

## FROM THE PULPIT

# It is all about Jesus and community

**By Brad Bryant**

FOR THE PANTAGRAPH

**R**eligious teachings are so diverse among world religions, and even among “Christian” churches, that finding God’s path is really hard for seekers. Many just “give up.”

So what’s a God-seeker to do?

First, consider that Jesus came into our world, to point us toward God. Understanding Jesus helps us better understand God’s plans and invitations.

Second, in my experience, it’s not possible to follow Jesus

alone. Some say “I don’t believe in organized religion,” and try to live a Christian lifestyle alone. That may encourage a “good life,” but falls short of living the fullness of the gospel.

Jesus said that the “greatest commandment” is to love God, then love yourself and love others (Matthew 22:36-40). Trying to do it alone, we miss the relationships that help us learn to truly love God, self and others. We need other people, and a love-based church family, so we can practice our ability to love all people unconditionally, to forgive, repent and rebuild rela-

tionships! You just can’t do that alone, in your living room, with a book on your lap.

Search for a church whose activities and ministries teach people about and introduce them to the living Jesus. Jesus points us toward God. Jesus’ actions and ministries should be reflected in the church’s ministries.

The church should be an environment that fosters joy, hope, love and peace in every person. Those fruits of the Spirit are rare in our broken world! The church is called to fix that!

And for love specifically, is it openly shared with all people? (Or only those good enough to meet our standards?) Jesus calls his people to love others unconditionally, and to bring them closer to his healing blessings!

Your spiritual journey is not over! Keep learning and questioning! Seek God’s truth! Here are a few steps to consider:

- ▶ Learn about Jesus.
- ▶ Be with people who will help you encounter Jesus.
- ▶ Learn to recognize Jesus at work in and around you.
- ▶ Accept Jesus as your savior.
- ▶ Ask for and receive the

blessings and healings that God wants to share with you.

▶ Come to know Jesus personally.

▶ Build a relationship with Jesus and his people.

Remember: God loves you, and wants you to find him. Find a church family that helps you meet the living, loving God, who knows you personally, and wants to be your partner now, in this life!

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