



Pastor's Update

Sunday, February 4, 2024

The Challenge of the Church In a Pluralistic Society (Pt. 5)

Another important criterion for tackling the challenge of being the Church in a pluralistic society, is to consistently revert back to the question of relevancy: Why are we doing what we are doing? This is a challenging but necessary question that any Church must consider. A few years ago, while visiting a small Church, I observed one of the deacons doggedly trying to fit the lower corners of the lectern with the edges of the pulpit. The lectern was standing on two pieces of “two by four” and it needed some skill to fit them on all fours! After a long period of fruitless labor another deacon (who was new to the Church) asked the other deacon, “Why does the lectern have to stand on two legs, the pastor is not that tall, is he?” After some thoughtful gazes, the hardworking deacon responded, “Well, the previous pastor thought it was a good idea to secure these logs and he had no other place to put them.” Needless to say the logs were securely removed from their place of rest.

This is one example of the many futile activities in some Churches that need to be subjected to the probing question stated above. Many do not wish to face this question since they are afraid of removing the “two by fours.” But if the Church desires to be God’s mission in the world it must ask the hard questions. In Acts 1:8, Jesus told his disciples that subsequent to their endowment with the Holy Spirit they will be His witness in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth. It seems as though the Church in North has for many years attempted to fulfill God’s mission to the last three geographical locations (Judea, Samaria, the uttermost parts), and have neglected its own Jerusalem. Many Christians in North America are more familiar with the condition of the world outside of North America than in their own back yard. Some are even more familiar with the dynamics of other communities than their own. Nevertheless, if any local Church is to fulfill Jesus’ mandate to be witnesses in Jerusalem, it must become knowledgeable about its own Jerusalem, that is, the cultural context in which it exists. And remember to remove the “two by fours.”

By God’s Grace and for His glory,
Pr. Francis