

THE MID-ATLANTIC DISTRICT
THE CHRISTIAN AND MISSIONARY ALLIANCE

MISSION 2015

“The Church Enflamed...The Kingdom Enlarged”

Waking Up to A New World of The Ancient-Future

Never since the first century has the Church faced similar challenges as the apostolic church. Persecution is at an all time high. Christianity, once revered in the West, has now fallen into disfavor and Christ-followers are increasingly depreciated. Society and government marginalizes the Church. Modern secularism, science and philosophy ignore it.

In America, the Church is shrinking and sailing toward irrelevance. In 1990, 52 million Americans attended church. In 2006, 52 million Americans attended church. Yet, the population in America grew by 52 million people. Christianity in America is fading like the smile on the Cheshire cat.

We are working harder than ever but conversions are fewer and fewer and most all the new growth we experience is simply one believer moving from one church to another. We are closing more churches than we are opening and church attendance is losing ground every year in America.

Yet there are signs that we are on the cusp of a Second Reformation. The first reformation was theological while this one is more philosophical and structural.

While the way church was conducted was virtually unchanged for many decades, we are now seeing the rise of satellite churches, multi-sites, house churches, coffee house churches, youth churches, cell churches, network churches, café churches, restaurant churches, community project based churches, workplace churches, gym churches, monastic community churches, and virtual churches through the internet. Once church was done on Sunday mornings and now it is conducted at a variety of times throughout the week.

Houses of Prayer are rising up all over the world and in the US being primarily led by young adults. The “Back to Jerusalem” movement is gaining momentum in China and CAC areas. Career missionaries are being replaced by marketplace international workers. In the U.S. full-time church planters are now bi-vocational, working in teams. All this is accompanied by signs, wonders, and dreams.

This New World, a “Novel Era,” is marked by a passion for intimacy with God and a passion for mission. As a result, we see a return to spiritual formation and accompanying personal spiritual disciplines. This has troubled many, who steeped in Protestant

traditionalism, are suspicious of the journeys of mostly youthful God seekers making their way to Prayer Centers and Monasteries to engage a “Rule of Life” that will take them to a sustained dynamic communion with God out of which they can lead and impact their world.

Indeed, like the first reformation, this reformation arises out of a spiritual restlessness for power, relevance and cultural impact. The response has been jarring and troubling to some, but it is our only hope. If the Church is to return to its original vitality and influence, we must re-engage first century-like faith and its accompanying way of life.

It will require a fresh love for God, love for our communities, and empowerment by the Holy Spirit. It will mean letting go of “complicated church” and embarking on “simple church” so that we can imbed ourselves in the market-places of society and building relational bridges over which the Gospel of rescue can travel. It will involve patience, courage, flexibility, openness to new paradigms and faith. And, it will require an honest discernment between forms and functions.

The call is not back to 1958 but a call to a time much further back: a call to first century passion for Jesus, sacrificial and courageous living, full-time intimacy with the Savior, Holy Spirit filling, accountability to one another, and primacy of prayer and mission.

Succinctly put by Reggie McNeal, we must possess missional spirituality, the combination of a burning passion for Jesus and a drive to reach lost people. According to McNeal, the reason the North American church is ineffective in reaching our culture is simply that the North American Church is not spiritual enough. Is that why many of our Mid-Atlantic District churches are stagnant and some on the edge of extinction?

But there is fresh hope in this New World in which we find ourselves. Hope as we join in the flow of this Second Reformation. My heart is that the Mid-Atlantic District will courageously embrace this new reformation and live like our first century forbearers. Then as missionally spiritual leaders, we can expect a fresh wind of the Spirit and a new harvest of Kingdom expansion.

It is a faith journey. None of us has been here before so we do not know what to expect. Like a newborn passing through the birth canal to face a new era, so do we. Let us seize the day with courage and confidence and with the Spirit’s empowerment become more than conquerors through Jesus Christ, discovering more world beyond!

In the New World of the Ancient Future.

The 2015 Dream

“Communities of Faith on journey and on mission with God, growing more like Jesus and carrying on His work of bringing wholeness to broken people throughout the Mid-Atlantic region and beyond”

Committed to

Transcendence: The Active Engagement of the Supernatural

- **Personal and Passionate Communion With Jesus**
- **Individual and Corporate Empowerment of The Holy Spirit**
- **An undeniable Presence of God in the gathered community**
- **A declared recognition and engagement in spiritual warfare**

Truth: The Compass of God’s Word

- **The source of God’s voice in personal and corporate worship**
- **The source of God’s voice in personal and corporate direction**
 - **The weapon in every spiritual test and battle**

Transformation: The Power of Changed Lives

- **The insistence of changed minds, changed hearts, and changed lives**
- **The unarguable evidence of broken addictions, altered attitudes, and healed lives**

Triumph: Taking Rescue Beyond Ourselves

- **Intentionally taking rescue to our local communities**
 - **Implementing rescue to the next communities**
 - **Engaging partnerships in cross-cultural rescue**

“If you have a new world, you need a new church. You have a new world.”

In The New World

Less...

Quantitative measures

Congregational/Modalic focus

Spiritual only emphasis

Missions-sending

Didactic Instruction

Worker Care: Skill

**Traditional Structures
(Multiple Programs)**

Monolithic Mega churches

Church Gatherings

Cloistered living

Wholly Financed Planters

Time Focus

More...

Qualitative/Transformative measures

Community/Sodalic focus

Wholistic emphasis

Missions-partnerships

Interactive Learning

Worker Care: Soul

**Simple/Fluid Structures
(Fewer Ministries)**

Small churches of all kinds

Church Scatterings

Incarnational living

Bi-Vocational Planters

Process Focus

OUR VALUES: The Compass That Will Guide US

GOD’S WORLD: Lost People (John 3:16)

GOD’S WALK: Prayer-Focused, Spirit-Filled (Ephesians 5:18)

GOD’S WORD: The Bible (Joshua 1:16)

GOD’S WORKERS: The Harvesters (Matthew 9:37-38)

GOD’S WORK: The Church (Ephesians 5:25)

GOD’S WAY: Courageous Faith (II Corinthians 5:17)

OUR PATH

MINISTRY COACHING

Through the use of coaching clusters, pastors will be provided a delivery system for soul care, personal development, and vocational development. If we lead out of the interior life, then issues of the heart and personal life will be equally emphasized with performance skill development.

INCARNATIONAL/MISSIONAL PHILOSOPHY

The Mid-Atlantic District will urge and seek to equip our local churches toward an incarnational and missional approach toward ministry. Local churches will be challenged to view themselves as existing for their community and world and thus to scatter themselves among their local community and to partner with other regions of the district and the world for the sake of bringing the Good News of Jesus Christ to those across the street, across the state, and across the world. Local congregants will be encouraged to embrace a full-time lifestyle of being a friend to sinners as they live missionary-like in their world.

WHOLISTIC MINISTRY APPROACH

The Mid-Atlantic District will encourage a wholistic approach to community and global ministry. Jesus modeled care of the whole person when he addressed the needs of people. Our local churches are therefore urged to incorporate not only soul rescue but person rescue. This will include developing ministries to address material and emotional needs of the community and world (the poor and the immigrants, Leviticus 19:10). This approach will be incorporated not only as it relates to the community but to their own fellowships as well, often in the small groups setting.

CREATIVE STRUCTURING

Effective ministry in this new era requires the ability to quickly adjust our ministries and our structures to accommodate the societal changes and needs of the day. Often our structures fit a previous era or need. Thus, the Mid-Atlantic District will call its churches to be ever re-evaluation ineffective ministries and structures and revise them to meet the needs and opportunities of the day. Upgrades, revisions, and fresh initiatives must mark every local church ministries, if not quarterly, then at minimum annually.

LOCAL CHURCH REPRODUCTION

The Mid-Atlantic District will continue to challenge our local churches to reproduction of itself in nearby communities. A clear mark of the first century church was missionary endeavor that included planting the gospel in next towns and provinces. So, we will commend to our local churches the ministries of church planting and reproduction

whether that be as a singular effort or in cooperation with area churches or it be in cooperation with regions. New day church planting may take a new approach using bi-vocational pastors, planting in a theater/bookstore/coffee shop, using the web, and/or cooperating with a non-C&MA entity for the sake of Kingdom expansion.

WORKER/CHURCH RESOURCING

The Mid-Atlantic District remains committed to providing resources to our workers and local churches through our media resource center, through seminars/conferences, through our web site, and the provision of consultants.

OUR MEASURES

“How will we know when we are getting there?”

- When by testimony and/or observation our workers find more consistent spiritual vitality and spiritual power for life and ministry
- When testimonies begin to mount in the areas of transformed lives, changed behaviors, and victory over strongholds.
- When we see more relationships established among lost people and a marked increase in conversions, baptisms, and community influence.
- When more than 50% of our pastors are engaged in some coaching or mentoring relationship and are finding it strengthening to their lives and ministries.
- When at least 30% of our churches are actively involved in a church multiplication effort.