

Alliance Churches Take It to the Streets

Alliance churches are breaking the mold of the traditional church plant. Frustration with budget crunches, dwindling congregations, and decreased giving with little left for outreach has caused many Alliance pastors to rethink the way they do church.

In order to build bridges of trust that will bear the weight of truth, some Alliance churches are moving beyond the four walls of traditional church buildings into their communities, demonstrating the love of their Servant King through projects that benefit their neighbors. *Benefitting Neighbors*

"Most church plants take [a group of] people and move them," says Pastor Scott Klaudt, who established a coffeehouse in downtown Missoula, Montana, in order to meet plenty of people. "We didn't want to just shift a bunch of Christians around, which may work for some, but it's not what I wanted to do."

The coffeehouse venue provides lunches, catering mostly to professionals in search of quality noontime respite, and hosts open-mike night that draws the university crowd, jazz concerts highlighting local musicians, and benefit fundraisers for neighbors. "We recently hosted a benefit concert for a youngster who suffers from a seizure disorder," says Scott.

God's Property!

In Ft. Wayne, Indiana, Bob and Sue Havenor and a handful of people, none of whom are in professional ministry, have reclaimed for God an area where an Alliance

church once stood. They have taken jobs within their community in order to build relationships. Bob is getting to know a lot of men through his work at an auto parts store.

"We didn't plant an organization where people with needs must go to a church," says Bob. "We are the Church that has a mandate to go to the people with needs. This is the essence of incarnational ministry." Bob's team began systematically prayer walking every street in a 1.5 square-mile area.

"We started at a strategic location that is, first, an easy place to find on a busy central street," he says. "Second, and far more important, is what this property once was. This was the site of the Fort Wayne Gospel Temple, a leading Alliance church in the middle half of the last century."

Freely Give

Pastor Rick Gates has led his Crossroads Church congregation in Perry, Iowa, out of the sanctuary to shine the light of Christ during a Week of Service in their community. Church members have completed 40 projects in four years. Local TV news shows have reported the "free help" that Crossroads provided for the community in June.

"Our culture today knows nothing of the church except that it expects people to give money and attend services for no meaningful or relevant purpose," says Rick. "The church is not connected to their daily lives and does not make sense to them. Jesus talks a lot about being servants . . . as we serve, people begin to see Jesus."

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Jesus In Public Schools

By John Sappia, serving in Paraguay

Recently, we were invited into the local public high school to teach a school-wide assembly on “Saving Sex for Marriage” as well as four classes on “Your Identity in Christ.” We presented our talk on sexual purity to a total of 250 students, ranging from age 12 to 20.

We started the presentation with a moving skit about the consequences of not protecting God’s gift of sexuality. Then I shared about how the Bible tells us that sex is a gift from God to be enjoyed within the protection of marriage.

During four weeks of our ministry in the school, we were asked to address a “rough to teach” seventh grade class on how they can find their true identity in God. We spoke about how Jesus has provided for our “real” identity.

Jars of Clay

Using clay jars, we explained that because of our sin, we are broken and cannot be what we were intended to be; God has provided a well of pure Living Water through Jesus Christ, and each of the students could enjoy this Water. Surrendering our lives to Jesus is the only way to truly become all that we were created to be.

What Does Buddha Do?

by Ed & Sue Danneker, serving in Thailand

Praise God for the eight children who joined us each day for our weeklong

Vacation Bible School (VBS) in October. We used the “Wordless Book,” a color-coded evangelistic device, throughout the week to present the gospel to the children. After Wednesday’s lesson on “red,” symbolizing the blood of Christ that cleanses us from sin, a sixth grader asked Fely, our missionary colleague, if Buddha could wash her sins away. Fely answered that Buddha teaches us to be good people but only Jesus can wash our sins away.

On Thursday Noi Na, another colleague of ours, taught the “white” lesson on how we can pray to ask Jesus to cleanse us from our sin and become new in Christ. The four girls sitting on the front row of the mat were intently following her every word. God really anointed Noi Na for that day’s message. The four girls wanted to pray to have Jesus wash their sins away.

A Vivid Contrast

As Noi Na began to lead the girls in prayer, a monk from China who was begging for money approached the front of the church where Ed was seated. I (Sue) began praying that Ed would be able to quickly and quietly have the monk move on without disturbing the children. It was such a vivid picture of the spiritual battle for the children between the former ways and the Jesus way. The children’s backs were to the monk, and they were so intent on what Noi Na was telling them that they did not turn around. Praise God! Ed managed to have the Chinese monk move on, and the four girls did pray to receive salvation in Jesus.

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Read expanded versions of these stories and more at
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