

Session One Life In Babylon

1. How do you feel about living in the SF Francisco Peninsula?
2. What are the assets of this place?
3. What are the problems/challenges we face here?

Read Jeremiah 29:4-14

4. What was the historical situation behind this letter to the exiles? How did the Israelites feel about being in Babylon?
5. In what ways are we exiles today? See 1 Peter 1:1-2.
6. What does God tell the exiles to do in vv. 4-6? How can we live as exiles here in this area yet still settle down here?
7. What does God say should be these exiles stance towards the culture in Babylon?
Fight?
Flee?
Assimilate?
None of the above?
8. What does it mean to seek the welfare of this place? What are some ways we can do that here on the Peninsula?
9. What are the plans God has for his people in vv. 10-11? How would these plans be both discouraging and encouraging? How would this force them to “take the long view”? What would it mean for you to “take the long view” when it comes to life in this area?

Read and discuss CPC’s new vision:

In the next ten years, CPC will engage in spiritual formation at a magnitude that will propel us into thoughtful and gracious cultural engagement on the San Francisco Peninsula to ignite both personal and societal transformation.

In his sermon, Life in Babylon, Mark said, “Before we can transform this place, we have to be transformed. We have to seek the Lord with all our hearts—right here in Babylon. We have to resist the lure of false gods around us— money, power, sex, beauty, and fame.” How does this challenge you?

As part of the vision making process, the elders also crafted a vivid description of our new vision and the “why” behind it. Read this over:

“As Christ-followers on the San Francisco Peninsula, we live in one of the most spiritually barren places in America. It is the bastion of a misguided worldview that manifests itself in an unfulfilling life of materialism, isolation, and transience for so many of those we know and love as well as an inaccurate view of what it really means to follow Jesus. We are committed to declare to all those living here that there is a different way to live this life! For we believe that Jesus deeply loves us all and longs for everyone to know the life of joy, freedom, and wholeness that comes from knowing him.

In the next ten years, we at CPC will unleash a relentless wave of Spirit-filled believers (children, students, adults) who are

uniquely equipped for thoughtful and loving engagement with the people on the Peninsula. This will include a gracious invasion of the domains of the arts, education, business, sports, government, science, and technology, as well as the diverse ethnicities of the Peninsula.

To accomplish this, CPC will implement a spiritual formation strategy that will lead each CPC'er on a pathway toward spiritual maturity. This strategy will include becoming deeply rooted in public and private spiritual practices including personal and corporate prayer, the study and practice of God's word, connectedness to a small group, regular vitalized corporate worship, and service using one's gifts, talents, and resources. Many of these renewed Christ followers will take advantage of opportunities for leadership training that will result in a mobilized army of leaders flooding the Peninsula, tearing down strongholds that keep people from experiencing the abundant life he offers to all.

With this surge of spiritually formed disciples, CPC will spark both personal and societal transformation. More and more people and families will know that the good life is a vibrant, personal relationship with Jesus Christ that results in love, generosity, and service along with a true sense of belonging and contentment."

As you read the vision statement and the vivid description...

10. What stands out to you?

11. How does this inspire you?

12. What questions does this raise for you?

It's not enough to just be captured with this vision. We also have to think through a plan for how we will go about this. In order to reach this ten-year vision, we have four things we want to emphasize in the next three years. We're calling these "pillars" and believe they're what we need to focus on to fulfill our vision:

Worship: We will revitalize our worship environment and practices to nurture greater engagement, participation, unity, belonging and expectancy of meeting with our Lord Jesus.

Spiritual Formation: We will develop and initiate personal and corporate spiritual formation practices and a rekindled community group ministry.

Equipping: We will equip our people through a vibrant leadership development program unifying CPC in both vision and passion.

Cultural Engagement: We will thoughtfully and graciously engage with three cultural domains in our community by optimizing our resources.

13. Which of these four pillars are you most passionate about?

Take some extended time in your group to pray about this new vision.