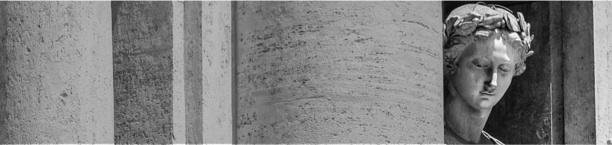
"Jesus -- YES! Church -- NO!" read a sign I once saw someone carrying. We still live in a spiritually hungry age where there is great interest in Jesus but equally great disinterest in the Church. When people think of the Church people are increasingly perceiving us as an institution that is ignorant, irrelevant, irascible, insulated, and isolated. We are spiritual Luddites who are out of step with the wave of popular culture. The fascination that culture still has with Jesus is tragically offset by our culture's disenchantment with the Church.

Take heart! This is nothing new! Anglican bishop, Stephen Neill writing in 1955 observed: "Nothing in the contemporary scene is more striking than the general regard which is felt for Jesus Christ and the general dislike of the organized church which bears His name."

The truth is that we, the Church, have always been an easy target… we are imperfect, compromised, sometimes hypocritical (unintentionally or not!), and have always been swimming against the tide of culture whether on spiritual issues-- we've never been enthusiastic about idolatry; financial issues-- Jesus not money is Lord; moral issues-- who led the charge against slavery in Europe and North America?!; and political issues-- God is the one we bow to not Ceasar, King, Prime Minister, President.



LifeGroup

Resource Guide

# for the week of 2 November: the RUINED Church

The Church is not insignificant, feeble, and in jeopardy. Jesus promised, "I will build my Church and the gates of hell will not prevail" (Matthew 16.18). Compare the Church with the 100 largest corporations of 50 years ago… fewer than one third exist today.  The Church endures-- it is lasting.  It remains Christ's body doing powerful work in the world today. The good news is that Faith Community is part of that powerful work and, I believe, God wants to multiply our participation!

So this week let's reflect on the Church-- the Body of Christ-- that everyone of us who has surrendered our life to Jesus is already a member of. There is no better place to have this conversation than in a "miniature church" that we call LifeGroups!

Enjoy yours this week-- it is meant to be God's gift to you and through you, Mark

on the Church…

*The Church is never a place but always a people; never a fold but always a flock; never a sacred building but always a believing assembly. The Church is you who pray, not where you pray.  A structure of brick or marble can no more be the church than your clothes can be you.*

– John Havlik

*The Church is a foreign body in the world.  She fits nowhere. She is too early for heaven and too late for the earth.*

– Unknown

Getting to know one another better ...

When you were growing up, who was your favorite person, character, or hero that you would like to be or dress up as? Why?

# Reflecting on the Church…

NOTE: In the New Testament the word, "church", refers to a called out/together assembly of people. It is never used of a place we go or a campus we maintain. This is the understanding of how we are using "church" in this Resource Guide.

Read Matthew 16.18. What do you think Jesus imagined when he said, "I will build my church”?

Read Revelation 21.3-4. What do we learn about the nature and character of God and His Church from this passage?

Read Romans 12.3-8; 1 Corinthians 12.12-20. What do we learn about the nature and character of the Church from this passage?

Read Matthew 28.18-20. What does this passage mean for the Church? How can a local fellowship, like Faith, maintain a balance between her pastoral calling and her missional calling?

The New Testament has high expectations for the life of the Church. The following is a list of God's expectations for our conduct together.

# Reflecting together on the Church…

* Abound in love for one another (John 15.17; 1 Thessalonians 4.9)
* Be devoted/defer to one another (Romans 12.10)
* Avoid judging one another (Romans 14.13)
* Build up/encourage one another (Romans 14.19; 1 Thessalonians 5.11)
* Accept one another (Romans 15.7)
* Admonish one another (Romans 15.17)
* Serve one another (Galatians 5.13)
* Avoid envying or arguing with one another (Galatians 5.26)
* Bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6.3)
* Show loving tolerance towards one another (Ephesians 4.2)
* Speak the truth with one another (Ephesians 4.25)
* Be kind, forgiving, and tender-hearted towards one another (Ephesians 4.32)
* Speak God's Words to one another (Ephesians 5.19; Colossians 3.16)
* Do not lie to one another (Colossians 3.9)
* Live in peace with one another (1 Thessalonians 5.13)
* Do not complain against one another (James 5.9)
* Confess your sins to one another (James 5.16)
* Pray for one another (James 5.16)
* Be hospitable to one another (1Peter 4.8)

Which of the above do you find comes naturally for you? Why?

Which of the above is most challenging for you? Why?

Which of the above do you wish were NOT on this list?! Why?

Which of the above do you think your LifeGroup does well? Why?

Which of the above do you think would be challenging, yet healthy, for your LifeGroup to be more intentional about? Why?

# Praying for my group...

Sermon notes…

# Highlighting...

Christmas In A Shoebox: We at Homes of Special Projects have our list and we are checking it twice. This year will be the 6th Annual Christmas In A Shoebox Drive for the children of Casa de Oracion Torre Fuerte in Ensenada, Mexico. Stop by the table in the Courtyard Sundays, Nov 2-30. Stop by and learn how to participate, sponsor a specific child, get a list of items for the shoeboxes, or make a donation.

Children’s Musical Rehearsals- move to the Worship Center, Nov 9, 4-6 PM

Night Shift Class with Jim Foreman- Nov 9, 8:30-9:45am in the Youth Center.

Inspired Hands- Nov 15, 9am-2pm in the Fellowship Center

Welcome to Faith- Nov 16 after worship in the Children’s Center. Do you feel new to Faith? Sign up at the Welcome Table or online for this free lunch!

Third Sunday Prayer- Nov 16, 6:30-8:00 PM in the Worship Center

High School Retreat- Nov 21-23, Big Bear