understand that we expect this move to be a permanent one for us. We have purchased a house in the Malvern area, and we plan to spend a long time building up the church of Christ in the Philadelphia area.

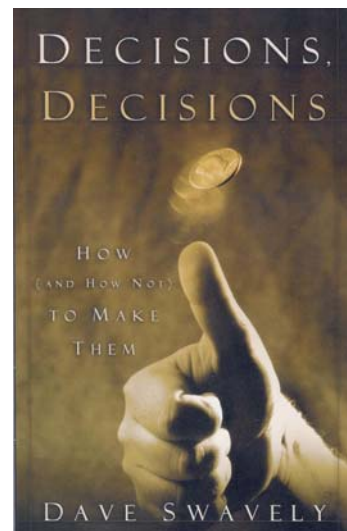
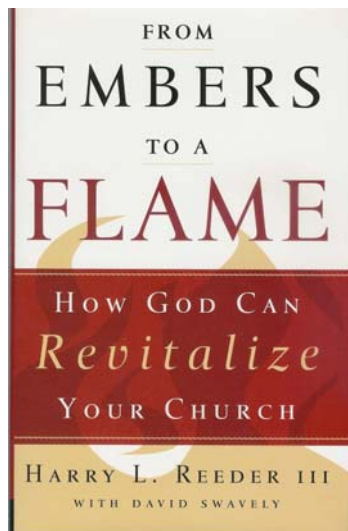
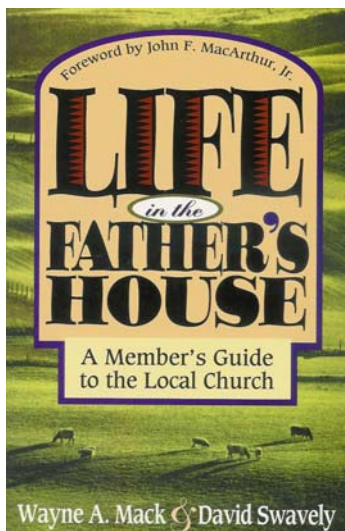
Below is a picture of my family, including the five children who are enjoying being closer to their grandparents! Their names are Nathan (12), Calvin (9), Raylyn (7), Madison (5), and Lauryn (2). The fact that they do love their grandparents has made the move to Pennsylvania desirable in their eyes—I am glad to say that it has not produced a “family crisis” in any way. Rather it has been a family blessing!



By God's grace, I have successfully planted a growing church in a very difficult area of Northern California. Faith Presbyterian Church began in 1999 with a few families who wanted a Reformed, gospel-centered church in the Wine Country. Today the church has over 100 people attending on Sundays, numerous effective and innovative ministries, and a budget that far exceeds the average for a church its size (plus a 2004 ending surplus of \$50,000). The church has an assistant pastor, provides significant support for church planters and missionaries, and we sent one of our members to seminary (he is supported by the church). God has done all of this in a small, expensive "left coast" community where less than 2% of the population attends evangelical churches on Sunday.

By living in that culture for eight years, and in Los Angeles for seven years before that, I have learned so much about how to relate to the unchurched, to "post-moderns," wealthy businessmen, and all other kinds of people who need to know Christ. And by God's grace I have seen many such people come to Him, and grow in their faith. This experience will be invaluable in suburban Philadelphia, because there are many unchurched, post-modern, and wealthy people there, along with the variety of other kinds that are found in any semi-urban culture.

So God has given me gifts and experience as an evangelist and church planter, but He also has made me an effective pastor and trainer of other church leaders, which I believe can add a unique depth to this ministry. I served for seven years at Grace Community Church in Los Angeles, as a staff pastor and personal assistant to Dr. John MacArthur. My personal theology and philosophy of ministry have developed since then, of course, but I gained invaluable experience in a big church environment, to complement my experience later in a small church. During those years and since, I have had numerous opportunities to teach and train other church leaders, and I also have practiced biblical counseling many hours a week for fifteen years. I have written the books pictured below, plus a new book called *Who Are You to Judge? The Dangers of Judging and Legalism* (P&R, December 2005), and I have been a speaker on the radio and at numerous conferences around the country. These experiences give me some extra credibility with both believers and non-believers.



## How You Can Help

The area around Malvern is one of the most expensive places to live and minister in Pennsylvania. So a significant investment in finances is required to begin this work, but a significant return is also likely, because God has blessed people in this area with the resources to make this an “epicenter church” that impacts the region and the world through church planting and missions support. I am confident that “God has many people” in this area (cf. Acts 18:10), and that Christ will build His church once the work begins here.

My ministry will be accountable to the presbytery and assisted by Dr. Bruce Finn, in his new role as Coordinator for the Metro Philadelphia Church Planting Partnership. (The recent formation of this Partnership is an exciting development that demonstrates a commitment to church planting on the part of PCA churches in the Philadelphia area.) Also, the MNA office will act as steward and distributor of your support, providing security and additional accountability for the early stages of this ministry.

## PARTNERING GOALS

We seek *Partnering Churches* and *individuals* to provide the following support for this ministry:

Year 1: \$120,000

Year 2: \$100,000

Year 3: \$60,000

Total goals for planting a gospel-centered, “epicenter” church in the Malvern area: \$280,000  
(Itemized budget available upon request.)

How these goals can be met:

1 Church or individual giving \$100,000

2 Churches or individuals giving \$50,000

5 Churches or individuals giving \$10,000

Other gifts totaling \$30,000

Total: \$280,000

Your support may be given as a one-time gift or pledged over a three year period.

## HOW TO MAKE A CONTRIBUTION

*Your tax deductible contributions may be sent to:*

**Mission to North America  
1700 N. Brown Road Suite 101  
Lawrenceville, GA 30043-8122**

**PLEASE MEMO EVERY GIFT: “DAVE SWAVELY”**

Please take a look at the information in the boxes, and pray about how God might lead you to participate in this ministry. If you have any questions, please contact me at 484-266-0250 or [daveswavelly@comcast.net](mailto:daveswavelly@comcast.net). I am asking the Lord to provide the full amount of support we need by the fall of 2006, so we can “hit the ground running.” Whether you can give or not, however, please partner with us in your prayers.

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:13).

In Christ,

Dave Swavelly