

Southminster Presbyterian Church
Missouri City, Texas
January 17, 2004

“We Can Do That”

9:30 - 10:15 - The condition of the culture

- 1. Radical Change**
- 2. Post-Christendom (post-Constantinian)**
- 3. Post-Modern**

Michael Warden, writing for Leadership Network, puts the church's situation and opportunity clearly. *“In the last half of the 20th century, the American religious landscape was transformed. Commitment to traditional church structures steadily waned, while at the same time our hunger for spiritual fulfillment inched its way into the forefront of the cultural dialog. For the first time in our history as a nation, the concept of Truth began to lose its status as an independent reality. Instead, Truth became relative, dependent on an individual's circumstance or perspective.”*

“This is a sign of the times...only one among many. The culture is shifting. And many of the established paradigms by which churches have operated for decades can no longer support a populace that is looking for Truth outside the “box” created by our predecessors. By necessity, the 21st century church is becoming more flexible and organic, adapting and changing to engage the culture that surrounds it.

“This new environment is giving rise to a fundamental 're-design' of how the church carries out its mission. To be effective, churches once thought (and many still think) that all they needed to do was maintain certain expected church programs, provide a sanctuary where members could gather and worship, perhaps send out work teams into the community, or support missionaries at various locations around the globe. Effective missional churches in today's culture are breaking new ground, trying new approaches, and going back to the blueprint provided in Scripture to show them how to become an authentic ‘city on a hill that cannot be hidden.’”

The Condition of the Culture:
Radical Change
Post-Constantinian
Post-Modern

I. Radical Change

- A. If you follow changes in American culture today, there are so many changes that it is difficult to keep up with them all.
- B. "We live in what some commentators call a permanent white-water society." - Thomas R. Hawkins
- C. We are a "high velocity" society.

II. Carol Childress of Leadership Network identified Key U S. Cultural Shifts:

- A. Knowledge to experience
- B. Representation to participation
- C. Mono-cultural to multi-cultural
- D. Producer to consumer economy
- E. Youth oriented to the graying of America
- F. The new urban and small place resurgence
- G. Print to broadcast to interactive

III. Post-Christendom (post-Constantinian)

- A. Christendom was the era ushered in by the Roman Emperor Constantine in which the church stood at the center of the culture. That era is over.

IV. Alan Roxburgh speaks of the concept of "liminality" and the "double liminal" position of the church in America.

- A. Liminality is the experience of transition...the tension of wanting to go

back to an old way of life while knowing the future means adapting to a new way of life.

1. Like the transition from High School to College
 2. The first liminal condition the church finds herself in is "marginalization". Once at the heart of culture, the church was central to the life of every community, the pastor a leading community figure, the church's message the source of hope for much of the populace. The church has moved from the center to the margins of society.
 3. The second condition of liminality is this: there are no longer any margins to society! The culture is changing so rapidly that one cannot say (according to Roxburgh) that there is a 'middle' to society that defines the "edge" of the marginalized church. This is a time of intense spiritual searching and yet to much of our culture the church is simply irrelevant.
- B. We are like a ship in a stormy sea with no reference points on land or in the sky by which to steer. We have to discern the "internal guidance" system the Spirit of God offers to every body of believers. Significantly, these days are not unlike the days of the early church in which there were also many voices claiming people's spiritual allegiance and in which the church was certainly not in the center of the culture.
- C. Significantly, the loss of vitality of the mainline congregations and denominations began while we were still in the era known as modernity (Jim Mead). As congregations became fixated on themselves, they lost clear missional vision to reach into their communities with the resulting loss of vitality, a loss that has only been accelerated by the changes in our culture. Increasingly the very language (words, symbols, media) used by the church are no longer the ones used in the culture.

V. Post-Modern

- A. Not only are we in a "white-water" society, not only is the church marginalized in this post-Christendom era, but our culture is in the

middle of a major paradigm shift in its understanding of the concept of truth and how it thinks about the nature of experience. This shift is being called the shift from "modernity" to "postmodernity." This shift is so vast that it may be more accurately called a "paradigm rift.'

- B. Dale Patterson, pastor of Hackberry Presbyterian Church in Dallas offers some of the contrasts between the thinking of "modernity" and that of postmodernity.

Modernity (began with the Enlightenment)	Postmodernity (began in the later half of the 20 th Century)
Meaning from external authority	Meaning is not from an external authority.
Truth exists.	Suspicion of anyone with notions of truth.
Concerned with “Is it true?”	Concerned with “If I hold this particular belief, how may it interact with someone who holds a quite different belief.” “How can we get along together?” Truth is not nearly as important as, “Does it work for you?”
Principles discovered apply at all times	The process of observing affects what is observed so there is less objectivity.
Right and wrong is determined by timeless and unchanging standards.	Situational contexts determine what is right and wrong.
Accepts the authority of a metanarrative [such as Scripture]	Rejects the metanarrative as a means of validating what is true. Self-referential in that one’s own self is the primary determiner of that which is helpful and meaningful.
Asks, “Is the thinking right?”	Asks, “Is it helpful?”
Focuses on the message.	Focuses on the experience.
Focuses on the individual and God (“I”).	Focuses on the role of the community that shapes our identity and our identity with the on-going story of the people of God.

C. **Leonard Sweet** expresses four defining characteristics of post-modern culture as E.P.I.C.:

1. Experiential - Participatory – Image-Driven - Connected.
 - a. **Experiential** - the whole person experiencing - feeling - sensing - more than just the cerebral - heart and head.
 - b. Participatory - experiences with those around us -- for example - not just those who are “up front” on the chancel or in the pulpit.
 - c. **Image-based** - in contrast with a purely "word-centered" experience - "a picture is worth a thousand words" ever more true in an image-based culture.
 - d. **Connected** - feeling as one with those around us, the sense of belonging to a Body - in contrast to the traditional "solitary approach to the Deity" of traditional worship.

2. Sweet suggests people over the age of 39 are **immigrants** to American culture. You may have been born and raised here, but the language and symbols of the culture have changed. If you are under 39 Sweet contends that you are a **native** to American culture. The language, symbols and mores of the culture are the air you breathe.

3. The challenge to the mainline church, with its predominance of “immigrants" is how to continue to affirm the "immigrant" while genuinely reaching the "native" (and only 7% of P.C.U.S.A pastors are natives).

VI. We are in a post-modern era that features a hunger for personal experience, a desire for personal relationships, a lack of interest in institutions, a disregard for credentials, a commitment to truth as relative, truth as personal and so on. In a recent issue of REV magazine, an outstanding periodical on congregational and spiritual vitality, there is an article on post-post-modernism. Things seem to be changing far more rapidly than most of us can really grasp. What do we do?

- A. **Erwin McManus** in An Unstoppable Force, writes, "Over the past forty years, the communities around many churches have changed dramatically, yet the church has stayed the same. Somewhere in the community's transformation, the church disconnected. And since the transition began incrementally, the local congregation was unaware or unconcerned. The church must acclimate to a changing world or she will destine herself to irrelevance or even extinction.
- B. Think about this - with all of the changes taking place in our society what changes are taking place in your ministry to people? How have your congregation's priorities and program changed in any significant way in the last five years? Ten? Twenty?
- C. Certain things can be said about ministry in our day. French Philosopher Blaise Pascal spoke of the "God-shaped vacuum" in every human heart. That vacuum is still there. People still need God, still love, still hurt, still hope, still need to be shown love, dignity and respect.
- D. The church has a great message, indeed the greatest message: through faith in Jesus Christ we can know the love, presence, and grace of God, forever. Our evangelistic and disciple-making opportunities have never been greater. What does all this mean? Has the salt lost its flavor? No! The unchanging Gospel of Jesus Christ will always offer tremendous hope
- E. As Stanley Hauerwas and William Willimon put it, "Our use of the images of the church as a colony and Christians as resident aliens was meant to set this matter in stark contrast. From a Christian point of view, the world needs the church, not to help the world run more smoothly or to make the world a better and safer place for Christians to live. Rather, the world needs the church because, without the church, the world does not know who it is. The only way for the world to know that it is being redeemed is for the church to point to the Redeemer by being a redeemed people."
- F. The saltiness of the Gospel has not changed, but society is changing,

rapidly. The church must change too, if its message is to be heard and to help. The fact is the mess in our society and the deep spiritual hunger we see everywhere makes our day one of the greatest windows of opportunity for the church in all history.

10:15 - 10:30 - BREAK

10:30 - 10:50 - Vision Shifts in Congregational Ministry

4. Traditional
5. Transitional
6. Transformational

I. Vision Shifts in Congregational Ministry

- A. Illustration - A Gink of Water by John Maxwell
 1. “Daddy when you come up here to spank me would you bring me a Gink of water?”
 2. That boy had a tenacious vision of what he needed.
 3. But do we?
- B. The Classic 20th Century Vision for Congregational Ministry
Communal in focus. Although most congregations engaged their communities in various kinds of spiritual or social outreach, the vast majority of the energy of congregational life was devoted to the church itself.
- C. Programmatical in nature. Ministry was about running programs and simply put, running last year’s programs over again.
- D. The role of the pastor was primarily preaching, pastoral care, and program maintenance.

II. Vision Shifts are changing the face of congregational ministry

- A. Ott: From Traditional to Transformational
 1. From maintaining programs to changing lives.
 2. From maintaining programs to ministry design.
 3. From “communal” (primarily an inward focus on the congregation itself) to **communal** (inward) and **missional** in nature.
- B. Three Kinds of Congregations: Traditional, Transitional, Transformational

	Traditional	Transitional	Transformational
Pastor	The pastor is the primary doer of ministry – central preacher, leader, caregiver. Presence expected in most meetings.	both	The pastor is the primary leader and one of the central preachers. The pastor remains a caregiver in certain situations. Most care has shifted to the people.
Worship	Traditional worship services feature classical and traditional church music, church choirs, and traditional vestments as well as the particular liturgical elements of the individual church's tradition.	both	In transformational congregations, a variety of worship styles may be found, including the traditional, the contemporary service and the blended service
Christian Education	Classes	both	Small groups and classes
People	Sunday worship attendance and participation in programs – typically on a low-commitment basis (Schaller).	both	Worship attendance and participation in small groups on a high commitment basis. Involvement in programs on an “as interested” basis.
People's ministry	Serve on ruling board (Session, Vestry, Council, Deacons) and committees. Some teach, usher, handle a variety of tasks. Most members have no formal ministry at any given time.	both	Ministry as lifestyle. The use of spiritual gifts and a servant heart inside an outside the church. Service within the congregation plus the understanding all of us have been “sent” in all humility to do ministry in every place and at all times.

Governance	The ruling board members set policy and lead programs. Emphasis on control. Committees	both	The Central Ministry Team or Board members identify core purpose and care principles of ministry. Emphasis on “permission-giving” – endorsing proposals consistent with purpose and principles. Ministry Teams
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III. Illustrations of "Vision Shifts" that move a congregation toward transformational ministry.

- A. from your present hopes for your congregation's future to the high expectation that God has a vital future for your church.
- B. from merely running programs to implementing a vision for ministry
- C. from a maintenance mentality to a sustaining and advancing vision.
- D. from an emphasis on friendliness to a ministry of friendliness and hospitality.
- E. from assuming discipleship to developing discipleship.
- F. a primary emphasis on the communal life of the church to a balanced emphasis on the communal and missional life of the church.
- G. from an unchanging worship format to a ministry of worship and music responsive to the variety of needs present in the congregation and the community you are trying to reach.
- H. from primarily audience-oriented programming (e.g. worship services, classes) to a balance of audience-oriented ministry and face-to-face ministry (e.g. small groups, one-on-one spiritual direction).
- I. from getting established groups to add new people to adding new groups.
- J. from a “leader-using” ministry to a “leader-developing” ministry, from committees to ministry teams.
- K. from a controlling leadership to a permission-giving leadership.
- L. from a pastor-centered/officer-centered ministry to shared ministry

among pastor, officers and people.

IV. Make Vision Shift Number 1: Shift from your present hopes for your congregation's future to the high expectation that God has a transformational future for your church

A. Vision is seeing what God wants to do through you

B. Take the adventure the Lord has for you

1. Enthusiasm and passion

2. Willingness to pay the price - as the pastor and as people of God

3. Be willing to “cross the street.” Erwin McManus

10:50 - 11:40 - Developing a Defining Vision Statement

7.

Clearly state what we seek to accomplish by God's grace

8. Crisp, tight, clear and short enough so that every ministry and sub-ministry can answer: "how is our ministry fulfilling the Defining Vision of our congregation?"

I. Develop a Defining Vision for Transformational Ministry

A. Make Transformational Shift Number 2: Shift from merely running programs to implementing a vision for ministry

1. The most common vision of established congregations is to run last year's program over again

2. While the original vision that inspired existing congregational programs may have been biblically based and directed toward growing disciples over time the activity itself often became the goal.
3. Stan Ott calls this the “Law of Programmatic Inertia.” Programs set in motion tend to continue in their original pattern until acted on by some external force. The result? We run in place. Of course this makes for both stability and vulnerability. Stability in a sound ministry like a good stock continues to deliver positive dividends in the lives of people. On the other hand there is a vulnerability in programs repeated year after year in that they can easily grow out of step with the current needs of people.
4. In the same way we can get so involved in our activities that we lose sight of our Defining Vision, just what it is that we are trying to accomplish.
5. George Odiorne put it bluntly; “Most people get caught up in the Activity Trap! They become so enmeshed in activity they lose sight of why they are doing it and the activity becomes a false goal and an end in itself. Successful people never lose sight of their goals, the hoped-for outputs.”
6. Two Harvard Business School Professors Robert H Hayes and William J. Abernathy have made an interesting observation. They contended the crisis in American business at the time was rooted in the preferences of American managers to service existing markets, to imitate rather than to innovate and to aim at short-term returns. We in the church often think the same way maintaining the programs and ministries we have in place. To only run last year’s program over again is to trap us in today. We keep running in place.

II. Make Transformational Number 3: from a maintenance mentality to a

sustaining and advancing vision

- A. Sustaining vision keeps it going. Advancing vision gets it going more or adds new directions, new emphases.
- B. Sustaining vision continues existing functions and systems. Advancing vision adds new function and systems.
- C. We in ministry tend to do the some things, continuing existing programs, serving existing participants, going for short-term results.
- D. Not surprising when you consider that the people caught in the activity trap at work are the same people in our churches.
- E. It is so much easier to tinker with existing program than to generate the vision, leadership, and resources needed for new endeavor. *However, if new endeavor is not part of the vision of a leadership team, and if that team makes no effort to improve what it is already doing, then that team has consigned itself to a purely maintenance vision.* It has become a “leadership team” in name only. When that occurs our current level of activity dictates what our future actions will be. We continue to run in place.

III. Tom Bandy a leading thinker in congregational ministry states, “The real hurdle that causes church developments to stumble however is not about finance, aging property or diminishing volunteers. It is not even about articulate mission statements Even before a congregation confronts the need for a mission statement---and long before it must tackle issues of finance, property, and leadership-the congregation must have a *vision*. The difficulty with perceiving a vision is that too often the congregation is unable to discern between an authentic calling of Jesus Christ and the abiding additions to past ideals, forms, and procedures.”

A. Groundhog Day

IV. The key vision shift in congregational ministry today is the shift from program maintenance to ministry design

- A. This is the shift from merely reproducing what we have done before in an uncritical manner to re-shaping our existing programs and ministries and designing new ones based on a coherent and theologically sound

Defining Vision for ministry.

1. Show honor to tradition and add new ministry - Bless and Add

- B.** A Defining Vision defines what you do and why you do it
 - C.** Transformational congregations are clear concerning their aims.
- V.** Whether **expressed as a "Vision Statement" 'or "Mission Statement" or "Purpose"**, the idea is to clearly state what we seek to accomplish by God's grace.
- A.** A Defining Vision is a ministry's most central vision.
 - B.** To "define" something means "to determine or identify the essential qualities or meaning of "to make distinct, clear." So a Defining Vision clearly delineates what the ministry is to be and to do. It captures the essential thrust of the ministry with distinctiveness and clarity.
 - C.** The Defining Vision of a coach is to develop the players as people and to win. The Defining Vision of a parent is a child who is healthy, happy, prepared for life. The Defining Vision of a golfer is to lower her score. The Defining Vision of a ministry to shut-ins is to offer encouragement in the faith and the love of simple presence, the ministry of "showing up."
 - D.** A Defining Vision is essential to leadership because leadership is knowing where you are going (vision) and having others with you on the way.
- VI.** Mission statements of congregations are often rather lengthy expressions of Christian conviction and practice and as such can offer a sound general perspective for their ministry.
- A.** Little or no relationship between Mission Statement and practice of ministry.
- VII.** Make the Defining Vision of your ministry crisp enough, tight enough, clear enough, short enough that every sub-ministry within the congregation can say,

"how is our ministry fulfilling the Defining Vision of our congregation."

- A. Without such a succinct Defining Vision, the overwhelming tendency of congregations is to maintain programs and structures without conscious fulfillment of vision.
- B. As a result their "practical vision is to run last year's program over again...maintenance... keeping it going...assessing the needs of the program rather than adjusting the ministry to more effectively fulfill the Defining Vision and doing so more effectively serve people in the church and in the community
- C. A Defining Vision: *The vision of the Pleasant Hills Community Presbyterian Church is to glorify God by making disciples and meeting human need.*
 - 1. Thus if the vision is "To glorify God by making disciples and meeting human need" then clearly every sub-ministry (e.g. small group, youth group, women's ministries, men's group, soup kitchen, Sunday School) could say, "What are we doing to 'to make disciples?' What more can we do differently to increase our effectiveness in disciple-making? What human needs are we addressing and how effectively are we addressing them? What may we do to improve?"
 - 2. Such a Defining Vision enables each ministry to clarify specifically what it aims to accomplish in the lives of the people it touches.

VIII. Let's look at the mission and vision statements of Southminster.

- A. Mission Statement - *Southminster Presbyterian Church is a Christian family governed within the Presbyterian Church, USA whom God has called to reach into the world with the mission of praising Him, serving others, and giving of ourselves in love.*
- B. Vision Statement - *We as the people of God are to reach into the heart*

*of each person to whom
God sends us in order that
we might reach out to build
His church around the
wholeness of body, mind,
and spirit through our
uplifting praises to Him,
our outpouring of Christian
service to others, and our
unceasing giving of self.*

11:40 - 12:00 - Identify Defining Practices for Transformational Ministry

9. Witness
10. Prayer - Prayer Covenants
11. Care
12. Word
13. "With-me"
14. Send

IX. Identify Defining Practices for Transformational Ministry

- A. A Defining Vision is that vision that defines what we do by establishing the aim of our ministry. A Defining Practice tells us how to do it.
- B. There are a variety of ways to think about the concept of Defining Practices of ministry:
 1. Defining Practices are our means of cooperating with the Holy Spirit in the building up of Christ's church
 2. Defining Practices are “pictures of ministry” that offer us ways of "seeing” what to do. Think of the practice of encouragement - and "see" yourself speaking words of encouragement.
 3. Every Defining Practice offers you a way to imagine the behavior, the practice, or model for the conduct being called for.
 4. For example, Leonard Sweet’s expression of ministry to a post-modern culture are illustrations of Defining Practices based on his observation of what forms of ministry are reaching people today: E.P.I C.
 - a. Experiential
 - b. Participatory
 - c. Image-based
 - d. Connected

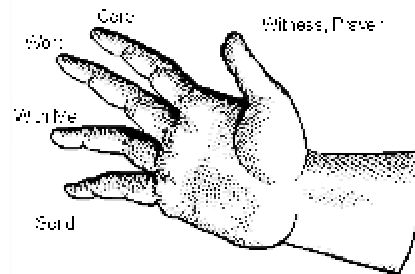
X.

Defining Practices lend themselves to a variety of methods and means of expression

- A. Take the Defining Practice of “hospitality” and there are a great many ways in which you may go about including people in your life.
 - 1. Difference between friendly and hospitable
 - a. Friendly - How are you?
 - b. Hospitable - come be a part of my life
- B. Consider the great variety of means of implementing these Defining Practices.
 - 1. Prayer
 - 2. Care
 - 3. Small Groups
 - 4. Encouragement

XI. Six Master Defining Practices of Ministry

- A. There are a great many biblical practices of transformational ministry. Stan Ott summarizes those practices as six Defining Practices, each of which describes a family of behaviors of transformational ministry.
- B. Rick Warren, in The Purpose Driven Church identifies five:
 - 1. Worship
 - 2. Ministry
 - 3. Evangelism
 - 4. Fellowship
 - 5. discipleship
- C. The six Defining Practices of transformational ministry:



- 1. Witness
- 2. Prayer
- 3. Care

4. Word
5. With-me
6. Send

XII. Bearing witness speaks of God's reality and invites others to faith.

- A. Speaks of the presence, love, and power of God.
- B. Speaks about God's work.
- C. Invites others to confess Jesus Christ as Lord.
- D. Invite others to faith: "We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard (telling about Jesus). So that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ." I John 1:3
- E. Bearing witness is a matter of how you live and what you say.
- F. Do you live your life in a way that honors our Lord and draws others to Him?

XIII. The Defining Practice of Prayer

- A. Jesus loved the many and focused on a few.
 1. Who are your few?
 - a. Home
 - b. Family
 - c. Small Group
 - d. Ministry Team
 - e. Random People God puts in your life
- B. Intercession
- C. Prayers on behalf of others.
- D. Prayers for the discipleship (teleios) and the **well being** (shalom) of the person.
- E. **The prayer covenant**: agree to pray for each other daily and (if appropriate) with each other weekly for a specified number of weeks.
- F. The Prayer Covenant
- G. "Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven." (Matt. 18:19)

- H. Agree to pray for each other daily for 30 days,
 I. Lord, grant me and _____ the grace today to commit our lives to the Lordship of Jesus Christ without reservation and grant me _____ further the grace to know your strength and your guidance this day. Amen.

XIV. The Defining Practice of Care

- A. Care seeks the total well being of another person.
 B. "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." Galatians 6:2 NIV
 C. Pastoral care seeks to offer need-responsive ministry to persons (one to one) and to groups.

XV. The Defining Practice of the Word

- A. Impart the Word of God using a variety of methods:
1. Preaching and Teaching - Consistent attendance at Worship and Bible Classes
 2. Personal Devotions – Daily Bible reading and prayers at home
 3. Bible verse memorization
 4. Personal study at home with Bible study guide materials.
 5. Small group Bible studies - groups of 3 to 14 study Scripture
 6. Ministry Team Bible study – leadership teams and committees spend time in small group Bible study before engaging in their work.

XVI. The Defining Practice of the With-Me Principle

- A. "He appointed twelve – designating them apostles – that they might be **with him** and that he might send them out to preach." Mark 3.14
 B. Personal invitation
 C. Focus on a few
 D. Some "With me" opportunities: "I invite you to be with me in my:
1. small group
 2. fellowship,
 3. family ministry,
 4. work,

5. life and leisure.

XVII. The Defining Practice of sending

- A. Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the father has sent me, I am sending you." John 20:21
- B. Sending means we send people **to their ministry** in home, workplace and in the church and community - to witness, pray, care, impart the Word of God, spend time with people - to pursue the passion for ministry God has given them with the spiritual gifts and resources that God has given them.
- C. Every Christian serves Christ every moment of every day.
- D. We send people to serve by helping them discover their talents, spiritual gifts and interests for ministry. We help each person find the place of service that blesses him/her and through him/her blesses others.
- E. Sending is a practice of the vital church. Many of us are not skillful in sending others. Why is this so?
- F. We often think of ministry in terms of what we do, such as caring or teaching, but not in terms of motivating others to do the work.
- G. Sometimes it feels easier to do the work ourselves. To "send" people we must call them to work, equip them for the work and send to the work. This takes effort and we may prefer to be lazy. We don't think anyone else can do a better job. We must remember that we made mistakes learning and to give other people the opportunity to learn the same way.
- H. We like to be the center of attention. Sending means letting go, in all humility, of some things others have praised you for.
- I. We fear of the loss of control.
- J. How to send others to ministry:
 1. Pray for direction and guidance - "Lord, who would You have me invite and send to this work and who has the passion, capabilities and readiness to serve?"
 2. **"Call them to the task"**- invite them to undertake the task.
 3. Be completely honest about what will be required. Don't be afraid to ask for a big commitment. God's people will respond to significant vision.
 4. **Equip them** for the task - give them the training they need for the

ministry to which they are being sent.

5. **Send them** - let them go. Be sure to offer guidance and encouragement.

12:00 - 1:00 - Lunch with Prayer Covenant partners