**Leading the Rural Congregation.**

Presenter: Pastor Ryan Schnee, Village Missions

October 24th, 2014

1. Demographics are considered part of culture, or at least a major contributing factor in the culture of an area. Demographic trends also have an important impact on churches. Who we find in our community will play an important part in our ministry.
2. The trend of most rural areas is that in comparison to urban areas, rural areas are generally: (circle one for each)
   1. Higher or lower income?
   2. Younger or older?
   3. Marked by population decline, or population growth?
   4. Intermarried/related or culturally diverse?
   5. Changing or stable populations with little immigration/migration?

**Helpful Categories for Understanding Our Community**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **People who have left and returned.** | **People who have never left.** | **People who never return.** | **New Arrivals** |
| **Characteristics of:** |  |  |  |  |
| **How is their story a challenge for our ministry?** |  |  |  |  |
| **What opportunities do they bring?** |  |  |  |  |
| **What do we need to do to minister to these people?** |  |  |  |  |

1. Appreciate that the rural congregation is:
   1. Highly\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and highly invested.
   2. Working extremely \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
   3. Linked to a long history and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in the church.

**I have come to love, respect, and appreciate our people. Understanding is crucial in exercising patience and compassion.**

1. Learning to lead without the following:
   1. Relief or Respite:
   2. Expert Help:
   3. A large budget:
   4. Relevant Resources:
   5. Clearly defined structure:

**Just as a lack of competition can be one of the greatest opportunities in a rural area, finding ourselves without many of the things we associate with ministry in a larger context can be some of our greatest blessings.**

Finding ourselves dependent on God and His Word is never a bad thing.

*‘Not by might nor by power , but by my Spirit says the Lord Almighty....Who despises the day of the small thing?’* ***Zechariah 4:6,10***

*‘Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.’* ***2 Cor 12:9***

1. The most relevant resource we have is the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Being able to focus on relationships is a great thing.

1. Be personal.
2. Enter into the lives of the people you came to serve and reach.
3. Be your own person.

PREACH THE WORD ---------- LOVE THE PEOPLE

**Bibliography**

Allender, Dan B. and Tremper Longman III. *Intimate Allies.* Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale. 1995.

Brickman, Twyla.  *Yoked Together,* United States: Xulon Press, 2004

"Contrasting Rural and Urban" Rural Homeland Missionary Article, n.p Cited 8 Sept 2014

Online: <http://www.rhma.org/index.php/resources>.

Culbertson, Rod. "Ministering to the Needs of Small and Declining Churches", Charlotte, North

Carolina. Reformed Theological Seminary. n.p. Cited 8 September 2014. Online: www.rts.edu/Site/Resources/FacultyArticles/Ministering-to-the-Needs-of-Small-and-Declining-Churches.pdf

Daman, Glenn C.  *Leading the Small Church,* Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2006.

Dudley, Carl S., *Making the Small Church Effective,* Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1982.

Elmer, Duane,  *Cross Cultural Connections,* Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2002.

Fortin, Myriam. “A Comparison of Rural and Urban Workers Living in Low Income.” *Rural and*

*Small Town Canada Analysis Bulletin* 7, no. 4 (2008).

J.D. Payne, *Discovering Church Planting,* Colorado Springs, Co: Paternoster, 2009.

Johnson, Kenneth. “Demographic Trends in Rural and Small Town America” *Carsey Institue*

*Reports on Rural America,* vol 1 no. 1 (2006):

Klassen, Ron, John Koessler,  *No Little Places: The Untapped Potential of the Small-Town*

*Church.*  Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002.

London, H.B., Neil B. Wiseman,  *Married to a Pastor,* Ventura, California:Regal Books, 1999.

Mathewson, Maynard, Ron Klassen, "The Small-Town Pastor's Family" " Rural Homeland

Missionary Article, n.p Cited 8 Sept 2014 Online: <http://www.rhma.org/index.php/resources>

Moore, W. Scott,  *Rural Revival: Growing churches in shrinking communities.*

Rogersville, Alabama: Eleas Press, 2012.

O' Brien, Brandon J.. *The Strategically Small Church.* Minneapolis, Minnesota: Bethany House,

2010.

Village Missions Manual*: Reclaiming the Heartland of North America for Jesus Christ.*

2004 edition.