

What Makes a Successful Church?

The answer to that question depends on whom you ask. Most people think a successful church is measured in large numbers, big budgets, programs that meet their needs, and state-of-the-art facilities.

However, none of those "standards" are proof of success. In fact, each one of those standards could just as well be present in a dead church. Do you remember the church at Sardis (Revelation 3:1-6)? This was a church that had a good reputation and was alive and well in the eyes of the community, but in the eyes of God, they were dead (Revelation 3:1).

Apparently, God doesn't see as we see (*Isaiah 55:8-9*), and He doesn't measure success in the same way that we measure success. While there is nothing wrong with numbers, programs, big budgets, and large facilities, a church can be successful in the eyes of God without possessing a single one of these qualities.

What, then, is the measure of a successful church?

- Christians who humbly try to live out the Lordship of Jesus in their lives daily.
- Christians who love the truth supremely, who will not allow their own personal desires or situations to skew their perception of God's revelation.
- Christians who are committed to moral living and are more concerned with godliness than fitting in with society.
- Christians who love peace more than they do a fight and who love the calmness of unity more than the rhetoric of a fuss.
- Christians who support the weak, restore the fallen, and reaffirm their love and commitment to those who have stumbled.

Now, these characteristics would make a successful church! And note: It's not about size, big budgets, programs, or facilities. Rather, it's about inward transformation and spirituality. And here's the best news of all: we don't have to have large numbers, multimillion-dollar budgets, or state-of-the-art facilities. The qualities that bring success and constitute greatness in God's eyes are qualities that are within our reach.

- Steve Higginbotham, Karns Church of Christ, Knoxville, TN -
(Bulletin Digest)

Christian faith is assuring, insuring, and enduring.

News Notes

CARE & SHARE BEARS: Each Tuesday at 9:00 - 11:00 a.m. All ladies are invited to participate.

CONVERT'S CLASS: Each Thursday at 11:00 a.m. All are welcome.

FRIDAY NIGHT SING: May 30, 7:00 p.m. at Bridge St. Church of Christ, New Martinsville (details on Bulletin Board).

OUR VBS: June 9-13, 10:00 a.m. - Noon. Classes for all ages.

PANTRY: No items needed this week.

SICK: At Home: David & Becky McKittrick, Matt Malcomson, Brian Haught (Skip's brother), John Sprout, Randy Beagle, Peggy Linger, Scharlotte Jones, Harry Huff, Nancy Cox, Barbara DeLong, Marlene Evans, Cheryl Renfro Walker. **Serra Manor, Weirton:** Jean Haught (Skip's mother). **Fox, Chester:** Janice Hutchins, Mary Johnson. **Elsewhere:** Carolyn Carbone, 98 Orange Blossom Lane, Ranson, WV 25438. Herman McHan, 7401 Elmwood Dr., Lisbon, OH 44432.

The Love of God

God loves us so much that He revealed the truth about Hell. He told us so much about Hell so that we don't go there. Jesus wants us to obey Him so that He can deliver us from the wrath to come (1 Thessalonians 1:10). Jesus said more about Hell than anyone else in all the Scriptures. He made it clear that most people will choose the path to Hell rather than seeking the obedient path to Heaven (Matthew 7:13-14). While we sometimes sing, "How beautiful Heaven must be," we must also realize how horrible Hell must be. Hell is everlasting punishment (Matthew 25:46). We sometimes hear people speak of "spending eternity" somewhere. Eternity cannot be "spent" because time does not exist there. Humans cannot fully understand the concept of eternity because everything we know has a beginning and an end. There will be no end to Hell. As everlasting as Heaven is, so is Hell. One way that Jesus tried to help people understand the horror of Hell was by describing it as a place where "their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:44). Every soul who misses Heaven goes to Hell! Why would anyone want to miss Heaven?

- Author Unknown - (Bulletin Digest)

The Horrors Of Hell

The prison house of despair,
Here are some things that *won't* be there:
No flowers will bloom on the banks of Hell,
No beauties of nature we love so well;
No comforts of home, music or song,
No friendship or joy will be found in that throng;
No children to brighten the long weary night,
No love or peace, nor one ray of light;
No blood-washed soul with face beaming bright,
No loving smile in that region of night;
No mercy, nor pity, no pardon nor grace,
No water, oh what a terrible place!
The pangs of the lost no human can tell,
No moment of ease - there's no rest in Hell.
Hell the prison house of despair,
Here are some things that *will* be there:
Fire and brimstone are there, we know,
For God in His Word has told us so;
Memory, remorse, suffering and pain,
Weeping and wailing, but all in vain;
Blasphemers, swearers, haters of God,
Sinners who refuse to be washed in the blood!
Christ rejects while here on earth trod;
Murderers, gamblers, drunkards, and liars,
Will have their part in the lake of fire;
The filthy, the vile, the cruel and mean,
What a horrible mob in Hell will be seen!
Yes, more than on earth can tell,
Are the torments and woes of Eternal Hell.

- Author Unknown - (Bulletin Digest)