

THE EXTERNALLY FOCUSED CHURCH: 2

Matthew 5.13-16

"We make a living by what we get; we make a life by what we give." Winston Churchill

DEFINING AN EXTERNALLY FOCUSED CHURCH

Externally focused churches are internally strong, but they are oriented externally. These churches look for ways to be useful to their communities, to be a part of their hopes and dreams. They build bridges to their communities instead of walls around themselves. They don't shout at the dirty stream; they get in the water and begin cleaning it up. (Isaiah 1.13-17; 58.6-8)

Externally focused churches ask, "Whose lives are different because of this church?"

WHO IS THE TARGET AUDIENCE?

The first group comprises those on the margins.

He [God] defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing. And you are to love those who are aliens, for you yourselves were aliens in Egypt. Deuteronomy 10.18-19; 14.28-29; 24.19-22; 15.10-11

The second recipient of the externally focused church's energy is the city.

'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.' Jeremiah 29.11

Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters: find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper. Jeremiah 29.4-7

You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. You know what has happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached – how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him. Acts 10.36-38

BECOMING EXTERNALLY FOCUSED

Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them. Matthew 7.19-20

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. Matthew 28.19-20

There are some key decisions that need to be made.

WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN AS A RESULT OF REDIRECTING OUR FOCUS?

You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.

You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven. Matthew 5.13-16