



Can you share a little bit of your testimony?

I had the blessing of growing up in the church. But I did not come to a saving faith until age 13 when I attended a Jr. High Youth Retreat with a Presbyterian Church in the woods of Eastern Kansas. As the youth director pointed to the glory and beauty of the cross, I understood the true weight and ugliness of my sin as well as the invitation to become an adopted son of our Heavenly Father. With the message of the cross ringing in my ears, I repented of my sin and surrendered my life to Jesus Christ.

The cross was magnified.

My joy was palpable.

My love relationship with the Triune God had begun.

What about your call into the ministry?

There was neither a sign in the sky nor an audible voice (though I sometimes mistakenly thought that God owed me one or the other at age twenty!). Yet after consistent discipleship by various pastors and elders that God placed in my life, I surrendered my life to full-time Christian ministry during my college years.

My home church played an instrumental role in my call to pastoral ministry:

- preached my first sermon at age 16 during a Youth Sunday;
- participated in various cross-cultural mission trips to Ethiopia, Costa Rica, & Belize;
- served as a Youth Ministry Intern for three summers in college as Godly men invested deeply into my life.

By God's grace, my performance-driven life was radically transformed into a relational life – "life is relationship". With the full support of my home church, I entered full-time Christian ministry eager to serve our relational God.



What are some of the characteristics that you hope characterize your pastoral leadership?

These are five of the characteristics that define my own pastoral ministry:

(1) A sincere love for people. People experience me as warm, authentic, social, kind, and easy to relate to. I enjoy being around people, and I love helping people become the followers of Christ that God intended them to be.

(2) Passionate preacher. I endeavor to study deep and wide and then preach with my heart on my sleeve.

(3) Relational Integrity. What you see is what you get. I strive to be a pastor and leader whose public and private life is congruent. I am committed to live the same Gospel-centered, Grace-saturated life whether I am visiting the hospital, preaching the good news, or leading teams. This “relational congruence” is the DNA that helps build a healthy organizational culture.

(4) Energetic Administrator. Senior level leadership invariably requires a high degree of organization in the administration of people, resources, budgets, and programs. I hope to bring warmth and joy as well as a high level of energy to administrative tasks, motivating people through a combination of empathy, kindness, and attention to detail.

(5) Combination of deep spirituality with a fun-loving spirit. I think we often take ourselves too seriously and Christ not serious enough!

Can you tell us about your central conviction?

My life motto is -- “My calling is to be a disciple and to make disciples of Jesus Christ through preaching, teaching, and living the Word of God. No one can make disciples without first being a disciple.” My prayer when I surrendered my life to full-time Christian ministry was simple: that my ministry, by God’s grace, might flow out of my own union with Christ and relationship with the Father.

Speed Round Q & A:

Any favorite books?

I am a person who typically reads 4-5 books at a time. I read 80% of Dietrich Bonhoeffer collected works by age 21: *Life Together* & *Cost of Discipleship* are classics. Bonhoeffer’s sermons are full of courageous wisdom.

The deep spirituality of Henry Nouwen resonates with me: *Return of the Prodigal Son*, *Wounded Healer*, *Spiritual Direction*.

For a marriage book, I often recommend *Marriage Builder* (by Larry Crabb).

For a book on prayer, I often recommend *A Praying Life* (by Paul Miller).

For modern classics: C.S. Lewis' *Screwtape Letters*.

For the best book on Jesus: N.T. Wright's *Jesus and the Victory of God*.

What are your sporting allegiances?

I am a die-heart Kansas Jayhawks basketball fan. Danny Manning and the Miracles (1988) and Mario Chalmers' clutch shot (2008) are championships that are routinely remembered with fondness!

Kansas City Chiefs in the NFL. Patrick Mahomes has rekindled my childhood loves of sports!

Any favorite foods?

My wife Lisa and I are polar opposites with respect to food. She periodically tells me that nachos are not the fourth food group. I pretty much ~~could~~ eat chips and salsa every day. I love trying new kinds of Mexican salsas. Exotic Root Beers are also a treat!

What about your "Bucket List"?

I've crossed off a few items on the 'ole bucket list:

- Visited Greece.
- Completed a marathon.
- Went on a Safari. (A one-day safari outside of Cape Town, South Africa after attending the Lausanne Congress of World Evangelization in 2010.)
- Attended an Olympic Event (USA Women's Soccer Quarterfinals London Olympics 2012 at Newcastle Stadium, England).

To name a few, I still want to: preach on every continent (Asia and Australia remain), trace the travels of the apostle Paul, and do a tour of MLB baseball stadiums with my sons.

Any fun memories from Central Africa?

My son Kenyon had three little boys named after him in Equatorial Guinea! My wife Lisa had two namesakes. I was trailing in this department until our last few months in Central Africa. A family told us that they were going to name their daughter Lisa (if they had a girl) or their son Jason (if they had a boy). Lisa almost went

up 3-1 on me -- would I ever live this down!?!? Fortunately, the family had a little boy, and now there is a second little Guineano boy named "Jason" in Equatorial Guinea.

Our favorite pet was Mario the Monkey. And we're pretty sure he thought Lisa was his mom!

We also lived across the street from a witchdoctor for a few years. Our three dogs would periodically bring pig bones, chicken bones, and goat bones back into our yard that had been sacrificed to the ancestors.

Tell us about your extended family.

I grew up with two awesome parents: Steve & Sandra Carter who moved to the Kansas City area (from Wichita, Kansas) to be closer to my younger sister Stephanie, her husband Brian, and their two children who also live in the Kansas City area. Lisa's younger brother Todd lives outside the Providence, Rhode Island area where Lisa grew up. Lisa's father died shortly after we got married, and Lisa's mother recently passed away after spending the last 10 months of her life living with us.