

CGGC eNews: Recalibrating to a Kingdom Focus

May 27, 2016

Have you ever lost your focus? Have you ever worked really hard on something only to realize that your aim was ever-so-slightly off and you completely missed your intended target? It happens all the time. When you get to the end of the month and realize that there's more "month" than money, you know it's time to recalibrate your budget and get things back on track. When you come home from vacation and hop on the scale and realize that it's time to rethink your diet and daily food choices. It's easy to lose focus.



We desperately need to recalibrate our focus in the CGGC!

I entered into adulthood and experienced a lot of my formal ministry training during the "church growth" era. It was a time where we really focused on how to make our churches grow, in part by removing barriers to growth. See if you remember some of these? When your worship space seating is 80% full then you are essentially full (you won't grow much more) because people won't cram in like sardines: it's time to start a new service or expand your worship area. Pay attention to parking spaces: do you have enough parking to make growth possible? Make sure your children's areas are warm, safe, and inviting: parents won't be likely to return if the nurse is in the old church basement that eerily resembles the thriller movie "Silence of the Lambs". We were trained to focus on helping the church grow.

There's nothing wrong with these axioms. In fact, a lot of church growth wisdom is really just common sense applied: people need a place to sit, people need places to park, and people need to know what to expect and feel relatively safe.

There's certainly nothing wrong with wanting to see the local church grow. The church is an organism and healthy organisms grow. Every congregation should be striving toward the goal of reaching and helping new people come to Christ, experience transformation, and become disciples of Jesus.

So why do we need to recalibrate? Because we've made our focus the church instead of the kingdom of God! We are a body filled with good, hard-working and diligent folks who are pouring their lives into building the local church, fixing the local church, or growing the local church. We're not seeing the fruit we want and desire because our aim is off. We're focused on the wrong end goal. Jesus wants us to seek His kingdom.

Read the Gospels and you'll discover that Jesus only refers to the "church" three times, but He talks about the kingdom almost constantly (105 references to the kingdom of God/kingdom of heaven). In Matthew 16:18 Jesus says "And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it." He also refers to the church twice again in Matthew 18:17 in addressing the sin of a brother or sister. Think about it, Jesus didn't talk much about the church, what it's supposed to be like, what it's supposed to do, or even how to grow it. He talked a lot about the kingdom of God!

Jesus says he will build His church (Matthew 16:18). He tells us that we're to seek His kingdom (Matthew 6:33)!

Over the next few weeks, I want to spend some time recalibrating our focus on what it means to seek first His kingdom and His righteousness. If we're to live on one mission, it's important that we understand the kingdom of God and our role as disciples of King Jesus.

Christ's Peace,

Lance

CGGC eNews—Vol. 10, No. 22