



May 2018

Greetings brothers and sisters in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I am so excited about ministry and the work we are doing as a church. This week I start an online course through Northeastern Seminary of Roberts Wesleyan University. This is a Free Methodist Seminary based in Rochester, NY. The course is titled "Calling and Vocation" and is the introductory course for their Doctorate of Ministry program. I have been allowed to take this course as a visiting student not part of the DMin program. This course will address several topics: spiritual, vocational, and pastoral formation; personal preferences and strengths for ministry; conflict management style; social support in ministry. This is a lot to cover in just five months.

I am also excited about the work we are doing in our combined ministry study task force. We have meet every other month to look at all aspects of the ministries of Peace and Trinity churches. We are now looking at the various demographics of our community and how we can address the needs of these various segments of people. Continue to pray for this task force and that God will guide and direct us in our work, and that our savior will make known to us His vision for our churches.

Leadership is a key component of our ministry study. We look at who is involved in leadership of the church, the organizational structure of the church, leadership styles, and ultimately what type of leadership will be required for moving forward into a positive, fruitful, vital ministry future. As part of my own training for my involvement in this task force, I attended an online seminar, a webinar as they call it, on organizational leadership. It was given by a professor at Bethel Seminary in St. Paul MN by the name of Andrew Rowell. HE was a doctoral student at Duke at the time I was there but I did not know him. According to Dr. Rowell, good quality transformational leadership includes six attributes:

- 1) Focused. Leadership must be focused on fulfilling the church's mission. He says that growing churches have a clear identity and purpose. Also, the more time that leadership spends in recruitment and evangelism the more the church will grow.
- 2) Collaborative. Strong and vital leadership must collaborate with many constituencies and community groups. The Church cannot be a group of silos of special interests pushing their agendas, and the Church cannot be an isolated silo in the community. We must collaborate.

3) Stable. This is where we as United Methodists have an advantage, because strong organizations need structure. However, when maintaining the organizational structure takes precedence over fulfilling the mission, then we will have an empty sanctuary.

4) Wise. Churches need smart leadership. According to Rev. Eugene Petersen, author of *The Message* modern paraphrase of the Bible, the pastor must focus on three things; scripture, prayer, and spiritual direction. Strong organizational leadership that is faithful to the gospel of Jesus requires that a pastor have these three areas as his top priority. He can then guide the leadership in the organization to take on more responsibility and authority. But without the pastor's guidance, the leadership of the church can become closed minded and inward focused, becoming the opposite of wise.

5) Innovative. There are two misconceptions about church innovation, which is just a fancy way of saying "how can we do things differently for a better outcome?" The first is that you must see the future, and the second, that you must be artistic. We obviously cannot predict the future and many of us are not artistic. I do not picture the apostle Peter, the big and burly fisherman, as being very artistic either, and yet, he brought many people to Christ through his preaching and ministry. Innovation is related to experimentation; put something out there; build, measure, and learn. That is how churches need to innovate.

6) Sober. Leadership needs to unearth problems early and ensure organizational focus on the mission. This requires discipline, and leadership must prepare and plan. We cannot just go through the motions. We can't just do what we've always done and expect different results. Dr. Rowell says that bad meetings are the birthplace of unhealthy organizations. If meetings are not focused and purposeful, dysfunction will occur and the health of the organization deteriorates. We must remember that the mission of the church must be focused on outsiders, and that its not about having things our way. That's what Paul was trying to address in chapter 11 of his first letter to the Corinthian church. They were a dysfunctional church because they were focused on themselves and not others. Therefore, the worship and congregational life became disorienting and dysfunctional. Paul's prescriptions about head coverings and the Lord's Supper were about bringing order and focused purpose back to the life of the church.

Until next time, have a blessed Easter season and see you in worship.

Rev. Wiley Gladney