

Word for the Year 2024

Convergence: Reaching People with the Love of God

Thesis: We are a people who want to reach others with the love of God.

Text: John 1:1-42

Each year, we seek the Lord for his word for us for the new year. I work with our leaders and we try to discern what the Lord is saying.

The word of the Lord for the year is an emphasis from God about what he wants to do in our lives both individually and corporately in the coming year.

Our desire is to respond to God's current prophetic word in our actions, attitudes, and affections.

Here is what I believe to be the word of the Lord for us in 2024.

Convergence: reaching people with the love of God.

Here is our group identity.

We are a people who want to reach others with the love of God.

Our word for the year comes from processing a prophetic word which Wayne Drain spoke over Calvary back on November 4, 2023. Our responsibility as leaders is to test the prophetic words given corporately to us, and to discern what the Lord is saying to us through those prophetic words. I believe that God wants to help us become whole and healthy in every way. The prophetic word which Wayne Drain gave is an invitation from the Lord to change and grow as a congregation. We are invited to feel what God feels for others and to reach others with the love of God.

We chose the word "convergence" over "multiplication" because the word "multiplication" can sound like we are trying to grow the church. Jesus is the head of our church. The Lord Jesus said, "I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18). Our goal is to join Jesus on his mission in our spheres of influence, together with others. We want to participate in the growth of the kingdom of God, and we trust Jesus to grow Calvary Community Church as we partner together on mission with him.

Convergence is the act or state of interacting with others; a meeting where ideas and views can be exchanged.

God calls us to interact with others like Jesus did with the Woman at the Well in John 4:1-42. This passage captures the heart of God to reach others with his love. And, Jesus shows us how to stay in step with the Holy Spirit so that lives are touched by the power of the love of God.

Jesus didn't argue with the woman. Jesus didn't attack her theology. Jesus interacted with her in a loving way, reaching this one woman and her whole town with the love of God that transforms.

God has called us to reach people with the love of God.

In order to interact with others effectively, we must feel what God feels for others. God loves people. People are not a project. People are not a burden to God. Rather, God has gone to huge, sacrificial lengths to touch people, to redeem people, and to help people receive and experience his love.

God wants us to share his heart for others. God loves people. God gave us his Son so that we could know him and be a part of his eternal family. God is hunting us down with his goodness and love.

God has called us to reach people with the love of God.

What does it look like to reach people with the love of God?

1. **Available** (aware and responsive).
 - a. Jesus was aware of, available to, and responsive to the Father through their mutual relationship.
 - b. God led Jesus to go through Samaria to Galilee from Judea in John 4:4.
 - c. Even in his thirst and fatigue, Jesus was available and responsive to the Father as the Spirit led him in a conversation with the Woman at the Well.
 - d. Here are some questions to ascertain our availability:
 - i. Am I fully present to God in my spheres of influence and daily life?
 - ii. Am I fully present to those around me where I live, work, and play as I walk with the Lord?
 - iii. Am I getting to know the Lord and to feel what he feels for me and for others?
 - iv. Am I growing in my capacity to love God?
 - v. Am I growing in my capacity to love others?
 - vi. Am I asking the Lord to help me feel what he feels, to love like he loves, and to reach others like he does?

2. **Organic** (natural).

- a. Jesus lived life in communion with God. It was normal for Jesus to spend time engaging spiritual practices individually and corporately that attuned him to the Father and the Spirit.
- b. Jesus shows us how to live a fully alive, fully human life in union with the Father, in surrender to the Spirit, and on mission with God.
- c. Reaching others with the love of God will require us to live naturally supernatural lives.
 - i. We will meet people in the ordinariness of life.
 - ii. We will have conversations with others as we take an interest in them.
- d. In order to **converse** well with others, we need to grow our skill capacities to:
 - i. **Listen** well and ask good questions.
 1. Active listening involves **inquiry** (asking good questions). "How did you come to see it that way?"
 2. Active listening involves **reflection**. "Let me say what I heard in order to be sure that I got it."
 3. We are seeking to understand before being understood.
 - ii. **Dialogue** with others.
 1. Dialogue is different than debate.
 2. Avoid debating, arguing, or trying to convince others or to win arguments.
 3. In dialogue I listen to deeply understand and to be influenced by what you see and are saying. Individuals who are well-differentiated can engage in dialogue without giving up their view. Rather, the result is that our view is enlarged.
 - iii. Have **transformation conversations**.
 1. A transformation conversation is sharing with others what we have seen, heard, and experienced of the Lord in our lives (1 John 1:1-4).
 2. What are we celebrating?
 3. What are we learning?
 4. What challenge(s) are we facing?
 5. What is the Lord putting his finger on in our lives?
 6. What is our current reality vs. our preferred future?
 7. What area of transformation are we currently working on?
 8. Where are we stuck or stopped, cynical or resigned?
 9. Where are we on mission with Jesus and others?
 10. What do we need to say?

- e. We need to spend time reflecting on what we have seen, heard, and experienced of the Lord in order to have something to share (1 John 1:1-4).
 - i. **How is your reflective life?**
 - ii. Is reflection one of your regular spiritual practices?
 - f. We want to be willing to risk and obey the leadership of the Lord.
 - g. We want to stay attuned to God's voice (listening) and obedient to the impulses of the Spirit.
 - h. As the opportunities arise in our conversations, we can ask questions like, "How can I pray for you?"
 - i. We can ask the Lord for the blessing of helping others to follow Christ: "O Lord, please give me, every so often, the grace to lead someone to follow Jesus."
 - j. That is who we are. It is organic. It is a natural way to engage others with the love of God.
 - k. **We need more than new methods and strategies. What we need is a heart-shift and a mind-change.**
 - i. God wants us to feel his burden for the lost, for dropouts, for the prodigals, for the down and outs, for the up and outs, and for the "other."
 - ii. And, God wants to infuse us with boldness to go and tell others what we have seen, heard, and experienced.
3. **Intentional** (anticipatory).
- a. We intentionally seek to follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit and the voice of our Shepherd.
 - b. We want to ask God for divine appointments throughout our day and week.
 - c. **We want to be anticipatory, so we ask and pray believing and expecting God to answer our prayers.**
 - d. **We want to be intentional, so we pray (1) for prophetic words and (2) for words of knowledge, that others might hear the voice of their Shepherd.**
 - e. We want to have a long-term perspective, not just a short-term view.
 - i. **People are not projects.**
 - ii. People are valuable because they are created in the image of God.
4. **Overflow.**
- a. Reaching people with the love of God starts with each of us, individually and corporately, connecting with the God of love. God is love. **Are we growing in our capacity to love?**
 - b. God is at work in your life right now. **Are you working out what God is working in and through you?** (Philippians 2:12-13).

- c. We want to practice having healthy conversations with others.
 - i. Practice listening well.
 - ii. Practice dialoguing in safe places.
 - iii. Then, we transfer our learning to everyday life.
- d. We want to be ready with the testimony of our lives.
 - i. What is the current activity of God in our lives?
 - ii. What is God doing in us and around us?
 - iii. What have we seen, heard, and experienced?
- e. **If you are walking with the Lord, you have something to share about what God is doing in your life.**
 - i. **We call it transformation conversations.**
 - ii. **As you share, others will think: "If God can speak to Martin, maybe he could speak to me."**
- f. **We naturally talk about what we are excited about, what we are passionate about, and what is important to us. We overflow with passion.**

Summary:

God has called us to reach people with the love of God. Reaching others implies that we are available to God and others, that we practice our way to engage others organically (naturally) with the love of God, that we intentionally follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit and the voice of our Good Shepherd, and that we overflow with love for God and for others to such a degree that we are compelled to join Jesus on his mission of love in our spheres of influence.

Let's read John 4:1-42 to get a picture of Jesus living into what we are describing.

Key assumptions:

1. **God is on mission** (Plan A) to put heaven and earth together, to put his heavenly and earthly family together, and to have us rule and reign with him forever.
 - a. We are a people who were bought with a price by Christ so that we could serve our God as kings and priests and to rule with him on the earth.
2. **God is already at work in our spheres of influence.**
 - a. We don't ask God to come and bless what we are doing.
 - b. Rather, we are a people who pay attention to what God is doing and seek to join him in his work.

3. **God is at work to restore individuals, social systems, communities, and nations to God's intended design.**
 - a. We are a people who get to join God in his work.
4. **God invites us to be a people who are on mission with Jesus in our spheres of influence, together with others.** We are not independent agents, nor are we isolated individuals.
 - a. We are connected to the head, the Lord Jesus.
 - b. We are connected to the body, the body of Christ.
 - c. And we go about our daily lives attuned to God and others by his Holy Spirit's help.
5. **We need more than new methods and strategies. What we need is a heart-shift and a mind-change.**
 - a. God wants us to feel His burden for the lost, for dropouts, for the prodigals, for the down and outs, for the up and outs, and for the "other."
 - b. And, God wants to infuse us with boldness to go and tell what we have seen, heard, and experienced.
 - c. So, let's pray right now for God to shift our hearts and to change our minds.

Ministry Time:

Wayne Drain Prophetic Word Given to Calvary 11'4'23

Calvary Community Church – Houston

As I prayed for you, I had a picture of a three-wheeled bike. It was crafted to be sturdy and strong—even made to go fast! I noticed it was going more slowly than it was made for. I saw that two wheels were strong. But the third wheel was slightly smaller in size. The bike was strong enough to ride but had a slight leaning to it. So, it took more effort to move forward. It was easier to go in a circle. So only the strong could ride this bike and make progress. I asked the lord what he was showing me. **I heard that Calvary Church was made to be a multi-generational, a multi-cultural, and a multiplying church.**

I sensed God's pleasure in this church in the way you worship and pray, your heart to serve together as a family, and your love for the poor and the alien. These efforts all come up as sweet, smelling incense to the Lord.

You have prayed for addition and God has added to you. Addition is wonderful! But it's time to pray and believe for more. I see a season for pressing in to the Lord as a praying & worshipping family. At the same time, it's a season for pressing out toward a season of multiplication. I asked the Lord what the wheels were. The two stronger wheels are your multi-generational and multi-cultural identity. The smaller wheel is a multiplication of souls saved, baptisms in water and the Holy Spirit.

No doubt you've heard it said, "The great commission is not the great suggestion." Everyone who calls themselves a disciple of Jesus have been given the same commission. Remember it's a co-mission with the Holy Spirit. Jesus promised he would be with us...always. He knows that the first door we must go through is our own. But each time we do, we'll find Jesus waiting there.

As you lean into a season of praying, believing, and witnessing for souls to be saved, multiplication will come quickly. As I prayed for your church, I saw ministries being multiplied through equipping and impartation. I saw finances being multiplied as the people gave themselves to generosity. And I saw people being trained up to share their testimonies. And the giving of the good news was bringing multiplication. And I saw faith overcoming fear to release multiplication in this house and other houses of God you will influence with the good news of the kingdom...both near and far...from neighbors to nations.

E. Wayne Drain
October 27, 2023