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BMZ News

"Systems of the Church: Stewardship Part II"

"BMZ: a place where the unchurched, de-churched, and over-churched can become deeply committed Christians." What does a deeply committed Christian look like? A deeply committed Christian is a person that Knows God, Loves People and Serves the World consistently. Why? We want to "Change the World for Good One Child at a Time!" Every person you meet and don't meet is a potential child of God and God wants that person to get to know Him through His Son, Jesus the Christ. AND, our Bibles say that Jesus wants to use the "Church" to be the place where people can become fully developing followers of Jesus Christ.

I believe that God dreams of a Church that is filled with developing followers of Jesus the Christ. I believe that God desires for His Church to GROW! How do we know that? How do we know that God is not pleased if we choose to just to be a club of people who are alike and like spending time with each other at the expense of those who do not know Jesus? Because our Bibles tell us that it is not okay! As followers of Jesus, here are his orders: *"And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*

Over the past couple of months I have been using this article to talk about the 8 systems of the church. Each church has 8 systems that are in action all of the time. Sometimes they are good systems and sometimes they are not. At BMZ we are attempting to improve on our systems. So far, I have written on the "Evangelism System (what we do to get non-attenders to attend worship)", the "Assimilation/Merge System (moving individuals from guests to involved members)" and, last month, we started with the "Stewardship System". Reminder: starting in January, we will have a new envelope system. Every bulletin/program will have an envelope right inside of it. That

way our guests and new attenders will feel like everyone else when it comes to offering time.

I am learning about stewardship systems that we have to offer different avenues of giving to the church. Instead of people only being able to give on Sunday morning during worship if they have cash or a check on them, we need to offer options. We now offer online giving through our website. That gives people a chance to give 24/7. The envelope that people get inside their bulletin every Sunday will be postage paid, so if they want to take it home and send something later in the week, they can. We also have in place automated giving; a way for people's tithe/offering to be deposited directly from their checking account. More people are becoming comfortable giving this way.

Another thing I am learning about stewardship systems is that churches often times do a poor job of explaining what the Bible says about money, where the money goes and why it is important for people to give. I believe that it's impossible for a person to become a fully developing follower of Jesus unless they are a fully developing steward of God's resources. Jesus used 2/3 of his parables to talk/teach about money and possessions. Jesus knew that the biggest competition He had for people's faith was their money. Many of us tend to put our faith in our money ... what we can earn and save and keep. But, I hope we have also realized that money is not all that stable (check the market). What Jesus says again and again is "trust Me!" ... "believe in Me" ... "place your faith and your eternity in My hands"!

One way to do that is through a Biblical tithe. Tithing is giving 10% of one's earned wages to the home church so that ministry for The Kingdom can continue. Here at BMZ we encourage people toward a Biblical tithe, knowing that God's plan for how we spend our money is usually better than ours. If a person cannot see how they can possibly give 10%, then we encourage them toward percentage giving with growth toward 10%.

Here's what that looks like: Figure out in your budget what you could possibly give to the Church reasonably. In other words, you can figure out how everything will still get paid. Then, add a percentage and trust God for it. So, if you can figure out how to make ends meet giving 5% of your income back to God through the church; give 6% and tell God that you are trusting Him to come through (that's practicing FAITH!). Once you realize that God has your back, you can increase toward 10% and beyond. I challenge you to find out how good God is!

Here's the thing about money and God. So many people think that Church is set up to get something FROM people (money). BUT, in
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reality, the Church is set up to get something FOR people (blessings and an eternal relationship with God). In order to discover who God really is, we have to get to the point that we will trust God to care for our money and stuff.

The systems that we are attempting to learn and are using are a tool used to partner with the Holy Spirit to bring people to a faith in Jesus. That's it. We are just trying to find ways to introduce people to Jesus and start them on the road to discipleship.

"Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations..." (Matthew 28:19a).

Those are Jesus' (Lord and Commanding Officer) marching orders. That's what we are following here at BMZ.

Over the next few months I will continue sharing in this article more about the systems of the church and what we are doing to improve ours at BMZ.

Next month = "Discipleship / Growth Groups System"

See You in Worship (Watch for the new envelopes!),

Stan Pegram