

What Is A Mission Church?

Congregations: Agents of God's Mission in the World

What might be lessons congregations need to consider as they reflect on being agents of God's Mission in the world:

Needing to learn... that mission begins with Christology not ecclesiology. Following Jesus leads us to mission, which leads to churches gathering.

Needing to unlearn... the assumption that starting churches naturally leads to mission. It doesn't. Churches default to self-focus unless a commitment to be like Jesus in the world comes first.

Needing to learn... that being global means decentralizing power, decision making, information, all of it. The Kingdom of God means ministry opportunities are available to almost everyone.

Needing to unlearn... the American church's traditional focus on a super-star speaker, worship leader, educator, and shepherd, which serves mainly to attract spectator's rather than igniting the power of everyone else.

Needing to learn... that we serve not to convert but because we have been converted. We serve because Christ has changed us and made us servants to people who are hurting and lost.

Needing to unlearn... the assumption that "Christian" is defined primarily as acknowledging a moment of conversion. Becoming a follower of Jesus depends on what happens after that.

Needing to learn... to love people, which means to see them healed, educated, and given the same opportunities that we have.

Needing to unlearn... that the Christian faith is all about heaven. Too often Christians have denied the future by just waiting for the Second Coming. We need a story that includes the future.

Needing to learn... the kingdom will be established not by human power or entertainment, but by realizing God's concern for humanity and the whole of society.

Submitted by Rev. Will Sibert, Executive Director of the American Moravian Board of World Mission



Hope Moravian: We Are A Mission Church

As a pastor, I sometimes get to hear and witness the little things that often times go unnoticed in the church. I see people turning off lights following a function, picking up a stray piece of paper in the sanctuary, slipping an extra \$4000. in the offering plate. It is one of the blessings of being a pastor.

Perhaps less often, I also get to witness the BIG things—even if the room full of people don't realize how BIG the thing is.

At our last Trustees meeting, while discussing creating a new ministry designed to help the people in our community fix their homes (think Monday Night Meal Site...only not limited to Mondays, not limited to nights, and no meal included, and not at our church site), something profound was said. Something HUGE was uttered. Profound, not because of its eloquence. Huge, not because of its price tag.

The quote: "We are a mission church." The point at the time was that this type of ministry to our community fits with the nature and character of who we have always been, who we are struggling to be and who we are in the process of becoming. We are a mission church—we have always been a mission church—it is a part of our congregational DNA. Furthermore, we need to continue to deliberately be a mission church.



The key word is 'deliberately'. It's easy to be a mission church when it is convenient for us, when we're tired of chasing bats, when we have a huge cash surplus and no bright ideas on where or how to spend it. It's easy to be a mission church when a catastrophe strikes and the call for help comes. It's easy to be a mission church as long as we get to choose in which mission field we will serve and to whom we will serve as missionaries.

Being a mission church is not easy because it prys the ministry of the church out of our hands and places it squarely in the hands of God, it pulls us away from our own self-centeredness and contentment. Being a mission church requires at least two very important things:

1. To listen deeply to God's call and mandate for us to be servants—we cannot be missionaries without wanting what God wants.
2. To open our eyes and really see our community—and the people in it—and we need to talk to them. We need to know their hurts. We need to feel their pains.

We are a Mission Church, and our mission field is right here.

Hope Moravian Church Newsletter, June 2007