

Words of Truth

Exposing The Community/Evangelical Church Movement (Part 5)

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Many times I have heard sincere Christians question what should be done to reach the lost. You would think that Christians would understand that we reach the lost when we live Christ (Matthew 5:14-16 and Philippians 2:14-16). We then study to be prepared to teach (II Timothy 2:14-18, I Peter 3:15, and II Peter 3:17-18). Our preparation then allows us to teach those who are truly seeking (cf. Matthew 13:45-56) the truth when we have the opportunity (Mark 16:15-16, Acts 5:42, Acts 8:25-39, Acts 14:21, and Acts 17:1-4).

While faithful Christians follow the pattern mentioned above, those of false religions have a different mindset. As you will soon read, many approach reaching those outside of their numbers like they are a business using a marketing campaign. Their goal is not to teach the truth and help save the lost. They could not do so as man-made churches even if that was their goal (Mark 7:7-9). What you can plainly see is that these Community Churches, like all other erring religious bodies, are interested in having more people as part of their false religion. Sadly, people are more willing to fall for false doctrine than to follow the truth (II Timothy 4:2-5 and II Peter 2:1-3).

You Can See That Their Focus Is Numerical Growth Rather Than Pleasing God!

The Crossroads Community Church began in 1996 (<http://www.crossroads.net/my/about/ourHistory.php>). Their website, at the time this article was written, said: "Welcome. **Whatever your thoughts** on church, **whatever your beliefs** about God, you are welcome here" (<http://www.crossroads.net/>). Another Community Church says: "We are not perfect, so if you're looking for perfection, we're not it. However, we do have some really good points. We have great praise and worship, as well, as solid preaching from the Word of God. I am a Pastor who is not afraid to go where others dare not tread. I deal with what is real. **If you are you looking for a Church where you matter**, we are such a Church. Yes, we do have a vision of becoming a large and powerful Church, but not at the expense of embracing you into the family" (<http://www.gladtidingsofwilmington.com/>).

The New Life Community Church says: "**We want to grow from attracting people** not presently connected to an evangelical church and encouraging to know and live for the Lord" (<http://www.newlifeirmo.com/mission/our-vision.html>). The Bella Vista Community Church actually divides Christianity up into over 30 systems of faith so that everyone is okay with them: "Bella Vista Community Church, located in Bella Vista, AR is an independent, interdenominational church with an energetic ministerial team. **We have over 30 denominational backgrounds represented at Community Church, and we accept people from all Christian backgrounds**" (<http://www.bvcommunitychurch.org/>).

The Liberty Community Church does not invite you to worship God with reverence (Psalms 89:7

and Hebrews 12:28-29). No, they want you to come, meet people, relax, and enjoy your time with THEM: "At Liberty **we want you to enjoy your time with us, we desire** that you have a great experience in a non pressured and comfortable environment. When you visit please pick up visitors information packs. Come, meet people, relax and enjoy" (<http://www.libertychurch.ie/faqs.html>)!

Sacrificing Truth On The Altar Of Numerical Growth

When the kingdom of Israel was divided, Jeroboam was concerned that God's people would unify if they went to Jerusalem to worship God aright. So, he developed a plan to build two altars of convenience in Dan and Bethel to prevent God's people from being one, as God desired (I Kings 12:25-33). The Community Church Movement has set up altars of convenience all over the world. As the quotes above indicate, they do not care what you believe. They just want you to be happy as they grow into a "large and powerful Church".

Serving God is not about making ourselves happy or doing what we think is good (Isaiah 55:6-9, Mark 8:34, and Luke 17:7-10). One sign of those who are false teachers is that they use human concepts and man's worldly desires to draw disciples (Colossians 2:8 and II Peter 2:18). You simply cannot follow human traditions or worship God the way you want to and be pleasing to God at the same time (Colossians 2:19-23).

Truth cannot be set aside in the interest of gaining numerical growth. It is the truth that sets man free from sin (John 8:32). It is the truth that sanctifies [sets us aside] (John 17:17). Our worship to God is to be carried out in accordance with the truth (John 4:23-24). When the truth is sacrificed, people are lost (Romans 2:8)!

Preaching, Not Marketing, Causes Real Growth Of The Lord's People

True church growth comes when the unadulterated Gospel of Jesus Christ is preached and people obey it (Acts 2:37-41). The Lord is the one that does the adding to HIS CHURCH (Acts 2:47; cf. Matthew 16:18). Therefore, real students of the Bible would never even begin discussing "church growth methods". What we are supposed to do for growth to occur has already been outlined by the head of the church (Ephesians 1:22-23, Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 6:7, and Acts 20:20; 32). The Lord is not concerned with having large numbers. In fact, throughout the entire Bible, the Lord's people have always been relatively few in number (Genesis 7:13, I Peter 3:20-21, Deuteronomy 7:6-7, Matthew 7:13-14, and Luke 13:23-25). So, get this, success of evangelism is not measured by gains or losses. Our work is to live the life of a faithful Christian and to soundly proclaim the truth. Evangelism is successful when we do those two things (I Thessalonians 1:6-8)!

Conclusion

As usual, much more could be said about the Community Church Movement and the errors associated with it. However, we will conclude at this point knowing that more than enough has been exposed. Truly, any honest student of the truth can see that the Community Church mindset has spread among many in so-called "churches of Christ". We should all be working to cause the spread of these errors to cease. Though we are finished with the Community Church Movement, our series in exposing false religions is not over. Next, we shall begin exposing the errors of Buddhism.