

SUCCESS IS A CULTURE – (It Is Intentional)

I have been taking us through a series about **“Strategies for Success”** and we have looked at a couple of foundational elements of success.

These have been:

- Dealing with Fear
- Vision and Hope – Direction and Momentum

Today I want to address what I believe is the next very important element in developing strategies for success.

Today we are going to look into developing a “Success Culture”. Perhaps I could describe it this way ... having an Intentional Success Mentality.

“Time is limited, so I better wake up every morning fresh and know that I have just one chance to live this particular day right, and to string my days together into a life of action, and purpose.” Lance Armstrong: 7-time winner of the Tour de France

Last Sunday I spoke of having the right ‘statement’ over us as a Church;

“... When we get the right ‘statement’ over our lives it literally has the power to build, strengthen and release us into all that God has declared.”

... and if you remember I presented our Vision Statement with a new word in it -

Our Vision Statement used to declare this:

“To be a ~~Place~~ of Life and Hope in Jesus”

Our Vision Statement will now declare this:

To be a **PEOPLE** of Life and Hope in Jesus.

I brought a message that opened up what direction I believe God wants us as a Church to head in. I presented two words to the Church that establishes the ‘compass bearing or heading’ we will be going on this year.

The words I believe God gave me for this year are...

“BUILD & STRENGTHEN”.

When it comes to having any form of Culture – this does not happen by accident; it is INTENTIONAL!

Culture comes from cultivation. Seeds do not surprise you! You get what you plant!

We need to think strategically and clearly about what sort of Culture we want to be prominent in our lives.

Jesus was very intentional about the culture He wanted to be prominent in the lives of His Disciples:

MATTHEW 16:18-19 (MSG)

This is the rock on which I will put together my church, a church so expansive with energy that not even the gates of hell will be able to keep it out. “And that’s not all. You will have complete and free access to God’s Kingdom, keys to open any and every door: no more barriers between heaven and earth, earth and heaven.

Last week we established through the Bible, the ‘Church’ that Jesus is going to build is His people; **expansive with energy, with complete and free access to God’s Kingdom.**

Jesus’ plans were completely intentional. He wanted to develop a whole new culture, where people had a total, expansive connection and relationship with God.

EXPANSIVE = generous, open, unreserved, extensive, outgoing, unrestrained, sizeable, open.

1 PETER 2:5

(MSG)- Present yourselves as building stones for the construction of a sanctuary (house) vibrant with life, in which you’ll serve as holy priests offering Christ-approved lives up to God.

(NKJV) – You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

God moves through His Church, the people. He is very intentional about His plans and we only have to look into the plan for redemption and lineage of Jesus to see how intentional God is, especially about having a successful and meaningful relationship with mankind.

I received an email this week with a couple of thoughts regarding last week's message and I really appreciated receiving it.

Firstly; because it told me that folk in the Church Family feel OK or safe enough to ask questions and they are thinking about what I am speaking from the front here.

Secondly; because it gives me an opportunity to perhaps further explain or better communicate my heart ... so thank you to the writer.

One of the main points of the email was this:

“Whilst all the points you made are very clear in theory, one would hope you have plans in mind to ‘equip the Saints’ or as another local church puts it: ‘empower the people’ to actually put the directives you see for this church into practice.

Build & Strengthen the Body: We can only do that if we are willing to ‘disciple, support & care for one another’ as Paul in the Scriptures was doing.”

I completely agree!

Last week I told you of a direction that I have been going ever since I was appointed as the Pastor here. I have been very intentional about leading the Church away from the culture of “Singular Pastor Dependency”.

What do I mean by that?

Church Leadership of ages long ago made a ‘rod for its own back’. If you study Church History you will soon find out that many Leaders established Churches in such a fashion that the congregation were not taught or led in a manner that encouraged them to think or inquire or seek God for themselves. In some Churches it was even established in a way that no-one except the Leader was allowed to read the Bible!

There is a long and historical path of the only one that can hear from God, therefore the only one who can plan or have a vision or have a dream is the Church Leader.

THIS IS ENTIRELY UNSCRIPTURAL!

Tom Hatch

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EPHESIANS 4:16 (NLT)

Under His direction, the whole body is fitted together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

Here we have a clearly stated collective responsibility to personally connect and establish a relationship with God so we can each be active in God's calling on our lives; for us and for others.

Does this remove my responsibility as a Leader of this House? Not in the slightest!

I believe I am required to assist you as 'my flock', to shepherd you in a way that encourages you to seek after God for your own personal lives, your families and your future.

As a Shepherd I will lead you to what I believe, by the Spirit of God, is the best pasture for you to feed on at the time ... but I cannot make you eat and I cannot eat it for you.

Success is a strategy and a culture, growth is a strategy and a culture, building and strengthening is a strategy and a culture.

My heart is to develop a culture in this Church where we journey together and as the above scripture states, we each do our own special work & it helps the other parts grow.

To answer the 'one would hope you have plans in mind to 'equip the Saints':

My direction has been to meet with the Key Leaders of Ministries in the Church and share my heart with them about wanting to see the whole Church *built & strengthened* in the five main areas of WORSHIP – CARE – EQUIP – SERVE – CONNECT.

Last year I established a tier of what I have referred to as my 'Operational Leadership' and I will be working with them to strategise and develop the shape and dimension of the building and strengthening.

I have a real desire, or perhaps I can put it this way; I feel a call or mission to try and **“unlock the ministry of every believer I serve”!**

It may come as a shock to some and absolutely no surprise to others ... but I don't and won't have all the answers. We should need each other to be successful and grow in a healthy manner.

So I will be working with the Eldership and the Key Ministry Leaders to bring shape and dimension to this ... and I will also be encouraging them to do the same with their teams. We are all in this together.

A culture of success is a culture of growth.

There are only two directions in life. We either grow or we don't; and if we don't then a law as real and as powerful as gravity begins to function. That law is ATROPHY or the Law of Decay.

If we are to be a living, vibrant and successful Church there are a list of things that we need to settle in our hearts.

1. Let's settle that - God wants the Church to grow.
2. Let's settle that - being part of a growing Church is a decision.
3. Let's settle that - building a Growth Culture is God ordained.
4. Let's settle that - I will personally determine to grow.
5. Let's settle that - WE will grow. Start – Grow – multiply!

The Culture of Growth requires us all to:

Prepare, Sow, Nurture, Water, Weed, be Patient, Protect, Wait and Harvest

List off scriptures about growth (in yellow notebook)

This whole culture is something that will take time and effort and patience.

It is more 'oven than microwave'!

I make this commitment to you:

- I will teach you the direction and specifics that I believe God is showing me without personal agenda.
- I and my team will do all we can to find and provide resource for your equipping.

- The Eldership , Key Ministry Leaders and I will strategise by the leading of the Holy Spirit the best way to equip you as the Saints and encourage you as you each do your ‘special work’ as written in Ephesians 4:16.
- I am convinced that each of you has a calling and a purpose and again I will work towards helping **‘unlock the ministry of every believer I serve’!**

Under His direction, the whole body will be fitted together perfectly,

So each part can do its own special work and helps the other parts grow,

So that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

We will be a church so expansive with energy that not even the gates of hell will be able to keep it out.

We have been given complete and free access to God’s Kingdom along with the keys to open any and every door: no more barriers between heaven and earth, earth and heaven.