

March Missions News

Perspectives Class - My Experience So Far

by Pastor Rich

As I seek to become a better Pastor of Missions and Mobilization this year, one of my goals has been to take the 15 week Perspectives Class. Each Tuesday evening from 630-930pm I attend a meeting at a church in Lone Tree and have been introduced to some incredible teaching regarding the World Christian Movement. I have also spent about four hours per week reading various mission articles and even have to take weekly exams!

WOW has it been worth it!

Part of my homework this week was to write a Personal Reflection. I thought you 'might' be interested in some of the things God has shown me so far.

One of the amazing truths I rediscovered has been the significance of the "gospel of the kingdom" (Matt. 24:14).

God's purpose is to bring a kingdom where the nations will be glad and sing for joy because God will judge the peoples with uprightness and guide the nations on the earth (Ps. 67).

The gospel of the kingdom is then not simply the salvation of humankind, but includes also the idea that God is seeking to bless His people in order to make His salvation known to all the world; includes the "God-ward" aspect of His purpose in the worship of all the peoples bringing Him the glory that He deserves; and is a kingdom which stands opposed to evil in this world – God will not simply bring prosecution or punishment for wrongdoing, but will confront and overcome evil. To accomplish God's mission, or to enter it at all, we must be convinced that God is not merely managing evil – He is destroying it.

When this "gospel of the kingdom" is fully proclaimed to all the nations, Jesus will return. This provides the necessary motivation to involve ourselves in world evangelization as when we are successful as God's people in preaching this "gospel of the kingdom" to every people group on the planet, the end will come.

Another wonderful discovery has been the significance of prayer as an act of rebellion against the powers of evil.

I was struck by the need to reconsider my failure to practice prayer as a way of engaging in spiritual warfare because I don't really believe it will make a difference. I discovered that in many ways I have resigned myself to the present state of the world because I have viewed evil as in some way part of God's plan. I was really challenged in seeing that the biblical worldview refuses to accept the evil we find on earth and to see that Jesus charged us as His followers to "rebel" against the status quo by intercessory prayer.

I have begun to pray the Lord's Prayer differently, asking that God's kingdom rule will become effective even where it is defiled and that His will be accomplished even where it is opposed by His enemies.

Yet another important discovery for me through the first five lessons has been the reminder from Genesis 12 that as the people of God so immensely blessed, we are to be a blessing. The blessing of God is not simply the goodness of God to those of us who follow Him by faith but includes the responsibility and duty that is ours to be a blessing to the nations of the world. The impact of this for me has been to reinforce my need to first recognize the marvelous riches that are mine in Jesus, and see that those blessings need to be shared with a hurt and dying world around me. As Pastor of Missions and Mobilization it continues to be important for me to remind our congregation that we have been blessed not to serve ourselves, but in order to bless the peoples of the world so that as they receive the blessing of God, they too can become a blessing to those they serve.

One final personal reflection comes from a comment made by the speaker dealing with Unleashing the Gospel. He mentioned the "other sheep" Jesus has in His sights and the need to see the work of Christ in them even though they may not be fully devoted followers of Jesus, yet.

He made a comment that I don't believe I will forget, when he suggested that we begin to experiment with the people we meet by looking for what looks like Jesus in them. He mentioned his own homosexual son and his partner reaching out to the transgender community of youth in and around where he lives and suggested that their 'love' looked like Jesus. He challenged me to look for the ways people were acting like Jesus.

"That looks like something Jesus would do," has become a new filter for me as I look at the actions of people around me – believers and non-believers alike.

I have already begun to see more of Jesus than I used to see as a result of this simple experiment and it's been a whole new way of viewing the world around me!

Big Thanks from Mission Partners

At the end of 2020 I sent our missionaries the following letter:

Dear Mission Partner,

*It is with great joy and overwhelming gratitude to the Lord and to the people of Bear Valley Church that on their behalf I write to inform you that you are receiving a check to **fully offset** the reductions made to your financial support during the crazy year which was 2020.*

Our new Lead Pastor, Joey invited the people of Bear Valley to give in extraordinary fashion to the 2020 Christmas Offering and the result was \$44,000!!! The Board decided to add to that offering additional funds making it possible for the church to FULLY offset all the reductions made to your ministry last year.

I sincerely hope that this is a wonderful "surprise blessing" to you and the fabulous efforts you continue to make for the kingdom's expansion!

Some of the responses we received:

From Servants of Christ International

On behalf of Jim Walters, Jesse Aughenbaugh, and the Theological Seminary of the Amazon/Peru, thank you Bear Valley Church for the very generous Christmas offering. God is doing some amazing things around the world, and we are blessed to have Bear Valley Church partnering with us.

From Austin and Laura Krokos, Colorado

Thank you for the catch up offering that was taken and made up for the smaller missions gifts over the Covid months.

We thank God for your generosity! We were able to host a Christ centered retreat this last weekend with students from Alamosa and Durango and many students were able to grow in their walk with the Lord away from the distractions on campus.

God also has given us great grace in raising the needed funds for securing the Three Trails Ranch, a Kingdom tool that God can use to impact many thousands for Christ. The future looks bright. Thank you for keeping us on the field, and making a difference in so many young people's lives!

From Ed and Sheryl Gudeman, Spain

This is really incredible and an amazing blessing!

From Frontier Labourers for Christ, Thailand

This is a "wonderful surprise blessing" as you put it in your letter. Thanks to you and the members of Bear Valley Church. We will pray that God continues to bless Bear Valley Church so that you can be a blessing to FLC and others. Thank you very much.

From Hines Ugandan Ministries, Uganda

What a blessing to find your letter and check in the mail this weekend! It IS a wonderful surprise!

Thank you to Bear Valley Church for this amazing gift of support that was not expected.

It is wonderful to know and hear Bear Valley Church has arrived to a much better financial place and especially the giving at Christmas. Praising God for faithfulness and provisions in this 2021!

From Justice and Mercy Legal Aid Center (JAMLAC), Denver

Wow!

Thank you so much. This is incredible and so generous. I'm so happy to hear how BV is thriving and responding in such a big way!

From IDEAS Nosu Ministry, Undisclosed

Thank you for the letter notifying me of the extra gift from Bear Valley! What a pleasant surprise, to say the least. What an amazing thing for the congregation to do and with such generosity. I can't tell you how encouraging this gift is.... Our support fell short this year for the first time in our entire ministry, significantly short. But your extra gift makes a huge difference.

Thank You!!!

From Lightbridge International, Cambodia

I just received the letter and the check you sent. It is definitely a huge surprise and blessing. What can I say except thanks to you and everyone at BVC for their love and generosity. I love your heart to care for your missionaries and to give even in difficult times...AMAZING!

From Open Door Fellowship, Denver

Thank you so much for the extra gift! What a blessing. Your congregation is generous and it showed in your special offering!

From Duane and Janet, Training Beyond Borders, Vanuatu

We are overjoyed by this gift and we praise the Lord for allowing us to be sent out by such a "move the world" missions church!

From Jack LaPietra, New Life in Christ Church, Lakewood

We are so grateful for your generous donation. Your gift will be used to help provide services for women, families, youth and homeless throughout the year.

From Howard and Connie Waller, Vision Puerto Rico and Straight Ahead Ministries

We just wanted to take a moment and thank you, Pastor Joey, the Deacon Board and of course our beautiful fellow members for the generosity and love you shared. We could never have imagined that expression of love!

BVC is blessed to have such giving people.