

Liberty Commentary January 8, 2010

Not I but Christ

In January of 2005 the Liberty Baptist Church was started because of a burning desire in my heart to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with the unchurched people of Central Iowa that comprise approximately forty percent of the population. In short, it was my desire to reach all people of central Iowa irrespective of culture or background with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

My family and I started the ministry at Liberty five years ago this month with virtually no people, no money, no permanent facility (a four month lease was secured to rent a vacant church building), in the worst possible time of the year with the harsh winter weather. Needless to say the task was daunting. Virtually every bit of advice and every “how to book” recommended that this not be done-it won't succeed.

Looking back over the course of the past five years I pause to thank God for His abundant blessings as well as many of the people of Central Iowa who have supported and prayed for this ministry. A couple of verses that have inspired me over the course of the past five years are Hebrews 12:1-2 “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience (perseverance) the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” Running with patience (perseverance) means to continue on a course of action even when the outcome seems to be in doubt. Many times along the way these past five years it seemed that the challenges would be insurmountable, but through perseverance God has brought many victories. In the challenging days of trying

to get the ministry off the ground I would call to remembrance the words of the Apostle Paul in Galatians 2:20 "...yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life that I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Through the past five years I often had to remind myself that it is not about my inadequacies, but it is about His adequacy to take anyone who will present themselves for His service and use them if they will just be faithful and persevere in their faith and never, never quit.

In 2006 the Liberty Baptist church received its first members and elected its first deacons. Needing permanent facilities we took a bold step of faith to first build a church for a poor congregation in Wiwili, Nicaragua before building a church for ourselves. We sent our entire bank account of \$12,000 dollars to build the Liberty Baptist Church of Wiwili, Nicaragua. Within 12 months God allowed the Liberty Baptist Church of Marshalltown to pay cash for seven acres of land on Iowa Avenue for \$102,000 for our future church building site. In 2008 we called Pastor Israel Becerra to assume the full time responsibilities of ministry to the Hispanic population of central Iowa. Pastor Israel now has one of the largest ministries to Hispanics in Central Iowa. In 2009 we purchased the former Grace United Methodist Church facility at 9 North 5th Avenue. Again, through bold faith and intercessory prayer God provided the money we needed to pay cash for the property.

After five years of ministry God has taken this ministry from what was just a vision of reaching people for Christ to blessing us with a growing congregation of around 200 people and financial assets in terms of insured replacement value of over two million dollars with no mortgages, and no liens having never borrowed money from a bank or paid a penny in interest in the history of the church.

God has always worked through unusual ways all throughout the Bible. God does not typically use the most gifted, the most

talented, the most articulate to accomplish great things for Him, but rather God uses those who will trust Him with bold faith and those who will persevere even when the challenges seem to be insurmountable.

God has a task for each of his children to accomplish, but we must be willing to join Him in what He wants to do through us. For me it was God taking me as a professional pilot who disliked public speaking or public expression of any kind and using me to start the Liberty Baptist Church and then become an ordained Pastor of the Liberty Baptist Church.

When we come to the place in our lives where we realize that it is all about Christ and His prerogatives and not about us and our abilities, talents, skills, resources (or lack thereof) then Christ can begin to use us to impact our circle of influence, impact our neighborhood, impact our community, impact our nation and our world because it is “not I, but Christ living in me.”

Thank you Central Iowa for your support of the Liberty Baptist Church these past five years.

Pastor, Randy Mason www.libertybaptistofmarshalltown.com
Liberty Baptist Church of Marshalltown