

MISSIONS WORKSHOP

ENTANGLED IN OUR COMMUNITIES

1

PRAYER

2

TEXT

PROBABLE TOPICS

- ▶ Some things to think about today
- ▶ Assumptions
- ▶ What we need to talk about today
- ▶ A plug for mission trips
- ▶ Small group discussion
- ▶ Some more or less practical things
- ▶ Next steps and resources

3

MISSIONS WORKSHOP

SOME THINGS TO THINK ABOUT TODAY

- ▶ What does our faith in Christ have to do with our everyday lives in the places where we live?
- ▶ We know the Great Commission of Jesus:

**Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,
(1) baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
(2) teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.**

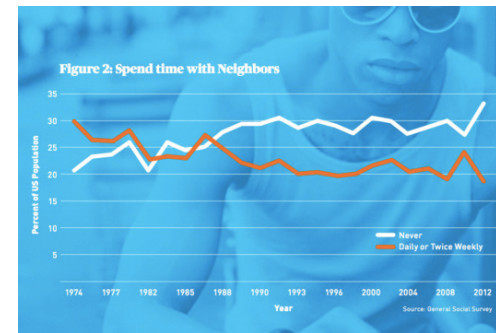
4

SOME THINGS TO THINK ABOUT TODAY

- ▶ Dallas Willard: *The Great Omission*
- ▶ Willard says it is rare to find churches where the program of discipleship actually includes the second part of the Great Commission (“teaching them to do what I commanded you to do”)
- ▶ If we learn this, the places where we live will experience real change

5

SOME THINGS TO THINK ABOUT TODAY



<http://nymag.com/scienceofus/2015/08/third-of-americans-dont-know-their-neighbors.html>

6

SOME THINGS TO THINK ABOUT TODAY

- ▶ The trend is toward **greater** isolation
- ▶ Reaching our communities with the love of Jesus will require **less** isolation, more interaction, more service
- ▶ More love = more risk, but...
- ▶ ...also more opportunity to share Christ authentically

7

ASSUMPTIONS

- ▶ Matthew 11:5
And Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them."

8

ASSUMPTIONS

- ▶ Luke 4:18-19
*"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives
and recovering of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."*
- ▶ God has a special place in his heart for the poor and marginalized people

9

WHAT WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT TODAY

- ▶ What does it look like to be "missional" in our own communities?
- ▶ How (practically) do we take steps to move from isolation from our neighbors to involvement with them?

10

A COUPLE OF PLUGS FOR MISSION TRIPS

- ▶ Today isn't about **international** missions, but **missions trips** can open our hearts to people at home
- ▶ Testimonies...

11

WE NEED TO DO OUR HOMEWORK

- ▶ What do we know about our own community?
 - ▶ Economics: How many are below the poverty line?
 - ▶ Religion: How many are connected to a faith community?
 - ▶ Who are the marginalized in our community?
 - ▶ What are their needs? What needs aren't already being met?

12

NO NEED TO RE-INVENT THE WHEEL

- ▶ Common mistake: creating new organizations or systems without checking to see if there are already organizations or systems that could simply use our help
- ▶ Find out what is already being done and lend a hand

13

COLLABORATION CAN BE COMPLICATED

- ▶ Are we willing to collaborate with people/groups whose values or motivations are different from ours?
- ▶ If not, we could create resentment or friction, or spend energy and resources duplicating efforts that are already underway
- ▶ We can demonstrate the love of Jesus by being willing to join hands with people who aren't just like us

14

DISCUSSION

- ▶ If Jesus were to show up today in your community, who are the people (in your community) he would be most likely to seek out and hang out with?
- ▶ If your church wanted to do something more to serve your community and minister to people, how would you find out where the needs are?
- ▶ In what ways could collaboration with existing groups and organizations be complicated or uncomfortable?

15

THERE ARE PEOPLE IN NEED ALL AROUND US

- ▶ There is poverty everywhere
- ▶ There are marginalized populations everywhere
- ▶ We may be oblivious to the wide variety of needs (economic, social, spiritual, etc.) around us
- ▶ Do we dare to pray for eyes to see and ears to hear?
- ▶ Are we willing to get our hands dirty (figuratively or literally)?

16

THE WORLD IS COMING TO US

- ▶ Even in small communities there are often international people—immigrants, refugees, and others
- ▶ Example: Burmese in Lawrence/KC
- ▶ College communities often have international students/families
- ▶ Often they are only here temporarily, but our relationships with them can have lasting and far-reaching impact

17

LOVE MUST BE GENUINE, NOT A STRATEGY

- ▶ Are we willing to make friends with people who may never, ever end up following Jesus or even just coming to our church?
- ▶ Authenticity (or the lack of it) is easy to discern. People can tell whether they are truly loved or just a “target”

18

“REDEMPITIVE ENTANGLEMENT” — TOM BASSFORD

- ▶ “Sustainable change through collaboration only happens when both those who help and those who are helped see their work together not so much as a transaction bound by timelines but as a relationship worthy of deep sacrifice, careful listening, hard work and creative problem-solving. We call this ‘redemptive entanglement’ and have found it to be the salient ingredient in any relationship or circumstance that needs growth, nurturing or change. Without it, neither true understanding nor real accountability is possible.”
- ▶ Discuss!

19

REDEMPITIVE ENTANGLEMENT—FURTHER THOUGHTS

- ▶ It can take a long time for people on the margins to trust “outsiders” who come to serve them
- ▶ Are we willing to be in it for the long haul? Are we willing to serve and love for years?

20

IDEAS FOR MINISTRY TO OUR COMMUNITIES

- ▶ Partnerships with local public schools
- ▶ Involvement with existing services to the homeless
- ▶ Providing services (e.g., English instruction or conversation) to international students, immigrants, refugees
- ▶ Volunteering for existing organizations (Big Brothers/Sisters, etc.)
- ▶ Other ideas?

21

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT . . .

- ▶ Dr. Michael Traylor, Cleveland, Ohio
- ▶ City official: "What are we getting in return for the tax exemption we grant you?"

22

THIS STUFF IS MESSY AND COMPLICATED

- ▶ Are we willing to be uncomfortable?
- ▶ Do we know and understand our limits?
 - ▶ We may not be equipped/qualified to help in certain cases involve things like mental illness or addiction.
 - ▶ Do we know where to direct people who need help that we can't provide?
 - ▶ This could begin a conversation that needs to happen in our community

23

MORE PRACTICAL THINGS

- ▶ Missions leadership in your church is important
 - ▶ You need a true leader who also has a passion for missions, who will keep the vision alive
 - ▶ A good leader will not do it all—delegate, share responsibility
 - ▶ Careful, wise, leadership succession is critical for long-term sustainability

24

NEXT STEPS

- ▶ Obviously, we can pray for direction—if we're serious.
- ▶ We can't do everything—"deep" is probably better than "wide"
- ▶ Perhaps we should educate ourselves:
 - ▶ Is there a volunteer clearing house agency? Are there city officials tasked with working on homelessness, poverty, hunger, etc.? Might they come help us understand the needs?
- ▶ Lara's resources from FMWM:
fmchurch.org/missions-conference

25

THANK YOU!

26