

TLC UNITED

Redefining Relevance

By Brittany Macias

In CRN's recent edition of Kat Notes, [The Unraveling of the Traditional Church](#), a particular statement

struck a resounding chord in my soul. Kat pointedly mentioned that churches are at a loss as to why their members, especially the young generation, walk in the door and right back out, never to return again. Kat's deduction –“The church isn't offering anything any different than what the world keeps forcing on them.”

Riddle me this: If we look like, act like, treat people like, love like, have fun like the world, **what's the point?** What's the appeal? If having Jesus means our lives change in no way... if having Jesus means we remain the same... why do we need Him?

We have been called to show the world that they **need** Jesus—that He wants to **change** their life—and we can't do that by being relevant in the way the Church is right now.

Being relevant doesn't mean allowing people to sin. It doesn't mean being a pushover. It doesn't mean conforming. It doesn't mean meeting status quo. It doesn't mean giving in. We are to stand up, stand out, *speak out*, reveal Truth, and show the world the Light that is Jesus Christ. We are to connect to the world as a lamp in the dark reaches in, driving out the darkness and bathing everything near it in its light.

What the American Church, as a whole, fails to realize is the young people that are leaving churches actually *hunger* for exactly the aforementioned—change. There **is** a remnant of the biblical Body of Christ, alive and thriving. I know this because I see them every week in my church.

“Personally, I look for a church where the people are authentic and that it challenges me... We [the Church] are supposed to be a hospital, but we don't



talk about issues the world gives us and be honest about them. Why is that? I don't think UNITED is like that at all. Josh [the leader of UNITED] brings up serious issues and talks about them," 25-year-old UNITED attendee, Andria Aurand states.

The sweet souls that come to [UNITED](#)—a young adult ministry of [The Life Church](#) in San Angelo, TX—*thirst* for God's presence. They fully expect to walk through the doors and into freedom. Freedom to be loved for who they are, but changed into who *God* says they are.

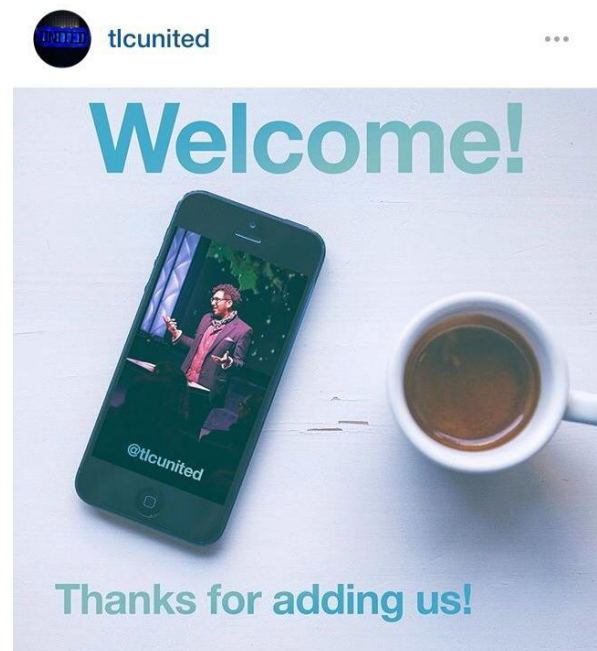
Aurand claims her favorite thing about UNITED is to be that very freedom. "Freedom to be just me and not be judged for that. Freedom that we don't set limits on God and what He can do. Freedom that I have now, after attending UNITED," she says.

This sentiment is echoed by Aaron Bradbury, "My favorite thing about our group is our acceptance for one another. We have a lot of real love for each other and it shows. The thing that makes us different is our acceptance, our freedom to be ourselves no matter what, with no judgment." Another weekly patron, Brianna Magers, shines light on the other side of the *real* Love coin with her explanation, "I'd rather church and UNITED be truthful and give it to me straight!"

Relevance **and** Truth; love **and** Truth; family **and** Truth—the way Jesus intended. That is what UNITED is all about. Jesus used the current time period, as well as His surroundings and cultural norms to remain relevant to His people, yet He told them the *Truth*—the sometimes difficult, but life-giving Truth. The result? A man who never even left His region changed the entire world—and that is what UNITED was created to do. That is what the entire Christian Church was created to do.

He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Mark 16:15. Not only 'go into all the world,' but go into all the world and preach the *Gospel*—not what itching ears wish to hear.

The leader of UNITED, Joshua Macias, states, "I think churches have strayed from biblical values due to a terribly distorted view of what we are. We are literally the greatest world changing body in existence."



This distorted view has caused churches to accept and pacify, rather than acknowledge and transform. And transformation is what the world wants. Just look at counterfeit rebirths in the LGBT movement. Those who feel utterly lost and are in search of being made new. Instead of looking to the new-creation life paid for by Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection, they self-identify with the opposite sex or "come out of the closet," celebrating their new birth into a destructive lifestyle, all the while remaining unaware that it isn't a true transformation.

The world is hungry for *God's* transformation and if the church won't offer it, they search in all the wrong places, still coming up empty-handed and extremely deceived.

UNITED has set forth with the vision of bringing the transforming freedom of God boldly to the community and as far as it can reach. "We do our best to keep what's most important, **most important**," Josh says of keeping the Holy Spirit the center of the group.

The UNITED leadership team stands on the Church's responsibility to be Jesus to the world. "God will not act independently of the Body (who) He empowered to do the impossible. When the Lord returns I think we will be shocked when **we** get the rebuke, not atheists, homosexuals, and whoever else you want to place on the 'Sinner List'."

Joshua also mentions a need for churches to allow time for God to love the people in return. "It's like going on a date with God and showing God *our* love but not allowing Him to say a word or love us in return." Worshipping God is a vital and beautiful thing, but there must be an allowance in services for God to speak to His people in return—He longs to love us as well as receive our love.

The truth is, it is not our love for God that changes us anyway; it is His love for us. UNITED is a place to come as you are, but you will encounter the life-changing freedom and love of Christ—and it won't leave you the way you came.



Come and encounter God with us. Our summer schedule varies, but we would love to have you. Follow us on Facebook : TLC UNITED & Instagram: tlcunited or Contact us at: jmacias@tlcfamily.com for more information.

Until Next Time...

Brittany Macias

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