

Christ Community Covenant Church
Why . . . do we 'do church'?
Pastor Dave Scherrer - January 6, 2013

Who, what, when, where and why - the five 'w's of Journalism. With these five questions answered, it is expected that they average reader will be satisfied with the story.

This series for January we have entitled "Why?" Over the next several weeks we are going to look at some familiar subjects

Why "Church?"	Why "Baptism?"	Why "Blood"?
Why "Communion?"	Why "Marriage?"	

Why ask why?

"Why?" gets at the purpose of the circumstances or the event - why did you do that?
It gets at motive. It gets at the ethics – really the reason we ask why is to establish right or wrong, perhaps to establish blame. The answer to why gets us to a deeper understanding than who what where and when. And typically it is the question that is the most difficult to answer – often times the answer to the why question is an agonizing "I don't know?"

Have you ever had a little child that just keeps asking "Why?" to your answers till finally you had to answer with the basic of all parental answers – "Because I said so!"

Defining our terms: What exactly is "Church?"

I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you quickly: but in case I am delayed, you will know how you should conduct yourself in the house (*domain*) of God, which is the ecclesia of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. (1 Timothy 3:14-15)

The ecclesia of the living God IS the pillar and ground of the truth! That makes it pretty important. If we can define "ecclesia," we will have identified "the pillar and ground of the truth." Few endeavors are as important and rewarding as this. I need you to hang with me for a few moments because this is a little complicated.

Ecclesia – the "Called Out"

The '**Ek**' part of this word means "out". Ek = "out" and the second part of this noun is the word "*kaléo*" or "to call from or to" to call out from one situation or circumstance into another.

Think of it like being chosen for a softball team. You have been in line hoping for a chance to play and you are in line and you get called out from the line and into the team. You used to be a wanna be and now you are a teammate. You have been called **out and to**. This is the only word used in the New Testament to refer to what has been translated "church" and it is used 115 times.

Now there is another Greek word that is the more accurate philological root of our word "church" and that is "ku-ri-á-kos" or "ku-ri-á-kon."

Kyriakos – "Belonging to the Lord"

If you look up the root word for church in the dictionary you will find this word not "ecclesia." As you can see, this word doesn't even resemble the Greek word "ecclesia". The Greek "kuriakos" eventually came to

be used in Old English form as "cirice" (*kee-ree-ke*), then "churche" (*kerke*), and eventually "church" in its traditional pronunciation. A church, then, is correctly something that "pertains to, or belongs to, a lord."

Here is a subtle but important truth for you this morning. The word ecclesia, the word used in the Bible means "called out." So you say "From what?" I would suggest that when Christ uses this word and the authors of the New Testament it means that we have been called out of this Kingdom with its various Caesars to a different Kingdom – the Kingdom of God – where we have a new King and where we live by new laws and values. And while what happens all over the world when we gather in Church together to "ku-ri-á-kos" - to participate in those things that "pertain to the Lord" - we do that as the ecclesia - "the called out" from the world with its fallen values to a new ruler and Kingdom.

1 Peter 1:9-10

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

So first and foremost, we gather together as a unique group of people, called out of darkness, out of false values and rules, out of deception and lies and into the pillar and ground of truth that is living under and in and through King Jesus in the Kingdom of God. Into life itself!

One hundred religious persons knit into a unity by careful organizations do not constitute a church any more than eleven dead men make a football team. The first requisite is life, always." **A. W. Tozer**

Fighting the misconceptions

I don't need church to worship God.

On the surface of that I have to admit that I don't need to gather with the called out to worship God. I worship Him quite often by myself. I have to admit I felt very close to God as I watched the ocean from my window overlooking the Oregon Coast last week. But, the very term ecclesia has in its definition the idea of "community." The "ecclesia" is a community of called out believers and we worship more fully when we gather to seek God.

Hebrews 10:24-25 and let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Our church is for seekers

Again, on the surface I like this statement. 4Cs is for seekers. We work pretty hard to make our experience here a welcoming and winsome experience for those who would like to find God. But there is a very big difference between being **seeker sensitive** and designing our church experience for those who do not know God.

Seeker Sensitive VS Seeker Only

So here at 4Cs we gather to encourage each other to hold fast to our faith and to celebrate who we are **and** invite others to join us in a new understanding of life in the Kingdom of God. So I hope you will invite those who are seekers and we will be careful to be kind and accepting. And from here are many things we can do to serve and befriend and testify to those who do not yet believe, but the purpose of this time is to seek God and worship Him. More on that is just a bit.

And finally this misconception:

I want a church that meets MY needs

Again, not that getting something out of church is wrong. I get something out of fellowshiping with you all every week. But too often a commercialism has crept into our gatherings, especially here in America, and it becomes almost entertainment. As though we were the one who needed to be served and not God. It is a dangerous thing to let this mindset creep into our church lives.

So really, why does church matter?

1. We are the Body of Christ

In 1 Corinthians 12 and in Romans 12 we who are called out by God and indwelt by His Holy Spirit are referred to as the Body of Christ. We together form a new manifestation of Christ on Earth. Recently we celebrated when God came to earth as a man. Now he has ascended and the church has now taken His place. We are God's physical representation on earth of His Kingdom Love and Truth.

2. We are the Bride of Christ

This euphemism speaks more to the churches' relationship with Christ than to our character. Just as there was a betrothal period in biblical times during which the bride and groom were separated until the wedding, so is the bride of Christ separate from her Bridegroom during the church age. Her responsibility during the betrothal period is to be faithful to Him (2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:24) and at the Second Coming of Christ, the church will be united with the Bridegroom, the official "wedding ceremony" will take place and, with it, the eternal union of Christ and His bride will be actualized (Revelation 19:7-9; 21:1-2).

And finally,

3. We are the Instruments of Christ

The church is Plan A and there is no Plan B. The coming of the Holy Spirit to indwell those who believe and receive are not only called the children of God but we are the instruments by which His plan is to be completed.

These ideas answer the "who we are" questions regarding the church and they apply to 4Cs too. We can (and should) ask ourselves the question "Why do we exist?" "Why do we do what we do?"

So let's apply that to ourselves; Why does 4Cs exist?

Mission Statement - To love God, to love others and advance the Kingdom together

Values Statements

Community Minded, Family church, Teaching church, Multiplying church and a Celebrating church

It is for these reasons that we sacrifice to build a building from which to minister.

Evidence of community in the name of Christ

There is a place where we can discover the why of church. It is in the commands of Christ for His followers and in the upper room before his death where Jesus prays for the church and the believers to come.

Love each other
John 13:34-35

³⁴ A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. ³⁵ By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Glorify God
John 17:4-5

⁴ I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. ⁵ And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.

Experience His Holiness in Worship
John 17:16-19

They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁷ Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.

Enjoy the delight of Oneness
John 17:20-22

“I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, ²¹ that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one,

Matthew 16:18

And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.