

General Topics :: Unfriendly churches**Unfriendly churches, on: 2006/3/6 11:21**

Anyone ever visit a church and have absolutely no one talk to you? You just come in, take a seat, listen to the sermon... and then leave without a single person coming up to you and saying hello?

Or has anyone been looking for a home church... attend one for a few months only to realize that you've been there for 2 or 3 months and not one person has taken the time to get to know you? Sure... they are friendly enough, but you still haven't developed any relationships? Yet the people in that church think they are the friendliest church on the planet...

Anyone ever feel that way?

Krispy

Re: Unfriendly churches - posted by IRONMAN (), on: 2006/3/6 11:55

bro Krispy

i know that feeling bro, but the thing is everywhere i go i feel this great heaviness or sense of superficiality. on occasion at church i'll find some genuine people but for the most part much superficiality, it's everywhere, work, the gym, the store s...even in me sometimes.

Re:, on: 2006/3/6 13:52

Altho I have certainly had that experience in churches before, I currently do not. We have a house church network and it is very intimate.

But the conversation I am attempting to spark would be about how people go about getting beyond the superficiality and enter into a "family" atmosphere in the church.

I recognize on this forum it is easier for people to be more open since for the most part we don't know names and are not face to face... but wouldn't be interesting if we could all fellowship face to face weekly... daily even.

Krispy

Re: - posted by IRONMAN (), on: 2006/3/6 16:57

bro Krispy

i think the best way to get around all the hype and stuff is to be genuine since that is stronger than the farce. of course we also have to deal with the individualistic attitude of the church as we know it today such that the Church then become that communal type in Acts. The latter can only come after we are rendered desperate by hardship because right now, we have too much other stuff going on.

Re: Unfriendly Churches - posted by GodsPeace (), on: 2006/3/6 18:43

I go in and stare at the backs of heads. The sermon is once again about being a light for Jesus from the fixated pastor/dictator (this is a modern office). He named his church "The Lighthouse". He always preaches about light. He walks in darkness. I pray for him daily.

I listened to a woman talk about how she just learned that the "Fear of God" isn't anything to worry about -not real fear - It has to do with how well you treat others. She got the sermon second hand at a seminar the week before. Hope they have a seminar to explain "Fear of God Part II"

Love the music. I usually leave for that part. We sing, "Let me know you are here!" Where's our faith? We sing, "Once again I thank you, once again I pour out my life". This was serious non-repeatable business for The Lord Jesus, and, later, Paul, but we only have to sing the song and we've accomplished the same, time and time again. Painlessly

What's a "Worship Leader" anyhow? I've never met one who could define what "Worship" meant. A prerequisite for the job

It must be a complete disregard for Theology. Last week I heard a "Worship Leader", say, "The theology in this song I wrote is probably terrible, but I don't care."

I went to a Thai church 2 Sunday's ago primarily to bring my friends who needed ministry in their native tongue. The church is run by women who minister to prostitutes, so there are a lot of new converts from that lifestyle. My friend's need was so urgent, and there was a 2 day legal deadline looming. In attendance were about 50 women and some young Thai guys in the band. The lone male pastor lives 2 hours away and wasn't there that day.

No high church this... and no visible authority structure. I asked if I could introduce my friends and their problem, as somebody, knowing Thailand better, might have a solution, or at least prayer. They said, NO I stayed, my friends left. They were very upset at how they were dealt with. Abused, they never want to return. She's undergoing postpartum depression, and he has lost everything recently. I was doing spiritual first-aid all week. This is the second church that has abused them. The pastor/dictator of the Lighthouse threw them out because they were my friends. I disagreed with him (privately) because the Lord's Supper shouldn't be used to cast out spirits. I disagreed a second time about Baptism and was manhandled out the door. He also called the police (his friends). My aforementioned friend stopped by later to find out what happened, and was thrown out too. The dictator/pastor called the man's wife at home and threw her out even though she hadn't said a word. She was already 9 months pregnant at the time. Nice shepherding!

Back to the women's church. As it turned out, later in the service there was a call for anyone to speak through the mic, and they had a mass prayer where 95% of the people went forward for prayer or to pray. But my friends had gone. We closed with songs of how much we love Jesus and are willing to do anything for Him.

The new mother has been isolated from other women since she came to the Lord. I have tried to find a nice Thai Christian "older sister", asking dozens of women. No luck! Sorry, I don't actually believe in luck, but I do believe in Satan, and he seems to be making a pretty good assault against this new Buddhist convert, her 2 month old baby, and her recently converted Sikh husband. The thing is, Satan's got a two-front war going on. The two directions of attack are her Buddhist family, and the "Christian" church.

It is a little difficult to confirm to them that God is Love and wants us to be conformed to that image of Love when the only examples these people have to learn from in their own language are not exactly brimming over with it. Indeed, the opposite has been all they've seen. Yesterday they said "God hates us!"

How can we claim to love God, whom we haven't seen, when we don't love our brothers and sisters, whom we have seen?

Another Rant,

Jeffrey

Re: Unfriendly Churches - Thailand - posted by GodsPeace (), on: 2006/3/7 10:35

Hi all!

I moved this back to the thread for unfriendly churches. Annie asked me some questions about being in Thailand, and my following rant is based on a shorter rant on unfriendly churches found elsewhere in this thread. Annie's questions that I'm responding to are usually quoted. Her entire post is quoted at the end. That said...

Quote:
-----I don't want to bog you down with questions, but this whole story from the other thread of "Unfriendly Churches" just amazes me and I cannot picture finding myself in a strange land.

Hi Annie,

Firstly Annie, if you're a Christian you are in a strange land! "To God's elect, strangers in the world" 1 Peter 1:1 (NIV) Honestly you haven't bogged me down with questions. It is my pleasure to give witness to what the Lord is doing in my life, and the lives of those around me. It is also my service to confess where I have fallen short - in obedience to Him. Maybe in this account, and the one previous, I'll benefit by gaining prayer support for baby Serafina, Sony, her father, Wanpen,

her mother, the evil city of Pattaya, Thailand in general and even, perhaps, solicit a little prayer for myself. Face it, we all need prayer!

Quote:

-----I know that my brother-in-law went there on a business trip many years ago and was about floored with the immorality.

Sister, you don't know the half of it. I'm in Pattaya, arguably the most decadent place in Thailand. I have non-Christian acquaintances who blurt out a few words about what goes on in these places before I can stop them. They have brought me to tears in the past. Some folks love to inflict on the unwary tales of what goes on in these places - every type of vile debasement of the woman's body in the name of fun, or entertainment... and all for money. No wonder both the women and their customers have to get dead drunk afterward to anesthetize their consciences.

The worst "pimps" of all take newborns, then cripple or blind them. Then they take care of them (right!) for a few years until they can set them out to begging, bringing a constant source of profits home. Their Judge awaits.

Quote:

-----It must be God's will or else you would have left there by now ... right ?

I guess so. I just came to find a nice Thai wife to take care of me and play music by the sea until my old age (I'm 54 now). I was pretty naive about Thailand, the immorality, the people and all. Since returning to Jesus, I can't consider a partnership with a Thai Buddhist lady.

Quote:

-----You seem to be the only one there who cares.

That's not at all true! There are many working with orphans, the poor and needy here. I can't accept praise, either. I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

Quote:

-----I read your story about that poor couple with the new baby. How sad, there's no words for such things, that I can utter right now.

Sony Singh, an Indian Sikh, who was married to a Thai Buddhist wife, came to the Lighthouse Church last summer. He had just had his business stolen by his Thai partners. They also either wanted him off their island of Ko Samui, or dead, so they sent young thugs on 3 occasions to stab him. He then went back to India, where he still had some property he could cash in on. In the years since his last visit home, his Sikh brothers had documents altered and stole his land. He returned to Thailand and soon after found that his wife had become pregnant during their trip. Now they were having a baby, that his wife's family was trying to influence her to abort, and they were dead broke. He resorted to going into a church for help.

The aforementioned Dictator/Pastor and I were sitting around after the service and he was trying to convince me that the Lord's Supper was useful to deliver people of demons. My mistake, I felt the Lord's Supper was for baptized believers to celebrate and remember the Lord.

Sony had been to that church several times in previous days, and I had just heard his story, though I'd never met him. Well, Sony came in that day and said that his wife was going to kill herself unless he donated one of his kidneys on the black market for money. I knew this was a super-manipulative ploy on his part, but eventually I felt that God was calling me to disciple him and help him out for his wife's and baby's sake.

To this day, I'm not 100% sure he is a Christian. That's to be revealed by God. Wanpen, his wife, seems more sincere, and likes to pray. I can't understand her Thai, and almost all the instruction she's received has been from me, though undoubtedly improperly translated, due to Sony's poor English.

Wanpen is going through a nasty postpartum depression exacerbated by the fact Sony owes about \$7,000 (a huge amount here) The man he owes is a slippery ex-brother-in-law, who has positioned himself to throw Sony into prison and steal Wanpen's Mother's house, I'm seeking the Lord to intervene because the man is evil and he will do this if he doesn't get his money. He offered to cancel the debt in exchange for Serafina. Sony's and Wanpen's beautiful 2 month old daughter - Why? To make her a slave? a prostitute? a crippled beggar?.

Serafina's always in my heart. Everything I've done I've done for her, and to a lesser extent, for Wanpen and Sony. I realize the parents could be taking advantage of me, so I set some ground rules. I paid for an apartment for them, food, and medical and hospital costs for the delivery of Serafina, which gave them a little breathing room. Now, if Sony shows sincere, we'll buy and sell used cars until he can repay the Snake and become independent.

Serafina was the name I gave the baby after being asked to by the parents. It's not Thai. It's Hebrew - from the Seraphim or 'Fiery Ones'. The angels who are continually in God's presence.

A little child shall lead them? The very existence of this child has brought the Mother and, I believe, the Father to Christ. Others are considering the fact that while many seek to do harm to the child and her family there is a Christian witness that stands and cuts them at a conscience level. This baby has been under a major Satanic attack since conception.

Did I mention that she's beautiful? She was dedicated to God before we knew she was a she. Many will be drawn to God's fire through her fire. This is my belief, and why I named her after the Seraphim - "Fiery Ones".

But the attack continues. If her mother doesn't find a good Christian lady to talk to she'll wither. The Father is obstinate about church, having been so often abused.

Not knowing what else to do, I'm setting up my house as a home church, perhaps that will draw some more fervent believers.

Quote:

-----How did you happen upon this site, if I may ask ?

I was searching for names of old teachers of mine and J.Edwin Orr's name brought me to this site - much to my delight.

Quote:

-----Do you ever consider leaving or do you feel the Lord has set you root there ?

WARNING! Major Rant Follows!

I'd love to get out of Pattaya, but I think the Lord moved me to this area on the Earth for His glory. Maybe somewhere else in S.E. Asia. Funny (sad, actually), but I go to some evangelistic meetings, and all the pastors are saying, "God's going to do a work in Pattaya!" They stretch out their hands to the North, and pray, then the East, South and West. Every meeting. It's all a big club, a big party. Where's Jesus? The Christians here haven't repented. Do they want to make converts that are twice as worldly as themselves?

Personally I want the Lord to shake me and shake this church down to bedrock, I want him to burn away my personal stuff and that of our materialistic lives, and give His church here and everywhere one of His greatest gifts of grace - true repentance. Romans 2 asks if we have forgotten that it is God's goodness -- His kindness that leads us to repentance. We don't repent. He leads us by His grace to repent. How can we expect God to pour out His Spirit on so vile a place as Pattaya, when we, the Church, are inwardly vile?

God, judge me not according to your sense of wrath, for I cannot stand before it. In your infinite mercy deal with me according to your lovingkindness, and grant me the undeserved gift of true repentance, not for my own sake, but for the sake of Jesus Christ who bled and died for me and called me for His glory. Then may His light shine forth to the nations calling them to the gospel of repentance to the obedience of the faith. Amen.

Jeffrey - God's Peace

General Topics :: Unfriendly churches

Quote:

MeAgain wrote:

God's Peace, {Amen}

Thank you brother for answering here and giving details of that country.

I know that my brother-in-law went there on a business trip many years ago and was about floored with the immorality. I can't believe you are there. That's incredible.

It must be God's will or else you would have left there by now ... right ?

You seem to be the only one there who cares.

I read your story about that poor couple with the new baby. How sad, there's no words for such things, that I can utter right now.

I can't imagine being "that" alone. But Praise the Lord you have a Computer and can 'venture out'.

I am happy you found your way here.

How did you happen upon this site, if I may ask ?

I'm just amazed at this whole story and I could tell by how you wrote, that you were not a native of Thailand. Wow.

Do you ever consider leaving or do you feel the Lord has set you root there ?

I don't want to bog you down with questions, but this whole story from the other thread of "Unfriendly Churches" just amazes me and I cannot picture finding myself in a strange land.

Oh my. Well, you certainly have my prayers and I pray the Lord impress it upon many others to keep you lifted up before the Throne.

His Mercy to you.

Annie