



It was the first service of a brand new church. Jan and I found a seat and were awed by the beauty of the sanctuary. No, not an office-front, not a YMCA. It was the St. Trinity Lutheran Church in south St. Louis. The new PCA planter/pastor, Chris Smith, introduced the service and told the story of how God had led to the beautiful facility.

He'd visited dozens of community leaders in the area. It was a Catholic nun, Sister Mary Ann Nestel, who leaned across the table, grabbed his hand and said, 'We're so glad you're coming! Let me show you who to talk to.' And she shoved her Rolodex across to him. Call this guy; email that person; see this one. And one of those was Lutheran pastor, David Liebnau. And that congregation invited Chris and his core group to use their facility.

Now, when do you want to worship? they asked him. Well, Chris replied, whenever you're not worshipping. No, no, they replied, what's best for you guys? Best for us? Well, maybe 11:00 am. Oh, ok, we'll change our worship time to accommodate you. Hmmmm.

Now, don't you want a sign out front? Chris replies, could we maybe put up something on Sunday morning? Well, we were thinking you'd need a permanent sign. Why not do that? A permanent sign? Monthly rent? Oh, well, how about...and it was incredibly reasonable.

When Pastor Liebnau was introduced, he said, We're so glad you're here. And if you can extend the gospel here in ways that are better than we've done, we'll be excited. We're praying for you! Welcome!

I found myself deeply moved by Pastor Liebnau and the St. Trinity congregation. What generosity, grace, lack of defensiveness and 'turf guarding'! It was almost like they were willing to give themselves away for the sake of a church plant in a different denomination! It was as if they were more interested in the Kingdom of God than in the 'success' of their own ministry! What does being Kingdom-minded mean anyway? I think Jan and I just experienced a little taste of it from a Catholic sister and a Lutheran pastor and his people.

And the question bubbled up: how many 138 year old churches in my denomination would say to a Baptist or Lutheran or Pentecostal church planter, how can we help you succeed, even if it makes it harder for us? Would you do that in your ministry?

What does it mean for YOU to be Kingdom-minded? How is that working out practically right now?

Let me know what you think. Or if you want to talk about this, church planting, or anything.

Yours for Kingdom extension,

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