

Launch Celebration Talk...

What if?

The Bad News... We are in the time of extreme challenge to our faith and the Church in our culture today.

Our Ultimate Threat – The World, The Flesh and the Devil.

The Twin Sins:

- 1) Rebellion against God
- 2) A redefinition of Good and Evil.

The late Dr. Larry Hurtado, historian of early Christianity, and is wildly celebrated book Destroyer of the Gods, Told the story of how a tiny Jewish sect of Jesus followers overcame the bastion of paganism and one over the Roman Empire in only a few centuries. His thesis was that it wasn't the churches relevance or relatability to the culture but it's difference and distinctness that made it compelling to so many. The church was marked by five distinctive features, all of which made it stand out against the backdrop of the empire.

5 Distinctive Features of the Early Church.

1. The church was multiracial and multiethnic, with a high value for diversity, equity, and inclusion.
2. The church was spread across socioeconomic lines as well, and there was a high value for caring for the poor: those with extra were expected to share with those with less.
3. It was staunch in its active resistance to infanticide and abortion.
4. It was resolute in its vision of marriage and sexuality as between one man and one woman for life.
5. It was nonviolent, both on a personal level and a political level.

Tertullian remarked that Non Christians would look at Christians and say, "look how they love one another and how they are ready to die for each other. There is something extraordinary about the way that they care for the poor, conduct their business, and restrain their sexual appetites. These people don't abandon their babies on the streets (as was common in that day), But pick them up and Care for them, husbands and wives have sex only with each other (unlike the Greek enrollment double standard of demanding a faithful wife, but allowing men to have courtesans and concubines for pleasure and slaves for their "daily needs." These people are different. It was not Christian worship that attracted outsiders it was Christians who attracted them."

- Tertullian 3rd Century pastor

The Hope of New Things...

¹⁸ "Forget the former things;
do not dwell on the past.

¹⁹ See, I am doing a new thing!

Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?

I am making a way in the wilderness

and streams in the wasteland. (Isaiah 43:18-19)

Our Dream: A Community of Reformed Churches connected through a Denomi-Network that is Lean, Nimble, Kingdom Focused, Relational, Enjoyable!

Toward a Kingdom Network Vision... To Join Jesus in building a global movement of regional networks compelled by a Kingdom vision, rooted in scripture and a reformed heritage, passionate about reaching the lost, making disciples, empowering the next generation, reaching and reflecting our diverse communities, and exploding with Growth and Joy.

4 Words of Challenge and Encouragement:

- 1) Let's Go all In!**
- 2) Let's humbly and passionately be about the work of the Kingdom.**
- 3) I want to Invite us into a movement characterized by prayer and fasting.**
- 4) Let us nurture an atmosphere of hospitality and radical welcome.**