



central conference of the evangelical covenant church

FEBRUARY 2016

From the Superintendent: ANGER



In the book of Ephesians, we are given rules for living the new life in Christ. In chapter 4 verses 25-27, we are told "So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbors, for we are members of one another. Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not make room for the devil." In the Greek, both elements "Be angry" and "sin not" are both commands. Efforts have been made for years to reject the implication of a command to be angry, but I don't find it to be valid. I believe that we need to regard the anger spoken of here to be a righteous indignation.

Here, Paul is talking about our temper. Telling us that our newness of life in Christ is seen in the way we control and express our temper. There is a false notion in the church that to have strong feelings or a deep conviction about something and to voice those feelings in an exuberant or buoyant way is sinful. But the reality is that we are born with the capacity to feel. Having and expressing feelings is not a sin issue. What we do with feelings, how we express them, and how our feelings affect others determine a Christian action and attitude.

In the Gospel of Mark 4:5, we are told that Jesus was angry. But he was not angered by any personal affront, but by hypocritical challenges to God and injustices done to others. Justifiable anger is directed against the wrong act without animosity toward the wrongdoer. To be able to separate the two is a supremely great Christian achievement. A Christian who is not aroused to the point of indignation by manifested wrongs and injustices may be insensitive to some things that ought to concern them. Righteous indignation has a most important function in stimulating Christians in the battle against evil.

We should be angry at materialism. This is the idolatry of our generation. We worship money, wealth obtaining things, hoarding things, accumulating things, and all the other trappings that go along with it. We should be mad about what it has done to the church and how it has ruined some of our Christian brothers and sisters lives. We should be angry about a false discipleship message that is hindering our mission to the world. This is the hypocrisy of our generation. We should be mad at ourselves and the church, because we are not going to every nation, making disciples and baptizing them and teaching them to obey all the commands Jesus has given us. We should be angry at silence in the presence of injustice. This is the cowardice of our generation. We should be mad about the injustice, inequality, prejudice, hate and evil that is allowed to exist in the world that we are supposed to be the light and salt of.

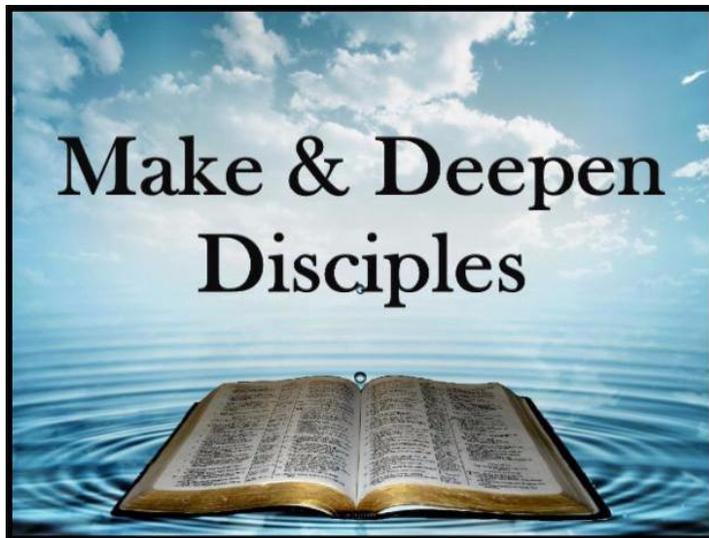
We are also commanded to sin not. We need to adhere to this command, lest justifiable anger leads to feelings of personal resentment, vindictiveness and loss of control. Our anger can turn into hatred and malice. If we harbor it, it can become seething bitterness or result in wrathful action. The impulse toward anger is a natural one. But anger is dangerous and must be kept under the restraint of the Spirit of Christ. Unjustifiable anger gives opportunity for the devil to set the members of the body of Christ one against the other. This is why the counsel is given to give the devil no place in our lives for his activities.

By: Rev. Jerome Nelson



130th Annual Meeting of the Central Conference of the Evangelical Covenant Church

April 29-30, 2016



The Central Conference Annual Meeting is designed to incorporate the business of the Annual Meeting and to celebrate the ministries that God is doing through the churches in the Central Conference.

First Covenant Church in Iron Mountain, MI will be hosting the Central Conference Annual meeting.

Registration brochures for the 2016 Central Conference Annual Meeting will be mailed out to the churches at the beginning of March and online registration will also be available.

Please remember to select delegates. The number of delegates is based on the number of members in your congregation. Member congregations shall be entitled to representation as follows:

Delegates per Church	
Church Members	Delegates
Up to 99	2
100 to 224	3
225 to 449	4
450 to 699	5
700 to 999	6
1000 or more	7

Each association recognized by the Central Conference shall be entitled to 1 delegate. Each affiliated corporation and institution shall be entitled to 1 delegate. A church plant within the Central Conference that is not yet a member congregation may send 2 advisors to the Annual Meeting.

More information will be coming soon!



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Ask the Lord of the Harvest Brochure

For over 20 years, now the Covenant has made a commitment to pray collectively for the salvation of those who need Jesus. We have done so through initiatives such as "**Bringing My World to Christ**", "**What's Your One Step**" and more recently "**Ask the Lord of the Harvest**." There was confusion and it didn't work well last year and I have been informed by the "Make and Deepen Disciples" ministry priority of the ECC that they will not be doing it this year either. They are revamping the initiative.

As a result, I would like for the Central Conference Churches to do it anyway on the Conference level. So I am asking our churches to go the ECC's website and order the "**Ask the Lord of the Harvest**" materials. The prayer cards and the brochures are free to our churches. You can designate a Sunday to have the prayer cards turn in. You can bring them to our Annual Meeting or send/bring them to the conference office. We will gather all of the prayer cards and pray over them on Friday evening at the worship service at the Annual Meeting.

Please join with us as we seek to continue our ministry to pray for the salvation of those who need Jesus. Go to <http://covbooks.com/products/ask-brochure> to order brochures.

Thank you,
Rev. Jerome Nelson



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Part 3: We affirm a commitment to the whole mission of the church.

Peter Kim is the planter and lead pastor for Redeemer LIFE Covenant Church in Vernon Hills, IL.



From our inception, Covenanters were known as “Mission Friends” who were propelled by the vision to be on mission with God through the gospel to all who needed Him. Both, the proclamation of the gospel as well as ministries of justice, compassion, and mercy, would mark this mission. We often begin the discussion of missions with the Great Commission Matt 28:19-20 and Acts 1:8 to take the gospel to the ends of the earth, but we must not forget that missions began long before this when a Holy God sought after a sinful and rebellious man when walking through the garden calling out, “Where are you?” (Gen 3:9). We didn’t invent missions...God did! Our God is a missionary God long before we came into the picture.

The gospel story is the redemptive story of a missionary God reconciling a sinful humanity back to Himself. Any discussion of missions must always be seen in this greater larger story, and never just as an isolated ministry or program of the church. It is the meta-narrative from which all other mini-stories flow out from and back into. Missions is the heartbeat of the gospel story that we find throughout the entire Bible, which ultimately leads to the worship of a God of grace and power who rescues lost people to Himself. God gives us true hope even in the midst of the tragic Fall. God Himself will provide a Rescuer who will bring justice and mercy to our world. “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel” (Gen 3:15). This first pronouncement of the gospel reminds us of the spiritual battle that we are engaged in between God’s Kingdom and the kingdom of this world, and the eventual victory we will have centered in the person of Christ. Missions, evangelism, and church planting must flow out of this reality by keeping the final outcome and future victory before our eyes.

The power, which fuels this mission, is the reality that we also were dramatically rescued in power and grace. When we forget this fundamental truth, we ourselves lose the compassion, humility, and dependency on the Lord to fulfill His mission. We forget that our calling is the ultimate privilege since no one deserves to be rescued and redeemed in the first place. It is always by sheer undeserved grace. Only in this understanding will we be able to look at the outsider, the lost, and the broken and not only identify with them, but minister in a spirit of true love since we ourselves are really no different than them. Missions flow out of heart that understands the gospel of grace.

Missions is not just a department of the church. It isn’t just for the super spiritual giants or the religious professionals. Missions isn’t a mode we enter into during a summer short term missions trip but rather it defines our essence, our identity, our lifestyle, and our focus. The church is the missionary community of God because our God is a missionary God who indeed seeks to save that which was lost as seen in the ministry of our Lord Jesus Himself. His mission is now carried out in His Body, the church, as we engage in the whole mission of the church to a lost and broken world.

Bible Study

We often immediately turn to Acts 1:8 or MT 28:18-20 in our study of missions but we must actually begin in Genesis to truly understand our conviction of our commitment to the whole mission of the church. Please read through Gen 3:1-9 and Luke 19:1-10 as we gain a clear picture of God's missionary heart seen at the Fall as well as that same heart in the life and ministry of Jesus.

Questions:

1. How does God demonstrate His heart for missions in Genesis 3:1-9? Why is this significant?
2. How does Jesus demonstrate this same heart in Luke 19:1-10?
3. Why is it important that we never lose sight of our own dramatic rescue when we first became a Christian?
4. "Missions flow out of a heart that understands grace." How has God been teaching you this truth in your life today?



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Evangelical Covenant Church Partners with GuideStone Financial Resources

We are pleased to announce a new partnership with GuideStone Financial Resources to provide a supplemental retirement plan option to churches within the ECC network. In the same way ministers and church employees have dedicated their lives to ministry, for nearly 100 years GuideStone has been committed to serving those who serve the Lord as they journey to and through retirement. As the leader in church retirement plans, they are uniquely qualified to provide your church with a competitive, personalized retirement plan.

If a church chooses to participate, employees will have the opportunity to invest with GuideStone Funds - the nation's largest Christian-screened mutual fund family - which allows them to invest in a diversified offering of award-winning funds that also align with their values.

GuideStone considers it a privilege to serve ECC. To discover more and start planning for retirement today, contact GuideStone's Holly Taylor at (214) 720-6453. Please go to www.GuideStone.org for important information.