

“ENCOUNTERS ~ Going MISSIONAL” 11.8.09

Guess the PLACE I am describing?

I'm 1 of the first new spaces to be built of my kind in the U.S. since 9.11.01, I have 1.2 million square feet @ my new location.

I am the 8th largest cargo center in the U.S., I'm the home of the 2nd –largest FedEx Express operation in the world. More than 2.2 billion pounds of cargo were managed at my space in 2008.

SO, WHAT is the PLACE I am describing? Indianapolis International Airport circa 11.11.08
Each year, more than 8 million passengers pass thru our HOMETOWN airport; Indy International averages 163 flights to 37 destinations daily.

It's quite a place = 24 Airport Retailers ☺

Books to read at Borders + nice hats @ Lids

The Harley Davidson store + South Bend Chocolate Company

Lots of great food = 19 Eateries @ IND

Whether you want a quick sandwich or leisurely sit-down meal, you'll find something to please your palate at IND.

Everything from Harry & Izzy's to TGI Friday's, Starbucks to Q'doba.

Actually it's so nice you could almost stay here overnight ~ Almost but we all know, that's not the airport's purpose ☺

On a fairly routine basis, airports get confused about what they're there for and for whom.

They think that if a whole bunch of planes are on the ground, close to the hub, & when the concourse is full of people, they are winning.

Airports sometimes think they are the DESTINATION! Of course, when this happens, it means a whole bunch of people aren't getting where they want to go. They are stranded at the dreaded airport. & WE ALL KNOW ☺

The airport is only a place of CONNECTION, not a destination. Its purpose is to help people get somewhere else. Because an airport-CENTRIC -world of travel would be dull and frustrating, no matter how nice the airport is.

Sometimes we get confused & think CHURCH is the DESTINATION. We think that if people are hovering in an around the church, the church is winning.

The TRUTH is, when that's the case, the church is really keeping people from where they want to go, from their REAL DESTINATION = LIFE.

Thankfully, it just so happens, this is what Jesus promised to bring to us. Jesus didn't say, "I have come to give you church and give it to you more abundantly." Abundant life is lived out with loved ones + friends beyond the walls of the church!

The Church is only a CONNECTOR, linking people to the kingdom life that God has for them. Substituting church activity as the preferred life is as strange as believing that airports are more interesting than the destinations they serve.

TODAY we are going to tackle an age-old tradition. I'm attempting to bring understanding to what God intended the Church TO BE: not just a place not just a gathering "to do church" activity well

WE are...

TO BE the people of God in an unmistakable way in the world.

TO BE the aroma of Jesus in the cemetery of decaying flesh.

TO BE different in the hope we offer, in the grace we exhibit, & in our love for God & love for His people!

TODAY we are going to explore what it means to be a MISSIONAL church; the people of God partnering with God in His redemptive mission in the world.

Foreshadowing the Church

Matthew 16: 13 – 17 or p. 747 in pew Bible

Life's most important question = "...but who do you say I [Jesus] am?"

Take some time to consider this question; we will conclude with it today.

More controversy & confusion has twisted around Jesus' next statement than almost any other reference in the Gospels.

Matthew 16: 18

"...upon this rock I will build my church"

Exactly who or what is the rock? Part of the problem arises from the fact that the Greek words for Peter & for ROCK are very similar but have distinctively different meanings.

Peter is Petros & ROCK is Petra

Petros means a stone or loose rock = small pebbles

Petra means ROCK = solid bedrock, complete & sturdy

Jesus DIDN'T say You are Petros and on this Petros I will build my church, he said "You are Petros [small pebbles] and on this Petra [bedrock], I will build my church."

The church was still in the future not yet established; it would be formed on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2.

So, upon what ROCK is the church to be built?

I Corinthians 3: 10 – 11 or p. 871 in pew Bible

Notice the INVINCIBLE QUALITY of God's church ☺

Matthew 16: 18 -19

The church is anything but passive - - the church will be invincible because its very foundation is built on Christ!

Remember bed-ROCKS are immovable ~ that wasn't the case for Apostle Peter.

Luke 22: 31 32 = 2 books to the right

Notice Satan asks permission from Jesus = petra, the ROCK to sift His disciple Peter = petros, small pebbles.

"...all the powers of Hell will not conquer it the Church"

WHY? Because God emasculated the enemies powers the day Jesus came out of the grave overcoming the devil's main weapon ~ beating death!

God's redemptive mission began with His own Son Jesus!

That's God's same purpose for the church today = sometimes we forget this divine-purpose & substitute cheap alternatives to draw crowds ☹

Myself + Our elders are being called to repent of any hint of the Attractional model of doing church activity to being Missional = being the Church!

3 distinct shifts we are prayerfully making to empower you to become a missionary in your own culture = family, neighborhood, work-place, etc.

Attractional vs. Missional

A. 1st Shift = from church programming to People Development

The attractional church model focuses on people simply coming to church.
God did not save you to sit on the edge of this pew & be entertained; God saved you for a divine-purpose = to join His redemptive mission

The Missional model focuses on people being the church.
Christ-followers are empowered to BE the church wherever God takes them = Little league + Local schools + where you find yourself @ in life; this is NOW your mission.
Christ-followers are released to BE "on mission" wherever they go!
It's why in I Peter 2 we are referred to as "a priesthood of believers".

B. 2nd Shift = from Internally Focused to Externally Focused

The attractional church model focuses on providing goods & services to consumers = terribly debilitating ~ horrifically far from God's divine purpose!

The attractional model consumes its time with superficial elements of church activity like is the media right is the person communicating the right type of image is the worship the right style or flow of traffic care-free?
Under this consumer type model the leadership is more concerned with how to please the congregation above their desire to please God ☹️
This model concerns itself with religious activity & developing a spiritual menu of programs that take the place of prayer, solitude, community, & simply being obedient to God.
Disciples who adhere to this model produce consumers who are primarily @ church for one reason...what can you give me?

Superficiality @ best = surely God has more for us than allowing us to breed the mentality of '...what have you done for me lately?'
Missional model is completely different...

The Missional model focuses on sending Christ-followers as providers of Good News.

Coming to church takes on an added dimension = not only do Missional disciples come together each week to celebrate what God has done, worshipping Him 24/7 but now they view the Bible differently:
No longer is it a text-lesson to simply be studied = it's a call to ACTION

Missional disciples constantly ask God, "...where do you want me to go next?"

Talk about different - - talk about exciting - - Time to take some risks!

C. 3rd Shift = from Church-centric to Kingdom-centric

The attractional model of church seeks to be the best IN the community

Personally this mentality sickens me to the core ~ I've identified the enemy & it's not my friends @ Grace, Northview, nor Father Tom down the street.

I'm not motivated to make WRCC the best church in the region = I want WRCC to make our community the best in Central Indiana.

The Missional model of church seeks to be the best FOR the community

Missional disciples are different b/c Christ lives in & thru them; they are motivated & directed by the Holy Spirit not just 'do gooders'

INSERT true story of construction crew

One last thing = the Missional disciple speaks more of the Kingdom of God than they do of their own church, serving alongside of other Christ-followers ☺

Can you imagine a group of Christ-followers that lived their lives as the 'SENT' people of God, going into their neighborhoods & nations to share God's love for them? I CAN...