

FIRST BAPTIST MOLINE AS A MISSIONAL CHURCH ... What's the Next Step?

During the month of August and later half of July, we have focused our worship experience and sermon teaching around the theme of missions, and more specifically, the missional church. "What is the missional church?" God's Word teaches that it is the church whose central focus is mission. Mission is not just another good thing the church does. Rather, the whole action of the church is centered *on mission*. Why? Because mission is central to the heart of God. Jesus sends us as witnesses to "Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Or to fast forward to the present - Jesus sends us to our neighborhood, to our local and regional communities, to our nation, and internationally. Mission defines us. In the 21st century, the missional church looks to the future and says, "Where he leads, we will follow."

We have been studying Luke 4. After Jesus is baptized and goes into the desert to be tempted by Satan to change his allegiance and purpose, he returns to his hometown to start his ministry *filled with the Holy Spirit*. Jesus reveals his mission. After reading Isaiah 61:1-3 he begins to teach about his mission. He informed the people that he was the chosen one, the deliverer they had been waiting for. "I am the One." The Kingdom of God is for all peoples, and Jesus would reach out and minister holistically to everyone beyond every barrier or boundary.

Let's imagine that Jesus walked into our church building one Sunday and read the Bible and then sat down and began teaching. He asks us, "Are you doing my mission?" "Are you serving and loving *the least of these*?" "Are your programs and ministries the same as mine?" "Are you involved in transformational mission?"

"The Lord's Spirit has come to me, because he has chosen me to tell the good news to the poor. The Lord has sent me to announce freedom for prisoners, to give sight to the blind, to free everyone who suffers, and to say, "This is the year the Lord has chosen."

Simply put, Christ came to earth to make all things new. He came to rescue, deliver, and free those bound up within themselves and imprisoned by others. We live in a very broken world with poverty, hunger, natural disasters, injustice, racial tensions, economical and political tensions, wars, human trafficking and slavery, addictions ... hurting people hurting each other. Jesus came to heal and to save us. He came to transform us all. As the arms, feet, and heart of Christ, we go out into the community and heal, rescue, help, love, serve and share the good news with others. As a church, we reach out to meet people where they are at ... in the midst of their brokenness. We connect to others ... God and neighbor, in hope of being changed and transformed by the presence and power of God's love and grace.

We are ambassadors for Christ ... God making his appeal through us (I CORINTHIANS 5:20). We are His workmanship created in Christ (EPHESIANS 2:10). God changes us, and *calls us into His work* (PHILIPPIANS 2:12-13). Our purpose in life is to reflect his glory, love, and healing in the world.

God's mission is certain! From the beginning of time to the end, God's mission is certain. From the Old Testament to Revelation in the New Testament, God's mission is certain. WILL WE BE A PART OF HIS MISSION? Are we radically BEING JESUS to the community and the world?

To the extent FBC Moline *mirrors the mission of Jesus*, it will count in the Kingdom of God!

What are some of the ways we might consider doing the mission of Jesus here in our Quad City area?

1. Backyard Bible Clubs/Kids Clubs around our church. Connect and build relationships with other ethnic refugees around our church. Start a weekly/monthly bible study at Manor Home or Century Woods for all people.
2. Have VBS at Manor Home or Century Woods.
3. Have prayer walks to more neighborhoods around our church.
4. Connect to an alternative school in the neighborhood and ask how we can help.
5. Volunteer at the youth homeless drop in center "the place 2 b" in Rock Island.
6. Volunteer to cook and or serve food at the Hope Church for the homeless.
7. Be an active prophetic voice in the community against injustices on behalf of all peoples.
8. Launch a "Mother's Day Out" ministry once a week or single parents ministry.

How is God speaking to you right now about being on mission with Him? Have you found your real purpose in life? We are called to respond with excitement and surrender. Let's keep being *fervent in prayer* as a congregation asking our Lord Jesus, "how do you want me ... your church called First Baptist Molineus....to be about your mission?" Keep believing ... listening ... then respond with your life in obedience. We will all be rewarded here on earth and in heaven. God's mission will be fulfilled!