

DO YOU WANT TO JOIN A NEW CHURCH AT 508 SHROYER ROAD?

EMBERS FROM MY FIRE

By Pastor Ken Damon

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A previous pastor of SRBC once told our congregation, the church has to be re-invented with each new generation or it will die. That was Rev. Win Ramish. He was the kind of man who continued to ride his motor cycle up until a few years before he passed away. What a young heart!

The only things that do not need to be re-invented at SRBC are: 1) Upholding the Bible as the essential authority for our beliefs and practices. 2) Acknowledging Jesus Christ as the one and only Savior of the world. 3) Seeking the guidance and gifts of the Holy Spirit to empower and direct the ministry of the church by producing the fruit of the Spirit through each of us. Everything else will work out as we humbly work together in faith, hope and love.

The church is a movement with a God-given mission. This congregation is not limited by the walls of the church building or the habits of traditions from the past. Our goal must always be to help link people to the life-giving power of God through Jesus.

We should not seek change just for the sake of change but to bear "much fruit" through and for the Lord. Jesus said, *"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing... This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. John 15:5 & 8*

Keeping things the same is not a healthy goal for a church. Bearing much fruit for God's glory is the goal. This demands that we are continually seeking the guidance and empowerment of the Holy Spirit as we adjust to a constantly changing environment. Much of the environment is hostile to bearing good fruit. So we will need to be constantly adjusting to conditions.

Maybe part of what attracts so many people to new churches is the fact that they are always adjusting to the changes in the environment. I'm not sure. What I do know for sure is that every Christian and church is intended to be continually renewed.

"Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day." 2 Corinthians 4:16

If we are not renewed daily by the Lord we will lose heart. It seems like many individuals and churches have lost heart in our time.

As church leaders and as a congregation we have talked before about the need for acting as if this church family was a new church. To get back to the basics of being a newly planted church is a significant way for a ministry to stay vital and alive.

Many at SRBC seem to be ready to view the SRBC church family in a new and transformational way. To be able to do this will take not just willingness but a real desire to make the sacrifices to be a new church. The ground work has been started but the time has come to surrender the whole organization to transformation.

Surrendering the church is accomplished as we each individually surrender to God's will. The theme verse for SRBC in 2009 describes the attitude we will need, "He (God) guides the humble in what is right and teaches them His way." Psalm 25:9

God will guide us into renewal if we humbly surrender to putting His will first. Practically speaking, this requires each of us learning to respectfully listen to each other as we try to discern what the Spirit is saying to the church.

"Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other." Galatians 5:25-26

Unfortunately I have often seen people who talk about being led by the Spirit of God who neglect to apply the second part of this passage. Those who are truly humble listen to others as well as to the Word of God. That is why, *"Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry." James 1:19* Spirit led people are good listeners.

The Bible must be the central guiding light as we seek to be led by the Spirit. Obviously the pastor and church leaders will have a significant role in this process. But the whole congregation will need to work hard to *"walk humbly with your God." Micah 6:8*

Let this be the initial invitation from your pastor for you to join a new church at 508 Shroyer Road in the New Year. Happy New Year!

Pastor Ken Damon