



What is a healthy church?

Like our personal health, we often assume that the church is healthy because there are no "big" problems. If I'm comfortable, relatively happy, not bothered, and I have my place, I'm healthy, right? Not necessarily. These things do not equal good health. It is tragic when young people die of heart failure. It is tragic because of the death, but also because we question, "Who knew that their heart was not healthy?". We assume good health all the time, until something breaks or doesn't work.

Next week Ryan Townsend will be in Austin. Ryan is the Executive Director for 9Marks, the organization, founded by Mark Dever, which has produced the increasingly embraced books 9 Marks of a Healthy Church and What is a Healthy Church? Since Ryan is going to be in town next week, it spurred me to look over my copy of What is a Healthy Church? Then I thought

about the health of our congregation.

Here are the 9 marks Dever gives:

- Expository Preaching
- Biblical Theology
- A Biblical Understanding of the Gospel
- A Biblical Understanding of Conversion
- A Biblical Understanding of Evangelism
- A Biblical Understanding of Membership
- Biblical Church Discipline
- Biblical Discipleship and Growth
- Biblical Church Leadership

How healthy is our church? The one thing that I hear from our guests over and over is that our church is happy, friendly, and kind! I am absurdly excited to hear that each time. I'm glad we are not a church that people visit and say, "Well, their noses were so high in the air, they'd drown if it rained." Milwood, make sure we continue to welcome and show guests the love of Christ. Either they don't

know Christ or they are a part of Christ, and we should embrace them. Don't come to worship on Sundays and watch visitors trickle in and sit alone. SIT BY THEM! And not just for a moment, only to return to the chair with your name on it! Say hello, extend your hand, and spend the service sitting with them. We are good at kindness, and let's continue to improve!

What about the 9Marks? How would you rate us? On a scale of 1-10, how would Biblical Church Discipline score? What about Biblical Theology? Leadership? We need to see ourselves as God sees us in order to answer well. To praise (continued on page 3)

In This Issue:

Verse of the Month	2
Ladies' Ministry	2
KidCity	4
Awana	4
The Mitchells	5

Verse of the Month:

You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra- which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3: 10-17

Sharing the Gospel

I recently had the opportunity to present the plan of salvation to a man with whom I have known and worked, off and on, for over a decade. He was not receptive or even interested in anything religious until the last couple of months. He has attended Hyde Park Baptist Church a few times and enjoyed the Christian interaction. In the last month, he told me that he did not have much use for religion. That was my opening. I told him, "I don't think God does either. God wants a relationship." It has been a long-time prayer of mine for this man. I will just have to wait and see what God's next steps are.

-Brian Evans

Ladies' Ministry

The ladies of Milwood have been blessed this Summer through the Monday night Bible study. It has been a wonderful time of fellowship, prayer and studying God's Word. We finished our study of Ephesians in July and began studying James in August.

During our study of James, we focused on several issues: the relationship between faith and deeds, finding joy in trials, guarding what we say, and not just hearing the Word but doing it. We also looked at the character of God and His promises. We closed with a study on prayer and how our prayers can be powerful and effective.

From James 3:17-18, we prayed for "wisdom that comes from Heaven that is pure, peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial, and sincere; and that we would be peacemakers who sow in peace and raise a harvest of righteousness."

Welcome Wyatt Perry Moore



Born August 28

7lbs 1oz

Next month, look forward to an article on discipleship and youth from Randy.

(continued from page 1)

God, I want to share what I think the three healthiest parts of Milwood are.

Three Healthiest Things about Milwood

Expositional Preaching

Now, before you think I'm just ringing my own bell, let me say that for this to be a healthy part of the church, the church must want and appreciate expositional preaching. Dever says, "Both pastors and congregations must be committed to expositional preaching. Expositional preaching is the kind of preaching that quite simply, exposes God's Word" (p 63). So, for expositional preaching to be a healthy part of the church, it is not only that a pastor does it but also that the church wants it. Paul said very simply to Timothy, "Preach the word in season and out of season". I'm thankful that it is expositional preaching season at Milwood.

Biblical Theology

This fits right in with our core value: Sound Doctrine. I think we do value this and that it is one of the healthier parts of our church. I say that because in the past year and a half of preaching, there have been many things which have challenged us theologically and doctrinally. I have heard the same from LIFEgroups. Yet, there have been no outright divisions or

quarreling on those issues. Discussions? Yes. Healthy debate? Yes. But division or bitterness? No, not to my knowledge. This is important. In fact, this is a great moment to say that if there is ever a theological issue for you, in preaching or LIFEgroup, talk to that preacher or teacher about it! That is an opportunity for you and us as a church to grow in understanding God's Word together. Paul urges Titus, the pastor, to teach sound doctrine (Titus 2:1). He also warned Timothy saying, "A time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions" (2 Tim 4:3). I thank God that our ears itch for truth before passions. I pray it increases and continues to do so!

Biblical Leadership

I'm so thankful for the leaders at our church. I've said that a lot this year and I hope it has been heard. There is much growth to be done in this area but I am thankful that our leaders, staff and deacons, in particular, are unified and committed to leading biblically. In January, we will present amended by-laws to the church body. Expect changes in the leadership structure. However, for now, and since I have been here, I have been thankful for the unity in our leadership. Dever says of the elders at his church, "It is difficult to put into words how much these

men have loved both me and our entire congregation by sharing the burden -and privilege- of pastoring." I say the same.

Why not the other 6 marks? Well, that is not what the Milwood Monthly is about. This is a place where we praise God for what He has done and is doing. While each of the 9Marks are evident in some way in our church, I am particularly thankful for these three at this time! Still, we need to continue to grow in these three, and we need to continue to grow in the other six.

Which are you most thankful for in our church? I'm not taking a poll and asking you to tell me or to think about everything that is wrong with Milwood. What are you thankful for? Stop for a moment and thank God!

I continue to tell people who ask how things are at Milwood, "Every day I get more excited about Milwood, and I see how much work there is to be done."



Highlights from our children's ministries...

KidCity

God has been doing wonderful things this Summer to get us ready for the KidCity launch that took place on August 26th. KidCity Uptown (1st - 5th grade) began meeting on August 12th with a study on worship. Through Scripture, we focused on three questions:

Who do we worship? God, the Creator of everything.

Why do we worship? Because God created us in our uniqueness to bring Him glory.

How do we worship? Through song, dance, prayer and continual praise of all that God is, and by removing any focus on ourselves during worship.

Our big launch on August 26th had the kids focusing on God's creation. (God created all things and people to bring Him glory.) We challenged our kids to think about their special talents and abilities and how they can use them to glorify God.

KidCity Downtown (infants - kindergarten) has been going strong throughout the summer sharing the Word of God with the children and their families. What a blessing it is to share God's character and Christ's love with our children. Walking alongside families and sharing the gospel is such a God-honoring and God-glorifying work. We are eagerly looking forward to what God has in store for the children and their families in our ministry.

"And these words that I command you today shall be on

your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children..."
Deuteronomy 6:6-7

Awana

On August 26th, we began our 20th year of Awana clubs at Milwood. WOW! Praise God for His faithfulness and His provision! There is no greater joy than to know you are serving where God has called you, and for me, that is in Awana. This will be my 25th year serving in the Awana ministry, and in preparation for that, God led me back to the basics of "Why Awana?"

The answer for me is that Awana is centered on the gospel. The first core value of Awana is that we proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ with clarity and urgency. There is no better reason than to invest my time so that children and youth will come to know, love, and serve the Lord Jesus Christ.

This year's theme from Awana headquarters is called "Zoom Out". We are to "zoom out" and see the bigger picture beyond the kids, in order to connect with their parents and families. This is not a new concept for Awana, but instead a renewed focus on how to partner more effectively with parents for the spiritual teaching and training of their kids. Last year, God richly blessed us by growing our club, and I cannot wait to see what He does this year.

In His Service,
Tom Nelson

Faith Builders LIFEgroup

Faith Builders is a group made up of senior adults, traditionally 50+ years of age. Don Courtney leads the group each week on Sunday mornings. The class is currently using the "Life Ventures" Quarterly as a guide. In addition to the weekly meetings, the Faith Builders typically meet monthly for a social event.

They are also often involved in service projects. Currently they are involved in a pure water project with Texas Baptist Men. The group has been making plastic mats made out of grocery bags for homeless and refugee use. Lastly, they are involved in visitation and outreach for shut-ins.

If you are interested in learning more about this LIFEgroup, or checking out some of the other LIFEgroups we have available, please visit our LIFEgroup webpage: milwoodbaptist.com/lifegroups

Jerry and Joyce
Leonard
celebrated their
45th anniversary
on August 5

"We married August 5, 1967, and I was not a believer at the time. Because of God's favor and Joyce's patience, I became a believer in 1985. It was about that time that my oldest son Chris, who I had not seen since he was 3 years old in 1968, came looking for me. He also had become a believer and wanted to see me as he was headed into the ministry. God has certainly worked miracles in my life. We owe it all to Christ and Mary Long, Joyce's grandmother who showed her the way and then Joyce showed me. We believers are all on a mission trip through life as we share His word and love." -Jerry Leonard



Spotlight on the Mitchells

We are Jared and Hannah Mitchell. We got married in April and have been attending Milwood since January.

The Lord placed a deep and consuming desire for ministry and missions in our hearts. Hannah grew up on the mission field, and Jared has led overseas missions. Our hearts yearn to see the nations reached with the gospel. We questioned a calling toward overseas missions, but Jared greatly sensed the need for in-depth theological training. We asked the Lord to reveal to us His next step in our journey, waited on Him, and watched Him work.

Immediately God began to orchestrate the details as only He could. The Lord provided a renter for Hannah's house in Iowa without us ever advertising its availability. Jared's several two-year commitments were dissolved through no action of our own. Hannah's travel nursing assignment was coming to a close, the lease on our apartment was up, and we found ourselves in a position of being able to answer the call no matter where it took us. We continued to wait and pray for the Lord's guidance.

June 27th, we went to see Jared's brother and sister-in-law at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Just two days before this, God took away Jared's two, two-year commitments tying him to Austin. It was a marvelous time of encouragement and laughter as Hannah was meeting Jared's brother, wife and nine children for the first time. All the while, God was stirring within our hearts.

New Orleans was certainly not on our mind when we were

praying about our next step, and we were taken a bit by surprise when we began to feel the Lord pulling us in that direction. I must confess, Hannah here, I was less than thrilled about New Orleans when Jared and I started talking about the move. But, as I submitted my will to the Lord's, I saw how He was working all around us. I know beyond a shadow of a doubt He has called us to this city, and trust that He will allow us to serve Him here.

Jared will initially be working towards a Bachelors of Christian Ministry with a double minor in Biblical Studies and Psychology. As of now, Jared is assured that God is leading him to then pursue the Christian Counseling and Psychology route at the Graduate level. Under NOBTS Christian Counseling program, Jared will also be getting a Masters of Divinity. Hannah will be working with The Southern Baptist Association as they build a free clinic in the Lower Ninth Ward, a very poor and desolate area of the city.