

- I. Quae Propositum Est; Sunday, June 22, 2014
(Sunnyslope)

Psalm 19:14

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be
pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.

- A. "Good morning, church!"
- B. Today we will hold our annual church business meeting
1. We will hear about the financial and ministerial health of our church
 2. And we'll elect new Board members for the next year
 - a) These folks will act as stewards
 - b) Stewards, trusted administrators of the details of our church
 3. It seems I've fallen into a tradition that each year when we conduct our annual business meeting, I offer a sermon with a Latin title
 4. This year is no different
 5. July 18, 2010
 - a) Quo vadimus
 - b) Where are we going?
 6. July 17, 2011
 - a) Consilio Dei pro nobis
 - b) God's plan for us
 7. August 5, 2012
 - a) Quid Deus vult
 - b) What God would have
 8. June 22, 2014

- a) Quae propositum est?
 - b) What's the point?
- C. I'd like to discuss why we meet as a church? What's the point? Why do what we do in the way we do it?
- 1. Taking the position of devil's advocate (somewhat literally)...
- a) We are a geographically diverse congregation
 - (1) We have folks who live out by Southworth ferry dock
 - (2) Up north nearly in Silverdale
 - (3) South in Belfair
 - b) We're socially diverse
 - (1) We have some youngers, children, babies, 30-somethings, some middle-aged folks, more mature, venerable folks
 - (2) We have sports fans, and we have people who are aware that sports exist
 - (3) We have folks who prefer to rest comfortably at home most of time and others who are almost constantly away from home
 - (4) We have different interests, different passions, different past-times, and different personal priorities
- 2. Wouldn't it be easier to not meet every Sunday? Wouldn't it be easier perhaps not to meet at all?
 - a) It'd be nice to be able to sleep-in on Sunday mornings, wouldn't it?

- b) Many of us have to drive for fair distances to be able to get here; it'd be easier to not have to do that every Sunday
 - c) For the past 7 years I've run software engineering teams remotely
 - (1) Most of us working out of our homes, distributed across the United States
 - (2) It wouldn't be all that difficult to do the same with church
 - (3) I already post the sermon audio and sermon notes to our web site each week
 - (4) We could record the worship songs and post them as well
 - (5) And we could get everyone hooked up with computers and the Internet
 - (6) Then whenever you want some "churching," you could just log on to the web site
 - d) Wouldn't it be easier, more efficient even, to have "remote church"?
 - e) Alternatively, why not just skip doing any form of church at all?
 - f) We each have Bibles at home
 - g) We each have God at home
 - h) So we can pray and read Scripture apart from the Church
3. So what's the point of church then?

II. To help us understand the point, let's examine some passages of Scripture that relate to the church, the collection of believers, the body of our faith

A. We know from Scripture that the first Christians met together regularly, as part of a routine

Acts 2:46

Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts.

B. We also know the first Christians met both publicly (maybe in church buildings and in public places) but also in small groups in their homes

Acts 20:20

You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house.

C. And we're commanded by the Bible to continue to continue to meet together in these small and large groups

Hebrews 10:24-25

²⁴And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, ²⁵not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

D. We need to remember that we are not solo agents

1. We are not individuals set apart from every other Christian
2. We are not rouge creatures who live and work and learn in isolation
3. Instead, we are all children of God, brothers and sisters in a family, and parts of one body

Romans 12:5

In Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

Romans 12:12

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ.

- E. And just as a part of our body, if cut off and removed, cannot survive; so we will not be healthy Christians if we separate ourselves from the body, which is the church

Romans 12:15-20

¹⁵Now if the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. ¹⁶And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. ¹⁷If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. ¹⁹If they were all one part, where would the body be? ²⁰As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

- F. Scripture commands us to confess our failings to each other and to pray for each other

James 5:16

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

- G. And what's more, we know from the Gospels that it was Christ's own custom to go to church
 - 1. Our Lord and Savior, someone who was without sin and perfect, still felt He needed to go to church
 - 2. How arrogant are we if we believe we don't need to go to church?
 - 3. We are claiming to be even more perfect than our very Lord and Savior
- H. So it seems clear that we ought to congregate together as a church, that we have been instructed by God to do so, and to fail to do this is to fail to obey God

III. So if we are then meeting together regularly, what do we do when we meet? What is our core mission and purpose as a collection of Christians?

A. From our bylaws, we have defined four parts that cover our mission and purpose

1. *The purpose of Sunnyslope is to study and declare the Bible and use all Scripture for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that every member may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 1 Colossians 1:28)*
2. *The mission of Sunnyslope is to proclaim Jesus Christ, make disciples, baptize, and teach to obey the Christ's commands (Matthew 28:19-20) and to teach and encourage disciples to be able to always give a reason for their faith in Christ. (1 Peter 3:15)*
3. *In all these things, Sunnyslope will discern and follow God's will and will conduct its affairs with Christian love and charity. (1 Corinthians 13)*
4. *Sunnyslope affirms that when a person accepts Jesus Christ as Savior, God places that person in the church. (Acts 2:47; 1 Corinthians 12:18)*

B. Gilbert Stafford, a former professor at Anderson University, noted some other traits of a Church of God:

1. A church of God is a church where the Bible and Bible teaching is supreme above all other interests
2. A church of God is a church that studies, teaching, and preaching scripture, and lives according to its message
3. A church of God is a church whose purpose is to follow God's will and whose goal is to make disciples, to reach out to both those who are saved and those who are unsaved

4. A disciple is not a passive and faithful attendee but an active participate in the mission of the church
- C. Let us take a look at some of the specific things that Sunnyslope Church of God does
1. [Biweekly theology study]
 2. [Monthly Saturday morning breakfasts]
 3. [Card ministry]
 - a) The church receives a constant stream of letters, phone calls, and emails from pastors who were blessed by our prayers and cards
 - b) In business, there's an idea called the "rule of 10x" when it comes to feedback
 - (1) If you run a retail business and you receive a letter in the mail complaining about something...
 - (2) ...it's very likely there are 10 times as many people, perhaps even more, who would also complain about the same thing but haven't taken the time to write in about it
 - (3) The rule of 10x works for communications of praise as well

- (a) For every card, letter, email, and phone call we get back from a pastor who is overwhelmed with gratitude for our thoughts and prayers...
 - (b) ...we need to consider the very real and likely fact that there are 10 times as many who don't reply but are blessed in the same way
 - (4) When we consider this, and when we consider the fact that the pastors we bless and encourage will in turn bless and encourage their congregations...
 - (5) ...we need to remember that our card ministry program while seemingly insignificant is having a titanic impact
- c) To illustrate, I'd like to tell you a true story
- (1) Eugene Polley went to work for the Zenith Corporation in 1935
 - (a) During his 47 year career with the company's engineering department, Polley worked on several projects
 - (b) In 1955, when he thought up what he would later call the "Flash-Matic"
 - (2) The Flash-Matic looked like a small flashlight

- (a) It activated photo cells in a television set allowing the viewer to change channels and turn the sound and picture on or off from across the room
 - (b) Polley had invented the television remote control
 - (3) When the device was introduced to the public, no one could have imagined a day when almost every home entertainment device sold would include a remote control
 - (4) Polley's simple invention changed the world of entertainment forever, but very few people know his name
- d) Why do we do the card ministry?
- (1) Not for the credit
 - (2) Not for any personal gain
 - (3) Not even for the knowledge of the real impact of the ministry
 - (4) Purely because it serves others, which pleases God
 - (5) Purely because God has prepared good deeds for us to do, which gives our lives purpose

4. [Scarf analogy]

D. Are we a perfect church?

- 1. No, but we're a functional church
 - a) I think if we're being honest with ourselves, looking back over our 3-year history...
 - b) ...we'd have to conclude that we started off as a rather dysfunctional church

- c) However, now, we seem to be functional;
not perfect, but functioning
- 2. We still have problems, of course; but these
are matters of improving our efficiency and
effectiveness rather than fundamental flaws
 - a) I'm not a full-time pastor
 - (1) Which means that I cannot do
perhaps all the outreach,
evangelism, and visitation that we
might want or need
 - b) Our building, while a blessing for us,
isn't ideal
 - (1) It isn't conducive to providing a
children's ministry
 - (2) Sunday school is difficult
 - (3) As would be many other ministries
 - (4) The floor can get slippery and
dangerous in winter
 - (5) The heater roars
- 3. Still, there are a lot of positives we have
going for our church
 - a) We're traditional yet informal, a family
of brothers and sisters in Christ
 - (1) And this isn't just a mostly
meaningless phrase to us
 - (2) We take the idea of being a family
together quite seriously
 - b) Our card ministry means we're fulfilling
a mission and participating in outreach
 - (1) We're serving
 - (2) We're working

(3) We're obeying God's call to be disciples

c) Our church Bible reading schedule means we're collectively as a body always seeking after God's wisdom

- IV. So what then is the answer to the question: "Quae propositum est?" What's the point?
- A. We continue to meet together because it is what God commands us through Scripture
 - B. We continue to meet together because it is what Christ did Himself and what He desires for us
 - C. We continue to meet together because through our congregation we can
 - 1. Pray for each other
 - 2. Encourage each other
 - 3. Teach each other
 - 4. Keep each other accountable
 - 5. Fellowship with each other
 - 6. And love each other
 - 7. ...as brothers and sisters
 - D. And we continue to meet together because through our congregational association we can collectively as a body bless and serve more folks outside our congregation than we could ever hope do so on our own
 - E. Though we are small, God continues to bless us and to provide for us in ways too numerous to count
 - F. I pray that the Almighty continue His showers of blessings upon us, and that we may continue to strength our faith, our obedience through learning and submission, and our blessings of others beyond this local body of brothers and sisters
 - G. Amen