



Embracing Reality

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Coming to grips with our own reality can often be a difficult and painful journey. My mind's eye sees a version of me that's at least twenty years younger and fifty pounds lighter. There's still a sense of shock every time I walk past the mirrored pillar in a department store, catch a glimpse of myself out of the corner of my eye, and wonder, "Who is that old fat man?"

Author

The weekly eNews is provided by CGGC Executive Director Lance Finley



I've seen it with friends who struggle with substance abuse; everyone around the person knows there's a problem but the individual with the problem. I've seen it with friends when their anger issues continually drive others away and yet they can't seem to grasp why they are so isolated and alone. It's often difficult to "own" our reality: to name what's wrong and take responsibility for it.

There are lots of ways we avoid dealing with reality.

We can blame. It's your fault that I'm like this (fill in the blank). We do this in the church as well. It's the world's fault – they just don't want to be spiritual or faithful like us. It's not our fault, it's the big church down the road that's stealing all our young people. It's not our fault: we're just trying to be faithful and all those growing churches have watered down the gospel or sold out. It's not our fault that our pastor is a dud.

We can deny that there's a problem. "I don't know what you're talking about, I don't have a problem." We do this in the church too. We get used to our own short-comings, dysfunctions and failings to the point that it's just normal to us. We stay busy maintaining the status quo and therefore avoid the hard questions that might require change. You know you're in denial when you make or hear statements like "We're still paying our bills so things must not be that bad" or "we're better off than most."

We can live in the past. This is the guy that only has high school football stories to list as his accomplishments because he's got nothing to celebrate from the past thirty years. It happens in the church too. This is when heritage and history outshine any sense of what the future will bring. There's a lot of energy spent celebrating the accomplishments of the past without any effort or energy dedicated to changing the present.

Nothing changes, whether personal or corporate, until we embrace our present reality and name it. We must own it.

This past week I spent some time at the Eastern Regional Conference (ERC) annual sessions. I was encouraged by our brothers and sisters as they wrestled to embrace their reality: things are not good and we need to change if we want to get better. Nothing can happen until we embrace reality.

Owning our present reality and changing it are two different things: the hard work is still before us. But, nothing can happen until we own our present reality. It is an important step in the process of moving forward.

I'm praying for our brothers and sisters in the ERC as they strive to hear God's voice and respond in obedience. I'm praying for the CGGC, that we would collectively embrace our present reality and take the steps God is asking us to take to see things change. I'm praying that God would help me to embrace my present reality; to show me where I really am in light of where He wants me to be as I seek to follow Him.

Let's embrace our present reality, let's embrace our gracious and loving Father, and let's do what He asks us to do.

Christ's Peace,

Lance