

Date: 12/4/2022

Title: Week 9 - Missions

Speaker: Rev. Tony Thomas

Introduction

- So, this is my last time speaking on a topic for our Launch Team - praise God you made it through our in-depth JOAN Membership Class! - But I pray its been helpful for this group to understand our DNA, convictions, operations of why we are doing what we're doing
- Here's what's coming next
 - Sun, 12/11 - Preview Service
 - Sun, 12/18 - Launch Team Sunday (Gordon preaching)
 - Sun, 12/25 - Christmas (No JOAN Service)
 - Sat, 12/31 - Watch Night Service
 - Sun, 1/8, 1/15, 1/23 - Launch Team Service (Sharon Elementary)
 - Sun, 1/29 - Public Launch Service
- So that's what is coming, but the final topic for this Sunday is "Missions / Strategic Targets"
 - But, as I was thinking - today is going to be a little more unique than typical Sundays in that this message is going to be shorter because I would like to focus on some planning for Launch during our discussion time
- Outline
 - 1. Life Groups: Our main missional strategy
 - 2. Strategic Targets: Our strategic and specific missional strategy

1. Life Groups: Our main missional strategy

- So, to make sure we understand the big picture of how we see "mission" in our church - the spread of the Gospel and the kingdom
 - I want to come back to "Life Groups"
- Now, I know not everyone heard the "Life Group" lecture, but the idea is through the meeting in homes and utilizing our personal relationships to invite people into Christian community - first through non-threatening events, then a bible study
 - My hope and prayer is that Life Groups is our bread and butter, our engine for mission and evangelism
- And the reason for that is - I think too often churches start to lean INTO what I'm going to talk about soon - strategic mission like community outreach and evangelistic meetings
 - And what happens is - mission is this "outsourced" thing that...this ministry does, this person does...but I am not really involved with
- But no, our hope and prayer is - by being in our church...you'll be in a Life Group for your own growth in Christ...but ALSO, part of finding life in Christ is...you'll find life as you share Christ with others
- Illustration: Dead Sea
 - We have a physical illustration of this in the Dead Sea - the Dead Sea is on the Eastern Border of Israel and its unique in that its a land-locked body of water with no river flowing fresh water into it or outlet out of it

- * And so it remains salty, is actually receding annually, and nothing can really live in it
- ◉ And in that we have an illustration of a Christian that - when there's no inlet of course you die spiritually...but also when there's no outlet - you also die spiritually
 - * So many of us are spiritually stagnant because we are not engaged with the lost...but the more we are involved with lost people...the more it brings spiritual vitality to our lives
- Therefore, we want to be a church that will keep LIFE GROUPS as our bread and butter of how we want to be engaged in mission and evangelism
- **Transition**
 - ◉ That being said, that doesn't mean we'd neglect being strategic and specific in other forms of mission - both mission of evangelism and missions of mercy and justice
 - ◉ But what will be our strategy?

2. Strategic Missional Targets: Our strategic and specific missional strategy

1. What are strategic missional targets?

- A focused effort at bringing the kingdom of God to bear on a particular people, place, or issue

2. Why do we have strategic missional targets?

- 1. Because we want to be wise in not over-stretching our church's capacity for mission and neglecting our main missional strategy of "Life Groups"
- 2. Because there are specific areas needing ministry where Life Groups will not reach and there is a need and our people have a passion and gifting to meet that need

3. What are examples of potential strategic missional targets?

- Examples
 - ◉ Outreach to South Asians

Friends of India	to become friends with Indian families and be intentional about sharing Christ with them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tutor Indian children • Serve at outreach events • Organize fellowships • Prayer walk neighborhoods 	Joshua Sunderraj joshuasunderraj@gmail.com
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- ◉ Blessing our local schools (Sharon Elementary)

Forsyth County Schools	to bless students and teachers in our county through loving acts of service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feed hungry children and families • Provide breakfast for teachers and faculty • Serve with Fellowship of Christian Athletes • Volunteer with Night to Shine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teresa Banker (Feed Forsyth Children) teresabanker@mindspring.com • Brian Weaver (FCA) brian@fbccumming.org • Scott Carpenter (Night to Shine) scott@fbccumming.org
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- Involvement in mercy ministries
- Involvement in Fostering / Adoption

Cumming Home Ministries	to provide Christ-centered help and hope to those facing homelessness or drug addiction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in events • Serve in the thrift store • Serve and bless the staff of CHM 	Karen Rivera (Executive Director) admin@cumminghomeministries.org
Family Haven	to provide safe temporary shelter, individual crisis support and referral services for victims of domestic violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate a Bible study with ladies • Serve and bless the staff of Family Haven • Donate and deliver items 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Latrelle Elliott atrelle@comcast.net • Amy Barfield (Director) amy@familyhavenga.org
The Place of Forsyth County	to serve local families with emergency basic needs in difficult times	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide lunch for the community • Volunteer at the Food Pantry or Thrift Store • Donate and deliver items 	Phil Dennis (Volunteer Coordinator at The Place) phillip@theplaceofforsyth.org

- Involvement in local issues of racial reconciliation
- Involvement in a global mission partnership

4. How will we decide upon strategic missional targets?

- 1. Year-by-year prayerful evaluation with the congregation and Elders
 - Criteria:
 - * 1. Need - what needs do we see around us?
 - * 2. Passion - what passions do we have inside our church?
 - * 3. Gifts - what gifts and resources has God given our church?
 - * 4. Capacity - what level of capacity do we have to extend ourselves, especially that we don't neglect our main callings of family, work, and church (especially Life Groups)?
- 2. Prayerful decision to commit to a strategic missional target

5. When and what would be JOAN's first strategic missional target?

- Let me share a few things here, but first of all, I do want to alert us, especially as we prepare for January's Launch
 - I have shared this before, but I think its important that we are reminded of this - but I see JOAN as being in different phases
 - * **May-December 2022 - Launch Team Development Phase**
 - We haven't had our doors open yet, we've been building the DNA, culture, structures
 - * **January 2023-August 2023 - Soft-Launch + Early Church Development Phase**
 - So while we are launching in January 2023, we still are not seeing that as our full launch - its a bit of a "soft launch"
 - Having a weekly Sunday service is a big shift and we'll need to learn how to do that

- Then also, over 8 months we want to implement Sunday school, Youth Group, Adult Sunday school
- We want to implement Life Groups - discipleship, bible study, outreach
- And obviously we'll be growing and integrating new people into our church - learning how to do that well
 - So there's a TON of learning we need to do in the next 8 months
- So to be honest, I am not very worried about trying to grow big in the next 8 months
 - Now do we want to invite people and grow? Yes of course
- But honestly, sometimes churches grow fast quickly and it actually hurts the church - because they've not developed the maturity internally to handle that growth
- * **August 2023-August 2024 - Full-Launch + Church Establishment Phase**
 - I look at the next year as us starting to really go out and inviting people into hopefully a church with healthy rhythms and being ready for growth
 - But again, we'd still be a young church and needing to solidify our rhythms
 - And in that sense, I'd say, we may be cautious about committing to a "strategic missional target" fully yet - we'll evaluate closer to then - but maybe to make it concrete I'll say it like this:
 - Before we commit to being a church committed to poverty issues in the local schools
 - I want to ask - are we seeing significant amounts of lost people being invited to Life Groups? Are we seeing conversions of lost people through our church?
 - If not - maybe our strategy is wrong...OR, we need to commit to our bread and butter longer BEFORE we over-extend ourselves into another missional commitment
- * **August 2024-Beyond - Church Growing + Year-by-Year Missional Targets**
- OK, now all that being said - I will say this, that in working with Perimeter to be blessed to plant our church
 - ◉ For sure a major reason Perimeter wanted us and allowed us to be planted as a church was because of a desire to reach especially the South Asian / Indian community in NE Atlanta with the Gospel
 - * And that is a desire we have and want to be faithful to from the start
- Now I do believe that Life Groups is still our main strategy of how we hope to see progress in that
 - ◉ But, what I also want to introduce is that something I've proposed and been agreed upon with the CPC Elders is that we want to support the efforts at least financially of a local missionary who is serving the South Asian community - and the Lord led me about a year ago to the ministry of our brother, Joshua Sunderraj and his ministry, "Friends of India"
 - * And so as a church we are committed to supporting Joshua's ministry financially and in due time when we are ready as a church - we want to also support his ministry with our time and gifts and services as well
- And so here's what I want to do now - is bring Joshua up here

- And I shared last week that weekly on Sundays we'd do a "Spheres of Love" update - and so I'll model a bit of what that would look like by having our brother come up here and share about his ministry
- Interview
 - 1. How did God call you to minister to South Asians in Forsyth?
 - 2. What is your current ministry?
 - 3. How can we pray for the ministry? How can we pray for you personally?