

What Kind of Church? Part 3

Doing a short “defining” series to add to “The Life Story!” Not “redefining” to keep up with the changes! “Re-defining” to make sure nothing has been added that doesn’t belong!

So far... (week 1) We want to be the Church... That gets in the way of evil without falling into it! That is soul-winning in every imaginable way! That stands up to anything and falls for nothing! That is discerning without being condemning!

(week 2) That is a refuge for everyone without becoming a resort *for anyone!* That loves Israel without becoming Jewish! That is loving without being enabling! That is real without compromising for the sake of cultural relevance!

Let’s also be a Church... *That is eternally minded without forgetting about the world!* “So heavenly minded no earthly good!” More common are people who are “minded” to not know what’s going on! Out of touch w/world events/ unbelievers/worldlings! Forgotten the fears/pain/needs/snare of the “old life...” And the need for those who can deliver the ones stuck there... “Not ignorant of his devices!” **2Cor2.11**

“We have escaped the pollutions of the world thru our knowledge of Jesus...” **2P2.20** But we are still “in the world, kept from evil by the name of God, saved by the word, sanctified by the truth, sent into the world, just not of it...” **J17.11ff** So we do not “go out of the world” **1Cor 5.10** to avoid worldlings!

We should not take so much comfort in our comfort that we forget why we have been comforted!

Let’s also be a Church... *That is focused on the world without forgetting eternity!* “the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, *while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for Himself a people that are His very own, eager to do what is good.* **Titus 2.11-14** “Risen with Christ we set our affections on things above, not on the things of the earth... *When Christ who is our life appears we will also appear with Him in glory.* So we put to death our connections with worldliness...” **Col 1.1-5** “We are no longer friends with the world, its lusts and the pride of the old life... *this world is passing away but we are living forever to do His will!*” **1Jo2.16,17**

We should never love the broken pieces of this life so much that we forget the wholeness out ahead of us!

Let’s also be a Church... *That remembers we are competing with the world, not other churches, for the souls of mankind!* [in fact we should be doing all we can to make other churches better] Locally, regionally, and globally! We are competing with the world for a society asking... “What do you have that can make life better for me and my family?” They must be able to identify it quickly!

There is no room for *competition among the members of the “one-body” of Christ... only a mind for the completion of it!* There must be an attraction to our *quality of life that overshadows the distractions to the quality of play!*

Let’s also be a Church... *That’s adventuring into the future while being firmly anchored to the Rock!* Our growth, privileges and problems, are evident... Population of Southern Brazoria estimated to double in five years! Lots of new opportunities for salvation/ discipleship... *if we are ready!* Currently more than 800 on Sundays... More than 900 on Wednesdays... Classes/events... every night of week!

10 Future Trends of Effective Church! *Heterogeneous Group...* God congregates what man segregates!
Increased attender frequency... Speaks to commitment! ***Theologically conservative...*** “Wiki’s” getting back to unchanging truth! ***Deeper teaching...*** People are looking for concepts/precepts they can live on, even if they don’t “feel good!” ***Transgenerational empowerment...*** Want to see generations ministering, not waiting to minister in place of old gen! ***Family oriented ministries!*** Immediate and extended community building! ***Evolving Staff mindset!*** Shared focus on Children’s, Youth, Education ministers... ***The charismatic leader, less important...*** Transformational leadership/discipleship will become more desirable! ***Local connection venues...*** People are beginning to discover TV/video pastors are not the same as the touchable ones! ***Church plants as discipleship tools...***

Church is not a building, but buildings that are used for discipleship will become more important to the church! We have all the “makings” of an effective church for the future... all but one...

Right now... Need to finish College/Career building! Need our adult auditorium! Need our new dining room! Need to convert our current auditorium into two for 350 kids in each! Need to convert STR8UP into 3x larger Nurseries! (4500 sq ft.) Need parking for 150 cars with new exits to the north! Need lights (10) for playing fields! Need a Miracle! To purchase of land/paving for an entrance/exit on Henderson Rd!

All but two of those we can do thru faithfulness... or we can do it all with a miracle!

Asides on faithfulness... About 33% (1:3) of the adults give something on any given Sunday... About 20% new to faith/life of our church! Don’t know about God’s financial covenant yet, don’t feel comfortable supporting what they don’t know yet. About 25% of our adults *tithing*... If 25% are giving 80% of our income, we have great untapped abilities/potential...

Faithfulness in the area of tithing would change everything for our group!

Asides on tithing... Some would love to earn “more” to tithe! The way out of a minimum wage job... The way out of recycling unemployment... The way out of debt strangulation... Is tithing, giving God the “first 10%”

“Opens the windows of heaven, pours out a blessing, rebukes the devourer, efforts are fruitful, makes you an attraction in your prosperity!” Mal 3.10ff

The way to greater earning is faithfulness in small things and tithing (“seeding”) by faith on what you want to make!

Asides on “effects...” Prayed that people would get new jobs, greater salaries, give more! One gal, 6x the income, hasn’t forgotten! Precious retired gal, SS, gets a call; former employer left her stocks! Tithed the blessing! Last week, Jessica asks, “do you know where this goes?” Shows me a check for \$12k, from someone who tithes here!

Each one is a different aspect of God’s ability to prosper YOU – to give more!

If We’re Going to be a Church... *That’s adventuring into the future while being firmly anchored to the Rock...*
Going to need to have the facilities to help families grow into a better life... Paid for by frequency attenders who have a heart for the world and mind toward eternity... Who understand that no one gets a resort pass until all the standing and shielding and saving is done...

Welcome to the Church, Life Church!