

## Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. Describe the church. Remember, it really is people not a property. When you describe the called-out people who are the “ekklesia,” what descriptors come to your mind? How should the people of God be known in this world? Are we living-up to our calling?
2. Do you agree that Christians have become more interested in entrance to heaven than transformation on earth? Do you agree that the gospel calls us to be citizens of God’s kingdom here on earth? How does our allegiance to God’s kingdom conflict with other “kingdoms” on earth?
3. In what ways have you and I allowed ourselves to become consumers of Christianity (or even just consumers of the church), rather than contributors? If this is true, how can we go about changing?
4. If you had to make two lists of characteristics—one to illustrate spiritual immaturity and the other spiritual maturity, what might you place on each list? To what extent have you matured in your Christian faith since becoming a follower of Jesus?
5. Dallas Willard suggests that dying to self is a requirement for spiritual maturity. How difficult is this in your life? In what areas of your life have you (by God’s grace) been able to die, and in what areas do you struggle?
6. Read again Galatians 5:22-23 (the fruit of the Spirit). How are you doing in these areas of life? How would other people say that you are doing?

## It’s called *church* because...(4)

Sermon Series: It’s called *church* because...  
Pastor Alan Robinson, March 11, 2007

**John Godfrey Saxe's** (1816-1887) version of the famous Indian legend, which was published in 1878 in Linton's "Poetry of America" The original parable originated in China sometime during the Han dynasty (202 BC-220 AD).

**Ekklesia** (usually translated *church* in our English bibles – a gathering or assembly of people who “come out” (because they are “called out,” which is the literal translation of ekklesia) to be together, for a purpose.

**The call to us is to be counter-cultural, other-worldly, “different.”** The call includes being a community of authenticity, acceptance, and transformation.

It’s called *church* because we are called-out to be a community of

- **Authenticity**
- **Acceptance**
- **T\_\_\_\_\_**

**From Library Journal** (concerning *The Divine Conspiracy* by Dallas Willard)...

“[Dallas] Willard (philosophy, Univ. of Southern California) considers popular Christian belief to be missing out on the essence and origin of its true meaning. Since "consumer Christianity" mistakes the logo for the logos, today's brand-name Christians have jumped on a bandwagon that has run off without its true leader. The imitation of Christ has lost its central importance in Christianity, according to Willard. He examines reasons why this is so and sets out a detailed plan for reawakening such commitment, which requires a genuine willingness to die to self in contrast with mere consumption of Jesus' merits as an insurance against

death. Willard's passionate insights are thoroughly argued, though not all may agree with his curriculum for changing people's beliefs. Most suitable for pastoral collections."

"The really good news for Christians is that Jesus is now taking students in the master class of life... This book, then, presents discipleship to Jesus as the very heart of the gospel. The eternal life that begins with confidence in Jesus is a life in His present kingdom, now on earth and available to all. So the message of and about him is specifically a gospel for our life now, not just for dying. It is about living now as his apprentice in kingdom living, not just as a consumer of his merits. Our future, however far we look, is a natural extension of the faith by which we live now and the life in which we now participate."

Dallas Willard, from *The Divine Conspiracy*

C \_\_\_\_\_ or C \_\_\_\_\_ ?

T \_\_\_\_\_ or D \_\_\_\_\_ ?

T \_\_\_\_\_ or T \_\_\_\_\_ ?

## 1. An Old Problem - \_\_\_\_\_

*Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly—mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. Indeed you are still not ready.*

! Corinthians 3:1-2 (church Bible page 808)

*Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.*

Hebrews 6:1-2

## 2. So what do we do?

Perspective: \_\_\_\_\_

Picture: \_\_\_\_\_

Process: \_\_\_\_\_

*I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow.*

1 Corinthians 3:6 (church Bible page 808)

### Tell me what spiritual maturity looks like!

• L \_\_\_\_\_

• L \_\_\_\_\_

• B \_\_\_\_\_

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control.

Galatians 5:22-23 (church Bible page 826)

• B \_\_\_\_\_