I know the title of my little newsletter today may have made you cringe with thoughts like "My church is loving, sweet and full of nice people. How could anyone say that 'The Church Hates Love?'" Or perhaps it might be unhealthy.
How could a church that is advertised as sweet, loving and accepting, be unhealthy? Well, perhaps we might start with your viewing of a 1950's TV Commercial for Kool-Aid.

Have you ever drank "The Kool-Aid"? Before you answer, watch the commercial.

Kool-Aid Commercial - Circa 1950's

As a person who spent over 30 years in the advertising business, I can testify to you that one learns quickly that not all products are as advertised or as promised. Even the sweet ones.

As a person who has spent over 50 years around "religious institutions", I can testify to you that one learns quickly that not all churches are as advertised or as promised. Even the sweet ones.

Look at the children in the commercial. So cute. So sweet. So white. Look at the Mom, making the Kool-Aid. So well dressed. So caring. So, Mom? Look at the Kool-Aid. So refreshing. But was it really healthy? Was it really good for you? The entire commercial is a lie. It seems nice and sweet, but it is still a lie. Perhaps you enjoy artificial ingredients. I sure don't.

The TV commercial aired in the late 1950's and as a child, I was even fooled by it. I asked my Italian father to buy me some. He said "Drink-a You-a Milk-a". He had a real thick Italian accent, but understood the difference between artificial ingredients, now called "junk food" and "real milk."

Let me get back to the main topic: "Why The Church Hates Love."

The Apostle Paul had a great career. He was a leader who was well respected by his "denomination". I'm sure, he was a "guest speaker" in his then known world at major events. His favorite topics were probably rules and how to obey them. Every single 600 plus of them.

To protect his "denomination" he even went so far as to round-up people who were threatening his groups religion and had them stoned or worse. He was loved by his group for doing this and was feared by many. Paul was "sincere" and perhaps that is why God had to step in and straighten Paul out. He does that to all of us, because he loves us. As I understand the story, Paul was made blind for a short time, in order for him to see.

While blind, he met Jesus Christ. After that encounter things became very clear to Paul.

It was the Apostle Paul's "Turning Point." Nothing about his belief system would ever be the same. When you meet Jesus Christ, nothing should remain the same, about your life, your belief system or the way you live and love or those you choose to love. I can give you a few texts from the Bible but I would rather share some thoughts live and in person. You can read a part of the account yourself in Acts 9:1-9. Paul is referred to as "Saul" in the text, but that is another story.

This Saturday, September 17th at 11:00 a.m. at Manhattan Church, 232 West 11th Street, NYC, I will be speaking on 1 Corinthians 12 and 13. I think the subject matter...
to be of such importance, that I will be giving two lectures on the topic. This week and continuing next week on September 24th at the same location.

In reading the book of 1 Corinthians the other day I wondered, why was Paul so emphatic when he spoke about love in many of his writings and letters to the early church.

At the end of 1 Corinthians 12, after spending an entire chapter on some tremendous attributes that the church and it's people should have, which Paul refers to as "Spiritual Gifts", he then closes the chapter with this perhaps odd thought "And now I will show you the most excellent way." - 1 Corinthians 12:31

Paul then writes perhaps the most clarifying scripture in the Bible on what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ and does it in a positive manner, with the addition of some amazing statements, to make sure people understand that it is not how many talents or spiritual gifts you may think you possess, or "have a faith that can move mountains" that counts, but how you love.

If you are in New York City this Saturday, September 17, please join us for this clarifying look at what it means to be a follower of Jesus. It is a lot more than attending a church with a praise team, or sitting in nice pews full of "nice" people. Even if you have a faith that can "move mountains" this sharing of the Word might just rock your world into a deeper realm of understanding that all of us need.

If you know of any young people who have been harassed out of "the church" invite them to come to this series. If you sometimes scratch your head or have been hit over it by well meaning people who know The Truth, but act otherwise, you might want to come also.

"A Conversation With The Word" This Saturday, September 17 at 11:00 a.m., Manhattan Church, 232 West 11th Street, NYC.

May God richly bless you and give you peace that passes all understanding.

I hope to see you there.

Best regards,

Tony Romeo, Pastor
The Chapel At Union Square / Manhattan Church / REACH-NYC

P.S. Those who attend our small group fellowship at The Chapel At Union Square will be joining us for this series at Manhattan Church. No matter what your faith tradition, you will find a welcoming hand of friendship here.

Some of our friends will be on a retreat this weekend and we pray for them to receive a blessing where they are gathering. However, if you are in New York City, we want you to join us for a time of refreshing and clarifying bible study and prayer.

Individual and group Bible study sessions are always available. "Cafe Reach" will be reopening soon. For more information, write to: reachnyc.contact@gmail.com.

Click on the link below to view the REACH-NYC website:
reach-nyc.com

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