

In my April Update in 2016, I wrote out my promises from my Commissioning Service on 19 March 2019:

- I will serve God to the best of my ability
- I will be faithful to His word and teach it and preach it as He provides illumination on it
- I will serve the church at TCF with a shepherd's heart and as one who would seek fruit for God in the lives of those who form the church at TCF
- I will, without fear or favour, preach the Gospel of the Lord Jesus and present its claims on the lives of the people that God will send to TCF
- I will dedicate the next five years to Him in these activities or as long as He will confirm His call in my life

I have been reflecting on these and my service to God. The stark truth is that there is only one view that truly matters! *1 Corinthians 4:3, 4 'But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me.'* Oz Guinness coins the phrase 'The Audience of One'.

I am guilty of using inputs as evidence (e.g. in Preaching and Teaching since January 2016 to March 2019 I have had the responsibility and privilege of preaching 149 times at TCF (81 Family Service, 68 Bible Teaching - 49% of the 304 possible - 169 and 135 respectively). I can further measure my own service to TCF by comparing my ministry and responsibility for others, e.g. I have had 7 trips to Faroe for Family and they have been in Scotland 3 times. I have also had 3 speaking trips to the European Leadership Forum in Poland; 3 trips to the Leadership Development Initiative and 2 speaking trips to Romania. I also preached 9 times in other churches. There is so much other data that I could collate in terms of my 'inputs' but there is a further story and that is about 'outcomes' - the 'so what?' question. It is difficult to measure the things that truly matter: *"It's incredibly hard to measure transformation in a heart, and that's what we're all after."* **Jim Mellado, Willow Creek Association**

There is no doubt that getting statistical information can be helpful (as was the case in the 2018 Church Survey) and I found an article recently saying that churches may want to measure certain things sometime¹:

- **Welcome:** percentage of attenders who are not strong believers but are 'checking it out'
- **Worship:** % of attenders who profess to 'truly worship' (praise, thanksgiving, confession, repentance, consecration, or some combination)
- **Word:** % of attenders who read the Bible during the week
- **Prayer:** % of attenders who pray regularly during the week
- **Ministry:** % of attenders who serve others in some way
- **Mission:** % of attenders who serve non-Christians in Christ's name in some way

But what we have to remember is that before the Audience of One, only He can do an effective work. In that sense, 'every number, every statistic, represents a life that was changed, a life filled with hope and purpose, a story of redemption and grace. People far from God filled with life in Christ.'²

When King David numbered the people', he was judged for sinning. How did David sin? In 2 Samuel 24, David's command was, 'Go, number Israel **and** Judah' and when Joab brought the sum to the king, it was divided under Israel and Judah. Israel 800,000 men; and Judah, 500,000. David wanted to know, not so much the number of the whole people, as the number of Judah, the royal tribe — David's own tribe — compared with the rest of Israel. God had so increased and multiplied the tribe of Judah, that it was more than half as strong as all the rest of the tribes put together.

My pride can lead me to doing legitimate things for the wrong purpose and in reflecting on my time at TCF I can only really know how God has changed me and transformed my heart. I feel the need to reassure you of my primary objective 'to serve God to the best of my ability'. Can I ask you to do the same and know His transforming power in your life and ministry as a disciple of the Lord Jesus?

¹<https://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2012/spring/measuringmatters.html>

²Elevation Church, Matthews, North Carolina. 2009 Church Annual Report