

The Small Church News Letter



Ninety-nine Percent of Our Churches Are Small Churches.

God does not consider these churches to be failures.

It has been my privilege to cross our country from coast to coast more times than I can remember. I have preached in every province in Canada. Very few of the churches I have ministered in have large congregations, most are very small, have been small for many years, and will be small until Jesus comes again.

They are pastored by faithful pastors who feed the sheep that God has entrusted them with. These churches are maintained by little groups of sincere Christians who have sacrificed to pay their pastor's salary and the expenses of the church from year to year.

According to a recent Barna Group report, small churches have the largest number of "born again believers." That is the reason the same faithful people return for the evening service and the weekly prayer meetings.

God Has Some Larger Churches

The Psalmist said in Psalm 42:4, "*I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God...*" First Corinthians 3:7 says God, "*giveth the increase.*" Sometimes God increases the size of the church; however, the majority of God's congregations are small

and always have been small and always will be small.

The question is asked in Zechariah 4:10, "*For who hath despised the day of small things?*" Four verses earlier we read that it is, "*Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.*"

In Psalm 119:141 the psalmist said, "*I am small and despised: yet do not I forget thy precepts.*" It is good to have a larger church if the increase is of God; however, an increase that is acquired and maintained by compromise is not a successful church.

Proverbs 15:16 says, "*Better is little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble therewith.*" Proverbs 16:8 says, "*Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues without right.*"

We have the false impression that a church that has a fleet of buses parked in the church parking lot is a successful church. I have spent hundreds of hours working on bus routes and have nothing but the highest respect for those who work on buses. Someday these faithful folks will receive their reward; however, if every Christian who

attends a large church would be picked up three people in their cars their church could send thousands of dollars spent on maintaining buses to some missionaries.

As I have travelled our country I have found that most of the small churches do not have money for buses; however, children are brought in by faithful church members in their cars. At FairHavens Baptist church in Sarnia, we have several people who round up children in their cars every Sunday. Some make more than one trip. My wife and myself pick up people in our cars every week. Is FHBC an unsuccessful church because it has no bus ministry? Small churches are not in the position to hire a staff to do all the work and therefore the work of the ministry is done by its members.

What Is A Great Church?

For many, great is synonymous with large or being uncommon. Concerning common people, Abraham Lincoln said, *"God must have loved them; He made so many of them."* The same thing could be said of small churches.

The one church of the seven listed in the Book of Revelation that received no rebuke from the Saviour, was the church at Philadelphia. The Lord highly recommended them. He said in Revelation 3:8, *"thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name."*

The church that received the sharpest rebuke was the church of the Laodiceans. Revelation 3:17 says they were *"rich and increased."* They had a crowd but where was Christ? He said, *"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock."* (Revelation 3:20).

The focus of much literature and how to do it conferences is about numerical growth. The main focus is if a small church wants to be better, it has to be bigger. Again, Proverbs 16:8 says, *"Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues without right."*

We have explicit instructions concerning how God wants things done in His local church. First Timothy 1:14,15 says, *"These things write I unto thee...that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."*

Not one word in First and Second Timothy is mentioned about increasing the attendance. If Christians take their God-given responsibility to witness to lost souls and people repent and trust Christ as their Saviour the church attendance will grow. The word attendance is found in First Timothy 4:13 where it commands the pastor to *"...give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine."*

The responsibility of the pastor is to spiritually feed the people God has entrusted him with. Jesus said, *"Feed my lambs"* (John 21:15 - **God's little sheep**). *"Feed my sheep"* (John 21:16). *"Feed my sheep."* (John 21:17).

Every Christian, should be attempting to reach people for Christ, including the pastor, however, the main purpose of the local church is to feed the sheep. If you are faithfully feeding God's lambs and God's sheep don't let anyone put you on a guilt trip about how many sheep you don't have.