

# COMMUNITY

## STAY IN STEP



Jesus clearly promised that He will build His church.

We are not alone; the Holy Spirit has been given to lead and guide us.

Today's message is to help us stay in step with God's leading for our Church Community.

Sunday, 17 May 2020 (By Marius Gradwell)

### A. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

- It has been two months since we met together at our buildings for a Sunday Celebration, due to Covid – 19 Lockdown. Large gatherings will be the last to get the green light to reopen again. Some say by September or even later in the year. That is another 4 months or so!
- Christian Centre have gathered every Sunday for 33 years, uninterrupted, in our building in Abbotsford without fail. It came to an abrupt halt. This is a remarkable turn of events! A virus closed church Meetings! Globally!
- We had some time to figure out how to live in a lockdown situation. How to resist paralysing fear. How to make plans for survival. Trying to hear God's voice, especially to know what to do as you may be forced into making some bold decisions.
- Hopefully, most of us got closer to one another as families. Some of you rose to the occasion and shared some of your limited resources with those less fortunate, gave encouraging words to those you care for and stayed diligent in prayer and the study of God's Word. As a matter of fact, you have grown some muscles you did not have before. Well done!
- On the other hand, some are waiting for this nightmare to stop, so that they can get back to life as it was before.
- Personally, I see a cosmic shift unfold – our world changed overnight – life after Covid-19 will not be the same, and I have been asking myself? ...asking God? What must I do?
  1. What must change? Who must change it? Must I take initiative to help change it? And how must it be changed?
  2. What must I get rid of? What must I let go of?
  3. What must stay?



Pause/Play

**Discussion Question 1: How has the lockdown affected your life so far? What are things in your life that calls for adjustment? What should stay? And, what do you think you should get rid of? Please discuss, share your fears, and hopes.**

- I have been a Church Pastor for 33 years now.
  - I have preached more than 2000 sermons.
  - I have counselled, married, and buried hundreds of people.
  - I have trained many leaders, planted a couple of churches and travelled to many cities and nations.
  - I had to navigate through many difficult and challenging church situations.
  - As most of you know, Linda and I are preparing to step to the side, away from the day-to-day pastoring of CCA, so that we can fulfil our apostolic mandate to our Family of Churches, including CCA, the City, Region and the Nations. We are not going away and will not abandon the church. CCA remains our home and the base from where we operate, submitting to the same Elders as you do.
- Linda and I have two passions that summarise our call from God: To work with God...
  1. To see healthy functioning Families, and
  2. To see healthy functioning Churches

## **B. ALLOW ME TO SHARE WITH YOU WHAT I SEE FOR THE CHURCH**

It is important that we stay in step with Jesus and the Holy Spirit!

***I see every local church as a beacon of light that shines wherever God has placed it. That is its collective influence.***

***Each of these churches are a part of Jesus' global Church that is called to permeate and influence Cities, Regions and Nations, just like salt does – how? By each member of all these different churches being deployed in the marketplace and society they live and work in, hand in hand with other believers, irrespective of their church affiliation all belonging to the united Body of Christ sharing the Gospel in word and deed advancing God's Kingdom on earth.***

In the light of this statement, let us consider and evaluate life at Christian Centre:

### **WHAT IS GOOD AND SHOULD STAY**

- Our Mission

*We are a diverse people united in Christ; deployed everywhere advancing God's Kingdom by living the way Jesus showed us to live and influencing others to do the same.*

- Our Diversity and Unity in Jesus Christ.
- Our emphasis on being a deployed people, advancing God's Kingdom everywhere we find ourselves – it is now even a greater reality. Scattered seed of God's Kingdom sown into our

Homes, our Places of Work, and where we have our Social Connections - Building relationships with unbelievers and believers, from our church and other churches in our city.

## WHAT IS LACKING AND NEEDS OUR ATTENTION

- We have been operating from our Sunday Morning Celebration and our Peer Group gatherings at large.
- There is a need to organise ourselves into a Community of people – that live just like we see in the book of Acts – A community that makes Jesus alive – a place where we care for one another, a place where we grow together and a place where we share Jesus Christ together.
- In other words, we need a strategic shift. To fulfil our mission and call from God. We can no longer operate from our Sunday Morning Meetings only. We need to establish a vibrant community of families coming together to make our mission a reality. Our Sunday Meetings and Peer Group Meetings are there to support and underpin a true Biblical Community. It is a priority shift that is required! – From a Celebration in a Building to a deployed Community.



Pause/Play

**Discussion Question 2: What do you think? What should our Church do to come more in line with the Church of the Bible? What is good and should stay? What needs change? Will you be willing to adjust?**

## C. WE CALL YOU TO ARISE AND BUILD! THREE PICTURES FROM THE BIBLE

- Just like in the time of Nehemiah – there was a call to re-build the wall – each family had a specific place to build – no one was left out!

Nehemiah 2:18 ESV ... *And they said, "Let us rise up and build." So, they strengthened their hands for the good work.*

Nehemiah 3. Each family was positioned next to each other, building the wall.

Nehemiah 4:6 ESV *So we built the wall. And all the wall was joined together to half its height, for the people had a mind to work.*

- Let us build an authentic vibrant Kingdom of God, Gospel Centred Community.
- In a way we have already started – but we all need to say, "Count me in!"
- What we have on paper is like Adam's clay body made from the dust of the earth. What is needed is for God to breathe life into it!

Genesis 2:7 ESV *then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.*

- Another picture is the valley of dry bones. God called the Prophet Ezekiel to prophesy life and God's Spirit caused the bones to come together, each in the right place. God put sinews and flesh on the bones and made the body to live. Ezekiel 37:1-10

#### **D. WHAT SHOULD WE FOCUS ON FOR NOW? 3 INGREDIENTS**

1. Each person on their own relationship with God – Priesthood – that is the living stones God uses to build His Temple, His Family the place where He lives.
2. Our Families – Intentional Kingdom Living – Disciple your Children
3. Our Community – Clusters of Families and Friends – Believers and Unbelievers

#### **E. FINAL EXHORTATION – AS WE BUILD COMMUNITY**

##### **1. Stay in Touch – Care for One Another**

- a. Emotional Needs – Encourage
- b. Financial Needs – Share
- c. Practical Needs – Help

##### **2. Stay Rooted – Grow in Christ**

- a. Spend time with God – Prayer, Word, and Worship
- b. Study the Word – Disciple others
- c. Serve others with your God-given Gifts

##### **3. Stay on Mission – Share Christ**

- a. Share the Gospel wherever and to whoever you can.
- b. Serve your neighbourhood and city and share what you can.
- c. Pray and Intercede for God's Kingdom to come.