

Biblical Reflections to Guide a Discussion of CCCR Appointments

PURPOSE: This devotional is intended to encourage thinking and preparation of the local church CC-CR appointment AND to embrace, support and help the Appointee SO THAT God is honored, the church's ministry is blessed, and the church is open to God's grace and ministry in their midst.

MODULE 1

THEOLOGY AND SCRIPTURE: Throughout the Bible we see Jesus, the disciples, and the EARLY church crossing and embracing all groups of people ... from all cultures and from all races.

Even in Matthew's account of Jesus' genealogy, we see cross cultural inclusion and is embraced. This genealogy includes Rahab the mother of Boaz, a Canaanite; Ruth, a Moabite; and Uriah's wife, Bathsheba, presumably a Hittite.

The essential character of Jesus' ministry including his Great Commission in Matthew 28:19 to go to all the world and '**make disciples of all nations**' implies a cross cultural and cross racial fabric. Such nation building united the 1st century church reflected in Paul's words in Galatians 3:26-29: "**In Christ Jesus you all are children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, slave nor free, nor male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs to the promise.**"

QUESTIONS:

WHAT EXAMPLES OF CROSS CULTURAL AND CROSS RACIAL EMBRACE CAN OUR SPRC COMMITTEE OR ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL REFERENCE FROM THE BIBLE?

From the Old Testament?

From the New Testament?

REFLECTING UPON JESUS' GREAT COMMISSION IN MATTHEW 28:19 AND PAUL'S INSTRUCTION TO THE IN GALATIANS 3:26-29, HOW MIGHT JESUS AND PAUL COMMISSION AND INSTRUCT OUR CHURCH? i.e. HOW AND WHAT WOULD JESUS AND PAUL SAY TO OUR CHURCH?

HOW MIGHT JESUS AND PAUL COUNSEL OUR CHURCH AS WE PREPARE OURSELVES FOR A CROSS CULTURAL OR CROSS RACIAL APPOINTMENT?

IS THE ETHOS AND CULTURE OF OUR CHURCH READY FOR A CR/CC APPOINTMENT?

WHAT WILL BE THE CHALLENGES AND OPPROTUNITIES OF A CR/CC APPOINTMENT?

WHAT DO WE AS LEADERS NEED TO WORK ON SO THAT WE MIGHT BE OPEN TO GOD'S CALL TO OUR CHURCH IN THE CONTEXT OF A CC/CR APPOINTMENT?

MODULE 2

THEOLOGY AND SCRIPTURE:

Revelation 5 portrays a glorious vision of heavenly wonder and grandeur as Jesus is revealed to be the Lamb of God, the Lion of Judah, the Root of David ultimately destined to break the seals of "the scroll." As described in Revelations 5:1-8 is a wonderfully moving scene BUT THEN THE BEST PART IS DESCRIBED IN verse 9(b) as "**persons from every tribe and language and people and nation.**" All God's children are present in full chorus --- with no distinctions between among them gathered and united before God and singing praises to God.

WOW --- what a great vision that "...**persons from every tribe and language and people and nation,**" were joined together in celebration and worship of God!!!!

QUESTIONS:

DESCRIBE A TIME WHEN PEOPLE FROM ALL LANGUAGES, TRIBES, AND NATIONS WERE JOINED TOGETHER IN GATHERED WORSHIP?

- PERHAPS A CRUSADE OF DAYS GONE BY?
- PERHAPS A CHRISTIAN CONCERT?
- PERHAPS A COMMUNITY CELEBRATION AND GATHERING?
- PERHAPS IN THE CONTEXT OF A MISSIONS TRIP OR RALLY?

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE EXPERIENCE? THE EMOTION? AND THE ENERGY OF SUCH A GROUP, ESPECIALLY AS IT IS GATHERED IN DIVERSITY AND UNITED IN FAITH AND WORSHIP?

HOW WOULD A CR/CC APPOINTMENT HELP OUR CHURCH TO EXPERIENCE A FLAVOR OF THIS SORT OF MORE DIVERSE WORSHIP UNITED BY FAITH AND WORSHIP?

MODULE 3

THEOLOGY AND SCRIPTURE:

The LORD'S PRAYER (Matthew 6:9-13, note verse 10) is a model prayer that Jesus taught his disciples to be a guide to prayer.

Jesus' instruction regarding prayer is in the context of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). Throughout the Sermon on the Mountain Jesus teaches the importance of the heart and inner being as the essence that God looks upon...not our outward actions (although they are revealing of our heart) --- It is the heart or the inner being that truly reveals the essence that God considers and the essence that Jesus calls us to live.

So, with this understanding, we are challenged to not rest upon the words we pray, but rather, the heart that motivates and guides our actions. When we pray as Jesus taught the disciples, we are challenged that we should pray for the ways of heaven to be made real in the ways of our lives in the context of our life together in the communities and churches in which we commit.

QUESTIONS:

HOW DOES OUR CHURCH BELIEVE IN TERMS OF THE LORD'S PRAYER WHEN IT GUIDES US TO PRAY, " ...**YOUR KINGDOM COME, YOUR WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN...**"?

IS OUR CHURCH PREPARED TO LIVE INTO THE VISION THAT IS SHARED IN REVELATIONS 5:9(b)?

IN WHAT WAYS DO WE NEED TO PREPARE OUR HEARTS AND OUR CHURCH TO RECEIVE, EMBRACE AND WORSHIP GOD THROUGH THE BLESSING OF A CR/CC APPOINTMENT?

- HEART MATTERS?
- PRACTICAL MATTERS?

SUGGEST THAT YOUR GROUP JOIN TOGETHER IN THE PRAYING OF THE LORD'S PRAYER IN UNISON TOGETHER...AND THEN TO PRAY TOGETHER:

"DEAR GOD, MAY OUR HEARTS BE PURE, MAY OUR HEARTS BE ALIGNED WITH YOUR WILL FOR OUR CHURCH AND MAY WE PRAY, WITH INTEGRITY, 'THY KINGDOM COME, THY WILL BE DONE ON EARTH [AND IN THIS CHURCH] AS IT IS IN HEAVEN...' THROUGH JESUS OUR LORD, AMEN".

MODULE 4

THEOLOGY AND SCRIPTURE:

1 SAMUEL 16:7-- But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

JEREMIAH 17:10 -- "I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind, to reward each person according to their conduct, according to what their deeds deserve.

In a world that 'naturally' looks upon the outward appearances of culture, race, and gender, God looks upon the hearts of you and I. Not our outward appearance but our heart.

IN WHAT WAYS ARE WE PREPARED OR NEED TO PREPARE TO LOOK AS GOD LOOKS AND SEE ONE ANOTHER AS GOD SEES?

IN WHAT WAYS ARE WE PREPARED OR NEED TO BE PREPARED TO PRAY FOR THE ABILITY TO SEEK AND TO SEE ONE ANOTHER'S HEART AS GOD LOOKS TO THE INWARDNESS OF OUR HEARTS & SOULS RATHER THAN THE OUTWARD APPEARANCES OF CULTURE, RACE & GENDER?

IN WHAT WAYS ARE OUR HEARTS PREPARED OR NEED TO BE PREPARED TO ACCEPT THE OUTWARD DIFFERENCES OF CULTURE, RACE AND GENDER AND TO LOOK FOR GOD'S BLESSINGS.

MODULE 5

THEOLOGY AND SCRIPTURE:

Romans 12:2 challenges us as Christian believers to “... **not be conformed to the pattern of this world but be TRANSFORMED by the renewing of our minds ...**” and 1 Timothy 4:4-8 reads, “***For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer. If you point these things out to the brothers and sisters, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, nourished on the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed ... TRAIN yourselves to be godly for physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.***”

The essential truths of these texts are:

1. We must not see as the world sees – nor conform to the ways of the world, **BUT RATHER** to allow our hearts and minds to be **TRANSFORMED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT’S RENEWING OF OUR MINDS.**
2. We must work to **TRAIN OURSELVES AND ONE ANOTHER TO BE GODLY ... TO BE AS HEAVEN WILL BE ... FOR “YOUR KINGDOM COME AND YOUR WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN...”**

QUESTIONS:

IN THE CONTEXT OF OUR CHURCH AND CLERGY APPOINTMENTS, IN WHAT WAYS HAVE WE ‘CONFORMED’ TO THE WORLD AND IN WHAT WAYS MIGHT WE NEED TO CONSIDER BEING ‘TRANSFORMED’?

WHAT PRACTICAL THINGS MAY WE DO TO PREPARE OURSELVES, AS CHURCH LEADERS, AND THEN THE CHURCH FOR ALL THAT GOD IS LAYING BEFORE US?

IT IS IMPORTANT TO REALIZE THAT WE NEED TO DO AND BE MORE THAN MERELY CONSENSUAL ACCEPTORS OF A CR/CC APPOINTMENT. IT IS CRITICAL THAT WE MAKE THE INTENTIONAL EFFORT AND PLAN TO ‘TRANSFORM’ AND “TRAIN” OUR MINDS TO MAKE PROACTIVE DECISIONS AND PREPARATIONS --- HOW CAN WE BEGIN TO PLAN AND TRAIN OURSELVES TO RECEIVE, BLESS, AND THEN SHARE IN MINISTRY WITH OUR NEW CR/CC APPOINTEE?

RESOURCE:

THE BOOK, “LEARNING FROM STRANGERS: PASTOR’S & LAITY WORKBOOK”

(www.gcorr.org/learning-from-strangers/) PROVIDES SOME EXCELLENT HELP IN PRACTICAL APPLICATION AND PRACTICE – SOME GREAT TOOLS FOR HELPING TO “TRANSFORM” AND “TRAIN” OUR MINDS, PRACTICES, AND BEHAVIORS.

MODULE 6

SCRIPTURE

ROMANS 8:28 PAUL WRITES THESE ENCOURAGING WORDS, "... **AND WE KNOW THAT IN ALL THINGS GOD WORKS FOR THE GOOD OF THOSE WHO LOVE HIM, WHO HAVE BEEN CALLED ACCORDING TO HIS GOOD PURPOSES**"

QUESTIONS

DO WE HAVE TRUST GOD ENOUGH TO TRULY BELIEVE THAT GOD WILL MAKE 'GOOD' COME FROM THIS APPOINTMENT?

WHAT WOULD THE 'GOOD' THAT MIGHT COME FROM THIS APPOINTMENT LOOK LIKE?

"DEAR GOD, THANK YOU FOR THIS APPOINTMENT. WE CAN HARDLY WAIT TO SEE HOW YOU MIGHT WORK ALL THINGS TOGETHER FOR YOUR GOOD AND THE GOOD OF THIS CHURCH. THANK YOU FOR CARING FOR US, FOR NEVER LEAVING US AND FOR HELPING US THROUGH "SUCH A TIME AS THIS".

SUMMARY QUESTIONS:

1. IN WHAT WAYS AND WHAT AREAS DO WE NEED TO WORK TO PREPARE OURSELVES AND OUR CHURCH FOR A CROSS-CULTURAL OR CROSS-RACIAL APPOINTMENT?
2. HOW SHOULD WE PRAY SO THAT OUR CR/CC APPOINTEE MAY BE BLESSING TO US?
3. HOW SHOULD WE PRAY SO THAT THIS APPOINTMENT BE A GOOD & POSITIVE EXPERIENCE FOR BOTH THE APPOINTEE AND FOR THE CHURCH?

PRAYER: Dear God, we kneel before you and pray that 'Your kingdom come, and Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven...' but it is not easy. Even when we're willing and wanting to be sanctified and transformed by the renewing of our minds by Your righteousness, goodness, and truth, we find ourselves holding back and slipping into our more natural ways of thinking, acting and behaving, even when it hurts You and others. We are sorry and we confess these more natural ways of our sinful, human natures. Please open our hearts and our minds with loving and keen insight so that we may prepare ourselves and our church for the best possible experience... that we be a blessing to the appointee, to the church and that our church be a blessing to the community in which we serve and are committed. May we be a blessing, and may we be found righteous before YOU. IN JESUS PRECIOUS & MIGHTY NAME, AMEN

MODULE 7

TO CONTINUE IN PRAYER:

- PRAY FOR GOD TO SHOW YOUR LEADERSHIP TEAM AND THE CHURCH A VISION FOR HOW THIS NEW APPOINTMENT MAY BE “GOOD” FOR THE APPOINTEE, THE CHURCH, THE COMMUNITY, AND EACH OF THOSE INVOLVED IN THE RESPONSIBILITY TO MAKE THE CHURCH A PART OF THE HEAVEN THAT IS TO COME WHEN WE PRAY, “THY KINGDOM COME, THY WILL BE DONE...”
- ASK YOURSELVES, ‘WHAT MIGHT BE GOD’S GOOD PURPOSES’ THAT MAY COME IF EVERYONE LIVES INTO THE DIVERSITY AND OPPORTUNITY OF A CROSS-CULTURAL, CROSS-RACIAL APPOINTMENT.