

January 2015

From the Pastor



## *The Ten Leading Indicators of a Healthy Church \**

*We are at the start of New Year. The start of a new year is good time to sit back and evaluate how we are doing and look ahead to see what we should be doing in the following year. As we begin 2015, I once again want to share with you something that I shared with you about four years ago in a monthly musing. It is the Evangelical Free Church of America's suggestion on how to evaluate a church. They have found ten leading indicators that tell you whether your church is healthy.*

*This month as you look at these indicators I am asking you a favor. I'd like you to pray for Pierce Hill Christian Fellowship so that we grow in these area and do them all in a way that pleases our Lord.*

*Thanks!*

**Centrality of God's Word** - *"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful...so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." (II Tim. 3:16, 17)* We are committed to a proclamation of God's Word which is clear, theologically sound and communicated in a relevant and practical way. The end result

\* From the Evangelical Free Church of America, found at <http://www.efca.org/health10ind.html>, accessed on 4/17/03.

of our proclamation is people who are eager to please God by applying His Word to every area of life.

**Passionate Spirituality** - *"Be filled with the Spirit...be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power..." "Put on the full armor of God...And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests..."* (Eph. 5:18-21; 6:10-18) We recognize that it is only the presence and power of the Holy Spirit that enables us to live obedient, transformed lives. The prayer lives of our congregations reflect a deep dependence upon God. Experiencing God and following Him are hallmarks of our ministries.

**Fruitful Evangelism** - *"The Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."* (Luke 9:10) We are driven to reach our neighborhoods, our nation and our world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ regardless of racial, economic or political barriers. The budgets, programs and leaders of our local churches reflect a high commitment to outreach and evangelism, both locally and worldwide. Significant numerical growth through evangelism is an expected outcome of this commitment.

**High Impact Worship** - *"Shout for joy...Worship the Lord...Enter His gates with thanksgiving..."* (Psalm 100) Inspiring worship which glorifies God and engages the heart, mind and emotions of people with God must be a hallmark of our public services. We are committed to meeting the worship needs of the various generations attending our churches. Healthy churches are characterized by a spirit of joy expressed in worship.

**Mission and Vision-Driven** - *"Therefore go..."* (Matt. 28:19-20) Our congregations must have a clear sense of God's mission and a compelling vision for the future that is communicated clearly to all members and that drives their programs, budget, personnel and priorities. We need church structures that facilitate mission and vision. A willingness to change and take risks are crucial to ongoing effectiveness for local church ministry.

**Leadership Development** - *"Entrust to reliable men..."* (II Tim. 2:2, I Tim. 3:1-13; I Pet. 5:1-11) We are committed to intentional leadership development and the exercise of the leadership gifts. We desire to see trained, godly individuals who are spiritually mature lead our local congregations. We desire to see mature leaders deployed in full-time vocational ministry as workers for the harvest.

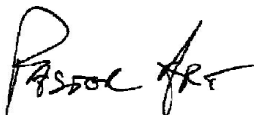
**Church Planting** - *"...in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth,"* (Acts 1:8; Acts 13-28). Healthy congregations are committed to reproducing themselves. We have a vision for planting or facilitating the planting of churches in our community, district and world. Believing that God desires the church to reflect the economic and ethnic diversity of our nation, we will be intentional in planting churches among all people who make up our nation and our world.

**Financial Stewardship** - *"Command...not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth...but to put their hope in God...Command them to do good...and to be generous and willing to share..."* (I Tim. 6:17-19). Our churches must be financially strong through ongoing stewardship education and the challenging of our congregations to make sacrificial investments in eternity through regular and special gifts. Our pastors must address the issue of money and possessions in a biblical, relevant and practical way. Our congregations must adopt God's heart for the poor, disadvantaged and needy in their allocation of available resources.

**Intentional Disciplemaking** - *"Entrust to reliable men..."* (II Tim 2:2). *"Therefore go and make disciples..."* (Matt. 28:19-20). Intentional disciplemaking processes to the next level of spiritual maturity must be built into the fabric of every local church. These disciplemaking pathways must be able to take a majority of local church members from new life in Christ to spiritual maturity. We have a commitment to see each member of our congregations using their spiritual gift(s) within the context of the local church.

**Loving Relationships** - *"By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another."* (John 13:35) Recognizing that all men are made in God's image and are loved by Him, we believe that our churches must reach across social, economic and racial lines with practical acts of love within the church and the community - with special care for the needy, forgotten and defenseless. We also believe our churches must be characterized by believers who are committed to the reconciliation of relationships among all people. Within the local church, loving relationships produce unity, accountability and a powerful demonstration of God's presence within our communities.

In Him and for His glory,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pastor Joe". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.