

# *Ten Leading Indicators of a Healthy Church*

## *Draft (11/08/06)*

**The Evangelical Free Church movement exists to  
glorify God by multiplying healthy churches among all people.**

- ◆ **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*" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). We are committed to a proclamation and teaching of God's Word that is clear, theologically sound, and communicated in a relevant and practical way. The end result of our proclamation is people who are eager and able to please God by applying his Word to every area of life in ways both appropriate to the cultural context as well as biblically countercultural.
- ◆ **Passionate Spirituality** - "*Be filled with the Spirit . . .*" (Eph. 5:18-21). "*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. 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 traits of our ministries.
- ◆ **Fruitful Evangelism** - "*The Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost*" (Luke 19:10). 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. Biblical evangelism normally results not only in numerical church growth, but in baptized, committed disciples of Jesus Christ.
- ◆ **Spirit-filled Worship** - "*Shout for joy . . . Worship the Lord . . . Enter His gates with thanksgiving . . .*" (Psalm 100). Inspiring worship that glorifies God and engages the hearts, minds, and emotions of people with God must be a trait of our corporate worship. We are committed to meeting the worship needs of the various generations and subcultures attending our churches. Healthy churches are characterized by a spirit of joy expressed in worship and regularly celebrate the Lord's Supper.
- ◆ **Great Commission 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 and "owned" by the members. Commitment to this mission guides the ministries and decisions of the church. Church structures should facilitate biblical purposes of the church. A willingness to change and take risks is crucial to ongoing effectiveness for local church ministry.
- ◆ **Leadership Multiplication** - "*Entrust to reliable men . . .*" (2 Tim. 2:2; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; 1 Pet. 5:1-11; Eph. 4:11-16). 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 ministry as workers for the harvest. Healthy leaders not only promote the spiritual growth of the members, but also develop, empower, and release them for ministry.
- ◆ **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 EFCA to reflect cultural, economic, and ethnic diversity, we will be intentional in planting healthy churches among all people who make up our nation and our world.
- ◆ **Stewardship of Resources** - "*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*" (1 Tim. 6:17-19). Healthy churches demonstrate faithful stewardship and investment of all the

resources God has entrusted to them. This begins by a church meeting its own needs and overflows to advance God's kingdom and meet the needs of others. Stewardship education must be emphasized, and our pastors must address the issue of time, money, skills, 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 . . .” (2 Tim 2:2). “Therefore go and make disciples . . .” (Matt. 28:19-20).* Intentional disciplemaking builds processes into the fabric of every local church that promote the continual spiritual growth of all its members. Such disciplemaking ministries must help believers move from new life in Christ to the exercise of spiritual disciplines, service in ministry, worldview transformation, and the alignment of all personal priorities with the lordship of Christ, whatever the cost.
- ◆ **Loving Relationships** - *“By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:35).* Recognizing that all people are made in God's image and are loved by Him, our churches must reach across cultural, social, economic, and racial lines with practical acts of love within the church and the community. Holistic ministries should address people's physical, social, psychological, and spiritual needs — particularly of the needy, forgotten, and defenseless. 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. Beyond the local church, they are manifested in cooperation and interdependent relationships with other Christians locally, nationally, and internationally.