

holistic. Missional. Christian . COMMUNITY. , Pt 4

September 8, 2013, we began a four week conversation dealing with what we hope will be the DNA of Missio Dei. There are four interwoven strands: Holistic, Missional, Christian, Community.

Here is a recap of Joe's talk on the fourth strand: Community.

Introduction

The Way of Christ cannot be pursued in isolation. No “Lone Rangers”. The Way of Christ is a journey we take together. We are called to a community.

This community is about a heart connection with God and each other and our neighbors, not just meaningless rituals and going through the religious motions. However, a community is also defined by certain practices that bind them together.

Over the last 3 weeks we have been discussing together what kind of community we want to be. What is our purpose? What are our practices? We talked about Holistic. Missional. Christian. Today we will focus on Community.

What is the purpose of church? What kinds of things should churches be doing? What should our church specifically be doing?

Read Acts 2:42-47

What purposes & practices do you observe here?

One mistake I think we make as we think about what it looks like to be community is to try to be just like other communities: Be like the early church. Oh yeah? Which one?

Instead of getting bogged down in the specificity of the early community, I suggest we look for a trajectory. Because we need to live out the way of Jesus right here. Not in 1st Century Jerusalem. Not in Dallas or Chicago or New York. Not even just like other churches here in our city. We are all called to different work and ways of being that emerge out of the way of Jesus. What is ours?

I suggest that the early church lived out these qualities because of

their commitment to the Way of Jesus, to one another and to the whole world. One of these things is that they did not decide on their own how to be the church. They discerned it together. There was an understanding of mutuality and unity that surpassed individual needs and wants.

Unity in the midst of diversity.

When have you observed the church at its best? When have you seen other churches live out these qualities we've talked about?

Read Exodus 35:4-5, 10, 20-22, 30-34 & 36:1

Each person has something to contribute to the community that God has gifted them with specially through the Holy Spirit.

What might your role be in helping our church become the kind of community we are dreaming about, as we reimagine church here and now? What is your gift?

But community of the Way takes a reorientation, a reorganization, a renewing of mind. There is a reason that repentance means turning away from something and toward something else.

- Interestingly, Paul employed the term as a continuous concept, rather than a static one. That is, Paul imagined that we, as followers of the way would daily have to turn toward Christ and away from every other thing that demands our allegiance.
- He imagined vigilance.
- Darrel Guder calls this the continuing conversion of the church...

A church which is a kindred spirit: The original Church of the Saviour commitment statement did not give a list of prerequisites, rules and regulations. In fact, all that was required was that *"we have the kind of gratitude that inspires generosity, inclusiveness, largeness of heart"*. Here are some of the promises the members of this church renew annually:

- *I unreservedly and with abandon commit my life and destiny to Christ, promising to give him a practical priority in all the affairs of life;*
- *I commit myself, regardless of the expenditures of time, energy*

- and money, to becoming an informed, mature Christian;*
- Because God is a lavish giver, I too shall be lavish and cheerful in my regular gifts;*
 - I will seek to be loving in all relations with other individuals, groups, classes, races and nations and will seek to be a reconciler, living in a manner which will end all war, personal and public.*

Maybe it takes being forgiven much to make these kinds of lavish promises. I know that every year, when we are back in recommitment season, I am shocked at the wholehearted commitment it requires to say 'yes' once again—'yes' to Jesus' life and teachings, 'yes' to Jesus' death and whatever is dying at Church of the Savior, 'yes' to resurrection and new forms of being church in this time and place. <http://inwardoutward.org/on-the-way/1476/>

Benediction – Ephesians 3:20-21

20 Now to God who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, **21** to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.