

View

A Publication of the Folsom Point church of Christ, 900 E. Natoma, Folsom, CA 95630

June 1, 2008

Beating the Odds

Why the church at Folsom Point isn't defined by so-called "rules of church growth"

Maybe I shouldn't use a gambling term to begin this article, but it does describe what is currently happening here at Folsom Point. The "odds" are that we shouldn't be growing and that we shouldn't be having much success in teaching others because we're well past the "bewitching" number of members wherein big problems are supposed to take over. At least that's what the experts say.

The "experts" in church growth tell us that if parking is a problem and the building is crowded on Sunday morning, we're doomed. In fact, they tell us that if we reach 80% capacity, we will stop growing, period. They also tell us that when you get to the point where we are, a church should hire a second preacher to help carry the load.

I'm not sure who came up with these rules. I have read them in several places and heard them repeated several times. I'm confident that whoever came up with them is sincere and developed them after the observation of the work of many churches. Whatever, it's great being the exception

to the "rule," because these rules do not seem to apply here at Folsom Point.

I don't know if it's because we're a unique church, but we are different. We are different because nearly everyone at Folsom Point understands that they are part of the work and nearly everyone "has a mind to work" (Neh. 4:6).

From what I've heard and observed, it's not like that in most places. The old corporate adage that 20% of the people do 80% of the work tends to be true in churches as well.

There's a more apt saying, popularized by preachers — especially those who focus on church growth issues — that goes something like this:

"In the average church, the preacher does the elders' work, the elders do

the deacons' work and the deacons do the members' work."

Of course, the unspoken conclusion is, "therefore, the members don't do much of anything."

If that's the case in most churches, then it's a shame! But, ironically, it may be the assumption behind the rules stated above. Where the rules fit, a church can't have more than 80% capacity be-

"...IT WOULD BE GREAT TO HAVE A LARGER FACILITY AND IT WOULD BE GREAT TO HAVE MORE 'PAID HELP' AND IT WOULD BE GREAT TO HAVE PARKING IN ABUNDANCE — BUT WE ARE NOT LETTING THE LACK OF ANY OF THOSE THINGS KEEP US FROM OUR WORK. AND THE LACK OF THOSE THINGS DOES NOT DEFINE US"

cause the members put comfort over commitment and won't accommodate visitors. It needs a second preacher because the preacher is doing the work both of the preacher and the elders. The church can't find many men who want to be elders and deacons because they don't want to work that hard. Where all that is true, the "rules" make sense.

But Folsom Point doesn't fit this average-church schematic. I can speak from two perspectives — as a preacher who has been working with this group since 1994 and as an elder for the past couple of years. I can tell you, without any fear of contradiction, that we are breaking the rules!

I believe the elders here do the work of the elders, not the work of the deacons. The elders realize that we are charged primarily with "keeping watch over your souls" (Heb. 13:17), a tremendous responsibility. We realize that if we had to "serve tables" (see Acts 6:2) on a regular basis, then that would distract us from this responsibility. Our aim is to see that the church is spiritually fed, led and protected. It's a big job. But having active deacons and a zealous, cooperating membership makes the job much less stressful and time-consuming — in fact, most of the time, the elders feel it is a great joy to shepherd this flock.

A major reason for that is because the deacons are efficient and work hard to take care of those items that fall under their auspices. As a side note, I have always appreciated how careful they are not to overstep their bounds and venture into the elders' work. Yet, they will frequently bring up matters to us, either to point out something we may not know or to question whether they or we should be handling a particular issue. Almost without exception, it has created a positive and harmonious working relationship.

Some members in some churches seem to be under the impression that the elders and deacons (and preacher, perhaps) are the only ones — or main ones — required to work. I don't believe there are many here who feel that way. It's evident that there is not. For example, look at the number of men and women who are willing to teach classes. It's really mind-boggling! The number of young men who have taught an adult class at least once or twice is truly inspiring to those of us who have wrung our hands over what might become of the church in the future. At this moment, I have no concerns about that.

That all members are willing to work is also evident when we look at our baptisms recently. It is not just the preacher who is doing all the work — far from it. It is a real team effort. Nearly everyone sees the importance of teaching the gospel and is seeking to seize opportunities to advance it. And the more people involved in the process, the better. When too much dependence is placed on one or two people then when those people are gone, the work suffers. Teaching the gospel is everyone's business. Each person should look honestly at himself to see what kind of role he can fulfill in the process.

Still, another example of how vibrant we are is to look at the work of our younger ladies, many of whom have young children. You may be surprised to see how many of those young women attend our Wednes-

The church of Christ

Meeting at 900 E. Natoma
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Elders

Forrest Brown: 530/295-9230
Randy Clark: 916/939-5066
Rich Ladd: 916/774-9048
David Posey: 530/676-9514
Dennis Reagan: 916/797-5539

Deacons

Brent Agee: 916/786-0436
Bryan Byrd: 916/351-9320
David Byrd: 916/985-6564
Barrett Cain: 916/351-0774
Michael Caisse: 530/672-2902
Jeff Clark: 916/985-8689
John Daniels: 916/985-3090
Jerry Deschler: 916/285-9115
Steve Dickey: 916/983-1071
Steven Doty: 916/933-5004
Eric Fields: 916/817-6495
David Main: 650/292-5417
Terry Raposa: 916/782-1140
Dane Scott: 916/631-7221
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David Posey: 530/676-9514
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Services

Sunday Morning Assembly
9:30 AM
Sunday Evening: 5:00 PM
Wednesday Bible Study
7:30 PM

Classes for all ages.

Private classes arranged
at your convenience.

For more information,

visit our web site at:

www.folsomchurch.com

Webmaster: Richard Harvey

Agenda

The Lord's Day, June 1, 2008

9:30 AM: Worship: Singing, Lord's Supper, Preaching

Sermon: Singing

☪ Preaching: David Posey, The Story

5:00 PM: Lord's Supper, Preaching.

Classes @ 5:30 PM

Auditorium, I John

- Teacher: Dennis Wade

Room 11-12,

Characters of the Bible

- Teacher: Bryan Byrd.

Wednesday, June 4, 2008

10 AM, Here — "The Bible for Everyday" (last class of this session).

Teacher: David Posey, Sr.

7:30 PM, Classes

Auditorium, Proverbs

- Teacher: Randy Clark (Jeff Clark, Assisting)

Room 11-12, James

- Teacher: David Posey, Sr. (Zac Brown, Assisting)

Notes

Most sermons are available in MP3 format on our website (www.folsomchurch.com) or on CD (see a deacon).

day morning Bible study. Traditionally, in many places, this is the group that virtually disappears for few months after a baby is born. It's as if they have been given a postpartum exemption from serving the Lord. But many of the young women who have children — and many of these are first-time moms — make an effort to be here whenever they can on Wednesday morning, in addition to the "regular appointed times."

But it doesn't stop there. These same women — some with two, three and four small children — are inviting people over, preparing food and delivering it to the sick, serving on the Bible class committee, teaching classes... I just realized, in writing this, how fortunate I am to be here and I know I speak for the other elders and, hopefully, for the whole congregation. We are blessed beyond words.

So, while it would be great to have a larger facility and it would be great to have more "paid help" and it would be great to have parking in abundance — we are not letting the lack of any of those things keep us from our work. And the lack of those things does not define us — they are still "good problems" and we will continue to look for solutions. Meanwhile, we feel that as long as the church "has a mind to work," the work will go on and go on well.

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If You've Never Been Called a Fanatic

by Bill Hall

Webster defines the word "fanatic": "A person affected by excessive enthusiasm." Its definition indicates that it is a relative term, dependent upon one's judgment as to what is a proper degree of enthusiasm in contrast with what is excessive enthusiasm. Anyone who has any knowledge at all of the world and its standards knows that to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness," (Matt. 6:33) and to "love the Lord with all one's heart, soul, and mind," (Matt. 22:37) and to "present one's body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God" (Rom. 12:1) is to be in the eyes of the world a fanatic.

Nevertheless, before becoming too concerned, one should realize that every Bible character whom he admires—Paul, Peter, John the Baptist, Eunice, Hannah, Jesus—would be looked upon by the world as a fanatic were he or she living today. On the other hand, the world would smile approvingly on those of whom the Lord said: "So then because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of my mouth" (Rev. 3:15-16).

If you've never been called a fanatic, you might need to reconsider your spiritual condition before God.