Hayley Richardson

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Church Visitation

Group #3-Non-Denominational

On Sunday, April 10, 2016, I attended Flood Church in Kearny Mesa; this is a non-denominational church and it is also the church that I regularly attend while I am at school. Flood Church is held at Kearny High School; the main service is in the auditorium and the children’s Sunday school sessions are held in surrounding classrooms. The difference in how Flood Church is set up in comparison to the previous churches I have attended (St. Timothy Lutheran and St. Agnes Parish) is important to recognize. I think that for other church denominations it would be unheard of to hold their service in a public high school’s auditorium; however, the non-denominational branch does not seem to care about something like this. In the Bible, we can read many stories of Jesus teaching in synagogues; however, we can also read stories about Him teaching in very unconventional places as well (like the home of a tax collector!). Flood Church is embodying the idea that the church really is the body of Christ and that the church’s definition comes from the people who meet within the walls and not from the walls themselves. They know that “wherever two or three are gathered in [Jesus’s] Name, there [Jesus] will be also” (Matthew 18:19-20).

The congregation at Flood Church was relatively diverse, although a majority of the population was younger families and college students. There were hardly any elderly people in the congregation at all. I think that part of the reason for this can be attributed to the style of worship at Flood. The worship at Flood Church was very loud and flashy; a four-person band complete with drums and electric guitars led worship; there were lights incorporated into our time of singing and the ambiance of the auditorium seemed to play a very important part in worship. I have noticed that in denominations of Christianity which do not adhere as strictly to original Protestant traditions, the worship is very modern and “rock and roll”. I think that this goes back to what I mentioned previously about the church being held at a high school; as long as your heart is in the right place and you understand the words you are singing, then there is no harm in adding a little bit of an edge to your time of worship.

Scripture played a key role in the service at Flood Church; it was what the entire sermon was based on and it really formed the backbone of what the pastor said. We were asked to stand for the reading of Scripture; I thought that this was interesting because at my home church (which is also non-denominational), we never do this. It is actually something that I am completely new and have only just experienced since I started college. I think that standing for the reading of Scripture heightens the sense of respect and reverence that the congregation has for the Bible. It helps me to remember that it is the Word of God that we are reading; I really like this practice that Flood Church carries out. The Scripture itself came from Philippians; compared to the Catholic Church that I visited previously, this Scripture selection is different because it is only one passage long. At the Catholic Church, there were multiple passages that were read from; one was from the Old Testament, one was from the New Testament, and another was from a Gospel. Reading only one passage really helped me to focus on what the message was and I feel that the reading itself was made more powerful since there was only one.

There was not a whole lot that was said directly to or about Christ specifically; but rather, the sermon consisted of things to do to change your life so that it would better reflect Christ. The sermon was part of a series called “Happy Hunting” and this Sunday’s message was centered on the habits that “happy” people have. So it was not centered directly on Christ, but Christ was addressed through the things that were covered in the sermon. This type of sermon allows me to better envision real-life applications of the Bible and to apply Scripture to my everyday life. In this setting, Christ is emphasized as being relevant for the present moment, not just “Bible times”.

In comparison with the other churches that I have attended, the pastor at Flood Church was a lot more casual in his dress as well as in his mannerisms. I think that this emphasizes the fact that, in order to meet Jesus, you do not need to wear certain clothes or have a certain social standing. You just need to have a willing heart and be ready to submit yourself to Him.

I really enjoyed my visit to Flood Church. I also really enjoyed writing this reflection paper about Flood Church; it is interesting for me to analyze the church that I attend while at school because it enables me to see the ways that I am being fed. Analyzing my own denomination allowed to gain a better understanding of what my church at home believes in contrast to other denominations; this has always been something that I have wanted to learn more about and I am glad that Christian Tradition has provided the avenue for me to do so.