



Why Are We Where We Are?

As Trinity Presbyterian, we want to always clarify our vision – helping people grasp why we do what we do. We want to see our city reached with the love of Christ, and to do that efficiently we want to go where the people and culture are most concentrated.

Our vision starts with downtown Lakeland because this is where many of the critical factors that shape our city are concentrated. This is where **Civic** and political power is centered; **Corporate** and business influence is concentrated here; so are **Cultural** leaders (like the arts, press, and education) as are **Classes** – the mix of the rich and the poor, and **Colors** – the mix of different races. We call these defining factors “the 5 C’s”.

We believe that the various parts of Lakeland’s culture are represented, even condensed, in a one-mile radius from downtown (a 2-mile circle centered on the intersection of Florida Avenue and Main Street). This circle encompasses the major people groups, institutions, companies, and obstacles also that would need to be changed by Christ for the gospel to sweep our city.

For instance, civic/political leadership influences any city – if it is corrupt everyone under their sway will suffer, but if it is marked by the love and mercy of Christ, everyone under them will be blessed. Lakeland’s civic and political leadership is downtown, within the circle.

Commercial or business leaders likewise will merely use, but not bless their employees if they are corrupt. But if they are changed by Christ, they will benefit the men and women they hire. If you’ve ever struggled with bad employees, you’ve felt the frustration of how their self-interest can jeopardize your company’s good goals. But if changed by the Gospel, like it says in Colossians 3, a worker can do any of his work with all his heart as if they’re truly working for the Lord Jesus. In Lakeland, the core of our city’s economy is based in our 2-mile circle.

The same holds true for cultural leaders. In Lakeland, the Polk Museum of Art, the Polk Theatre, the Imperial Symphony, and Florida Southern College are all located in this same area. If art, ideas, culture, and values are not changed by Christ, they will only spiral downward. But if the artists, thinkers, educators, and cultural leaders of Lakeland were transformed by the gospel, then imagine the impact upon our city!

This holds true for areas of obvious need as well. Our target area also holds Lakeland’s richest and poorest residents (Class), and all of the races (Color). Without the gospel, the rich are prone to resent the poor and the poor envy the rich. Without Christ, we distrust other ethnic groups. But in the gospel, those with wealth are moved to help those without, and the dysfunctional poor are restored. Because of Jesus’ power to save, different races are reconciled in worship for their Creator.

The gospel tells us that God Himself determined where He would live and work, in Christ, not by His comfort but by where He was needed. As a church, it may not (and likely *will* not) be comfortable to

serve downtown, but it is where the social fabric is most vulnerable, it is where those who have the gospel are most needed. And as our city's culture is led from this 2-mile circle, that is where the gospel's impact will have the greatest efficiency. Given what Lakeland is like, what better reasons do we need?