



desert breeze community church

Teaching Notes: Alan Cook

February 22, 2009

“Taking the Dare”

Why Plant Churches?

The vigorous, continual planting of new churches is the single most crucial strategy for 1) the numerical growth of the Body of Christ in any city, and 2) the continual corporate renewal and revival of the existing churches in a city...Tim Keller.

1 – Jesus’ essential call was to plant churches

Matt:28:18-20

2 – Paul’s whole strategy was to plant urban churches. Acts 16:9, 12; Titus 1:5; Romans 15:19,23

The Bible’s Premises concerning reaching the world...

a) The way to most permanently influence a country was through its chief cities.

b) The way to most permanently influence a city was to plant churches in it.

3 – New churches best reach new generations, new residents and new people groups.

4 – New Churches best reach the un-churched.

What Kind of Churches Do We Plant?

Acts 2:40-47 (biblical in function, gospel focused in convictions and beliefs, Elder-led in structure)

1 – VV.40-41. “Generation = Whole Culture”. The church itself is a “new –generation” (counter-culture).

2 – VV.42-47. Lists the 12 characteristics of the early church. (see backside of growing notes)

3 – The Five “vital signs” of a healthy church:

a) Learning in the Truth (Theology)

b) Loving in the fellowship (Intimacy)

c) Worship in the Spirit (Joyous)

d) Witness through words (Evangelistic)

e) Service through deeds (Sacrificial)

Why Is The City so Important to Christianity?

1 – God began history in a garden, but is ending it in a City!

2 – The power of cities are such that.... as the city goes, so goes society!

3 – In every earthly city, there are two “cities” vying for control:

a) The city of Man (under sin)

b) The city of God (under God)

Why urban Portland, Oregon? (Acts 17:16-34)

1 – Size (1.5 m – hub for large area)

2 – Density (8400 pop. Sq. mile)

3 – Diversity (multi-social order)

4 – Influence (affects rest of state)

5 – Spiritual need – (least-churched city)

What’s God calling you to do next?

1 – *Every believer has a calling in life. (gifting)*

2 – *Every calling involves steps. (preparation)*

3 – *Each step is an act of faith. (obedience)*

4 – *Steps of faith involve “risk”. (faithfulness)*

5 – *Risk in Christ is not the same as worldly risk!
(Eternal reward)*



Growing

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- 1) Read 1 Corinthians 9:20-23. What do you think Paul meant by “becoming all things”? How is the culture around us similar or different than the culture in Corinth? What are some ways we can “be all things” to the surrounding culture without compromising following Christ?
- 2) Read Romans 7:15. Why do we all struggle like this? How does that make you feel? Now read Rom. 8:1-6. How does God’s promise help us through our feelings and motivate us to a closer relationship with Christ? How should this help us impact our culture for Christ?
- 3) When was the last time you had an open dialogue of exchange between someone who differed with your Christian beliefs? What did you learn? Make it an assignment to have an exchange this week with one person who differs from you in essential beliefs.
- 4) Review the five vital signs of a healthy church. How does DBCC line up in your opinion? Discuss our strengths and weaknesses and what can be done to improve. Are you prepared to help?
- 5) Which is true: A) The American church is influencing our culture, or B) The American culture is influencing the American church? Why is the American church struggling to influence our culture? What can (we do to) change this?
- 6) Read Acts 2:40-47. Look on the back side of this page for a listing of the 12 characteristics. Go through them with your small group, discuss and assess where your group is doing well and where it needs to improve.

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12 Characteristics and functions of the early church:

- 1 – v42a) The church **trained and educated** its members. (“devoted themselves to the apostles teaching”)
- 2 – v46) The church brought its members **together** constantly (“every day”)
- 3 – v44a) The church moved members into **relationships** of mutual support and fellowship (“they were together”)
- 4 – v46a&b) The church had both **large group** meetings and **small group** meetings.
- 5 – v42, 46) They practiced the **sacrament** of the Lord’s Supper constantly (“the” breaking of bread)
- 6 – v42d) The church spent much time in group **prayer** (devoted themselves to prayer) both in homes and groups.
- 7 – v45) The church practiced **stewardship**, sharing and mercy ministries (“selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need”)
- 8 – v43) There were deeds of power which accompanied and **verified the truth** of the apostles preaching (“many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles”)
- 9 – v46 &47a) There was a general spirit of **joy** (“glad and sincere hearts”) and **praise** (“praising God”) which permeated every meeting at every level.
- 10 – v47) The community life was extraordinarily **attractive** to outsiders (“enjoying the favor of all the people”).
- 11 – v47) The church was **evangelistically effective** in the extreme, with new conversions everyday (“the Lord added daily those who were being saved”)
- 12 – (v47) Conversions were not seen individualistically. When a person was saved, they were “added to their number”; they were incorporated into a **deep relationship** to the church body, not just to the Lord.