

Filipino church teaches members to adopt missional lifestyle_101804

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Members of
First
Phillipine
Baptist
Church in
Houston
participate
in a recent
Vacation
Bible School.

The
congregation
partnered
with the
youth group
from
Tallowood
Baptist
Church for
the effort.
Partnership
is one of the
hallmarks of
missional
churches,
said Milfred
Minatrea,
who recently
wrote a book
on the
subject.

Filipino church teaches members to adopt missional lifestyle

By John Hall

Texas Baptist Communications

HOUSTON-Actively involved Christians may spend seven hours a week inside church walls. That leaves 161 hours a week they aren't in church.

Shouldn't believers live out their faith around-the-clock, wherever they are?

Howard Dagohoy, pastor of First Philippine Baptist Church in Houston, is answering the question with a firm “yes” by equipping members to share the gospel through day-to-day words and deeds.

He is one of a growing number of church leaders who are encouraging Christians to live “missionally”—intentionally following God's purpose to share the gospel and make disciples through everyday action.

Living missionally is “being a missionary where you are,” Dagohoy said. “You don't have to go far. You are a missionary at the workplace, at school—wherever you are.”

That takes different forms in different congregations, said Fred Ater, consultant for the Baptist General Convention of Texas Missional Church Center. One congregation may help teachers understand what they can and cannot say about their faith in school. Another may help individuals turn their hobbies into ministries.

At Higher Dimension Church in Houston, members are involved in discipleship classes, where their faith becomes more mature. Members are encouraged to read the entire Bible at least once a year. Church leaders are preparing members to impact their neighborhoods by strengthening

their faith and encouraging them to be bold in a community with drugs and prostitution, said Olus Holder, the church's overseer of pastoral care.

"It's going really well," Holder said. "The people are thirsty for the word of God."

Leaders admit it is difficult to define a missional church, because churches are continuously evolving and honing their work on the missional journey, but it is about mirroring the mission heart of God.

"When the church as a whole moves to the heartbeat of God, they will see not only the grace God gives, but the responsibility," Ater said.

As church members begin seeing the world they live in as a mission field, attitudes and cultures change, said Milfred Minatrea, director of the Missional Church Center.

The traditional marks of an active Christian lifestyle appear, he added.

Believers start to recognize the non-Christian people around them and naturally share the gospel with them, Minatrea explained. Christians are obedient to the Scriptures, which they hold in high esteem.

With that, the culture of churches changes, he continued. Rather than focusing on bringing people in, congregations look to release people into areas where they can have the most impact for Christ. They start churches. Members function as staff. They strengthen other Christian efforts.

"The missional church is not a program or process," said Minatrea, author of "Shaped By God's Heart."

"It is a paradigm. It is another way to see what the church is to be."

Missional churches focus on penetrating communities, not "staying afloat" with adequate membership to support themselves, Ater said. Each member

is a missionary that can help change the world for God. A global vision includes local ministry. Laypeople have the greatest impact, not church staff members.

“I think we are at a hinge moment in history,” Minatrea said. “Very few generations live at the hinges. I'm convinced we are moving from the era of the ordained to the era of the ordinary.”

News of religion, faith, missions, Bible study and Christian ministry among Texas Baptist churches, in the BGCT, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and around the world.