



ILLINOIS CHURCH OF GOD

LINK

RICK WHITTER, ADMINISTRATIVE BISHOP

September 2018

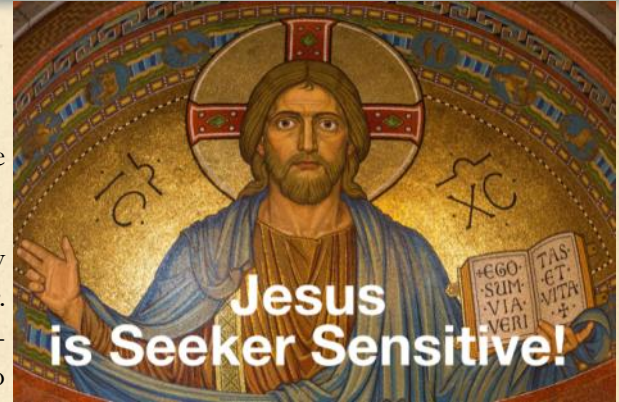
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Jesus is Seeker Sensitive!

Before you call the State Office to express your disagreement, please allow me to explain.

There are times that Christians need to redefine words and phrases. A few years ago, someone came up with the phrases, *seeker driven* and *seeker sensitive*. These words were used to describe an approach to ministry that included considering how unbelievers felt about the worship. Language was changed so unchurched people could understand. Some pastors changed their preaching style to a more conversational approach. Some even “softened” the message of the Bible, in an attempt to make it less offensive to people who did not live according to its standards.



Some dedicated Christians see “seeker sensitive” ministry as watering down the truth. Trying to please everyone and being politically correct in ministry results in weak Christians and anemic churches. There is no doubt that the Lord is displeased when anyone changes the meaning of His Word or compromises on Biblical standards. But I would like to challenge us to think deeper about the subject of reaching people who do not know the Lord.

I believe that Jesus was seeker sensitive. Of course He never compromised the truth, so the current definition of the phrase certainly doesn't fit Jesus. But the Word is clear; Jesus was supremely motivated to reach lost people. Jesus was the friend of sinners! Matthew 9:26 says, “When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.” He came to “seek and save all who were lost.” It was the sin of sinners that took Jesus to the cross; He was so sensitive toward sinners and driven by their need that He died for them! Jesus was tender and sympathetic toward them. He never scolded sinners (He did, however scold religious leaders for being hypocrites.)

We may wonder why the phrase “seeker sensitive” needs to change. It is because the phrase sends the wrong message. To those who are unfamiliar with the term, they may be shocked to hear that Jesus is not sensitive toward them. They may mistakenly think the Lord is not compassionate and forgiving. We wouldn't want that, would we?

Allow me to go a bit deeper. I believe that churches should be willing to adjust their approach if the adjustment results in people coming to Christ. In order to win sinners to Jesus, the Church must be sensitive to sinners. We must never willingly offend or hurt anyone. Of course, we never compromise the Word of God. But we also must never use the Word as a weapon to hurt people. Truly, the Gospel is offensive to people who live in rebellion to God. The Bible believing church may not win a popularity contest. But Christians who take pride in hurting unbelievers are, in my opinion, not acting like Christ.

We've got to stop criticizing people who are willing to adjust their personal religious presences in order to reach the lost. These people are not sellouts; they are missionaries.

So, let's consider changing our language. Let's stop preaching against being “seeker sensitive.” Let's preach against sin. Let's preach the truth in love. Let's let unbelievers know that there are consequences to their sin but let's offer the Good News that Jesus loves and saves sinners.

Jesus is seeker sensitive; I want to be seeker sensitive, too!



Small Pockets, Big Hearts

When my husband, Pastor Jonathan of Living Hope Church of God, said, “What do you think about taking up mission offerings for VBS?” I said, “Yes, let’s do it.” What I didn’t want to say was I figured we would only raise about \$200. “Lord,” I said under my breath, “help us raise at least \$200 to send to Casa Shalom Children’s Home in Guatemala.”

The reason I thought we could only raise about \$200 was because we pastor in Carrier Mills, Illinois where 43% are economically disadvantaged and the median household incomes are only at \$30,217 per year. Carrier Mills is a town of 2,129 people and many live in modest homes. I know that \$20 means a family in Carrier Mills could at least drive two or three days back and forth to work or it would help put food on the table. So putting \$20 in the offering plate is a big deal to the people of Carrier Mills and the surrounding area, but nevertheless, we put our “feet to faith.” We rolled out our giant, green, frog named Freddy-the-Frog to make giving fun. We asked the youth to stand up in front of the church with their clear, water pitchers with the group’s nametags on each pitcher. We broke the children into four crews each night of VBS. Then each group of children would compete with other crews to see who would raise the most money each night. With joy in their hearts and excitement in their eyes, the children put money in the clear pitchers. After announcing who won that night’s offering, we would pour all the money into Freddy-the-Frog’s mouth that was hungry for the offering.

The winning team would then get small prizes. Later, I heard a kid went home and asked their grandma, “Where is your purse? I want to give to other kids.” The first night, we mainly received pennies, dimes, and quarters with a few dollar bills. By the last night, whole families were digging deep and writing checks. It was no longer about the competition or about feeding Freddy-the-Frog, but it was kids giving to kids. These are the same kids who often times went without. The offering came from children that didn’t know what a new pair of shoes were like and from teens that didn’t know what their shirt or pant sizes were because they only received hand-me-downs and never went shopping for new clothes. It was about kids giving to other kids who had less than them.

Living Hope Church raised \$1,100 for Casa Shalom, so we could help feed the orphans for three months, but we didn’t rejoice over the dollar amount. We rejoiced over the attitude of giving; it was the joy in the children’s faces when giving without expecting to get anything back. It is a humbling experience to serve in a town where they have small pockets, but big hearts. II Corinthians says it best, “So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.”

By Co-Pastor Serah Stevens



MINISTER’S MEETING

Benton-New Life

Service October 25 ~ 7:00pm

Minister’s Meeting October 26 ~ 9:00am

& Session for Pastor’s Wives ~ 9:00am

STATISTICS

	July Tithes	On Campus	Off Campus	Morning Worship	August Missions	August Rebuilding Walls
Alton, Beltline Christian Center- R. Todd Shaw	\$6,695.50	0	0	86	\$100.00	\$
Alvin- Dan R. Hunt	9,557.00	36	88	72		72.00
Anna- Philip Rexing	575.00	0	0	9		
Benton, New Life- R. J. Joplin	21,746.30	116	85	144	670.00	144.00
Bethalto-	50,727.15	118	0	561		561.00
Bloomington, Center for Hope- Larry Taylor	Mission					
Bloomington, New Beginnings- Aaron L. Stine	2,752.00	34	9	37		37.00
Bourbonnais, Worship Center- Rick D. Sexton	7,484.54	28	20	124		125.00
Brookport- Charles D. Tate	17,413.86	56	0	99	20.00	99.00
Cahokia- Larry Ridenour	8,116.00	29	18	69	102.00	69.00
Cambridge- Donald Grooms	262.00	0	60	14	20.00	
Carbondale-	889.75	20	0	15		
Carlyle, Living Stones- Larry Whited	3,378.00	12	16	7	20.00	15.00
Carmi, New Beginnings- Michael LeBuhn	8,210.00	61	0	110		
Carrier Mills- Jonathan Stevens	1,225.70	21	0	35		
Centralia, New Destiny- Jason Wyman	1,622.50	0	0	16		52.00
Champaign- Christopher Smithey	13,788.00	45	0	55	100.00	
Chauncey- Dwayne R. Sovdi	5,064.00	11	0	43		50.00
Clay City, Transformation- Thomas Cody	1,372.00	0	0	36		37.00
Clinton- Jeffrey L. DeLaughter	4,615.00	32	27	37	45.00	
Collinsville, Solid Rock-	212.10	9	0	37		
Columbia, East Bridge Fellowship- Larry Ridenour	2,990.00	28	10	31	111.00	35.00
DeKalb, Cathedral of Praise- Brandon Nelson	16,073.17	40	0	80		
East Alton, Flowing River- Kenneth Dickerson						
Eldorado- Dennis West	6,718.00	18	21	67		
Equality- Peggy J. Winters	4,852.00	136	16	52	10.00	52.00
Fairfield- Chris Vandergraph	3,600.00	60	95	55		55.00
Fairfield, Canaan Bridge- Jeremy Cline	1,250.00	29	0	121		
Farmer City- Timothy J. Clagg	N/R	0				
Galesburg, Oasis- Darrell W. Garrett	3,079.63	0	188	29		29.00
Geneseo, Ebenezer- Jerry W. Bosworth	N/R	11	0			
Granite City, Michael Mayberry	5,893.71	12	51	21	10.00	21.00
Harrisburg, Land Street- Paul J. Taylor	2,846.00	11	5	10		
Herrin, Park Avenue-	3,430.00	44	0	35		35.00
Honey Comb- Harold E. Miller	7,418.36	52	45	50		
Kincaid- Jacob Skelton	13,090.67	45	0	84	1,350.00	125.00
LaSalle, Living Word- Cres Rios	1,456.00	16	30	28		35.00
Lawrenceville- Thomas Cody	N/R					
Lincoln- Roman W. Krywyn, II	1,191.00	17	0	17		17.00
Logan- Rick Fowler	13,206.98	60	0	71	50.00	100.00
Manteno- David R. Hanners	2,804.00	10	6	30	70.00	
Marion- Preston House	2,224.00	12	0	14		
Marion-All Nations- Bruce Fox	7,438.00	13	20	56		
McLeansboro- Terry Hall	4,657.39	10	8	58		58.00
Mt. Vernon, Harlan Road-	15,219.50	60	40	93	10.00	175.00
Mt. Vernon, LifePointe- David Gregg	4,211.10	17	0	37		
Norris City- Charles Waggoner	4,652.00	40	8	29	20.00	30.00
Paris- Christian White	2,395.00	10	50	33		
Pekin, Lighthouse- Will Carson	10,760.10	47	2	68	20.00	100.00
Peoria- The Lord's Table- Burl Cole	N/R					
Plano- John Todd	3,191.00	8	0	29		
Pontiac- Matthew Studinger	N/R					
Raleigh, Restoration- Troy Brittingham	2,060.00	73	47	41		82.00
Ridgway, Soul's Harbor- Jason Sork	1,450.00	70	12	14	20.00	25.00
Robinson, Westside- Hugh Crowe	1,383.00	6	0	6		
Rochelle-	3,372.00	0	0	10	10.00	
Salem- Brian Mixon	1,423.00	0	0	30		
Sesser- Fred Ping	1,593.00	26	30	15		25.00
Shawneetown- Randy Vaughn	1,947.85	40	4	19		19.00
Taylorville, Faith Community Worship Center- Jerry L. Thorpe	N/R	0				
Thompsonville- Brian Mixon	9,658.00	80	53	95	10.00	100.00
Waterloo, New Beginnings- Matt Smith	6,084.00	0	0	23		150.00
Wayne City- Ryan Reavill	1,276.00	0		40		
West City- Harol Whitlock	7,673.00	127	90	130		
West Frankfort, Southpoint- Tod W. Parchman	10,024.71	75	0	61		61.00

TITHE BREAKER

Waterloo- \$6,084.00

New Members

McLeansboro— 17

Centralia— 4

Bloomington—3

Brookport—2



"Reaching Illinois"

September 2018

ILLINOIS CHURCH OF GOD

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Telephone: 217-429-5121

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ILLINOIS COGYD

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OCTOBER 13TH 2018

FAITH COMMUNITY WORSHIP CENTER
TAYLORVILLE, IL

CHECK IN: 8-10AM | EVENT: 10-3PM

Registration Online @illinoiscog.org
\$20 PER STUDENT & LEADER (INCLUDES LUNCH & T-SHIRT)
Registration Deadline- OCTOBER 1st