



Loudon County Baptist Association
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Calendar

March 7 & 14, 2022
Church Conference

March 25-27, 2022
DNOW

April 29, 2022
KNOWN Women's Conference

May 5, 2022
National Day of Prayer



THOUGHTS FROM PHIL

From the desk of your D.O.M., Phil Holmes

I rarely do this, but I am making an exception for this time...I will yield my article space for a blog from J.D. Walt, who has put into words where my heart has been dwelling for a long time. A special thanks to Phil Young, DOM in Knox County, for sharing this blog with me.

1 Peter 1:1b NIV

To God's elect, exiles scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia,

CONSIDER THIS

On the day of Jesus' Ascension he said this to his disciples.

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

He effectively told them the Holy Spirit would fill them and then scatter them here, there, everywhere, and to the ends of the earth and to the end of the age. Was he ever right! By the time of Peter's letter, about thirty years after his first sermon on the Day of Pentecost (circa AD 60) the gospel was well beyond Jerusalem, all Judea, Samaria and heading towards the ends of the earth. It had reached Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, the earliest recipients of the letter.

We might say the primary marker of being filled by the Spirit is becoming Diaspora—vessels through which the gospel is profusely scattered and sown. Here is where we can get off track. One of the tragic collisions of history was when Christendom met up with modern America. The outcome was all manner of efforts to get the gospel to "scale." Scaling is the process whereby a quaint neighborhood coffee shop becomes Starbucks. Scaling is not necessarily a bad thing. The problem is the Gospel of Jesus Christ does not scale. It will multiply, but it will not scale. The essence of scaling is minimizing costs and maximizing returns. The essence of scaling is highly leveraging growth factors into a calculus of rapid addition. Again, not a bad thing; just not Jesus. Jesus and his Kingdom do not scale. He multiplies.

Here's how the gospel works. A seed is sown. The seed germinates, sprouts and grows. It flourishes as a leafy plant and then it flowers. The flowering gives way to the development of fruit. The fruit then gives more seeds. One seed is multiplied into many more seeds, and then those seeds are sown and the process repeats itself. The process is slow, growth seems imperceptible much of the time. Many intervening factors can interfere. It requires much cultivation. And the outcomes are highly variable; from nothing to extraordinary. Of course, as Jesus taught us, the problem is never with the seed. The challenge comes with the soil.

This is how Diaspora works. We come to understand that we have been scattered to the place we find ourselves. We sow our life into the soil of that particular place. We germinate, sprout, grow up, struggle, suffer, flourish, and time bear fruit. The fruit yields seeds. They are sown into other's lives and the process repeats itself. It can take years to seemingly make real progress and yet progress is happening all the time.

All these places Peter wrote his letter to were tiny churches in often large population centers. They were small communities of sowers scattered across the landscape; themselves tiny hubs of gathering and scattering. They were seed-like awakening movements, being multiplied by the Holy Spirit growing season after season after season. That's what a local church is—a community of sowers the Spirit is multiplying over and over and over again.

Continued..

A closing word of warning to our local churches. Beware of the seduction of scaling. It comes from a good impulse to want to “grow” the church. The problem is the way growing the church is measured by the deceptive metric of size and numbers of people. What’s the headcount. This inexorably leads to all manner of efforts to scale and market religious services—to get the greatest return on the lowest cost. The ultimate marker of this model’s apparent success is the mega church—an organization with an often super-inflated membership roster with a super lean staff of professional servants ever on the brink of burnout. It is all too often a religiously driven corporate business model—the ultimate collision of Christendom and America.

The metric of the Church Jesus is building is not headcount but saint count. It is not assimilation and retention. It is supernatural love. It is not scaling by ramping up the addition game. It is multiplying by descending into the valley of the Cross. Let’s be clear. This is not a cynical rant against mega churches. Mega Churches are not bad. Many of them are doing amazing things. It is an honest concern and perhaps a warning for all churches. The gospel of the Kingdom does not scale. The real question any and all local churches must repeatedly ask themselves is this one: Is the Spirit multiplying us through the extravagant sowing of our lives into others or are we stuck in worldly models of organizational growth by the metrics of scaling? Are we scattering or are we scaling?

Most interesting is how the New Testament seems not to care one whit about church size. It doesn’t even seem to rise to the level of a non-issue concern. Perhaps the greatest disservice we have done to the Church Jesus is building are all these adjectives we want to tack onto the front of the word—small church, mid-size church, mega-church and so on.

THE PRAYER

Jesus, you are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God. Thank you for bringing your church to our town. Thank you for scattering saints whose lives you sowed into our soil and who bore fruit and went to seed. Make us those kind of people and these kinds of churches. We know things are broken right now and yet we also know we aren’t yet broken enough about it. It is too easy to point fingers and complain. Forgive me if that’s what I’m doing. I want to be part of the solution. Really, I just want to be completely yours. That’s the solution. Let it be so. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

THE QUESTION

What about this? Big church small church? Is it an adventure in missing the point. And if the Church Jesus is building has to “do marketing” isn’t that the ultimate tell-tale sign something is askew?

Phil Holmes



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LOUDON COUNTY BAPTIST ASSOCIATION
YOUTH CONFERENCE

D **N** **O** **W**
2022

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Building. On. Our. Testimony.



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MARCH
25-27



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Upcoming Events

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR NORTH AMERICAN MISSIONS/ANNIE ARMSTRONG OFFERING



March 6– March 13, 2022 Statewide

The Week of Prayer for North American missions is annually observed by SBC churches to pray for missionaries, their ministries and their families. Prayer is the fuel for spiritually sustaining missionaries in places where the gospel is greatly needed, but often opposed.



MISSIONS GET-TOGETHER

April 1 @ 12:00pm-April 3 @ 10:00am

Gatlinburg Convention Center

234 Historic Nature Trail, Gatlinburg, TN

A missions event for women of ages 18 years and older to worship & grow together. Event includes: Four general sessions, six breakout session times with over 20 options to choose from to attend, 40+ exhibitors in the missions and ministry fair, over 1,000 women in attendance to fellowship and connect with during the weekend.

Please contact Shelby Lord at 865-986-2103 or via email to sjeanlord@hotmail.com for any questions or assistance with your WMU projects.

IS YOUR CHURCH PLANNING A VBS THIS SUMMER?

If so, we need to know your dates so we can advertise them in our VBS Associational Calendar. Please contact Teresa at 865-986-2292 or via email at teresalcba@gmail.com



STOCKTON VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH
PRESENTS

KNOWN

Women's Conference

Guest Speaker: Kristy Stafford
Music by: Sarah Hughes

APRIL
29

Smokin' F BBQ Barn
1821 Lynn Road
Philadelphia, TN
Doors Open at 5pm
Conference starts at 6pm
Registration Deadline April 15

Tickets \$15 (includes BBQ meal, dessert & drink)
Pay through Paypal, Check or Cash by scanning the QR Code

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