

DADDY, ARE WE THERE YET?



EXPORTING DISCIPLE-MAKERS
IN MICC

These measuring marks: our beliefs, practices and virtues, have been part of MICC since 2001.
They've been posted on our website and part of our shared church culture.

But they haven't been declared often enough.

So in an effort to move from a passive to active position,
from holding them unconsciously to holding them consciously, and
from expressing them casually to declaring them intentionally,
we spent some weeks in August/September 2015 reviewing these and
distributing the treasures in new booklets.

May we all read, respond and rejoice together as God renew our commitments to declare his glory.

Munich International Community Church was founded in 1985,
and by God's grace continues to proclaim the good news in 2018.

On the cover: detail of a photograph by Rainer Viertlböck

Daddy, are we there yet?

MUNICH INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY CHURCH

Let's review again: we're asking key questions about our identity, our community and our mission. *Why are we here? Where are we going? and How are we going to get there?* We've given answers to those questions and in the years since we first formulated those answers, we've stumbled on to make progress toward accomplishing our mission, realizing our vision, and living according to our values.

Remember: in MICC, we believe that God is calling us to be a significant, growing presence in this city. We believe that God is calling us to be a developing, growing and equipping place. We believe that God is calling us to be a reproducing church. We believe that we're to be a home for many people from many different lands, a place where believers can introduce their friends, their co-workers, their friends, their neighbors, to the gospel, and to life in Jesus Christ.

And now we have one final question to ask, whose importance we learned after posing the previous questions. But before we get to that, let's take a look at some helpful changes of perspective on the local church and the kind of church community we can enjoy and offer to the city of Munich. The insights on the following page are adapted from Linus Morris, a pioneer in planting international English speaking churches in Europe during the 1980s and 90s.

Looking at our last question and answer—*How will we know when we have arrived?*—will help us in our journey. It's the same question that most of us have shouted from the back seat of the family car, "Daddy, are we there yet?"

Fresh Perspectives on the Church

What kind of church can reach the city of Munich with spiritual power? What kind of church can attract people to Christ and draw them into the community of the redeemed? What kind of church can overcome the negative perceptions that many have of the modern church? God calls MICC to influence our modern and postmodern city with spiritual power and presence, and is prepared to adapt to our culture without compromising God's truth in order to fulfill His call. Here are some points of reference on our church profile:

- **Purposeful and expectant**—we commit to reaching the lost by cultivating a praying, worshiping, equipping, witnessing body of believers.
- **Faithful and flexible**—we honor the mandate of mission rather than man-made tradition. We seek to be innovative and flexible, yet never violate the authority of Scripture.
- **Gracious and relational**—we emphasize God's love, acceptance and forgiveness and foster relationships so people can meaningfully share their lives together.
- **Attractive and engaging**—we creatively develop ways to capture the interest of contemporary urban people in order to introduce them to Jesus Christ.
- **Loving and caring**—we demonstrate genuine concern both for the needs of believers and also for those not yet saved.
- **Joyful and celebrative**—we worship God for His holiness, obediently relate to Christ's Lordship and actively draw on the power of the Holy Spirit.
- **Vital and dynamic**—we equip people to discover and use spiritual gifts, and empower people to minister to others.
- **Growing and reproducing**—we seek to facilitate the growth of believers and so break through barriers which limit our personal and corporate growth in order to multiply ourselves by supporting other new witnessing churches.

Adapted from Linus Morris, Christian Associates International

Fully Developing Disciples

GLORIFYING CHRIST • DISPLAYING OUR BELIEFS, OUR PRACTICES AND VIRTUES

In assessing our mission, vision and values as a church, we have asked the questions:

Why are we here? Where are we going? How are we going to get there?

And in the area of values comes a final question:

Are we there yet?

MEASURING OUR PROGRESS toward our goal is of great strategic importance, especially if we want to arrive at our destination, being unwilling to settle for sitting in a motionless tram! In order to measure ourselves, we have to be aware of the standard of measurements and the competing dynamic forces that operate in our culture.

CHOOSING NEW ASSUMPTIONS FROM BIBLICAL INSTRUCTIONS

Our world operates from certain (often) unspoken assumptions. The lists in the shaded box on the next page contain the assumptions and values—the operating principles—that we often can passively absorb from our culture and world. These assumptions are the source of our culture’s values. If the source is polluted, the resulting value, even though it appears worthy, on closer examination may prove to be corrupt in some way as well, since it does not flow from something eternal and true. These basic, default assumptions and values often undergird the workings of our culture, and it is critical to stress that *the assumptions are all contrary to biblical truth*.

The values that flow out of the assumptions are often directly communicated or sometimes more subtly stated by newspapers, magazines, popular culture, music, social media, television and entertainment. They are commonly held in government, in our places of business and in schools. They have inherent value only to the extent that any of them flow from biblical truth and eternal reality.

For example, “stay in good health: eat right, exercise and take care of your body” is good advice. But it is faulty advice if it grows out of the conviction that this physical world which contains our bodies is all there is—that there is no God, no purpose, no eternity, no hope, no absolutes. Staying in good health as a stewardship from God is vastly different from a devoted exercise and health regimen which keeps a youthful appearance and increases your sexual allure for selfish gain.

DEFAULT ASSUMPTIONS OF THE WESTERN WORLD

There is no grand purpose to life

The reason for living is to achieve comfortable survival. Success is defined as the absence of pain and sacrifice, and the experience of happiness.

There is no value to focusing on or preparing for the future

Every person must live in the moment and for the moment.

There are no absolutes

All spiritual and moral principles are relative to the situation and the individual.

There is no omnipotent, all-knowing deity who guides reality

We must lean on our own vision, competencies, power and perceptions to make the most of life.

From this set of assumptions will flow...

DEFAULT VALUES OF THE WESTERN WORLD

Time is our single most precious non-renewable commodity

Guard your time carefully; use it wisely. Spend money to protect your schedule.

Minimize long term commitments

Be flexible. Things change too fast for permanent commitments, and great opportunities are often unpredictable.

Maintain your independence and individuality at all costs

Possess a healthy skepticism of people, organizations, and philosophies. Protect your unique self against the vested interests and stacked agendas of those who cannot be trusted to serve your needs and interests.

Trust your feelings to guide you

Relying on absolute principles places unrealistic limitations on you. Only you know what is right at any given moment.

Pursue love and acceptance from others with abandon

Without love and acceptance, you will feel emotionally empty, and that emptiness will undermine every other dimension of your life. Surround yourself with people who appreciate you.

Don't waste your time doing things that do not produce immediate gratification or reward

That capacity will protect you from unnecessary pain and suffering and will help you achieve the quality of life you desire and deserve.

Set goals and achieve them

It is through our achievements that we develop self-esteem, character, reputation, a desirable lifestyle, and a sense of contribution to the world

Have fun

The highest end of life is to enjoy available experiences. Life is too short to devote time and energy to drudgery.

Stay in good health

Eat right, exercise, and take care of your body.

These default assumptions and values can gain control in our lives when we do not *actively* replace them with the pursuit of the character, conduct and confession of a developing disciple as revealed in the Bible and outlined in this booklet. Individually, each of us must take personal responsibility to guard against the adoption of a “this life only” perspective which is so common in our world.

Our church is here to assist believers in this process by providing an environment in which spiritual character, disciplines and beliefs—eternally valuable commodities—can be encouraged and developed in a lifelong discipleship process.

In assessing our mission, vision and values as a church, we have asked the questions: Why are we here? Where are we going? How are we going to get there? And in the area of values comes a final question: *Are we there yet?*

We believe that the answer to this question demands that we search the Scriptures to discover a personal profile of a fully developed disciple—a follower of Christ—so that we can have a shared knowledge of what a developing disciple looks like. With this common goal—the image of Christ to which we are being conformed (Romans 8:29)—we will be able to measure our progress regularly along the way as we walk with Him.

Briefly, on the following pages we present an outline of the beliefs, practices and virtues which we find revealed in the New Testament and provide a pattern of a fully developing disciple: *what a disciple must “be” (character), “know” (confession), and “do” (conduct or competency)*. These lists were tested over several years with the leaders in MICC as we gathered for small group leadership events. Again and again, these twelve milestones to mark progress were identified as necessary in the life of a disciple in MICC.

BELIEFS

Trinity: One God eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. 2 Cor. 13:14

Personality of God: God is not a force or power, but is personal and relational. Ps. 121

Biblical Authority: The Old and New Testaments are inspired by God, inerrant and reveal God's person and pleasures to us. 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Heb 4:12

Jesus Christ: He is the eternal Son, the God-man, the sufficient sacrifice for our sins. John 1:14; Col. 1:15-20; Rev. 1:8,18

Humanity: Man is created as God's image, fallen, yet God has acted to redeem a people for himself. Gen. 1:26-27; John 3:16

Sin: The entire human race fell into sin and guilt in Adam and also continues to diminish God's glory. Rom. 3:10,23

Salvation: Is a work of God, by grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone. Eph. 2:8-10; Titus 2:14; 3:5

Identity in Christ: Believers are granted status and privileges that are eternal and unchangeable in Christ. John 1:12; Eph. 1:3-5; Col. 3:12

The Church: The only human gathering that God has promised to protect for all time; the body and bride of Christ. Matt. 16:18; 1 Cor. 12

Security in Christ: The believer is secure forever in the love of God. Rom. 8:38-39

Spiritual Maturity: This is the goal and destiny toward which we all strive by the Spirit's power. Eph. 4:12-16; Rom. 8:29; Col. 1:28-29

Eternity: There is an eternal perspective which we can embrace in this life which affects the life to come. There is a real heaven filled with joy and a real hell filled with grief. Matt. 6:33; 2 Cor. 4:16-18; Rev. 11:15

PRACTICES

Worship: Worship is the normal behavior of the genuine believer in all of life. We become like the One we worship. Exod. 20:1; Ps. 95; Rev. 5:12-14

Prayer: Just as breathing is essential to physical life, so prayer is essential to spiritual life. It is communication in a relationship with God through Christ; it is also a developed discipline. Eph. 6:18

Bible Study: Every believer should learn to read, understand, follow and provide for others from God's Word. 2 Tim. 2:15

Evangelism: Telling others about the grace of forgiveness and greatness of hope in Christ is the privilege of every child of God. Matt. 28:18-20; Col. 4:2-6

Community: A group of people learning how to love each other in the power of the gospel and in the power of the Spirit glorifies God more than isolated individuals relating to Christ alone. Col. 3:11-12; Rom.12:3-8

Spiritual gifts: As members of one body, we have gifts that differ and enable us glorify God greatly in a variety of ways. Rom. 12:4-5

Worldview: Loving God with all our minds means that we learn to see life, people, culture and history with a God's-eye-view through the lens of Scripture. 2 Cor. 10:1-5

Thinking Christianly: As we are transformed by the renewal of our minds we learn to refuse the temporary and corrupt things of this world and to choose the things that are of eternal beauty and value. 1 John 2:15; Phil. 4:8

Stewardship of Time: Each day is a gift from God which we choose to manage wisely before the face of God. Eph. 5:16; Col. 4:5; Ps. 90:12

Stewardship of Money: Everything belongs to God and we choose to use our resources to extend His fame and to display His goodness and grace, by laying up treasures in heaven. Ps. 24:1; Matt. 6:21; 2 Cor. 8:7

Single Mindedness: A heart of loyalty and devotion to Christ is the aim of the child of God. Our first love and allegiance is to Him. Heb. 12:3; Phil. 3:13

Missions: Because God is worthy to be proclaimed for who He is, and since we have come to know Him intimately through His Word, we are well equipped to declare His glory among the nations of the world as an offering of worship to Him. Rom. 15:7-13

VIRTUES

Faith: Taking God at His Word and acting on it. He is reliable and desirable. 1 Cor. 13; Heb. 11:6

Hope: Counting on the certainty of God's promises. Heb. 6:17-20

Love: Choosing to give what is best to another person, because we have received the best (God himself) which we did not deserve. 1 Cor. 13; 1 John 4:7-10

Compassion: Treating others with tenderness because we sense their misery and hurt with them. Col. 3:12

Kindness: Giving to others in consideration of their need and our resources. Col. 3:12

Humility: Putting the needs of others before our own. Phil. 2:3-4

Patience: Trusting in the long term view of God's faithful provision and mercy. Col. 3:12; Gal. 5:22

Forgiveness: Choosing to bear the cost of someone else's disobedience just as Christ has done for us. Eph. 4:32

Thankfulness: Each day can be colored with gratitude when we know that all we have received is because of God's grace. Col. 1:12; 2:7

Joy: Delight in God transcends the disappointment of temporary loss and the enthusiasm of temporal and temporary gain. Phil. 4:6; Ps. 37:4

Peace: Wholeness, health, harmony and satisfaction in who God is and what He has done. Col. 3:15; Phil. 4:6-7

Self-control: Submitting to the strength of the Holy Spirit to show restraint and wisdom in life's choices. Gal. 5:22

PROFILE OF A DISCIPLE

These three lists correspond to the major issues of the Christian life:

What a disciple must know (beliefs)

What a disciple must do (practices) and

What a disciple must be (virtues).

And to help them be a little more memorable, we can use three descriptive terms beginning with “C”:

Confession (related to beliefs),

Competency (related to practices), and

Character (related to virtues).

Each of these three areas find a common root in regeneration, the new birth.

This is evident from

1 John 2:28 (Competency/Practices)

1 John 4:8 (Character/Virtues) and

1 John 5:1 (Confession/Beliefs)

Identifying and rejecting the false, default assumptions of our world, and then choosing to embrace these beliefs, practices and virtues is the mark of one who is born of God—a fully developing disciple of Jesus Christ.

And by embracing and implementing these beliefs, practices and virtues, we can measure our progress toward our final destination: being conformed to the image of Christ (Rom. 8:29), with fullness of joy in his presence and pleasures forevermore at his right hand (Ps. 16:11).



MUNICH INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY CHURCH

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