

CGGC eNews: A Conversation with Reggie McNeil

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Below is a transcript of today's video:

Lance: Hello faithful *Enews* readers. It's been a little while. We took the summer off with our videos. But, what a special treat we have today because not only do you get me - our old friend Reggie McNeil is with us.

Reggie: Not that old. (laughs)

Lance: No, you're not that old. The length of your friendship – there you go. Not your longevity. We are here at Salt Fork for both a regathering of some of the folks that have been through MLI and the fourth round of MLI is going strong. We always like to pick your brain Reggie.

Reggie: It's pickable!

Lance: You are out there a lot. As you look at the big picture of the church, especially in North America, what are a couple of the key things that you are seeing?

Reggie: Well, I think it is right, there are a couple. The conversation seems to be emerging more and more around how the church can be involved with the community as a Kingdom venture and not just as a social agency; to bring the faith based communities into the issues that communities are facing, to help communities heal around issues of literacy, or job creation, even issues sometimes involving sex trafficking, or heroine addiction. There is just more and more engagement by congregations beyond their Sunday gathering to the community as a whole. How that's being done and how that's being manifested in different places is really wonderful to watch because we are really seeing a kingdom theme emerge out of all of this. We are not in the church business, we are in the kingdom business, which is what Jesus was in.

The second thing I see going on, if that is the macro level, on the micro level is the discipleship issue. Everybody is saying we have done a pretty good job of developing a bunch of church consumers, who like to rate the church; was the sermon any good, did I like the music, the Wednesday night suppers – are they up to par, how's the youth program? This changes to, "Are these really followers of Jesus"? How does that show up in people's lives? Not at church, how they behave, although they should, but just in their everyday lives as husbands and fathers, students and employers and employees. How are we following Jesus in everything we do? How are we viewing life as a mission trip? So, the conversation about how that is happening is really pretty new because we have assumed if people participated in church they would automatically be disciples. But we are coming to realize if we are going to be church everywhere we are, then we are going to have to be Jesus followers everywhere we are, not just club members inviting people to our club meetings.

Lance: Wow. What are the main shifts a church as to make to get to that idea of making disciples rather than just church consumers?

Reggie: Well, I think there has got to be a different "why" that actually drives us. If we are in the church business, then it makes sense to turn people into church consumers and customers and view them that way. We actually start a lot of church services with, "We are glad you are here today." Like, "Thanks for coming!" Can you imagine Jesus getting up and saying, "Thanks for coming! I appreciate you showing up so I can do some miracles and stuff"?

There's a whole different "why" we are here. The Sunday gathering takes on more of a half-time feel, because the game is life, instead of the Sunday gathering being the game and the rest of "that" is something you do so you can get back here and play the game next week. No! This is half time. We are here to equip you, build you up, inspire you, to bind you up if you are broken – whatever it is so you can play the life game, which is the point. So the church has got to make that shift on why we think we are here. That's a big one. And we've got to be more externally minded in terms of how we are thinking about our ministry. We can no longer think, "Is this good for us?" The impact is, how can we invite the community to partner with us in doing something that better life for everyone in our community?

Lance: Great. Well, you continue to pour into us and we are so appreciative of that.

Reggie: Glad to do it.

Lance: Great to talk to you a little bit today.

Reggie: It's good to see you again.