

Evaluating where the church is now

4 Tools

1. [Vine Project – Phase 3 – Loving Honest Evaluation](#) – a very thorough set of tools
2. How are we going on our vision – e.g. if our vision is to ‘know Christ, live Christ and make Christ know’ – how are we doing in each of those 3 areas?
3. How are we growing?
 - a. In number
 - b. In maturity
 - c. In diversity
4. Revelation 2-3 church spiritual health check
 - a. How might the Lord encourage us (signs of grace) and how would he rebuke us as a church?
 - b. Jesus’ 7 marks of a healthy church
 - i. Love – Thyatira had it – but Ephesus had forgotten their first love (and it’s probably why the deeds of Sardis are ‘incomplete’ – no love) – could be love for other Christians, it could be love for the lost, it could be love for Jesus. In some ways they all hang together – but love for Jesus is the big one – he is the Bridegroom of the church.
 - ii. Truth – strong, clear biblical truth and sharp discernment about what is true and what is false – Ephesus had that, but Pergamum and Thyatira had a big problem with lack of discernment.
 - iii. Service – Hard work, labour – again and again Jesus says to the churches “I know your deeds, your service, your work.” A healthy church has members who are known for working hard in every area of life but especially in gospel ministry.
 - iv. Perseverance – 4 of the churches are praised for persevering, enduring, being faithful, not giving up. It’s one thing to work hard in a short burst – but keeping going in season and out of season is another thing.
 - v. Progress – Rev. 2:19 – not only are they serving and preserving they are actually growing in what they’re doing – the curve is going up. That is an encouraging sign – attempting great things for God, pushing out of their comfort zone, doing more mission, seeking to be more fruitful than last year, gaining gospel traction.
 - vi. Dependence – desperate, dependant faith in God – Smyrna had that, Pergamum had that, Thyatira had that – the small, weak, persecuted churches had that – desperate faith. But Sardis – they think they’re great. Laodicea – they don’t think they need anything. Seems they don’t even need Jesus – he’s on the outside knocking to see if they’d like him to come back in. A healthy church is a church which is on its knees, crying out to God in weakness and dependence.
 - vii. Spiritual riches – Rev. 2:9 – the weak, small, poor, afflicted churches are actually rich — while the churches that think they are rich are ‘wretched, pitiable, poor, blind and naked.’ The healthy church treasures Christ in whom are all the riches of forgiveness, Sonship, wisdom, life, joy, peace, holiness, glory.