

October 2006
In the Company of Jesus

Dear Theophilus,

“What really matters is life lived, every minute and second, in the company of Jesus on the road to mission.” These are the thoughts of Tom Bandy, a Methodist pastor and writer on the present and future church. He argues that this is what the New Testament emphasized and felt to be most important.

Our generation and a few before it have thought that worship is the most important thing we do and we have spent much of our time fighting over the way we worship and the songs we sing, spend great resources of time and energy planning it, count the health of a congregation by how many people are in the pews, and agonize over dwindling numbers.

Worship is important, Bandy maintains, but it should be measured by how many lives are changed and transformed, the percentage of adult worshippers who go on to participate in a small group or regular spiritual discipline, and how many go on to invest their lives during the next week in hands-on mission and service to the poor.

Life lived in the company of Jesus. Are we thinking this way? Are we putting ourselves in places where we are in the company of Jesus? A small group perhaps, a choir, a ministry, a team? Teaching our children, befriending our youth? What ways might you live with Jesus during the week?

On the road to mission. How are you involved in mission? If not, why not?

This fall we seek to live in the company of Jesus on the road to mission through the *Creating Community* initiative, renovating our downstairs rooms, creating a garden park in front, and exploring the possibility of a pastoral counseling center. It’s also happening through *Circle of Life* and other small groups. We see it in our church school and youth programs. We see it in our music programs. Did you know that Chris Hill, our new director of music, is starting a music program for our children and youth?

We see it when we live generous lives, when we share our resources and time, when we give to others, when we tithe. Watch for ways that our stewardship ministry will be offering opportunities, especially at a dinner on Saturday, October 21 and worship the next morning.

We see it when we sing and pray and share and laugh with one another, when we move from our normal standing place to follow Jesus.

Worship is a good place to start and the spiritual life will happen all along the way. It begins with a first step. Are you ready to take it?

Blessings,

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