

The Pastors Connection

“Proclaiming the Known”

“Men of Athens, I see that in every way you are very religious. For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Now what you worship as unknown I am going to proclaim to you.” Acts 17:22-23

I have been blessed recently by two books. One, recommended by a member of our Pastoral Team, is Deep and Wide by Andy Stanley.

I was moved with conviction to realize they weekly welcome many unsaved to their fellowship. They witness high percentages returning. They work intentionally and effectively to grow responders into mature Jesus followers.

Andy prophetically challenges readers to ask if we are satisfied with our success at reaching and maturing the lost. If we are not satisfied, he invites us to revisit how we do church compared to what measurably works.

CMC has deep roots of tradition for which I praise God. Roots stabilize. Over the generations we have also shown readiness to change our cultural trappings when gospel demanded it.

The second reading was with the CMC Young Adult Bible Study. Discussions focused around Gregory Boyd’s book Letters From a Skeptic.

I delight to witness our young adults giving creative leadership. They have passion for scripture. They pursue truth. Character and community is shaped by laughter and story. Truly God is raising up another generation of faithful Jesus followers here at CMC!

I seldom agree fully with any author. Stanley and Boyd were no exception. But both are driven by a love of scripture. Both aim to proclaim the known to those unknowing.

An added fascination with Boyd’s book was reality that the one articulating faith is the son; writing to dad the skeptic. Dad asks profound questions. Son welcomes the dialogue.

Dad brutally critiques religion. Son is confessional yet unapologetic for inviting a well reasoned faith. Questions are addressed with clarity and grace.

Happy endings sell. Boyd’s book is no exception. The final pages outline dad’s embrace of Christian faith!

Some people respond naturally to Christ from the heart. Emotions engage and they embrace faith. Others need a logical articulation that addresses their concerns. Gregory’s

dad was the latter. Yet when his mind settled on faith his final letter following salvation overflowed with the joy of salvation. It confirmed anew that no matter how we come to faith, God integrates heart and head. Mind and emotion get touched and transformed in salvation!

I pray God will continue to favor CMC with creative capacity to proclaim gospel so that those unknowing can know. It is knowing that empowers us to live well in this world. It is knowing that deposits the Spirit within us guaranteeing deeper knowing in the eternal!!

Joyfully living HiStory with you, Pastor Bob