



National Missions

And the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled. Luke 14:23

Dear Friends,

Tricia and I are so very grateful for your constant support. We pray, as the seasons move from Spring to Summer, that you will be blessed by the presence of the Holy Spirit and find peace in the midst of all the earthly turmoil that we all face.

I am certain that you all wish to know how church planting is going in Indian Land. My coach, Alan Foster, reminds me regularly that church planting today is not like it was 10 or 20 years ago. He tells me that it is "like smoking meat - it's low and slow." You may wonder why that is?

As I am sure you all are aware, the culture of the United States of America has changed significantly over the last several decade - and not for the better. Attitudes about civics, parenting, long-held traditions, and institutions, including government and the church, have grown negatively, but especially attitudes towards the church. Many Americans are skeptical about the role and veracity of the Christian church in America.

It seems a week cannot pass without some new scandal involving a minister, priest, or church worker. On top of that is the role the University plays with its constant drumbeat of secular humanism and materialism, and the denial of anything that is "supernatural." Is it any wonder that our citizenry is so skeptical?

Friends, we should not be surprised at the infiltration of evil doers into the church. Jesus told us in Matthew 7:15 we are to beware of false prophets who look like sheep but instead are ravenous wolves. That "beware" is written to you, church. Keep a watchful eye on those you give the privilege to minister at Bethel Church.

Nonetheless, we must consider the profound consequences of these evil acts inside and outside the church, and the impact they have on all church ministry. These things together have created a sea of change in our culture that now is resistant to older, more traditional forms of evangelism. It is no longer sufficient to simply "hang a sign," so to speak, announcing a new PCA church in a particular area and watch several hundred people show up.

In order to reach the lost - the unchurched and the de-churched - significant investment must be made in building relationships that reestablish trust between the church planter and the unbeliever. This must be done individually or in very small groups. As you can imagine, this takes time - "low and slow."

Luke 14:15-24 is a parable about a great banquet held for a group of invitees. However, the invitees are too busy or too preoccupied with their lives to accept the invitation. So the banquet giver instructs his servants to go into the highway and hedges and compel people to come in. This is where the church finds itself today in Indian Land and across the country; lots of invitation, little acceptance - many just too busy to taste the goodness of God.

Yet, we are doing God's work one way or another, working diligently, building relationships one at a time, and seeking to "compel" people to come in. It will take time. On the other hand, there is a warning from this passage; those who are too busy to accept the invitation will not taste of the goodness from it.

Let us pray that God will pour out his Spirit on our land once more and change the hearts of these people that we can bring them to God's banquet table.

Be of good cheer. Jesus promised, "I will build my church."

Michael Lee
Assistant Pastor of Church Planting
Indian Land, SC

this week

Sunday's sermon

The Believer's Armor: Part 1
Ephesians 6:10-20

events

Called Session Meeting 5/4 at 2:00 pm	Men of the Covenant 5/5 at 6:30 pm
Circle # 2 5/4 at 3:30 pm	Circle # 1 5/6 at 10:30 am
Youth Committee Meeting 5/4 at 4:00 pm	Diaconate Meeting 5/6 at 7:00 pm
Youth 5/4 at 5:00 pm	

volunteer schedule

Infant Nursery Jennifer Forrest & Mandy Wynkoop
Toddler Nursery Cullie Mounts & Ann Falls
Worship Training Peggy & David Long