

Radiant Church, September 13, 2020  
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### The Church We Can Be Part 3

**Acts 20:20-21** *How I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house, testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.*

When people called Jesus a “Friend of sinners,” it wasn’t meant as a compliment.

How do we relate to people who are not a part of our church?

How do we relate to non-Christians?

1. Ignore them? (Like ignoring our empty trash cans on trash day?)
2. Avoid them? (Because we’re afraid they’ll disagree, or we’ll end up like them?) This is called “sectarianism”
3. Blend in with them? (Because we want to be liked and accepted, with no pain in the process?) This is called “syncretism”
4. Villainize them? (Are they our “deplorables?”) We don’t want to love you or win you to Jesus; we want to end you!

Paul says he “testified,” a term used describe the action to convince someone of something that they otherwise do not believe

Paul was able to say that he saw the unbelievers in Ephesus, he loved them and he point them to the reality of Jesus in every way he could

It must have been hard for the Jewish Christians who lived in Ephesus  
They were not the majority of believers in their own church  
Theirs was not the majority belief system in their own city  
It would have been easy to want to just hide out and be a closed group

The Church is God’s people and plan to reach the nations with the hope of the gospel

Philip Yancey once wrote: “I rejected the church for a time because I found so little grace there. I returned because I found grace nowhere else.”

#### **Can outsiders be on our radar?**

Look at our church

We’re young, somewhat financially secure, and upwardly mobile  
Most of us are educated above the national average  
Most of us own our own homes, we have toys, and we can look forward to fun vacations

And most of us would say our best and trusted friends are also a part of our Church

When churches “die,” it’s almost always because their sense of mission died long before

Theirs may be a long-before paid off church building, but they haven’t seen a visitor since the Civil War

How easy it is for any of us to fall into the old “Us four, and no more” mentality. Because we really just want to go to church with our family and friends

We could respond to the question of “How’s your church doing,” with “Oh we’re fine. We all like each other, and we pay our bills on time.”

We like comfort, predictability, and control. Any risks taken are a threat to that

We’re easily like the third servant in Matthew 25, each given a different amount of money to invest. One gets five, invests and makes 10; the second gets 2, and makes 2 more. The third does nothing, buries it in the ground, and the master is not happy, so he consigns the third servant to hell.

Southwest Airlines came into existence when only 15% of travelers were flying. Instead of trying to steal that 15% from other airlines, they went after the non-flying 85%. Their competition was not the other airlines, it was cars and busses and trains. They wanted every traveler to be “free to fly about the country.”

Someone once said, “The church exists for the benefit of its non-members”

No other organization or community on earth is like this

**Anyone can get in on the gospel (even people we don’t think should)**

Here’s the gospel in a nutshell...We are all complete idiots and misguided rebels by nature and by choice, but our future is really bright, because of who Jesus is and what He has done, and anyone can get in on it!

To be a part of a church there is only one qualification

You are a sinner, ready to be done with your sin, ready to trust Jesus

**What will Jesus say to each of us on that day when we stand before Him and give an account for how we lived our lives?**

To be the church we can be, we can:

We can learn to pray for outsiders, especially those we already know

We can figure out how to be on mission to outsiders, even in the midst of Covid 19 restrictions, and our church's present homelessness

We can live **bold**. The gospel is "the power of God for salvation for all who believe."  
We can live out and even talk about the grace and the truth of Jesus

This means we can no longer ignore them, avoid them, try to be just like them, or villainize them

This also means we are not willing to wait to tell someone about Jesus until we are confident enough that we know enough

We can make sharing our faith feel more normal, without you taking a class

1. Growing up...
2. My life was...
3. Then I was introduced to Jesus...
4. Now...

We can **be hospitable**. Wouldn't it be amazing if every one of us was able to say we entertained a unsaved person in our home sometime in the next 6 months?

We can **be creative**. Because going forward, we're going to have to be creative. And creativity always comes with risk. We are now in a season where we will have to be risk-takers. And we'll have to accept the fact that not every idea will work out well.

We can **take on a long-term view**. If we love an unsaved person, we will be willing to see their possible conversion to Jesus taking time, consistency on our part, and repeated exposures to gospel truth in different contexts.

It doesn't start with our church doing this. In this case, the macro doesn't not determine the micro. Just the opposite. We each have to decide to be in relationships with unsaved people.

And we all know that simply knowing someone's name does not equate to having a relationship

If we continue as we are, safe and comfortable, we will not make it over time. Our church will die. It's happening all around North America as we speak.

FRANC and BLESS lists