

Conversations for the Church
Ephesians 4:11-16
By Bob Young

Introduction

*What is our mission? What will advance our mission?

- --Our mission is not to meet needs, to turn lives upside down, then to help them mature
- --Our mission is to become disciples, model, then others will follow

*Today, belonging leads to knowing

- Formerly, the process was that knowing led to belonging.
- We live in a different world, in most of our churches the members are from a previous world.
- Not many appreciate or understand the developing model: Intellectual vs. experiential.

*Come and See. What are our come and see events? Come and see is not Sunday morning in most cases.

*This should lead us to think about church with different measurements

- Not attendance, dollars. Not budgets, buildings, baptisms. Not in bricks and buses and # on benches
- We must establish challenging standards of what we will do/be.
- Churches face difficulties when “they fail to establish clear and meaningful performance demands to which they hold themselves accountable.” This is an almost universal weakness of churches.
- What are we trying to do? Are we doing it? How can we do it? Most churches keep a limited number of measures. What matters?—what do you count?

*Churches that identify a shared vision and establish corresponding standards create a dynamic for learning and growth that is potent. But establishing such standards is not easy—it takes thought, prayer, input, correlation with the dream (more than with personal preferences, past actions, the routines, etc.)

We exist to make as many disciples of Christ as possible using the most effective means available. Making disciples means winning the lost to Christ; baptizing new believers and assimilating them into the local church; teaching, training, nurturing, and equipping all believers for personal growth and for ministry; and sending out believers to be reproducers in the world.

Let's talk

- What will we measure? Attendance at events, attendance at disciple-building, disciple-making, discipleship-training courses? How will we assess whether what we do is fulfilling our purpose?
- We must talk and come up with a set of indicators of mature disciples.
- Behavior regarding (1) corporate worship, (2) personal daily worship, (3) daily prayer life, (4) financial stewardship, (5) service in a specific ministry, (6) involvement in meaningful fellowship or small groups, (7) relationships with unchurched persons.
- Thinking of other factors and relationship with non-members
 - How many of our first time visitors return a second time? Can we increase the percentage?
 - How many quality contacts does this church have with non-Christians in a typical week?
 - How many evangelistic contacts do we have, where we actually share faith?

Ephesians 4:1-16 is a model for ministry

How will we do ministry?

Will we try to be coercive, work by force? Illus: Charlemagne forced baptisms, “be baptized or we will kill you”

Jesus is Lamb and Lion, Rev. 5

TEXTUAL STUDY