

"You're moving WHERE?"

"To Fresno."

"There's nothing there; you're going to hate it."

Before moving across the country from Minnesota to Fresno, the few conversations I had with people who had actually heard of this place were pretty pessimistic. People don't have the greatest of opinions- if any at all- about this particular part of California.

But this is a great place. I have enjoyed my time here, discovering all that Fresno has to offer. Brave cutting edge festivals like Rogue and Reel Pride, free Shakespeare in the Park each summer, thriving art and music scenes, and a diverse university community that is deeply invested in building a better world. That's a far cry from "nothing"!

Dismissing places off the beaten track is no new phenomenon. You might recall that Jesus was dismissed by some for being from that lowly dirty little place called Nazareth. When his disciples were first gathering, Nathaniel responded to Phillip's invitation to meet this Jesus guy, wondering "Can anything good come from Nazareth?" Phillip's response was simple and yet profound: "Come and see!"

To all the naysayers, I proclaim: "Come and see!" The truth is, goodness is everywhere. No place is too dirty, too poor, too simple, or too unimportant.

It has been a great joy and privilege to walk here with the people who are part of the community of Fresno State. I've worked with a handful of bold, creative student leaders through the University's Scholars in Service Program. I've partnered with dedicated board members and innovative university staff and faculty. I've witnessed young adults being transformed as they work with the Bulldog Pantry. And I've seen the grace of God blessing the lives of the young adults that have participated in the gatherings and events of our ministry.

But now it is time to say goodbye. Ever since my position was reduced to half time in mid 2017, LCM and I have been on a transitional journey together; we knew I'd eventually depart, we just didn't have a date set.

Though a new leader is not yet in place, we have determined that now is a good time to part ways. I was recently married and am looking into some other ministry opportunities, and we've all discovered that the work of transition is surprisingly difficult to do when there isn't actually a pastoral vacancy at hand. So in December we decided that my last day with LCM Fresno will be January 31st, 2019.

Please know that this goodbye is not an end for anyone. The Ministry of LCM Fresno will carry forward as the board explores options for partnership. And I trust that God has great plans in store for me, as God always has.

Thanks for your ongoing support of this life giving ministry.

Trust in God,  
Pastor Paul