

“The Church,” and Westwood Heights
Baptist Church

Matthew 16.15-21: The Church has these assurances

- It will be built upon the fact that Jesus is The Messiah, The Son of the The Living God. 16.15
- It will be built BY Jesus: not by missionaries, pastors, or members
- It WILL be built.
- It belongs to Jesus. He bought it with His blood, Acts 20.28
- It is a Church: The Body of Jesus on earth

Local Assemblies

- Come and go
- Jesus Himself warns of this: Revelation 2:5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent
- The city of Ephesus is (as is all of Turkey) 99% Muslim (The U.S. State Department says the actual number is slightly lower)
- The State Department says there are 3000 Protestants, out of 67.8 million people

- In the U.S., estimates are that between 4000-10000 Churches close every year
- On October 14, 2013, *Huffington Post* published an article written by Steve McSwain entitled, “Why Nobody Wants to Go to Church Anymore.”
- According to McSwain (stevemcswain.com), between 2010-2012, more than half of all U.S. Churches didn't add one new member
- And, 3,000,000 more people drop out each year

Westwood Heights is not immune

- It was chartered on March 31, 1972.
Twenty one adults signed the charter.
The pastor was Thomas Jack Warren. He pastored from 1972-1978
- In 1978, Pastor Richard Weightman came. He pastored until 1984
- We've had our ups and downs, our highs and lows

McSwain identified 7 factors impacting Churches

- Changing demographics: America is getting older and more ethnically diverse
- Technology
- Moral failings among leaders
- Competition: there are lots of alternatives to Church
- Religious pluralism

- The contemporary worship experience: trying to be something you're not
- Phony advertising: saying you welcome everyone but not being diverse in the makeup of the congregation

What's a Church to do? II Timothy 4.1-5

- Preach the Word. Proclaim what has been written.
- Be “instant” in all seasons
- The word “instant” comes from an Old French word meaning “at hand”
- In season and out of season: when times are “good,” and when they are not

The proclamation of what is written involves

- Reprove: to lay out the Biblical argument for right and wrong.
- Rebuke: show guilt, show fault
- Exhort: comfort, show solution to guilt and fault
- Do this patiently and faithfully
- And do it through teaching the Word