



### ***People Spot Missile: Full Service or Quality***

Jim Moss, Jr., Pastor of the Eberly's Mill Church of God near Harrisburg, calls the super churches "Full Service Churches." They are large and they can offer programs in virtually every venue of ministry.

Let's talk small churches. For me an average worship attendance of less than 79 is a small church. Over the last couple of decades there has been some migration from this size church to the Mega Churches. However, there has been some reversal of that trend as some people would like the pastor to know them by name. But, when they come back to a smaller church it is seldom the church they left.

People in the small church, as already defined, are intimidated by the mega church 1 mile down the road. They forget the genius of the small church. What is that? It is intimacy! There is the chance to know a number of people very well. Please remember there are many very healthy small churches. Just as there are a number of large churches that are dysfunctional.

What is the key to a healthy church? A healthy church seeks to know the will of God and strives to do it. A small church can do that.

First, it is nearly impossible for a small church to support a full-time pastor, pay a living wage, and appropriate benefits such as health care. A pastoral family should not be without health care. One of the core guidelines for expenditures is that a church should not invest more than 45% of the offerings in staff support. When that support is higher, benevolence, building maintenance, programming and most of all essential outreach efforts are curtailed. So what are the options? We need to once again consider placing small churches on circuits. What is a circuit? A circuit is where one pastor serves 2 or more churches at the same time. That reduces the cost of pastoral service to a specific church. I did serve a circuit and had a great deal of fun. People were very understanding. Remember our pastor serves 2 churches. If you gave me the choice of serving 2 churches or serving as a tentmaker, I would take the circuit. We are also seeing a rebirth of tentmaking. What is tentmaking? That occurs when a pastor works at a secular job and pastors at the same time. I have known pastors who were very successful doing that. Unfortunately, I have also known pastors who literally steal from their churches by not giving a fair return to the church for the compensation they receive ultimately using the church to subsidize their salary.

Second, a church must be supported by the people in attendance. That is why the above paragraph is included. A healthy church must always contribute outside of its walls. When

money gets tight, the first cut is benevolence. “Missions begin at home” is a statement I have heard many times when a church decided to quit giving to missions outside the walls of the building.

Third, a small church must decide what it does best and cultivate that ministry. I am talking about one ministry strategy. The first ministry frequently mentioned is Youth Ministry. Frankly, that is not an easy ministry. Not many people are gifted to do it. Take a look at your church. What is the one thing you do best? What can you do to cultivate and encourage that ministry? To start with you don't have to do everything well, you have to do one something well. For a small healthy church, doing one ministry well provides two significant benefits. They are: an increase in corporate self-esteem and community recognition. When that one ministry is successfully under way, then you look for a second to develop.

A quality program connected with appropriate outreach into the community is a dynamic package. Quality is essential for retention. Outreach is necessary to walk people through the door to experience the quality. They are like “a horse and carriage, love and marriage, you can't have one without the other” as the old song says.

A healthy church is always looking to add to the body. There are no magic formulae that replace prayer, creative thinking, hard work, and the expenditure of money.

Small churches can be healthy! What are you feeling about yours?

*A Thought: “The future of your church is not with the people who are currently attending, but with the People who have yet to attend.” Jim Moss, Sr.*

*I am now available to present “The Role of the Church in the Civil War”, “Starting a New Service”, “Churches Have Personalities”, “People Spots”, “Does Your Church Really Care About People?” and “A Christian Perspective on Leadership Skills.” “Stewardship and Managing Debt” jm*

***Volumes 1, 2, and 3—“A History of the Civil War as Presented by the Church Advocate!” are now available. Volume 4 is well under way and will be the final volume. It is a history without the varnish of revision.***

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