

Our God is on the move, are we?

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[0 : 00] Remember, we thought about the members, ministry, and maturity of the church. Members in the sense of being part of the body of Christ.

Members using their gifts and skills with which God has empowered them and growing up to become mature in Christ.

Those who were able to attend yesterday's induction service at Viewfield, let me just remind you of one thing Martin Hutchins said, The church, a building of living stones, joined together in him, loving one another as he loves us, united as Jesus and the Father are one.

United in Christ, united with each other. The church is a body of Christ.

And the church should be a visible illustration of heaven. Think about it. The church, Christ's body, Christ's called out people, a visible illustration of heaven.

[1 : 31] Is that what people see? Now, I suppose we don't know what heaven's like, but we can ask God to make us like him and like what his presence will be as we share together and love together.

And that's the important thing, loving each other as if Father has loved the Son. Now, the English word for church is derived from Cariacus, the Lord's.

And so we have the Scots Kirk. Michael Griffiths, a missionary in Japan and principal of London Bible College, in his book, Getting Your Act Together, Cinderella, notes that in Japan, Korea and China, we find all three use the same pair of characters to describe the church.

The church is a teaching association where the kingdom of love, the kingdom of forgiveness, is seen with a command to follow.

And we are asked to follow Christ in all his imitable excellencies. And what more is a more excellent imitation than that of love?

[3 : 10] Leslie Newbigin, a theologian and missionary in the 20th century, stated that the church is a pilgrim people of God and is on the move, hastening to the end of the earth and imploring all men to be reconciled to God.

where we'll move together to know him, to love him and to dwell with him. And the most important phrase in that sentence is on the move.

But is that the impression we get in our generation?

Are we on the move? I think Karen prayed in her prayer about being partnership.

We've not to be sleeping partners. We have to be active partners. Letting God fill us and motivate us and move through us for his glory.

[4 : 39] And sometime we get two pictures of the church. Either one of progression or one of regression. Griffiths Griffiths takes a rather cynical look at the church as he paints a distorted scene from Acts chapter 2 verses 42 to 47 where rather than a church blooming and blossoming he sketches the complete opposite.

One which was laughed at. And then he adds this. And God withheld from their midst any power or blessing and their numbers decreased day by day.

And growth we have to understand is not just about numbers. Not just filling pews. we should be looking at growth in a spiritual sense.

In growth and maturity. It's not that the Lord has lost his power.

it is it is that the church has lost its focus. God has not lost his power but the church has lost its focus.

[6 : 19] And when we refocus our minds and our hearts and our wills on what God wants that is progression. What is the vision for this church?

Helping those without Christ become complete in Christ. Is that the vision? I've heard people ask the question what does that mean?

helping people without Christ become complete in Christ.

To become complete in Christ we first of all have to come to faith in Christ. We have to follow his direction his example and we have to go on to maturity and maturity is important.

As we said last week grey hairs doesn't always bring maturity. Some time ago I heard an American preacher say this the world is under no obligation to come and hear until the church fulfills its commission to go and tell.

[7 : 57] And people don't know how much we know how much we know until they know how much we care. and that's the important thing.

It's not head knowledge it's heart knowledge. The heart of Christ living in us motivating us stirring us up and enabling us to do his will and his purpose.

In the year 1990 the Baptist Union of Scotland put out a challenge to the churches through the soul covenant calling us collectively and individually to embrace this concept stating Jesus Christ is the hope of the world.

He is the center around which our lives revolve. He is the sovereign presence in the kingdom in which we live and work.

His truth is eternal. His love is unchanging. His grace is sufficient to him we commit our lives totally joyfully and unreservedly.

[9 : 31] I don't know of you who were involved in that out from Baptist Union this old covenant but the question I ask myself 20 years down the road are we seeing that impacting our communities today?

Once a growing thriving pulsating throbbing church church how we lost the impetus. Oh we have this group and that group and other groups but as I said numbers is not the important thing.

The important thing is how we grow in Christ. Developing our skills our gifts that God has given us and enabling other people to be blessed.

Blessing each other. We often say that bless you my friend but what do we mean by it? we need to understand the God of Scripture.

We need to understand what Jesus Christ wants us to do and not just understand it but put it into practice.

[11 : 12] Rick Warren in his purpose driven church said this never confuse methods with the message. The message must never change but the methods must change with each new generation.

The message is central to what the church proclaims because Jesus is central but how we communicate him may be different.

You know I've said before from here about Gilbert Ritchie past president of the Baptist Union who made this statement in his presidential address church like a mighty tortoise moves the church of God brothers we are treading where we've always trod not moving forward the church is God's called out people you are God's called out people as I am to listen and to respond to a God who is on the move that means always keeping up with God and never being left behind and if we go forward and in our ministry in our work together if we fail to prepare we prepare to fail and therefore we have to hold on to the whole aspect of hearing listening obeying

God's word and God's word for me in this generation moving with the heartbeat of God and rejoicing with the heartbeat of God the Lord Jesus Christ in his ministry call men to him he prepared them he sent them out to follow him will be costly and it means getting your jacket off it means getting your sleeves rolled up and moving in the power and dynamism of the Holy Spirit Mark Twain once remarked I know a man who grabbed a cat by the tail and learned the 90% more about cats than the man who didn't

I don't know if you have ever grabbed a cat by the tail I'm not asking you to do it but how did Jesus prepare his followers he prepared them individually small groups large groups multitudes he put he prepared them through teaching individuals groups large groups multitudes all had a place in his teaching ministry and he won them into the kingdom through love fellowship and healing and that is our mandate to follow

[15 : 21] Jesus Christ as he would have us imitate him winning people into the kingdom through love fellowship and healing and we all need to be healed we're all we can all struggle from time to time mentally physically emotionally spiritually and we need to we need to see that and get alongside people and help them to know God's power and God's love he taught them as no other person he taught them through prayer that cry from lips of the disciples Lord teach us to pray as

John taught his disciples it was a deep rooted plea Lord teach us to pray as John taught his disciples a little boy was praying one day with all sincerity and he prayed this dear God please bless mommy and daddy granny and grandpa and my wee sister and then he finished by saying and please take care of yourself because if anything happens to you we are sunk so God is the most important person in that to let him be predominant and preeminent in our lives prayer for me is I suppose one of the hardest things to really get down to

I marvel at how the stalwarts of the past spent hours and hours in prayer I can read about it I can hear sermons on it I can listen to other people speaking about it but that doesn't get me down to pray I have to ask God to give me the strength to be able to do that he taught them in groups he shared with them his prayer life there was discipleship there was mentoring through modeling and helping those disciples through encouragement correction demonstration and accountability the end phrase

I suppose is having a joined up service not church service where we all work together each part each person doing his own thing complimenting everybody else to prepare God's people for works of service so that the body of Christ may be built up and that's the ultimate goal that our church that each person in it use their skills and their abilities to build each other up not to knock them down but to encourage them and to enable them to grow into greater people because

Christ is the center of all things is he the center of your life is he the center of my life all the time I have to work on that and ask God to fill me with all his fullness from the moment I get up to the time I retire and go to bed fill every conversation and every plan and purpose

God is on the move and wants the church to move with him in such a way that the unchanging biblical concept is kept alive a church which vibrates with new life members and maturity the late Dr.

[22 : 20] Fisher Archbishop of Canterbury was asked to chair an informal discussion and one particular frank young delegate suggested that the archbishop generation were back numbers no longer useful maybe retorted the archbishop but back numbers are useful for lighting fires don't discount older people realize the wealth of information they have their discipleship how God has used them how God has blessed them and how God can bless us through their experiences

I want to see the purpose of God in my generation and therein lies the secret we need each other young and old and those in between working together growing together and maturing together and may we cry out this morning to God not to withhold his power but to refill us and let us remember that if we cry out that prayer to God we must be prepared to move with a moving God on his terms not ours on his conditions not ours with his power not ours and

Jesus told those disciples wait in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit comes upon you and then you'll have power and sometimes we are prepared to wait without the power but let God fill us to all his fullness that he may be glorified in everything we do Father God thank you that you're a God who doesn't stand still who's always on the move we don't want to be left behind we want to indeed be members of your church we want to minister with the gift you've given to us but more importantly we want to grow in maturity help us to do that and help us to move with you as your

Holy Spirit empowers and helps us with that message of good news to implode upon the world today take our lives and let them be consecrated Lord to thee this day and always amen thank you make of ■ don't comfortable there■■■ one I have to and take up you ■■ mundo boomarts godriver BON old squash Kelvin fin chancellor him bitch poor bitch have