

September 7, 2014

Mostly Personal ... Prayer

Hello Loved Ones,

Mission Statement and **Core Values** are two phrases that exploded into popularity in the church world during the 1990s. Taking our cue from the business world, congregations sought to communicate the “why” and sometimes the “how” of their existence through these two ideas. I personally believe the idea of Missions Statements and Core Values began as an invaluable tool for growth. Yet I also believe the idea may have become the most over-used and least effective growth tools to emerge out the past quarter century. Let me explain how it can be both.

On the good side, a lot of positive things resulted from this idea as churches learned how to focus on the right places to spend money and time. They learned that no church can be *everything*. There's not a congregation in America that can provide *every service* people think is important. So we have to choose what we believe is God's plan for us. It is good for a church to be forced to focus. For instance, I believe there are people in Columbia who will never be reached by the way we do church. But there are also people in Columbia who will be drawn to our message and method. In fact, there are people who come to Jesus at Christian Life who possibly would never come to Him through another setting.

On the bad side, I think many churches who began well have unknowingly “caved-in” to a consumer mentality that has somehow made pleasing people by meeting their needs our highest priority. I believe such an error is unintentional, yet many churches have forgotten our goal, first and foremost, is to please The Lord. This means we must create the venue of approach for others that He put in us as part of our spiritual DNA. There is great wisdom in approaching Him on His own terms.

So after twenty five years or so of this “new strategy”, where are we now? Let me make the following observations:

- It is vitally important that a church understand its reason for being, and articulate the unchanging pillars that justify our existence.
- When a church determines its broad “reason for being” (which is called its Mission Statement), it must commit to a handful of bottom line, non-negotiable principles (called Core Values) that guide and guard every decision it makes.
- For the mission to be understood and pursued, it has to be proclaimed and explained to every generation.

Years ago we set forth both our *Mission Statement* and *Core Values*. It's way past time for a review. With that in mind, I want to take the next few weeks in *Mostly Personal* to explain what they are in detail. Our model is the Church at Antioch described in the Book of Acts.

I have tried to resist the temptation to answer every critic and please every observer. We have tried to remember our mission and stay focused on our

core values. Some we do very well, concerning others, we are definitely a work in progress. We've tried to be open to the move of the Holy Spirit without bending to the temptation to endorse or condemn every revival or trend that comes along. We've had setbacks and victories, but the values are the same.

Our Mission Statement is simple. We exist in order to create venues in which people encounter God, have their lives transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit, - and the result is lives transformed to serve God with a Biblical worldview. In other words, we are committed to getting people face to face with God, and we believe that encounter will change their lives.

Concerning our Core Values, here is a list of what we believe God has called us to:

1. **Biblical Authority** - We believe God is speaking to us through the Scriptures. Therefore, the Bible is our ultimate authority concerning all of life's issues.
2. **Intimacy with God** - We believe God desires an intimate relationship with every believer. Through consistent prayer, meditation, worship and Bible study, we can pursue and achieve intimacy with the Father.
3. **God's Empowering Presence** - We believe that through God's Empowering Presence lives are transformed. Therefore, we welcome Him in every aspect of Christian Life, acknowledging our dependence on His grace-filled presence.
4. **Pastors who are Servant Leaders** - We believe in God-ordained leaders who model the Christian life and devote themselves to the care of the church family. The responsibility for the church rests upon their shoulders.
5. **Partners In Ministry** - We believe there are ministry opportunities for every member of the Christian Life Family. Ministry involvement will be in accordance to the person's spiritual gifts as well as present needs within the church family.
6. **Authentic Community** - We believe accountability, care, and a sense of belonging are critical to balance and progress in our spiritual journey. These three things are best achieved within the context of a small group of relationally connected believers.
7. **Intentional Apprenticing** - We believe the key to the success of “Building Godly Generations” is intentional apprenticing. Every experienced follower of Christ is responsible for passing along to others the knowledge, skills, and opportunities for service that God, through others, entrusted to them.
8. **Relational Evangelism** - We believe all Christ-followers have the responsibility of intentionally sharing the Gospel within their network of relationships.
9. **Culturally Relevant Environment** - We believe our role is to convey eternal truth by creating a variety of environments that are relevant to every generation and conducive to the work of the Holy Spirit.

Keep an eye on *Mostly Personal* for a thorough explanation of these Core Values, and join us for six special Sundays beginning September 14 as we discuss the model for Christian Life – *The Church at Antioch*.

I love you, *Pastor Stephen* ©2014 Pastor Stephen Chitty Christian Life Church
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