Differences Between What a Successful Church Is, & What It Is Not

By Jack Wilkie

As a minister, I'm constantly looking for materials (books, blogs, videos, etc.) that deal with church growth and helping build a "successful" church. Unfortunately, much of the material available today views churches just like businesses. In fact, if you stripped them of their religious language, many books and blogs could be just as easily applied to a restaurant or a clothing store.

But the church isn't a business. Its success is not defined by what man sees as success. Instead, each congregation's success is defined by her faithfulness to the missions God has given in His Word. Here are three ways to get past the world's pervasive definitions of success by going back to the Bible to find what God considers to be success and faithfulness.

A church is not successful just because it has a large number of people. That's not to say that a small church is automatically successful, either. The size of a church has no bearing on whether or not that church is being faithful to its mission. Instead, a church is successful when it is helping every member grow to maturity as a contributing part of the body (Ephesians 4:14-16). Whether there are 10 people or 10,000, what matters is that each one is being shown how to use their gifts to help build up the church.

A church is not successful because of the size, location, or beauty of its building. Though there's nothing wrong with having buildings, and it only makes sense to try to make the building look nice, the building is simply a meeting place. It is not the church's primary tool for evangelism. Jesus said "Go," not "Get them to come to you" (Matthew 28:19). Instead, the building should be a launching point for the mission of the church, where we all gather together and then walk out with the purpose of spreading the Gospel message with our friends, neighbors, and co-workers. In other words, what matters isn't the building that brings people in, but what happens in the building that sends people out.

A church is not successful simply because it has a calendar full of events. Once again, events aren't necessarily good or bad in themselves. They can hinder true growth, though, when busyness is used as a substitute for growth. It's good for the church to spend time together... but not at the exclusion of a community focus. It's good for the church to have fun together... but not at the expense of service and evangelism. *Instead*, what matters is that the time spent together is used to build up the spiritual lives of the members (Acts 2:42-47), serve the needy (Matthew 25:31-46), and evangelize the community (Mark 16:15-16).

The question has often been asked, "If your church were to close its doors tomorrow, would anybody outside of it notice?" It's a fair question, and it's a challenging question. Many ideas of what makes a church successful in terms of numbers and what goes on inside the doors can still leave the church invisible to the community. Truly successful churches will constantly be looking to strengthen their members so they can shine God's light of love and truth to the people around them.

*Taken from our 5/26/19 bulletin.

On Our Prayer List... Bonita Madewell-fall on 4/0
Rita Stevens-CA W. R. Long Al & Vicki Peek

Earl Forster-in Horizon

Jimmy Long-hip surg on 4/16. Jimmy Phy **Toad Smith**

Norma Ross (Glenn's mother)

*{Please keep all our elderly in your prayers}

Ed Gunn- fall John Henry & Carlene Davis & family-could use our prayers Tracy Wilhite (frd of Joyce Long) home fr hospital

Shane Cobb-complications fr diabetes -toe/foot amputated Sharon Curtis—Cancer

Wayne Hatcher-mass on liver & wife Debbie-cancer in one eye

Mike Parrish-(Wesley's son) surg went well -now home recovering Ethan McClure-(friend of Buttrey family) has mass in stomach

Barry Dean-(grandfather of a friend of Rachel Bell's) Cancer Beth Schreiber Fritts (Wesley Parrish's cousin) breast CA

Linda Burns-(sister-in-law of Mike) broken ribs from fall

Wanda Wright-chemo treatments Jerry Belles-sick requesting prayers Faye Marshall-(Traci Adams) mom /Maggie Wright (friend of N. Buttrey)CA-chemo Kim Marlow- CA

Tim Crafton-(Kathy Martin's nephew) advanced CA-no treatment at this time

Carolyn Eddings-cancer treatments June Dreaden-S.Rachford's mom

Jackie Borders-(Lauren Stuart's mom) cancer

Jerry & Judy(blood clot lungs)Smith / Frank Hall-(Brother-in-law Roy Deloach) Dialysis Kenna Rickenbrode-CA

Tony England-Marvin's nephew- complications back sg Tresa Garber Staggs-(Frankie's daughter) cancer

Patrick Tarpy(grandson of Teresa Deloach) Diabetic/Covid

Shirley Proctor-(Robert's mom) @ Waverly for rehab

Jimmy Arnold (Bruce&Roxanne's son's father-in-law)CA

Larry Hayes (fr Waverly COC) restarted chemo

ASSISTED LIVING & NURSING HOME

AHC Decatur County-726 Kentucky Ave, Parsons, TN 38363-Wyle Marshall (Rm 726)-Traci Adams dad Dickson Health & Rehab-901 North Charlotte, Dickson, TN 37055 - Clayton England - Marvin's brother

Humphreys County-Billy Adams-Rm 712/Jane Ridings-Rehab-Rm 704 104 Forte Hill Rd, Waverly, TN 37185

NHC-812 N. Charlotte St. Dickson, TN 7055 -Jim & Anita-(Rehab) Buckner -both in Rm 102 Doris Stokes- (Rm 127)

MILITARY

Dustin Proctor-(Navy-

Dalton & Hope Palk (Navy-Louisiana) 500 Woodland Dr, Apt 597 New Orleans, LA 70131

HERBERT CAPPS-1400 Bradley Rd/

HOME | EARL FORSTER-131 Bold Springs Rd/(currently in Horizon)

ELTON SMITH - 7731 Hwy 70 East

ANNOUNCEMENTS & UPCOMING EVENTS

OUR SYMPATHY TO THE FOLLOWING FAMILIES: *Debbie Gentry & Sharon Tate & family on the loss of their mom "Virginia Tate" her service was held on Monday the 8th.

Wayne & Sonya Rachford on the loss of their nephew "Trov Rachford Jr"

YOUTH **NEWS** DEVO this Sunday the 14th after our evening services.

Camp Applications for Leatherwood are here......Be sure to get one & send in this week to ensure your spot !!!!! Will be held the week of June 23rd-June 29th

Campers are Age 9 thur 16

VBS Meeting - Sunday, April 21st @ 5:00 PM in Adult Classroom I. If you are helping this year please attend.

IN F.O.C.U.S.

Faith, Obedience, Character, Unity, Salvation

It is so hard to believe that we are more than a week into the month of April! Time keeps going by fast and a lot of my attention is about to shift to VBS! We are only 2 months away from our biggest week of the year!!

Several of our youth and several adults were blessed to be able to go to Makin Music last Saturday afternoon. We had a group of 27 head down to Freed Hardeman for a great show! All the clubs did a wonderful job. Brayden, Jacen, and Noah are all part of Phi Kappa Alpha, and thankfully they took home the trophy for best show!! I know all the groups put so much work into Makin Music. I'm sure they are glad it's over and are gearing up the end of another semester. After Makin Music, we headed back toward McEwen, made a stop in Camden to eat supper, and then headed home.

In Christian Love, Keith

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday April 14th 2024

Welcome	Mike Tyler	
Lead Singing	Mark Forster	
1st Prayer	Dwight Stuart	
Se <i>rmon</i>	Bruce Mayfield	
Lord's Table	Mike Burns	
Glenn Ross Ethan Tummins Brent Davis	Jim Suddeath Chad Vaughn Jack Grigsby	
Closing Prayer	Jimmy Suddeath	
Collect Cards	Colt Stanfill & Wade Tummins	
Greeters		
Nursery	Not at this time	
Collect Cups	Youth	
Securitysorry last wk was suppose to beTeam #2 team 2, but I put 3 & 3 did it so this wk 2.		

Sunday 6PM, April 14h 2024

Lead Singing	Mark Forster
Prayer	Billy Buttrey
Sermon	Bruce Mayfield
Lord's Table	John Potter
	Drew Swearns
Closing Prayer	Joe Smith

Wednesday 6:30 PM, April 17th 2024

Lead Singing	Calvin Buckner
Prayer	Jack Grigsby
Adult Class	Bruce Mayfield

If you are unable to serve...please contact Wade Tummins, in advance. (cell 931-209-6291) *If changes need to be made in scheduling please* contact Jimmy Phy.

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Return Service Requested

*If you are unable to attend any service please tune in to our Facebook page or our YouTube page to watch the services. This is NOT a replacement for the command to assemble together as Christ's Body, but a tool for those who may be homebound/shut-in or sick.

The MESSENGER is online! Visit the church website to view!



OUR RECORDS for 4/7/2024

Sunday Morning Bible School — — — — 1	120
	194
Sunday Evening Worship 1	108
	10
Sunday Contribution $$	312
Number of Seeds Planted — — — —	15



The MESSENGER

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Week of April 7th 2024

A Caring Church Lifting Up The CROSS And CROWN of CHRIST



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Phone: 931-582-6130

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Bible Study	9:00am
Worship	
Evening	6:00pm

Wednesday

Bible Study......6:30pm

Elders:

Calvin Buckner James Buckner Billy Buttrey Bruce Mayfield W.R. Long Mike Robertson

Deacons:

Derek Berryman Mike Burns Wayne Coates John Hurt Robert Proctor Elton Smith Dwight Stuart Dennis Tester Wade Tummins

Mark Forster Barry Phy James Ridings Toe Smith Drew Swearns Ethan Tummins Ronnie Tyler

Ministers ---- Every Member Pulpit -----Youth ----- Keith Grigsby Secretaries Terri Tummins/Teresa Fleming