

Christ Community Covenant Church
Advancing the Kingdom Together: What in the world do we do?
The Values of Community Mindedness and Multiplying
Pastor Dave Scherrer - January 24, 2016

Review

Our Mission: *Love God, Love others and Advance the Kingdom Together*

Our Mark: *Life, Light and Love*

Our Measure: The Five Stones

Teaching Church

Family Centered Church

Community Minded Church

Multiplying Church

Celebrating Church

Thomas Finally Caught Connie's Monkey with Milk and Cookies

Last Sunday we highlighted the value of being a teaching church. That means of course that we are all teachers – we are all called to be able to give a defense of our faith. But it goes farther than that. We are called to persuade. Paul said

2 Corinthians 5:11

"Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others."

What we are persuading them about is the truth. Remember I called it Truth with a capital T. There is a saying, "*Be careful what you save them with, because that is what you are saving them to.*" Because Truth is a person and his name is Jesus. And you remember that I also called us to a persuasion that is winsome and kind and loving and healing and abounding with grace. Because kind and loving and winsome and grace also has a name and that name is Jesus as well. We are not allowed to pick a fight, but we can hold fast.

Illustration: Internships and perhaps a relationship with CHET our Covenant Spanish speaking seminary in LA.

Today we want to tackle two more of 4C's values; being a Community Minded Church and being a Multiplying Church.

The Community Minded Church

Discussion: *What do you think defines a community church? Is it more than just geography?*

I have said before, I am tired of churches being accused of being solely 'against things.' I would rather be known as being for things. We are for Life. We are for Light and Truth. We are for Love - a fearless reconciling love. A healing love. We are for these things. We are for justice and compassion and mercy.

Justice, Compassion and Mercy

These are particularly important to the Covenant and I long to be known as the church that is community minded in our pursuit of justice and acts of compassion and mercy for those in our neighborhoods. I know that God is bullish that these character traits be manifest in those that call Him Lord.

Zechariah 7:8-10

And the word of the LORD came to Zechariah, saying, ⁹"Thus says the LORD of hosts, Render true judgments, show kindness and mercy to one another, ¹⁰do not oppress the widow, the fatherless, the sojourner, or the poor, and let none of you devise evil against another in your heart."

Micah 6:8

He has told you, O man, what is good;
and what does the LORD require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?

Justice: Equal education, employment, housing, fair treatment in the judicial system. Justice is concerned for the marginalized and the disenfranchised – the castaways. In our culture that is often the poor, minorities, those with mental health and physical health issues. Our Senior Citizens are often made to feel unimportant or to somehow believe that they are a burden. That is unjust and unchristian.

Mercy: Is to act benevolently towards perhaps those who don't deserve it. Some might say that someone addicted to drugs or down on their luck financially or perhaps in jail are getting what they deserve. Perhaps, but our God is a God of Mercy. And remember, you have been the recipient of that undeserved favor yourself.

The Kingdom of God loves Collaborations and Partnerships!

Arvada Food Bank, Confluence Ministries, Jefferson County Health and Human Services
Severe Weather Network, Hearts and Hands, David Clifton...

Let's talk a minute about the unfinished space right here in our property: day care, job and health education, worship and outreach ministries to our 18 to 28 year olds who are dropping out of the church pandemically. The sky is not the limit, Heaven isn't even the limit - but it is our hope! I love the fact that we are a Community Minded Church. In a sentence I think we could say it this way:

"We participate in great good deeds of divine proportion that none would mistake for anything but the handiwork of God".

So let's move on from being a Teaching Church and a Community Minded Church to looking at the idea that we are a Multiplying Church:

The Multiplying Church

I think we can make a compelling argument that being a multiplying church – a growing and vital church is a good goal. Few would disagree with that. No one wants to be a part of a dying movement. But rather than appealing to these arguments, let's go directly to scripture to receive our mandate.

Matthew 9:35-38

³⁶ When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷ Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; ³⁸ therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

Our Job:

Seeing in others the need to be filled
Having compassion and ownership of the problem
Praying to the Lord of the harvest

Seeing the need:

This text in Matthew 9:35–38, describes a situation similar to ours. It also tells us how Jesus responds to that situation. All I want to do is lead you this week in obeying the command of our Master given in the text.

Seeing in others the need to be filled

First of all, there is a need which Jesus finds, a privation among the people. Verse 36: "When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd." People without Christ are like sheep without a shepherd. They will soon run out of pasture and starve, or they will get lost or caught in some thicket and die. And in the meantime they are harassed, wearied, and helpless. Now the unbelievers you know may not seem to fit that description. But if you see them with the eyes of Christ and are not misled by the shell of self-assurance, you will recognize sheep that desperately need a shepherd.

In Colorado, according to a February 2015 report, only 25% of Coloradans associate with a church, 8th lowest in the nation. We are about the same as the far northwest of Oregon, Washington, and Alaska but not as bad as the far northeast where NH, Vermont Maine, Massachusetts all fall under 22%. If this is mostly true then 70 to 75% of our fellow citizens make no pretense of affiliation with a church. And that probably means they are also without Christ who always moves his people into fellowship. There is the need: these people, no matter how good or bad, are not saved. They cannot know ultimate meaning in life, they cannot have a purified, clean conscience before God, and without Christ they have no hope of eternal life. "He looked on the people, and they were like sheep without a shepherd."

Having compassion and ownership of the problem

Second, notice in verse 36 that Jesus had compassion on them. The word means, literally, to be moved in one's stomach with pity. Do you remember the last time you felt real strong pity? (**Illustration: Tijuana Dump City**). *Our* need is to feel compassion because of *their* need. Our need is to care and love like Jesus did. He was so much a man for others! We need to be honest and admit that compassion does not come natural to us. It is a work of grace in our hearts and, for that reason, the product not of works, but of prayer. "He saw the crowds and had compassion for them."

Praying to the Lord of the harvest

That leads us to a final observation. Not only did Jesus find a privation among the people, and feel compassion but he also commanded us to pray about it. "***The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few, therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest***" (verse 38). The strangeness of this command points to something very important. It is strange that the farm hands should be told to beg the owner of the farm to send out more workers into *his* harvest. Surely Jesus doesn't mean to imply that God doesn't know there is a shortage of reapers! And surely he doesn't mean that God doesn't care whether the harvest comes in! Why, then, are the farm hands told to beg the farmer to get more help?

There is only one possible answer. God has willed that his miraculous work of harvesting be preceded by prayer. He loves to bless the world. But even more, he loves to bless the world in answer to prayer. It is God's way before he does a great work to pour a Spirit of supplication upon his people so that they plead for the work. Therefore, the sign that God is going to bring in the harvest to 4Cs will be a widespread movement of prayer among us.

With all this in mind I have three opportunities I want to lay before you – three petitions really:

Three Petitions for 4Cs

Fast one meal a day this week

Join me or Gloria every day here in the Worship Center from noon to 1:00 pm

Join us for celebrations and prayer on January 31 from 5 to 6:15 pm in the Worship Center

I want to introduce you to a friend. His name is Jeremiah Panphier. He lived about 160 years ago and he was a missionary to NYC from North Dakota.



Burdened so by the need he saw, Jeremiah Lanphier decided to invite others to join him in a noonday prayer-meeting, to be held on Wednesdays once a week. He therefore distributed a handbill:

HOW OFTEN SHALL I PRAY?

As often as the language of prayer is in my heart; as often as I see my need of help; as often as I feel the power of temptation; as often as I am made sensible of any spiritual declension or feel the aggression of a worldly spirit. In prayer we leave the business of time for that of eternity, and intercourse with men for intercourse with God.

A day Prayer Meeting is held every Wednesday, from 12 to 1 o'clock, in the Consistory building in the rear of the North Dutch Church, corner of Fulton and William Streets (entrance from Fulton and Ann Streets). This meeting is intended to give merchants, mechanics, clerks, strangers, and business men generally an opportunity to stop and call upon God amid the perplexities incident to their respective avocations. It will continue for one hour; but it is also designed for those who may find it inconvenient to remain more than five or ten minutes, as well as for those who can spare the whole hour.

Accordingly at twelve noon, September 23, 1857, the door was opened and the faithful Lanphier took his seat to await the response to his invitation. Five minutes went by. No one appeared. The missionary paced the room in a conflict of fear and faith. Ten minutes elapsed. Still no one came. Fifteen minutes passed. Lanphier was yet alone. Twenty minutes; twenty-five; thirty; and then at 12.30 pm, a step was heard on the stairs, and the first person appeared, then another, and another, and another, until six people were present, and the prayer meeting began. On the following Wednesday, October 7th, there were forty intercessors. Thus, in the first week of October 1857, it was decided to hold a meeting daily instead of weekly.

Within six months, ten thousand business men were gathering daily for prayer in New York, and within two years, a million converts were added to the American churches in what historians have called the American Great Awakening.

I long for us to know the glory of answered prayer for our community and for the sake of the Kingdom. Let's start small, but let's start. Join me in fasting one meal every day from Monday through Saturday. Sunday we will break that fast and eat as before. Let's all who can join here to pray every day Monday through Saturday pray for one hour (noon to 1:00 pm). And then let's join together here Sunday night for a time of celebration, imaging all that God has in store for our church and for our Kingdom efforts. Please join me in praying together the prayer our Lord taught us. Let's recite it somewhat slowly and let it sink in to our hearts.

**Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread, And forgive us our debts,
As we also have forgiven our debtors; And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom and the power, And the glory forever. Amen.**