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Wee Kirkers: Heroes and Heroines of the Faith

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I just recently came back from a Wee Kirk Conference in Wagoner, OK.

As I reflect on my time there and the nine or so other Wee Kirk conferences I've had the privilege of being a part of, I cannot help but think that there is something terribly wrong with the markers the church world uses for "successful" ministries. All the markers that are typically mentioned - big buildings, big programs, big budgets, and big memberships - for healthy congregations cannot be the only markers God has in mind for successful churches. There's got to be more.

When we get to heaven, I am sure that the Bill Hybels, Chuck Swindolls, and Rick Warrens will get their crowns. But I can't help but think that God will have the biggest crowns for the Wee Kirk pastors. You see, I don't think God holds pastors and leaders of churches accountable for the numerical growth of the congregations we serve because growth is ultimately a Holy Spirit led thing. But I do believe God will hold every single church leader and pastor accountable for our faithfulness to the ministry to which God has called us.

When it comes to the faithfulness department, some of the Wee Kirk pastors I've met have faithfulness by the bucketloads. Most of the Wee Kirk pastors serve in congregations that are aging and declining. Not only are the churches aging and declining, most of the Wee Kirk pastors find their congregations in towns that are aging and declining as the younger generations have been fleeing to the cities.

One of my heroes of faith is a Wee Kirk pastor I met from Alaska. He has been faithfully serving a congregation of 8-12 people in a small fishing village in Alaska. The only way to get into this fishing village of 90 people is either by boat or sea plane as there are no roads into town. There is only one ecumenical church in town of which he is the pastor. He has been pastoring in this town for over four decades in complete isolation. When I asked him how he's able to pastor in such a fishing village (only recently have they had satellite tv - no libraries, no radio stations, no other pastors, no other churches), he replied by saying, "If I am not there, who's going to go to pastor a village like this? And those 12 people in town and the rest of the fishing village deserve to have a pastor in town."

That's faithfulness! I know I couldn't do it. Compared to settings like that, my church setting - where we are growing, where there are lots of opportunities to grow, etc. - is easy in comparison to a fishing village of 90. While that pastor will never have a congregation in the hundreds or thousands, I am absolutely convinced God is pleased by his faithfulness to Christ and to his people in that fishing village.

I thank God for the Hybels, Swindolls, and the Warrens for such leaders have been wonderful teachers to me and to so many others. But I also thank God for the Wee Kirk pastors and their faithfulness to Christ's church. Wee Kirkers are my spiritual heroes and heroines.

May God bless you and keep you, and may you be found faithful in serving Christ's church and his people.