

Song Stories # 1 - “What We Really Need”

I wrote this song when we first founded Heart of the City Ministries in 1996. As I left a great ministry of being the Music Minister at the Church of the Open Door for 11 years and having been a worship leader with Promisekeepers for three years, my eyes were turned to a much broader picture of the health of the whole Church versus a single congregation. At Promisekeeper events, we would have these incredible experiences of unified worship with men from all different denominations and ethnicities, but then we would return home to our racially, denominationally and congregationally divided church institutions. These things, along with all the doctrinal, stylistic and lifestyle tangents that divide us in the Church began to burden me greatly and this song was born as an expression of that burden and as a sort of manifesto. It still stands for me as probably the clearest song manifesto I have of what I believe the core of the Christian life is and isn't.

The first verse addresses our mass divisions amongst Christians. It addresses the “modernizing” of the Christian message regarding what is acceptable Biblical lifestyle and behavior like the ELCA recently embraced. It addresses the shallow emotional draw to worship experiences that “move” us but don't cause us to change our behavior and live out our worship. It addresses the reality of pews filled with simply church attendees and often self-righteous religious people instead of radical disciples of Christ.

The second verse addresses how so many of us go to church week after week hearing so many sermons but have so little transformation in our lives. It addresses our contentment with injustice in the world that doesn't move us to action. It addresses prosperity theology that presents “godliness as a means of gain”. It addresses the huge lack of Biblical knowledge amongst Christians and it addresses the need for our lives to be marked by love if we are going to call ourselves Christians.

The third verse addresses how so many of us have college degrees but lack so much wisdom. It addresses our endless consumption of entertainment that is compromising to our Biblical values. It addresses the modern Christian message that doesn't speak of sin and Judgement Day and tends to tickle itching ears. It addresses our many churches that are built around the charisma and personality of the pastor or worship leader and the quality of the production instead of dependent on the power and presence of the Holy Spirit.

The bridge of this song comes from Revelation chapter three that speaks to the Laodicean church which was a carnal congregation that saw itself as rich and content and in need of nothing but that God saw as poor, wretched, naked and blind. God's call to that church was for them to repent and this bridge is an attempt to embrace God's perspective in repentance.

The chorus of this song comes from that profound and most difficult statement of John the Baptist “He must increase, I must decrease”. I think that sums up the core mission statement of what it means to be a follower of Christ – so difficult and un-natural, but the way to life, hope and the fullness of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

To hear this song, click on this YouTube link: www.youtube.com/watch?v=sJ0bNoFL_Hg

What We Really Need

by Dan Adler

1. We don't need no more division, we've divided for so long
We don't need a truth revision to redefine what's right and wrong
We don't need just an emotion that will make us feel okay
We don't need to sing of one thing but then live another way
We don't need empty religion! We don't need self-righteousness!

CHORUS: But what we really want, what we really need
What we hunger for is to know You more!
We need to seek Your face, we need to learn Your ways!
We need to build Your kingdom instead of our own!
What we really want and what we really need is Jesus!
He must increase! We must decrease!

2. We don't need another sermon that we choose to not apply!
We don't need to see injustice and then just simply close our eyes!
We don't need a lot of money just to spend it on ourselves!
We don't need so many Bibles if they're sitting on our shelves!
We don't need to say we're Christian if we do not live in love!
(To chorus)

3. We don't need more education if it will not make us wise!
We don't need more entertainment if it makes us compromise!
We don't need a brand new gospel that is easier to sell!
We don't need to speak of heaven but then never speak of hell!
We don't need some charming leader! We don't need a better show!
(To Chorus)

Bridge: O Lord, please help us find our way!
Our hearts so quickly go astray!
Clothe us where we are naked! Show us where we are blind!

We need to follow you and leave our sin, our sin behind!
(to Chorus)

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