



March 2000

Well, and a good month it is we have coming up! I'm always happy to see the Intercessor's Conference come out of the chute, especially since we aren't having the Summer Revival meetings any more. There's nothing quite as special as drawing closer to the Lord, and how good to know that the Lord must enjoy these times too!

It will be a hard couple of weeks getting there yet, but expectation gives one strength. Not only that, but Spring is nibbling at us! All frost aside, I saw the legendary *golden lawnflower* for the first time this morning, and in my lawn no less! It just doesn't get any better than this.

Last month I promised to talk about TORCH vision and distinctives so I had to study up a bit on just what we are doing. That was good for me, so I expect it to be good for you too. We're here for a reason. God has a unique purpose and calling on this age group.

For starters, we are TORCH Singles of City Bible Church. We are here primarily because we've bought into the vision of this local house, want to be part of it, and want a group that reflects the current life of the church.

In many ways this portion of vision concerns more what we don't do than our activities. We don't want to raise up a big center of bustle and entertainment that pulls people out of real ministry or makes it hard to enter into such. We do, however wish to meet needs that are hindering others from finding that place of involvement and belonging that is the goal of membership in a good church.

As much as possible we try not to make being single a rallying point by itself. It's neither a blessing nor a curse, an advantage or a handicap, a hindrance to be overcome, or a disease to be cured of. It's a state of life ordained by the Lord and subject to all the responsibilities, provisions and privileges of any other state of life. For this reason we chose not to create a TORCH entity within the cell groups.

We just attend and participate like any other men and women of God.

We do have a monthly meeting for a time of fellowship and Bible study on issues that are especially relevant to singles. But the TORCH program is not meant to be complete aside from a healthy involvement in the full spectrum of church life and activity. We are careful not to try to replace the church dynamic, but to supplement it.

One of the groups I am familiar with is the intercessors. Among the intercessor's there are many singles in the target age who are not involved with TORCH. After prayerful consideration we began to realize that this was wonderful, these people are healthy, involved Christians carrying a full load of responsibility in the kingdom. To try to take them away from that just to build a "single's ministry" would be counterproductive and just not right!

As you explore other areas of the church you'll discover the same thing- singles who have plugged in here and there and are holding up an area of responsibility. Many are not involved with TORCH, for they don't need to be. But there are those who do need the belonging, the identification and the fellowship. That's the reason for the group.

Then there are those who by reason of vocation and other responsibilities are just not able to get into a niche tight enough to keep their needs covered. Again TORCH has a calling to be available for those who just need something extra.

The three areas of church vision here are exalting the Lord, equipping the saints, and extending the kingdom. They also are the overriding principles of TORCH, influencing every plan and activity, or at least, that is the goal and the hope.

The name TORCH is an anagram, like many of the titles in this church. It does tell it's story if we let it.

T stands for the Transformational power of Christ. We are people who have been touched, and are being touched by the Lord. We believe

in prayer, and in the quickened Word of God. We see ourselves as whole, healthy people who have found answers to the issues of this life. We have something to share and impart.

O is for Outreach. The Lord never gives us blessing in order to hide it. Our hands are refilled continually so that we will have something to give to others- if only we will keep passing it along. Don't just receive a blessing from God- bring a friend too!

R- Relationship and belonging. After we get either delivered or sickened of the old *date or die* mentality we find that we do need friends, those who will be part of our lives and allow us into theirs. God sets the solitary in families.

For this reason we try to make TORCH a safe place where one can spend time and grow both spiritually and socially with other people who are likeminded.

C- Christ Centered. We are here because we are Christians. That relationship is the most important thing in our lives. May it affect every activity that we engage in.

That also means we are here to love those whom Christ loves. Some of them will be less than lovely. Love, however is different from catering to the whims of another. It involves speaking truth and sometimes calling for change. So be it.

H- Helping. Christ called us to be servants. How can we serve others? That is one of our most vital questions, for when we reach out to another a whole different world opens up. As we do we put away our tin beggar's cup and reach out instead to give a blessing. Suddenly we're rich!

A servant has a brand new attitude. The All American Consumer is gone, with all of the baggage that entails. Now he is approachable, correctable, grateful yet confident. He is not hesitant to take time for others, yet at the same time he's hard to manipulate and take advantage of, for his heart is pure. He is God's man in a quiet way.

As far as activities go, there are only a few fixed ones. We try to get together on the last Friday of every month for a time of worship, fellowship and the Word. B- has been leading these meetings. If you haven't attended recently, why not try to make one? This is also a time to bring a friend or two.

On Sundays we get together for dinner at various restaurants two or three times a month. SNAC actually stands for Singles Night After Church. When the renewal hit, however Sunday evenings became very iffy, so we usually make it afternoons, but everyone still knows what we mean.

We found that we were usually going out and doing this anyway, but planning ahead and getting it into the church bulletin means that just anyone can come, whether they are in on all the planning or not. Have you joined us lately? You're welcome. If money is a problem for you we try to have a few Sunday afternoons also at someone's home where you could just be our guest. If that's you, watch for such a time and please come.

Some of the single men of this age group have rough edges, so we are trying to see changes through the Promise Keeper's group. This meets on the first Friday of the month at T- and M-'s house at 7 PM. It's not all heavy duty stuff, and M- really knows how to cook. Due to the extraordinary effort she puts in we give her at least \$5 per guest for the meal expenses. If you're a man ready for some change and can handle getting fed, come join us.

The ladies meet a little less regularly, officially that is. Unofficially there is always something happening, so don't be fooled by a less than full calendar. E- is a good one to talk to if you are a lady who wants to get in a little deeper here.

There are a group of TORCH folks who try to sit together and attend the 11 AM service on Sundays. They try to sit in the far left section of the sanctuary, generally rows 2 and 3 counting forward from the center aisle. The section is not reserved, however, so sometimes they get moved a bit but are usually right around that area.

Events-

Well, now that we know who we are, lets look at what we will be doing this next month. First off, on the third the ladies are having a get together at C-'s. C- says to be there at 6:30 and bring orderes to share around. Last time they met it was a great time, so this should be too.

The men will be to Promise Keepers this night. Have chapter six read in the book, dealing with racial reconciliation. Remember the rules, be on time, bring your book, and be ready to talk about what you have read. Some months we follow the book a little closer than other months, but since we are reading on our own, that's ok.

The Northwest Intercessor's Conference is not specifically a TORCH event, but don't you dare miss it. Ministry is coming from all over the world to help us plug into more of God.

After it's over there will be some demonic backlash and counterattack. As a member of the church you'll get that regardless. Why not get the blessing first? I know I am! And as for the backlash, remember one thing- the devil's lazy. He goes for the easiest target first. That's usually the fellow who missed the meetings! The more of the Spirit we get into us, the less he even wants to get close.

Our monthly meeting will be at Gary's since S- will be out of town. Let's come at 6:30 and go for potluck. Sound good? It usually is.

Prayer on the 13th. That will be just after the conference so it will be a good time to keep our fences mended if nothing else. Come on down and we'll have a time of it.

Have a great month!....

GAH

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