



MEASUREABLE EFFECTIVENESS

Houston's First Baptist Church asked their congregation a question last year regarding spiritual gifts that I believe directly relates to the effectiveness of PLACE within their congregation. Before I give the question and the congregation's response, I assume if you are reading this article you are most likely one of several types of people as it relates to PLACE Ministries.

- 1. Hopefully you are an avid supporter of the resources based on the impact PLACE has made in your life, ministry, or organization.**
- 2. Someone who has engaged PLACE Ministries at some level and have mixed feelings as to whether it accomplished your purposed or your church or organization's purpose.**
- 3. You are considering utilizing the resources of PLACE Ministries and have inquired about our ministry at some time.**
- 4. You have never utilized PLACE Ministries and its resources, but you are on our email distribution.**

At whatever level you have engaged PLACE Ministries, one question should always be asked when using any resource for yourself or your church or organization. Is the resource, product, ministry, process, or whatever effective in accomplishing your purpose? But the question then arises, "What is effective and how do you measure effectiveness?" as it relates to PLACE being incorporated into your church, I have several responses that might be used to evaluate effectiveness. They are:

- 1. The number of people we take through the PLACE process (objective)**

- 2. The increase in people serving since we implemented PLACE (objective)**
- 3. The feeling (positive, negative, neutral) of those who have been through PLACE (subjective)**
- 4. The overall desire to serve within our church body (subjective)**

If you asked me to list 50 objectives to determine effectiveness regarding implementing PLACE I could, but I doubt many of you would read this article so I will stop at four. I have discovered to my disappointment that very few individuals, churches, and organizations look at objective, measurable effectiveness, much less subjective effectiveness like changing attitudes regarding serving in using resources like PLACE.

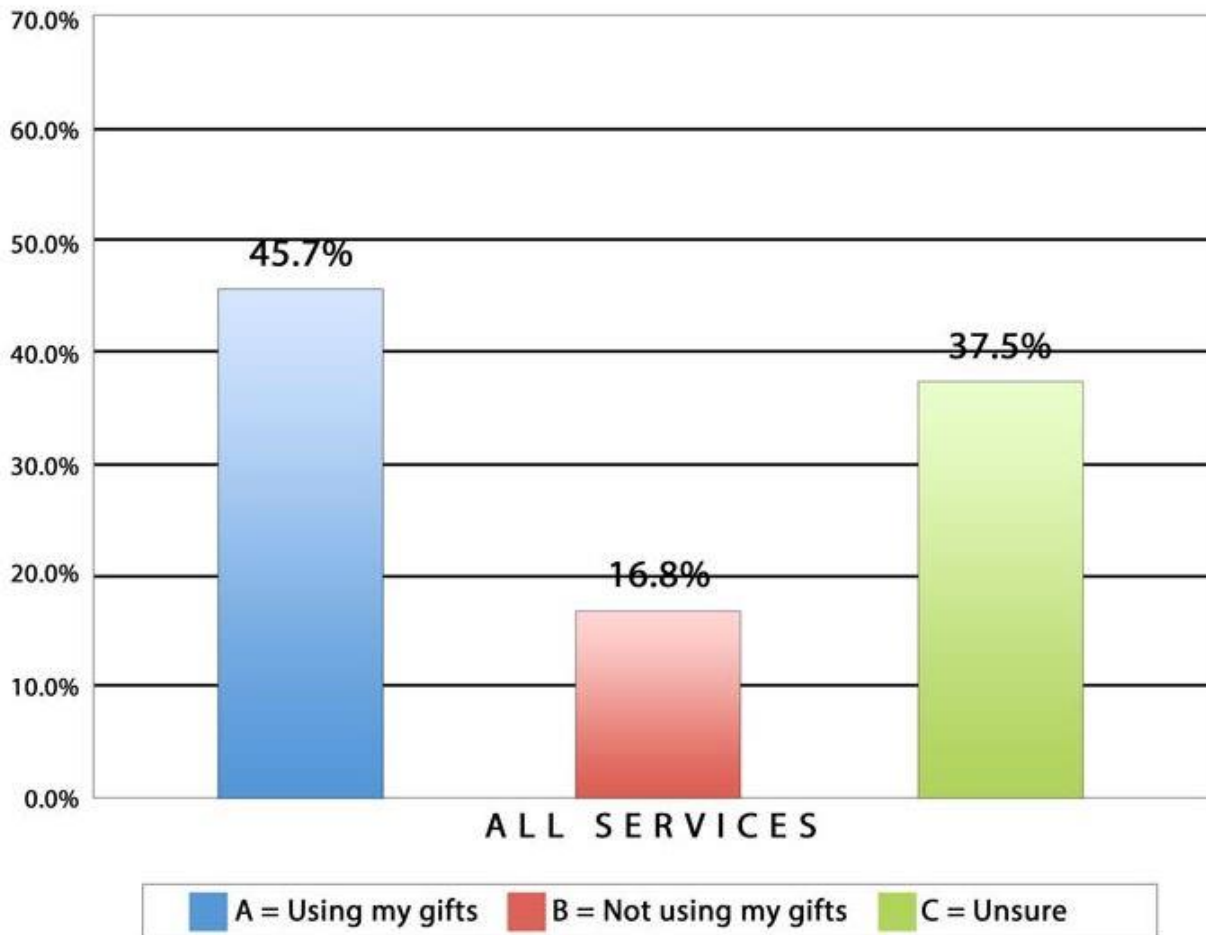
HOUSTON'S FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH –ARE YOU USING YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS?

Houston's First Baptist Church is one of the original pilot churches I began working with in 1999 in implementing the PLACE process. PLACE was launched at Houston's First during a time when they were without a pastor. But, David Self, the Executive Pastor and other staff and key leadership believed PLACE could be implemented in the absence of a senior pastor. Many people during this long interim period without a pastor went through the PLACE process with mixed results as to its effectiveness. Gregg Matte became the senior pastor at Houston's First Baptist Church in 2004 and shortly after becoming the pastor did a six-week sermon series on spiritual gifts called "Spirit Given-Spirit Driven." One of the new staff members brought on shortly after Greg became senior pastor was Malcolm Marshall. Malcolm is the Minister of Assimilation. Malcolm is passionate about assimilating new members into ministry at Houston's First Baptist Church and outside the walls of the church by helping them discover how God created them and doing what God created them to do. PLACE is a resource that Malcolm uses to help accomplish Houston's First Baptist Church's objective of connecting their people to meaningful ministry.

Fast forward to February of 2012 during a sermon at Houston's First Baptist Church. Pastor Gregg Matte had put on the screen during all their worship services the question, "Are You Using Your Spiritual Gifts?" The congregation was asked to text (don't you love modern technology) "Using my gifts," "Not using my gifts," or "Unsure" (see graph below for responses).

Spiritual Gifts Text Poll

Houston's First Baptist Church | Feb 19, 2012



COMPARING HOUSTON'S FIRST BAPTIST TO ????

Some reading this may think it's not so great that only 45.7% of Houston's First Baptist Church were using their spiritual gifts based on the survey. However, this number must be put into proper perspective. First, Houston's First Baptist Church has many attend their worship services that have yet to join the church and get actively involved in their assimilation process. Gregg Matte is a dynamic communicator who draws a large number of people to their church that have yet to engage. Secondly, it is rare and almost unheard of that any church ever evaluates whether or not their people are using their spiritual gifts.

Thirdly, while the Barna Research group not done a survey asking exactly the same question Gregg Matte asked last year, they did have a survey that lowered the bar from "using my spiritual gifts" to just knowing your spiritual gifts. The

results were very discouraging. The survey was completed in February 2009 and only “Two-thirds of Americans (68%) who say they are Christian noted they have heard of spiritual gifts.” Notice only “heard of spiritual gifts” much less using them. Barna did the same survey two other times and the percentage from the 2009 survey had declined from 72% (2000) and 71% (1995). The statistics on those who claimed to have heard about spiritual gifts are as discouraging as the 32% who have not heard of spiritual gifts. Barna reported:

“Between those who do not know their gift (15%), those who say they don’t have one (28%), and those who claimed gifts that are not biblical (20%), nearly two-thirds of the self-identified Christian population who claim to have heard about spiritual gifts have not been able to accurately apply whatever they have heard or what the Bible teaches on the subject to their lives.”

So, nearly one-third who claim to be Christians have not even heard of spiritual gifts and of the other two-thirds who have heard of them either they do not know their gifts, claim a gift that is not biblical or say they don’t have a spiritual gift. When, you go back and look at Houston’s First Baptist Church who raised the bar in their survey from “KNOWING” to “USING” their spiritual gifts you come away impressed that only 16.8% stated that they were not using their gifts while 37.5% were unsure (I am sure many of them were using their spiritual gifts but were unaware of it) and almost half (45.7%) of their church stated they were using their spiritual gifts.

SO, WHAT’S THE POINT?

From my standpoint Houston’s First Baptist Church has been highly effective in utilizing a resource like PLACE to not only help their people know their gifts, but to help them “...fan into flame the gift of God which is in you...” (II Timothy 1:6). Houston’s First Baptist Church has greatly helped their people “not neglect” their gifts (1 Timothy 4:14) through their international strategy to assimilate their people with PLACE being a vital part of their strategy.

There are many, many reasons why I believe Houston’s First Baptist Church is effectively using PLACE as a resource. Let me name just a few of the big reasons why I believe they are effective. First, Houston’s First has a senior pastor that is using his teaching/preaching platform to highlight the use of spiritual gifts and the importance of using them within the body of Christ and outside where his members live, work, and play. Secondly, the leadership of Houston’s First has allocated enormous resources of time, talent, and money to ensure there is an

intentional strategy to help their people know how God created them and do what God created them to do. In incorporating PLACE as part of the assimilation process they have put the right person (Malcolm Marshall) in place (no pun intended) to lead a team that is equipped in phenomenal ways (worth the communication to talk with Malcolm about how they equip those on the PLACE team).

I know some who read this article might tune out or become turned off when they see statistical numbers regarding effectiveness. I could have given story after story (my normal means of communicating) Houston's First Baptist Church and individuals who have been impacted by PLACE both personally and are greatly impacting ministries through Houston's First Baptist Church and beyond. There is great value in evaluating PLACE from a micro level (individuals) and a macro level (like overall number using spiritual gifts).

My bottom line in writing this article is to stress the key elements in making PLACE effective within a church. They are:

- 1. Senior Pastor and key leadership have to be engaged in promoting and supporting PLACE**
- 2. Evaluation of PLACE and its effectiveness have to take place**
- 3. The right person leading the PLACE team must be in place**
- 4. Training for the PLACE team has to be a part of this process up front and ongoing**

If PLACE or I can serve you in helping PLACE be effective in your church or organization or for you individually we could consider it a privilege.

Serving Him Together,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jay".

Jay
Founder & President of PLACE Ministries