

The Mission of Millersville Bible Church

We seek to honor God by **Winning, Building, Equipping,** and **Mobilizing** people to advance Christ's kingdom and exalt His name.

Discipleship: *At the heart of everything we do*

Obedience to this final command of Jesus Christ is the mission of Millersville Bible Church. Because of this, disciple-making lies at the heart of everything we do. Accomplishing this challenging task involved a two-fold responsibility. First, we must be careful to employ the means God has provided for building His church, and second, we must seek to understand the attitudes and world-views which prevail in the culture to which God has sent us. At MBC, we focus on the following:

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

-Matthew 28:19-20

The Gospel: *Proclaiming the Gospel in an age of pluralism*

Faith in Jesus Christ is the only source of eternal salvation. He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father but through me." This message confronts the pluralistic attitude of our society which declares that all religious beliefs are equally valid. At MBC we believe that only the Gospel is the "power of God unto salvation for every one who believes." We seek to both proclaim the gospel in our community and train each disciple to effectively communicate it to those with whom they have contact.

Teaching: *Teaching scripture in an age of relativism*

Jesus prayed, "Sanctify them in the truth; Thy Word is truth." God's revelation to man, His instruction for what we should believe and how we should live, is found in the 66 books of the Bible. Though our culture promotes the idea that there is no absolute truth, the Bible declares itself to be the inerrant Word of God. The disciple of Christ must not only understand the teachings of the Bible, but obey them as well. At MBC we strongly emphasize the preaching, teaching, and application of God's Word. The Scripture is our sole authority for life, and cannot be overruled by such things as religious tradition or personal experience.

Worship: *Worship of God in an age of materialism*

To worship God is to love Him with heart, soul, mind, and strength. This is the foremost command of God. The Bible warns the believers not to put anything "before the Lord God." We cannot, as Jesus taught, "serve two masters." He also said that a man's life does not consist in the abundance of things he possesses. In an age of materialism, possessions can easily become modern day idols competing for the devotion of our hearts. At MBC we encourage people to serve God with single-hearted devotion - seeking first His kingdom and righteousness. We view all aspects of life as a stewardship for which each of us will give an account to God.

Fellowship: *Fellowship of believers in an age of individualism*

The New Testament clearly teaches that it is God's design for every Christian to be an active and accountable part of a local assembly of believers, willingly serving others. This results in the mutual encouragement and support of all believers in their walk with Jesus Christ. In contrast to this, our society promotes individualism; the attitude which seeks to please self, elevates personal fulfillment, and avoids costly involvement with others. At MBC we challenge believers to fulfill God's design by meaningfully relating to others in the church. Merely attending the worship services will not accomplish this; other opportunities for both fellowship and service must be pursued.

Leadership: *godly leadership in an age of anti-authoritarianism*

Like every institution ordained by God, the Church of Jesus Christ has a structure of authority. The Bible reveals that God's design for leadership in the local church consists of a group of godly men called elders. At MBC we follow this pattern, with elders overseeing and guiding the life of the assembly. Though our society today largely rejects authority, the faithful disciple of Christ desires the accountability and security which comes from willing submission to those God has placed as leaders in His church.

Five key components for effective Church ministry

1. **M_____ godly leadership**
2. **M_____ shepherding units**
3. **M_____ related membership**
4. **M_____ strategically placed**
5. **M_____ ministry teams**

Seven emphases over the years

1. Emphasis on qualified and clear leadership: 1 Timothy 3; Titus 1; Hebrews 13:17.
2. Emphasis on maintaining unity: Ephesians 4:3; Philippians 2:14-15; John 17:21
3. Emphasis on humility in service: Luke 17:10; Mark 10:45; Philippians 2:3-5
4. Emphasis on every member ministry: Ephesians 4:16; Hebrews 3:12-13
5. Emphasis on understanding debatable matters: Romans 14:3
6. Emphasis on commitment: Hebrews 10:23-25
7. Emphasis on evangelism and discipleship; Romans 1:16; Matthew 5:13-16;28:19-20

Meaningful Church Membership

During New Testament times those who confessed the Lordship of Jesus were baptized and considered to be Christians. Such a confession assumed the intention of being a fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ. True Christians are those who intentionally seeks to be fully devoted followers of Jesus. Such devotion was required by Jesus when he commissioned his disciples to go and make more disciples. Jesus specifically ordered them to teach new disciples to “obey *everything* I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:20). Obedience to Jesus Christ is a non-negotiable part of being a Christian.

Since making disciples involves teaching obedience to all Jesus commanded, it must include an element of accountability. “If we have not taught obedience” writes Bill Hull, “and encouraged it through accountability we have not disciplined.” Hull defines accountability as “helping people keep their commitments to God.” Christians leaders must hold people accountable to God’s standards. All who are involved in disciple making need to ask if they are providing healthy accountability for those being disciplined.

One of the most effective means for ensuring Christian accountability is local church membership. Commitment to a local church and submission to its leadership is not optional for a Christian. “There is today a widespread belief that one can be a Christian or develop one’s filtered own faith system apart from the church. The proposition is ludicrous. For everyone regenerated by God is by definition a part of the universal church. It’s not a matter of choice or membership. And following the pattern made normative in the book of Acts, each believer is to make his or her confession, be baptized, and become part of a local congregation with all of the accountability that implies. So membership in a church particular is no more optional than membership in the church universal. (From: *The Body*, Chuck Colson)

After surveying present trends, one author concluded that, “the meaninglessness of church membership is a widespread and disheartening reality.” The core of the problem, he suggested, was “the customary procedure of adding new members without the slightest bit of real challenge to commitment.”

Many professing Christians do not want the integrity of their commitment to the Lord to be tested. They do not want to be in an accountable relationship with other believers unless they get to define the commitment. These people resent it when a church determines to make membership a serious (and even difficult) process. Yet, “the refusal to grapple with the issues of entrance into the Christian church is not toleration; it is betrayal of the gospel which we preach ... a surrender to Christ is a surrender to His people - total involvement in the life of the church. Commitment in a community environment means participants can no longer commit themselves to the Lord in the abstract. Nor can they commit themselves to one another on a superficial plane. Community always tests the integrity of commitment” (Elizabeth O’Connor).

“It is scandalous that so many believers today have such a low view of the church. They see their Christian lives as a solitary exercise - Jesus and me - or they treat the church as a building or a social center. That the Church is held in such low esteem reflects not only the depths of our

biblical ignorance, but the alarming extent to which we have succumbed to obsessive individualism of modern culture ... for any Christian who has a choice in the matter, failure to cleave to a particular Church is failure to obey Christ." (Colson)

Steve Cornell

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