



## “FIRST PRINCIPLES” FOR PURPOSEFUL MINISTRY IN THE EVANGELICAL FRIENDS CHURCH

**People are hungry** for

purpose. In truth, our hunger is the direct result of God creating us with huge appetites for purpose that he alone can fulfill in a close relationship with him.

Rick Warren knows this. You and I know it. **But we didn't create our need for purpose. God did.**

Jesus is the perfect expression of a purposeful person. And he calls us to join him in a life that makes sense—both in the now and in the world to come.

Movements like ours—the Evangelical Friends Church—are at our very best when we live on purpose with Christ at the center, Scripture as our defining norm, and God's Spirit as our Counselor. Consider, then, five of our “First Principles” for ministry.

### 1 CHRIST: JESUS CHRIST IS SUPREME

*Col 1: 18 “And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.”*

- He is our hope and he fills us with his hope!
- In everything, what would he do? What would he have us do?
- He is the Head of the Body—his church—us.
- He is grace-giver, truth, way, and life—Savior, friend, and living Lord,
- Let him be the issue, not our politics, opinions, or church traditions.
- He is the absolute center of our life and ministry: he chooses us and appoints us to bear fruit that will last (Jn15:16).

### 2 PRIORITIES: PEOPLE MATTER MORE THAN THINGS

*Jn 13: 34b “. . . As I have loved you, so you must love one another.”*

- Although it is easier to count, to measure things and material success, our calling is to value people far above things.

• In our ministry, people are not a bother, they are our priority.

• We are called by Jesus to treat one another with respect—as friends—as we like to be treated.

• Meetings, budgets, job descriptions, goals, strategies, programs, even the Sabbath (Mk 2:27) are created for people, not people for them.

### 3 PURPOSE WITH PASSION: JESUS CHRIST CALLS US TO FULFILL HIS GREAT COMMISSION

*Mt 28: 19-20 “. . . Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I will be with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

#### —IN THE SPIRIT OF HIS GREAT COMMANDMENT

*Mt 22: 37-39 “Jesus replied, ‘Love the Lord you God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”*

- We desire to be purpose-driven and Spirit-drawn.
- Developing intimate friends and devoted followers of Jesus is a life-long passion and calling by which all of our ministry must be measured.
- The attitude of our hearts matters even more than quantifiable results.
- God desires both faithfulness and fruitfulness (Jn 15: 16).

### 4 ATTITUDE: POSITIVE PROBLEM-SOLVING IS OUR GOD-GIVEN PRIVILEGE AND OUR GOAL

*Phil 2: 4-5 “Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus.”*

- Glance at problems, stare at solutions.
- Bring the hope of God as the fundamental assumption.
- Actively seek God's best possibilities for one another.
- Understand that unselfish sacrifice is required to bring about God's solutions.
- By faith, see “beauty rising out of ashes.”

• Be both a grace-receiver and a grace-giver.

### 5 SPEECH: TALK TO THE RIGHT PEOPLE IN THE RIGHT SPIRIT

*Eph 4:29 “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen” (See also Mt 18: 15ff).*

- We are called to talk with one another, not about one another.
- It takes more courage, more faith, more sanctifying grace to speak directly than indirectly.
- The health of our souls and of the Body of Christ is largely affected by our patterns of talking.
- The test of our speech is not whether we are being brutally honest, but whether we are “building up” others according to their needs.
- Disagreements in the Body of Christ are to be expressed in a respectful, mutually beneficial spirit.
- Words that encourage and bless “warm a winter's night.”
- To love means that we speak in love; any other speech falls short of God's norm.

As Jesus leads us, **prayer** is our continual lifeline to God, keeping us in tune with **his word, his living presence,** and the power of **his Spirit. Joy** and **thankfulness** overflow in our lives and ministry together (1 Thes 5:16-18).

—dr. john p. williams, jr.

**“Such confidence as this is ours through Christ before God. Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.”**  
**(2 Cor 3: 4-6)**

“. . . We must come to Scripture humbly and in a constant attitude of repentance. Only in this way will we gain a thorough