

September 2020

Our JOYFUL Noise

The Monthly Newsletter of First Presbyterian Church of Britton SD
Pastor Donald Buck 605 551 9001 - Mindi Buck 605 551 9005
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The Bucks' Blog

Message Text: Romans 12:9-21

Message: Rev. Donald Buck

“Living Christian or Living Churchy Person?”

Sub-title: "Conformist or Non-Conformist?"

We're back in the
Sanctuary!!!

(Occasionally, during research for a message, a preacher finds a commentator that reflects his/her exact thinking. It happened to me this week, and I must give credit to Rev. Dr. Eleazar Fernandez, Professor of Constructive Theology, Union Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities, Brighton, MN. He had great influence on today's message.)

There is a quote attributed to Gandhi... "I like your Christ. I do not like your Christians. Your Christians are so unlike your Christ."

Actually, the real quote came from a philosopher from India named Bara

Dada. He said..."Jesus is ideal and wonderful, but you Christians, you are not like him."

A strange thing has happened in the churches of our American capitalistic society since the enlightenment era that brought about the separation of church and state. I know you're aware that separation of church and state is not about keeping the church out of the state (or government), it's about keeping the state (or government) out of the church. ¹ That's why the German Barmen Declaration, written in four days by Karl Barth and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, was written. It was written to keep Hitler from nationalizing the churches of Germany.

But something more insidious, sly, and slick has crept into the churches of our nation. From the inside out, we have taken on the lifestyle of our consumerist, compare one to another, society. As a result, few can tell the difference between the church and Wall Street, the church and Main Street, the church and Capitol Hill, the church and the Country Club.

And here, beginning with the 9th verse of chapter 12 in Paul's letter to the church in Rome, he is saying that he spent the first 11 chapters telling you who, as Christians, you are in

Christ. Now he is telling you to act like it.

Jesus gave the Beatitudes. Jesus said that they (those outside the church) will know you are Christians by your love for one another. And here Paul, beginning in verse 9 and continuing to verse 17 is telling us how to behave, how to live, like Christians with one another.

Now here's the rub. Here's the hard part. I have learned that people will always find a way to be or have or do what they really, truly, want to be, do, or have. We, as Christians, don't really want to live as Jesus taught. If we did, we would act like it.

How many churches can you name, that the people in them, are living like Christians, like Jesus and Paul said we should live? O, I know, most will get all uppity and indignant and say, "I think we're doing okay."

Do you really think Jesus would say you're doing okay... living the way He and in this case, Paul, is saying we should live?

The church (ekklesia) Is commonly referred to as a community "called out" of the world or as a community "set apart" for a distinct mission in relation to the world.

Have you ever wondered... What is distinctive about the community called the church... our church, your church?? What is the character of a

church community? What are the norms that guide the practices of the church? What kind of world is your faith community a part of?

Can we tell any difference between our church and the world outside of our church, our community? We are to be a distinct community in living out the teachings of Jesus. We are called to stand in sharp contrast to our system of privilege, power, and social conformity. We are called to live differently as faith communities defined by the life and teachings of Jesus.

I submit to you that the greatest danger to our churches today, even your church, my church, is conformity.

Conformity to the system of privilege, power, status, and money. We have become so comfortable with our conforming to the world that we have lost our identity as an alternative community of faith in our secular society.

In an effort to be relevant, we have been seduced by buildings, budget, and bodies (cheeks in seats). And before you know it, we wake up realizing we have taken on the culture of domination, privilege, accumulation and consumption.

We're no longer interested in harmony and agreement, we're only interested in winning and coming out on top.

What we should be offering is a new community that nurtures believers in Jesus Christ to live differently within their faith community and in their wider society.

What is this different life? A life lived in the power of the Spirit of God within us. That is the power that makes our life different than others. A life renewed for eternal living, not just this brief mist of our life here. It is a way of being and acting that seeks to embody genuine love, mutual regard, humility (there's a tough one), solidarity, peace, and harmony. It is a way of being and acting that cares for our wider community and society, even strangers. It's a tradition called hospitality.

Hospitality is a distinctive mark of the church. It is the practice by which the church stands or falls.

We cannot continue to conform. Already, our current virus situation is succeeding in separating us. Rendering hospitality mute. More than ever, we must find ways to renew hospitality. We must find ways to bring radical love, the love of Christ Jesus, fresh and new into our world. It is a spiritual survival necessity.

Let me ask you, Are you living like a Christian, a non-conformist... or are you living like a Churchy Person, a conformist?? Do you behave and live like Paul tells us in these verses, or are you no different than a member of

the local country club, just doing it in a different place??

May God in Christ help us all to purpose that from today forward, we will live like a Jesus Christian with passion.

You'll be so glad you did. Amen.

--Donald & Mindi



5 Ways Churches Can Thrive by Embracing Diversity

Across the nation a variety of churches are taking concrete steps to become more inclusive.

by **Jim Hinch** **Web Exclusive** -
Posted on July 17, 2020



This interview is part of our *What Our Faith Calls Us To* series.

America has embarked on a national reckoning over racial justice. What role should churches play?

Guideposts posed that question to several pastors around the country. While these ministers may lead churches of very different sizes and ethnic make-up they all agreed on one point: Followers of Jesus are required—no exceptions—to embrace people from all backgrounds.

“I go to (the biblical book of) Revelation and we see this picture in heaven of every tribe, nation, language and tongue,” says Chuck Mingo, a pastor at Crossroads Church in Cincinnati, Ohio. “This is our gospel. This is how our church is supposed to express itself.”

Martin Luther King, Jr. once called Sunday mornings “the most segregated hour in America.” Fifty years later, that observation remains true. A 2014 Pew Research Center study found that the majority of Christian denominations are still overwhelmingly mono-racial.

Close to 90 percent of Presbyterians, Methodists and Lutherans are white, as are 85 percent of Southern Baptists, according to the study. The most diverse religion in America is Islam, whose adherents are a roughly even mix of white, Black and Asian. Seventh Day Adventists (37 percent white, 32 percent

Black, 15 percent Latino) are among the only Christian denominations approaching such numbers.

The United States as a whole is 60 percent white, 18 percent Hispanic, 13 percent Black and six percent Asian. The Census Bureau estimates a majority of Americans will be non-white by the middle of this century.

How should churches respond? Five pastors weighed in on their top recommendations for guiding congregations toward full inclusion of all people.

1. Reach out. Church leaders should form their own personal relationships with people of different backgrounds. This might require reaching out to pastors or members of other churches. Leaders cannot guide a congregation toward inclusivity if they are not inclusive in their own lives.

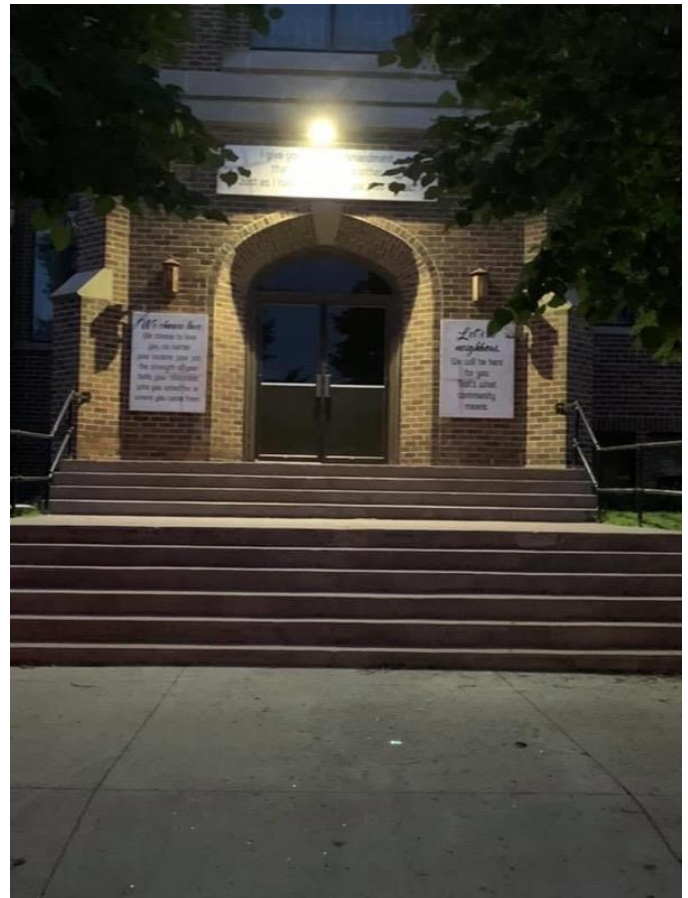
2. Learn. Read about the history of racial injustice in the United States and learn how Christians have both helped and hindered the cause of equality. A good place to start: Christianity Today magazine’s resource page on racial justice.

3. Connect. Talk to friends, colleagues and church members about how race has affected their lives. Form racially inclusive small groups—partnering with another church if necessary—to foster such discussions. The Undivided program at Crossroads Church in Cincinnati helps churches form groups that are constructive, supportive and rooted in Scripture. More information [here](#).

4. Act. Commit to making your church a place that promotes justice and inclusivity in your community.

5. Be open to change. People have a deep emotional connection to their church and can be reluctant to change worship styles or embrace new members with different priorities. Remember that Jesus commanded his followers to “make disciples of all nations.” It is impossible to fulfill that commandment in a church where everyone looks, thinks and acts alike.

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The following remarks were found on Facebook by Carmen Tisher:

I love when I am in town at 9:00 and have time to just sit and listen to the church bells ❤️❤️❤️❤️ Thank you Presbyterian Church!! -- Lori Ammerman.

Comments:

A fond memory of growing up in Britton!

It IS awesome!

Always calms me & makes me feel “at home” ❤️

Me too!! 😊

My grandma Vold lived across the street to the east when I was growing up. Listening to the bells takes me back everytime. ❤️ It seems we end up at the park at 5 a lot and get to hear them! It soothes the soul!!

I used to walk at night about the time I knew they would play loved them Britton is lucky They are lovely... ❤️

Growing up in town, I heard them every day.Love them. Love the bells too!!

I LOVE them too, DON'T get to hear them often, We miss those bells ❤️

176 likes & loves!

There are four sentences that matter most – just 11 words – in our relationships with others:

“Please forgive me.

I forgive you.

Thank you.

I love you.”



Please remember that the church is counting on your gifts, pledges and assistance during these trying times.

So, as you are able, please forward your gifts to: PO Box 127, Britton, SD 57430.

You may also give your gifts by going to our web site and hitting the giving button which will take you to the site for setting up your profile to make a secure one-time gift or a repeating gift through the Presbyterian Foundation to First Presbyterian Church, Britton.

That's at fpcbritton.com.

Please keep Carol Anderson in your prayers as she once again battles cancer.

Please pray for Jack Clarke as he underwent surgery on August 27th, for prostate cancer.

Continue prayers for Sharon Tisher and Sandy Ellingson.

And Lonnie Furman as he continues healing.

An additional prayer request has been made for Margaret & Myron Eich, 86, of Salem, SD, parents of Rose Kraft, as they battle Covid-19

Sharon Tisher would like to thank everyone for the many prayers, flowers, cards and texts she has received.



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Pastoral Appointments
Monday thru Thursday
10:00 – 4:00**