

Healthy Missional Marker #9

Culture of Godly Leadership

By Peter Sjoblom

In a recent workshop someone mentioned frustration with leaders in Washington. “Oh,” I said, “these people aren’t leaders, they are representatives.”

In our culture we are obsessed with leadership. From the youngest children in school through college and into the work place we almost assume that everyone is a leader. Leadership is the subject of more workshops, continuing education and journals than almost any other topic. Everyone is a leader or at least everyone is told that they are leaders.

I’ve noticed that leadership is often confused with management and influence. We almost assume we’re talking about the same thing. Since, in our technological age, we oversee more work than we actually do, I think our penchant toward middle management has captured thoughts of leadership in the church.

Many of our church governing structures have been divided between “spiritual” work and “financial or temporal” oversight, deacons and trustees if you will. In my consulting history I’ve been curious to note the meetings which begin with a devotion or prayer, almost always (over 90 %) for deacons, and occasionally (under 30%) for trustees. This is not unusual and is based on a form of dualism (spiritual and secular) in how we view our world.

I’m not convinced that this view of church life serves us well. Dualism is not found as a model in the scriptures and the lines of separation in the church are much more blurred based on the very purpose of the church. We need spiritual sensitivity throughout the system in churches. All leaders are called on to seek God’s mind in matters of church governance.

Leaders in congregations are responsible for pursuing the mind of Christ in relation to the church’s mission, values and programs. They are responsible for the management of resources moving toward the initiatives where God is blessing and also for the re-allocation of resources when a program has run its course. This requires spiritual vigilance and the ability to make decisions, sometimes difficult and unpopular decisions.

This is not just on the pastor. It takes a spiritually healthy pastor who is consumed with God’s mission to be a healthy missional church and it also takes a spiritually healthy and sensitive lay leadership to work in concert with the pastor to move a church forward in health and growth.

A Culture of Godly Leadership helps establish a climate of sensitivity to God, trust in each other and a passion for the world which needs to know Christ. I pray that the leadership in all the Central Conference churches will continue to take their call seriously in their pursuit of Christ and Christ's priorities in the world.

Peace,