

Needs in The Lutheran Church of the Republic of China (Taiwan)



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Introduction

We are a small Church with only 11 congregations. More than half of them are less than 30 in size. Therefore, the apparent needs are resources, especially physical, tangible resources to meet their daily operation. However, the apparent needs are not our true needs in mission. If we focus on meeting those apparent needs, there will be no mission and we would fail to be the church.

Our real needs, in my observation, are

1. Right motivation

We need to continually reflect on our motivations for missions, free ourselves from self-seeking motivations like the quest for feats or church-growth. We need to beware of & resist influences from the world and other glory-seeking churches with their apparent successes. The right motivation must come from faith in Christ and be solidly founded on the gospel of His cross.

2. Simplicity

Congregations often stick to trivial rules, do a lot of activities and hold many programs. Often, we lose sight of why we do them. These things, basically good in their own rights, may preoccupy our time, consume our energy and passions for the true missions the Lord ordains for us. Leaders need to be discerning and prudently selective in advocating/organizing activities, so we are not hindered from doing the Lord's mission. Such discernment is not personal and subjective, but always objectively gospel-oriented.

3. Be a good neighbor

Small congregations are always tempted towards a survival-mode, if they are trapped in struggles to meet their inner demands. Yet smaller congregations, being more accessible, actually have better opportunities to bless their communities, as long as they are not too ambitious to be who they are not called to be. We need to be outwardly focused to serve others, regardless of our own inadequacy, with a firm conviction that our Lord is infinitely rich and God's grace is inexhaustible.

All these three needs must be, and can only be, met by the joy of the true gospel. It will motivate us with a pure heart, simplify our programs to center on Christ, and free us from a fortress mentality into generous service to our neighbors.