

MISSIONAL CHURCH: Treasure in Clay Jars

Lesson Eleven: Principles With Which to Move Forward

Outcome Objectives

1. Learners will identify opportunities found in the North American culture, which is marginalizing Christianity.
2. Learners will understand the need to have direct immersion in missional experiences.
3. Learners will recognize the importance of matching learning with life experiences.

Introduction

1. Teacher will read Hebrews 13:11-13 to the class. “For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp. Therefore, Jesus also suffered outside the city gate in order to sanctify the people by his own blood. Let us then go to him outside the camp and bear the abuse he endured.”
2. This passage suggests that we see our culture as a mission field and think of ourselves as missionaries. Rather than embracing power and influence in the culture, we live an exilic lifestyle. Mark Love (**Seeking A Lasting City**)¹ provides five implications of practicing Christianity outside the camp. (See pages 162-164)
 - Take an exilic stance toward expressions of power and status.
 - Take an exilic stance in extending a welcome to all outsiders.
 - Take an exilic stance in being “anti-tribal.” Speaking for the racially marginalized, the exilic church refuses to be a tool of the dominant ethnic culture, calling all people to the cross.
 - Take an exilic stance, which breaks down walls of human division.
 - Take an exilic stance in embracing diversity as an esteemed value by all those in the community of faith (socio-economically, educated/uneducated, ethnicity, etc.)

Mark concludes chapter seven by declaring, “The church in a post-Christian, postmodern, post-denomination world is the exilic church, the missional church, the prophetic church, the marginalized church, the church of the cross that stands outside the city gates.” (page 175)

¹ **Seeking a Lasting City**, written by Mark Love, Doug Foster, and Randy Harris, provides a solid biblical/theological perspective on the church. Chapters 7-9 specifically address issues of missional church. Dozens of questions and teaching strategies are found in the final 40 pages of the book. The Abilene Christian University Press published the book in the summer of 2005.

Exploration

1. Rather than establish a school to train disciples, Jesus invited disciples to interact with people they encountered in the culture. Immersion in an experience, followed by theological reflection, often produces the most effective spiritually forming opportunities.
2. Invite the learners to identify a time when they found themselves immersed in a missional opportunity, which transformed the ways in which they saw people, dealt compassionately with socially marginalized people, and felt outrage for those trapped in poverty and oppression.
3. Invite learners to identify what lessons the disciples would have missed if they were enrolled in an academy rather than going with him from village to village. (Direct learners to a few passages in the gospels where Jesus interacts with people. (good examples include: John 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, etc.) Ask the learners to reflect on some of the liabilities that we experience by often being rational and preferring study and discussion over immersion in the culture and living missionally.
4. Identify ways in which your congregation is providing immersion experience for adults (we often provide these opportunities for teenagers), which provide them with important spiritual insights.

Life Response

1. If you were going to design an additional neighborhood ministry for this church, what would it be? What are the needs of the neighborhood where you live? What are the needs of the neighborhood where the church building is located?
2. What skills/abilities do you have that could be used to minister to someone? What skills/abilities do you need to be equipped with in order to live more missionally?
3. What would be the advantage of arranging for class members to ride with a police officer throughout much of the night in the area around the church building?
4. What are some of your fears about living as exile people in the North American culture? What risks does it require? What lifestyle changes are important to consider?