

Upcoming Events...
Galatians Class: Every Thursday at 1:00 p.m.
Business Meeting: today at 4:30 p.m.
Ladies Bible Class: next Sunday, August 19
Barnabas Group Meeting: August 28

Personal Responsibility

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you...”

Matthew 28:19-20

“So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God.”

Romans 14:12

“Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble.” 2 Peter 1:10

August Birthdays

4 Noah Perales 6 Gigi Zamarripa 12 Debbie Hoffman
12 Lee McKnight 16 Nick Hoffman 19 Keith Lovelady
25 Pat Limburg

Regular Meeting Times

Sunday.....9:45 a.m.
Sunday.....10:45 a.m.
Sunday.....6:00 p.m.
Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.

Preacher:
Mike McKnight

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Graying instead of Growing, Part 2

By Doug Dingley

It is no secret to any of us that the Lord’s church is shrinking; that we are graying instead of growing. If we are ‘growing’ at all, it is only in the area of ‘growing older’ and getting smaller. The 2018 edition of “Churches of Christ in the United States” (© 2018 by 21stCentury Christians, Inc.) reveals that as recently as 2000-2018, a whopping 1,047 congregations of the Lord’s church in America have simply ceased to exist.

So how did our first century brethren manage to carry out such successful evangelism then? Let’s continue to look at Bible examples...

Whether we turn to the story of Cornelius and his entire household’s conversion as recorded in Acts 10; or we take a look at the biblical account of how church growth exploded as “a great number believed and turned to the Lord” in Acts 11:19-21; if we explore the austere beginnings of that great and faithful first-century congregation in Philippi by examining the conversion accounts of both Lydia and the jailor which we read about in Acts 16:10-34; or, should we examine such events as we see resulted in the fact that “*all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus*” in Acts 19:8-10, we would note the same exact pattern of effective evangelism always in evidence. And never once did it involve any saint ‘inviting anyone to church’ so that the preacher or some other ‘professional’ teacher might somehow perhaps help convert them to Christ – no, not once.

What we discover instead, is every saved and grateful saint, explaining to everyone they ever encountered, everywhere they

ever travelled, all about the infinite love, grace, and mercy of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ – instantly and on the spot! This they did in the streets, the marketplaces, and the prisons; in private homes, from house to house, and on a daily basis; and even on the banks of a river – indeed “everywhere” they ever went (Acts 8:4, 21:28)! God’s precise and divinely-documented pattern of infinitely powerful, productive, and effective evangelism, always was, is, and shall forevermore be, exactly that.

Therefore, if we would grow today like they did in the first century, then we must do today what they did then to achieve it. As individual Christians we must stop neglecting our God-given duty by insisting on a process that is as Biblically non-existent and therefore anti-scriptural as the so-called ‘Sinner’s Prayer.’ In other words, we, as grateful and Christ-clad individuals, must stop simply and ever so occasionally just inviting someone to church and thinking we’ve done our Christian duty. Instead, we must start instantly and individually involving everyone we possibly can, in an in-depth, on the spot investigation of the scriptures with us personally – no matter who we are (Matthew 25:14-30; 1 Peter 2:13-16) – at each and every opportunity we have or can create! THAT’S how THEY did it!

We must get away from this man-made and self-justifying reasoning that we pay the preacher and/or the elders or other ‘professionals’ to do the congregation’s evangelizing. We must study and retrain ourselves to understand that biblically speaking, evangelism is every, single, individual saint’s responsibility – no matter their age, gender, or church status.

Yes, the preacher and the elders do have the same responsibility to evangelize as everyone else – but no more and no less than any other saved and grateful member of the Lord’s church to be sure! They also have the added and God-given responsibility of making sure they are providing the proper biblical tools and training to the rest of the congregation, so as to most effectively equip the everyday saints in the pews to carry out their God-given duty. That is precisely what scripture says that the Christ gave those leaders

to His church for in the first place. We see this providentially proven in Ephesians 4:11-16:

“And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.”
(emphasis by editor, jb)

My beloved brethren; it’s time to do what God told Moses to do (Exodus 14:13-15). God has provided us with His perfect and timeless blueprint for explosive church growth. We’re just not following it. It’s time to stop complaining because we’re shrinking, graying, and going backwards, and to start following God’s divine plan to get growing forward once again (Matthew 28:18-20). Will you join me now in implementing the Lord’s infinitely powerful instructions, for initiating effective everyday evangelism?

Greatest Commandments

“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” And He said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’” Matthew 22:36-39