

# Officer Training Notes

**The Combined Efforts of the Southern Cluster of The  
Presbytery of Western Colorado**

Contributors:

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Rev. Dan Straw [Dan's notes are not represented here, but he conducted a very lively discussion on reaching younger generations]

Alan TeBrink [Alan's notes are not represented, but he led a morning Devotion from 1 Tim 3:1-7]

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### **Brief Introduction**

On Saturday January 19<sup>th</sup> the Southern Cluster of the Presbytery of Western Colorado gathered as many as we could to share in the joint venture of training our church officers. We as Pastors of the cluster wondered if our combined knowledge and resources wouldn't be helpful (and perhaps more stimulating!) for those called and elected to lead in our churches. Both newly elected and currently serving officers (Deacons and Ruling Elders) were invited to participate. These notes are humbly submitted for a) those unable to attend the training, b) A reference tool for those able to attend, c) a potentially useful resource submitted to the entire Presbytery, and d) to contribute to the ongoing conversation of our Presbytery as we seek imaginative ways to work together as clusters.

# **The Foundations of the Presbyterian Church & Why I am Presbyterian**

Rev. Steve Nofel

## KEY TO NOTES ON SEMINAR –

- Black “New Times Roman” is directly from the Book of Order
- That which is highlighted I would read and comment upon ‘off the cuff’
- Blue are the specific comments I would like to be sure to make
- Red are a couple of exercises as part of the presentation

## General Introduction - These Foundations are why I am a Presbyterian Christian

- I left the Roman Church in June 1993
- Told Kim, “You are a PC minister, your dad is a PC minister, your family is PC. I am now PC.” (From Book of Ruth 1:16, ‘Your God is my God.’) Made perfect sense to me. Not to her.
- “You were stuck in one denomination that didn’t fit you. You will study denominations and choose which fits you best.”
- Study went from August to November
- Chose Presbyterian Church U.S.A. – After some work, ordination exams and so forth...Homestead Presbytery of Eastern Nebraska recognized my previous ordination August 1995.
- After preparing for every question imaginable for my exam on the floor of presbytery that day, the only real question was the obvious: “Why did you choose to become Presbyterian?”
- My initial answer was one word, “Polity.”
- Of course said more, and discussed what, at the time was the opening chapters of the Form of Government, and has been transformed by NFOG into *The Foundations of Presbyterian Polity*

## THE FOUNDATIONS OF PRESBYTERIAN POLITY

### CHAPTER ONE: THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

#### F-1.01 GOD’S MISSION

Begin with the very basic – never underestimate the importance of the basics and stating the obvious: The good news of the Gospel is that the triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit— creates, redeems, sustains, rules, and transforms all things and all people. This one living

God, the Scriptures say, liberated the people of Israel from oppression and covenanted to be their God. By the power of the Spirit, this one living God is incarnate in Jesus Christ, who came to live in the world, die for the world, and be raised again to new life.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ Jesus’ Ministry announces the nearness of God’s kingdom, bringing good news to all who are impoverished, sight to all who are blind, freedom to all who are oppressed, and proclaiming the Lord’s favor upon all creation.

The mission of God in Christ gives shape and substance to the life and work of the Church. In Christ, the Church participates in God's mission for the transformation of creation and humanity by proclaiming to all people the good news of God's love, offering to all people the grace of God at font and table, and calling all people to discipleship in Christ. **Human beings have no higher goal in life than to glorify and enjoy God now and forever,** living in covenant fellowship with God and participating in God's mission.

## **F-1.02 JESUS CHRIST IS HEAD OF THE CHURCH**

### *F-1.0201 The Authority of Christ*

Almighty God, who raised Jesus Christ from the dead and set him above all rule and authority, has given to him all power in heaven and on earth, not only in this age but also in the age to come. a. **God has put all things under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and has made Christ Head of the Church, which is his body.** b The Church's life and mission are a joyful participation in Christ's ongoing life and work.

### *F-1.0202 Christ Calls and Equips the Church*

Christ calls the Church into being, giving it all that is necessary for its mission in the world, for its sanctification, and for its service to God. **Christ is present with the Church in both Spirit and Word. Christ alone rules, calls, teaches, and uses the Church as he wills.**

### *F-1.0203 Christ Gives the Church Its Life*

Christ gives to the Church its faith and life, its unity and mission, its order and discipline.

Scripture teaches us of Christ's will for the Church, which is to be obeyed. In the worship and service of God and the government of the church, matters are to be ordered according to the Word by reason and sound judgment, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

### *F-1.0204 Christ Is the Church's Hope*

In affirming with the earliest Christians that Jesus is Lord, the Church confesses that he is its hope, and that the Church, as Christ's body, is bound to his authority and thus free to live in the lively, joyous reality of the grace of God.

### *F-1.0205 Christ Is the Foundation of the Church*

In Christ all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through Christ God reconciles all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of the cross (Col. 1:19–20). **In Christ's name, therefore, the Church is sent out to bear witness to the good news of reconciliation with God, with others, and with all creation. In Christ the Church receives its truth and appeal, its holiness, and its unity.**

## **F-1.03 THE CALLING OF THE CHURCH**

### *F-1.0301 The Church Is the Body of Christ*

The Church is the body of Christ c. Christ gives to the Church all the gifts necessary to be his body. The Church strives to demonstrate these gifts in its life as a community in the world (1 Cor. 12:27–28):

The Church is to be a community of faith, entrusting itself to God alone, even at the risk of losing its life.

The Church is to be a community of hope, rejoicing in the sure and certain knowledge that, in Christ, God is making a new creation. This new creation is a new beginning for human life and for all things. The Church lives in the present on the strength of that promised new creation.

The Church is to be a community of love, where sin is forgiven, reconciliation is accomplished, and the dividing walls of hostility are torn down.

The Church is to be a community of witness, pointing beyond itself through word and work to the good news of God's transforming grace in Christ Jesus its Lord.

#### *F-1.0302 The Marks of the Church*

With all Christians of the Church catholic, we affirm that the Church is "one, holy, catholic, and apostolic."

##### *a. The Unity of the Church*

Unity is God's gift to the Church in Jesus Christ. Just as God is one God and Jesus Christ is our one Savior, so the Church is one because it belongs to its one Lord, Jesus Christ. The Church seeks to include all people and is never content to enjoy the benefits of Christian community for itself alone. There is one Church, for there is one Spirit, one hope, "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all" (Eph. 4:5–6).

Because in Christ the Church is one, it strives to be one. To be one with Christ is to be joined with all those whom Christ calls into relationship with him. To be thus joined with one another is to become priests for one another, praying for the world and for one another and sharing the various gifts God has given to each Christian for the benefit of the whole community. Division into different denominations obscures but does not destroy unity in Christ. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), affirming its historical continuity with the whole Church of Jesus Christ, is committed to the reduction of that obscurity, and is willing to seek and to deepen communion with all other churches within the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.

## **One - Paul Shows us a Way to Live This Out**

### **Philippians 2**

Though He was in the form of God,  
Jesus did not deem equality with God  
As something to be grasped at.  
Rather, He emptied Himself  
And took the form of a slave,  
Being born in the likeness of human beings.  
He was known to be of human estate,  
And it was thus that He humbled Himself,  
Obediently accepting even death,  
Death on a cross!  
Because of this,  
God highly exalted Him  
And bestowed on Him the name  
Above every other name,  
So that at Jesus' name  
Every knee must bend  
In the heavens, on the earth,  
And under the earth,  
And every tongue proclaim  
To the glory of God the Father:  
JESUS CHRIST IS LORD! Amen.

### **Philippians 2:1-4 – Getting into the Great Hymn**

Verse 2 – “be of the same mind” – Phrono – have the same perspective – look at things from the same perspective – Your Christian Perspective. Have the same way of looking at things as Christ did – individually, with each other, and in the church. Paul knows it is hard, that is why he is emphasizing it.

Illustration – Turn the other cheek

Verse 2 – “Make my joy complete, be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord of mind.

Are we failing to love if we disagree with other deacons, elders, or the ministries of the church?

Does this mean that Christians should NEVER disagree?

How do we disagree in love?

### Christian Teammates

What does it mean to be a teammate?

How do teammates respond when they disagree?

What is the hardest thing to do as a teammate?

#### *b. The Holiness of the Church*

Holiness is God's gift to the Church in Jesus Christ. Through the love of Christ, by the power of the Spirit, God takes away the sin of the world. **The holiness of the Church comes from Christ who sets it apart to bear witness to his love, and not from the purity of its doctrine or the righteousness of its actions.**

Because in Christ the Church is holy, the Church, its members, and those in its ordered ministries **strive to lead lives worthy of the Gospel we proclaim. In gratitude for Christ's work of redemption,** we rely upon the work of God's Spirit through Scripture and the means of grace (W-5.5001) to form every believer and every community for this holy living. We confess the persistence of sin in our corporate and individual lives. At the same time, we also confess that we are forgiven by Christ and called again and yet again to strive for the purity, righteousness, and truth revealed to us in Jesus Christ and promised to all people in God's new creation.

### HOLY

Philippians 1:1-2 – Paul and Timothy, servants (slaves) of Christ Jesus. To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the overseers and deacons (bishops and helpers): Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Servants – Slaves of Christ Jesus

What do these words mean in general to you?

What is the implication in your life that you are a slave / servant of Christ Jesus?

Paul is Addressing YOU:

Saints – Not speaking of pure, miracle worker, perfect follower. In fact, you being called a saint has not a lot to do with your inner being, but your faith in God and your willingness to follow – be slaves to Him.



Only God is Holy, Perfect. We are saints because as we follow Him, we share in His holiness and glory. As 1 Peter proclaims in chapter 2, verses 9-10.

It is not on our account that we are saints, it is because of the Holy God and the fact that Jesus has forever drawn all who believe into His presence.

This letter is going to you saints – who have entered into the presence of God through Christ Jesus. And I wish you grace and peace.

This is Paul's cliché. This is Paul's way to say hello and goodbye. If Paul had a cell phone, he wouldn't answer "hello?" as we do. He would say, "Grace and Peace."

These three little words are loaded with the whole Gospel message for Paul.

Grace. It comes from Greek thought

This originally is a Greek word. – Charis.

For Paul it means Unmerited Favor. Great Surprise Gift. Joy to You. Health...Mercy...Peace...Love

God's love, mercy, peace, salvation is given to YOU. God gives you salvation and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. You have done nothing to deserve it – but here it is. God is withholding the judgment you deserve, and has lifted you to SAINTHOOD! You now share in his holiness

What are some of the ways you see grace in your life?

What are some of the graces you have that you know you don't deserve?

Peace. This comes from Jewish thought

Shalom translated in LXX three ways, because it means so much.

Irane – "Like peace dude." "Make peace, not war." Means lack of war.

Irane, don't be in battle

Soltare – Salvation. God has saved you. You are soltare, at peace with God.

Tellias – Peace has been fulfilled. Christ came made us right with God, so we "In the fullness" of time our eternal life, our guarantee of peace is fulfilled because Christ came, made us saints, and we share in His eternal life.

Three Words: Grace and Peace sum up the whole Gospel

Our modern way of saying it, is that A MARK OF THE CHURCH IS HOLINESS:

We personally bear witness to the fact that the love of Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the Father has taken away the sin of the world.

Our holiness – our sainthood – comes because we share in this personally.

This gives us GRACE and PEACE

Our Response:

We live like it – bear witness with our lives to this surprise unmerited love

In gratitude we proclaim in Word and in Deed Christ's work of redemption.

We confess we are sinners. We also confess we are constantly and forever forgiven by Christ.

We are called to again and again strive for purity and righteousness and truth in Christ and witness that to the world around us.

Our modern way of saying it, is that A MARK OF THE CHURCH IS HOLINESS

And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to do. And whatever you do in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. - Colossians 3:15-17

### **Reflection Questions**

*How have you received Grace and Peace through the words and deeds of others in your life?*

*What are some of the words and deeds you have done in the past which is done in the name of the Lord and give thanks to the Father?*

*What are some ways for you to witness to Grace and Peace in the future?*

### **c. The Catholicity of the Church**

Universal. Not RC. Make a joke out of my not being only "Catholic" in the room full of Presbyterians.

Catholicity is God's gift to the Church in Jesus Christ. In the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, by the power of the Spirit, God overcomes our alienation and repairs our division.

Because in Christ the Church is catholic, it strives everywhere to testify to Christ's embrace of men, women, and children of all times, places, races, nations, ages, conditions, and stations in life. The catholicity of the Church summons the Church to a deeper faith, a larger hope, and a more complete love as it bears witness to God's grace. Lead a discussion of openness and welcoming of ALL PEOPLE we are called to be. Bring up "all are welcome" even though all are not immediately called to be ordained: several reasons including homosexual lifestyle. BUT ALL ARE WELCOME ALL THE TIME.

d. *The Apostolicity of the Church*

Apostolicity is God's gift to the Church in Jesus Christ. In Christ, by the power of the Spirit, God sends the Church into the world to share the gospel of God's redemption of all things and people.

Because in Christ the Church is apostolic, it strives to proclaim this gospel faithfully. The Church receives the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ through the testimony of those whom Christ sent, both those whom we call apostles and those whom Christ has called throughout the long history of the Church. The Church has been and is even now sent into the world by Jesus Christ to bear that testimony to others. The Church bears witness in word and work that in Christ the new creation has begun, and that God who creates life also frees those in bondage, forgives sin, reconciles brokenness, makes all things new, and is still at work in the world. To be members of the body of Christ is to be sent out to pursue the mission of God and to participate in God's new creation, God's kingdom drawing the present into itself. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) affirms the Gospel of Jesus Christ as received from the prophets and apostles, and stands in continuity with God's mission through the ages.

The Church strives to be faithful to the good news it has received and accountable to the standards of the confessions. The Church seeks to present the claims of Jesus Christ, leading persons to repentance, acceptance of Christ alone as Savior and Lord, and new life as his disciples.

The Church is sent to be Christ's faithful evangelist:

making disciples of all nations in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit;

sharing with others a deep life of worship, prayer, fellowship, and service; and

participating in God's mission to care for the needs of the sick, poor, and lonely; to free people from sin, suffering, and oppression; and to establish Christ's just, loving, and peaceable rule in the world.

Where Christ is, there is the true Church. Since the earliest days of the Reformation, Reformed Christians have **marked the presence of the true Church wherever:**

**the Word of God is truly preached and heard,**

**the Sacraments are rightly administered, and**

**ecclesiastical discipline is uprightly ministered.**

In our own time, we affirm that, in the power of the Spirit, the Church is faithful to the mission of Christ as it:

*Proclaims and hears the Word of God*, responding to the promise of God's new creation in Christ, and inviting all people to participate in that new creation; *Administers and receives the*

*Sacraments*, welcoming those who are being engrafted into Christ, bearing witness to Christ's saving death and resurrection, anticipating the heavenly banquet that is to come, and committing itself in the present to solidarity with the marginalized and the hungry; and

*Nurtures a covenant community of disciples of Christ*, living in the strength of God's promise and giving itself in service to God's mission.

#### ***F-1.0304 The Great Ends of the Church***

**The great ends of the Church are:**

**the proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind;**

**the shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God;**

**the maintenance of divine worship;**

**the preservation of the truth;**

**the promotion of social righteousness; and**

**the exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world.**

## Great Ends Redefined by MVPC

Worshipping and praising God

Sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ – keeping the faith and passing it on

Growing in faith – studying the Word of God (the Bible)

Doing what God tells us is right – putting our faith in action

Taking call of ALL God's children

Pointing to eternal life – living so that all know God's saving love

### **F-1.04 OPENNESS TO THE GUIDANCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

#### *F-1.0401 Continuity and Change*

The Presbyterian form of government set forth in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is grounded in Scripture and built around the marks of the true Church.

It is in all things subject to the Lord of the Church. In the power of the Spirit, Jesus Christ draws worshiping communities and individual believers into the sovereign activity of the triune God at all times and places.

As the Church seeks reform and fresh direction, it looks to Jesus Christ who goes ahead of us and calls us to follow him. United with Christ in the power of the Spirit, the Church seeks “not [to] be conformed to this world, but [to] be transformed by the renewing of [our] minds, so that [we] may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect” (Rom. 12:2).

#### *F-1.0402 Ecumenicity*

The Presbyterian system of government in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is established in light of Scripture but is not regarded as essential for the existence of the Christian Church nor required of all Christians.

#### *F-1.0403 Unity in Diversity*

“As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise” (Gal. 3:27–29).

The unity of believers in Christ is reflected in the rich diversity of the Church's membership. In Christ, by the power of the Spirit, God unites persons through baptism regardless of race, ethnicity, age, sex, disability, geography, or theological conviction. There is therefore no place in the life of the Church for discrimination against any person. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall guarantee full participation and representation in its worship, governance, and emerging life to all persons or groups within its membership. No member shall be denied participation or representation for any reason other than those stated in this Constitution.

#### *F-1.0404 Openness*

In Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all creation, the Church seeks a new openness to God's mission in the world. In Christ, the triune God tends the least among us, suffers the curse of human sinfulness, raises up a new humanity, and promises a new future for all creation. In Christ, Church members share with all humanity the realities of creatureliness, sinfulness, brokenness, and suffering, as well as the future toward which God is drawing them. The mission of God pertains not only to the Church but also to people everywhere and to all creation. As it participates in God's mission, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) seeks:

a new openness to the sovereign activity of God in the Church and in the world, to a more radical obedience to Christ, and to a more joyous celebration in worship and work;

a new openness in its own membership, becoming in fact as well as in faith a community of women and men of all ages, races, ethnicities, and worldly conditions, made one in Christ by the power of the Spirit, as a visible sign of the new humanity;

a new openness to see both the possibilities and perils of its institutional forms in order to ensure the faithfulness and usefulness of these forms to God's activity in the world; and a new openness to God's continuing reformation of the Church ecumenical, that it might be more effective in its mission.

Read Together Ephesians 4:1-2

V. 1 – YOU have been called to lead a life worthy YOUR calling.

Qualities listed in verse 2:

Humility

Gentleness

Patience

Forbearing

For Discussion:

*Which of these is a strength for you?*

*Which do you need to better develop?*

*What (which) relationship(s) will profit from developing these qualities?*

*Why do we need to develop these attributes?*

Read Verse 3-7 – The Unity of the Church – THAT ALL MAY BE ONE

Read Verses 11 – 12 – Gifts for Building Up the Body –  
Unity through a Diversity of Gifts.

For Discussion - Verse 11: *How would you define each of these ministries?*

*Name a person, past or present who was memorable as each of these:*

Apostles

Prophets,

Evangelists,

Pastors,

Teachers

For private purposes only:

*List two, three or four GIFTS the LORD has given YOU:*

*List two, three or four WAYS YOU can use these gifts to BUILD THE BODY OF CHRIST:*

Read verse 13 – All bring unity, knowledge, maturity – Binds us together

Bonus Questions:

*What is the problem with trying to live the Christian life apart from the church?*

*In what way do you need others in the church?*

*What strength (gift) can YOU GIVE to others in the Church? To Equip the saints for ministry?*

# **How We do the Work of the Church is Ministry**

Rev. Suzy Meyer



## Bare-bones outline for leadership-training session

PREMISE: How we do the “work” of the church is visible to our community and can, in itself, be a valuable ministry.

- 1) Biggest issue facing the Rico Steering Team (our version of a session) right now is whether to move our propane tank. (Seems like it won't push many people's buttons)
  - a) There is no theological content inherent in this issue.
  - b) BUT how we make decisions, even seemingly inconsequential ones, should be an exercise in thinking of ourselves as the body of Christ.
  - c) When we're using Brian's discernment processes, we may not actually be discerning what to do about the fuel tank but about something more important.
- 2) Our ordination questions (read)
  - a) What does that mean for the way we interact with each other as Ruling Elders?
  - b) What are the “tools” implicit in those vows?
- 3) Our polity
  - a) Why is “decently and in order” important here? Benefits?
  - b) What are the harms when we don't act in that way?
  - c) Polity is great. I love our polity (or most of it) almost as much as Steve Nofel does, but it's a recipe. We still need to provide the ingredients.
- 4) Identifying the “churchy” values in mundane decisions:
  - a) Worship: Our church temp must be comfortable and healthy.
  - b) Outreach: A cold church will discourage attendance BUT some people believe a visible propane tank is not good outreach.
  - c) Stewardship: We need to heat the church in the most economical way possible because we have ministries we need to fund.
  - d) Pastoral care: What if we need the church and can't heat it? Rico doesn't have many gathering places.
  - e) Congregational relationships: Our members have valid but strongly differing desires and there is no way for everyone to get exactly what s/he wants here, and yet we are one body.
- 5) A nod to tradition: We can't do everything the way we have always done it, but we can hear and understand and honor what our members value in those traditions. (Ex: We are NOT going back to heating with wood, but we honor the memory of gathering to worship around a woodstove, and how the fire seemed to hallow our worship space. )
- 6) So, what?
  - a) Merging practical matters into a life of faith.
  - b) Pray. Pray often, pray diligently, pray honestly, and don't talk so much in your prayers that the Holy spirit doesn't have a chance to get a word in edgewise. It is never inappropriate to take time out for prayer, because nothing focuses us more accurately on the purpose of all we do.
  - b) What's the best possible outcome, and what would be the most disastrous? For most issues that face our sessions, we probably don't have to spend much time thinking about those questions. For example, the best outcome for me would be a warm church, and the worst would be that my 120-year-old wooden church would burn while my congregation was in it.

c) But that's pretty superficial, and if we stop there, we aren't living up to our responsibilities as leaders.

d) One of the worst possible outcomes, spiritually, to any decision we make is that it won't settle the issue, which will continue to be divisive and perhaps grow more divisive.

e) And the best outcome — I'm always awed when I see this — is that people who thought they couldn't come together will find themselves truly in agreement and will thank God for getting them there.

f) What are the realistic possibilities to this specifically problem?

g) Back to the faith perspective again. (Healthy discussions keep coming back to that, even though they're grounded in concrete issues). Is there anything, in any of these realistic possibilities you've identified, that our faith either mandates or prohibits.

h) Better pray about that. Generally, we know what's right and wrong. It would be wrong for us to solve our heating problem by surreptitiously tapping into our next-door-neighbor's propane tank. It would be wrong for us to respond to our across-the-street neighbor's complaint about the propane tank by painting a rude message on it. It would be wrong to say to some of our members, "Sorry, but you're in the minority so I'm going to throw you under the bus."

7) You're getting the idea that this is a partnership between God and God's people, and we have a responsibility to do more than just "turn it over to God."

8) So as we elders order the life of the church, the principles we apply to the challenges we confront are central to who we are and what we do. We're the body of Christ in our community, and how well we succeed at living up to that charge matters far more than where we put the propane tank. God probably doesn't have a deep and abiding concern with the location of our propane tank, but solving that — or any other — problem is not a "time out" from our real work. It's an opportunity to model for one another and anyone who might be watching that following Christ WORKS for the good of all.

# **Discerning God's Will Together**

Officer Training Event

FPC Durango

Saturday, January 19, 2013

Rev. Brian Caselles

### **Where else do you serve?**

- If you lead in the church, you probably lead somewhere else too
  - Tell us about other decision-making groups you serve/have served on
- 

### **Does it sound like this?**

“Decisions shall be reached in councils by vote, following opportunity for discussion and discernment, and a majority shall govern.”

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### **We wrote that**

From the  
New and Improved  
Book of Order  
F-3.0205

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### **The “F” in F-3.0205 stands for “Foundations”**

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### **Are our boards any different?**

“Decisions shall be reached in councils by vote, following opportunity for discussion and discernment, and a majority shall govern.”

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### The sentence right before

“Presbyters are not simply to reflect the will of the people, but rather to seek together to find and represent **the will of Christ.**”  
(F-3.0204)

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### In other words...

- We don't just make decisions, we seek God's will
- Not just the “right” thing, but God's thing
- We are operating under the assumption that God isn't hiding from us

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### How do we do that?

- How do you **personally** seek to obey God's will?

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### How do we do that?

- God's Still Small Voice in
    - Scripture
    - Prayer
    - Through other individuals
    - The common denominator:
  - Listening
-

### Do we take time to listen?

- Not if We already know everything
  - Come to meetings with our agendas
  - Agendas of our “constituencies”
  - Places we’d rather be
- 

### Do we take time to listen?

- We bookend our meetings with prayer and “hope it sticks”
  - But we don’t often make room for God to speak
- 

### How do we make room for God to speak?

- Remember, God wants to be found
  - What has worked for me...***
- 

### How do we make room?

- Praise of a Consent Agenda
  - An extra 30 minutes
  - Puts “Administration” in its place
- 

### How do we make room?

- Read the Bible together
  - What does Scripture say?
  - What is it saying about the work of the Church?
- 

### **How do we make room?**

- Triplets

[triplets are small groups of three assigned to meet over a designated period of time to discern God's will for a particular issue in your church. Information is gathered from the separate groups and compiled to see what common threads they have]

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### **How do we make room?**

- What have you experienced?

[Brian ended by encouraging us to share experiences of discerning God's will]

# **Conflict & Conflict Resolution**

**How to Deal with the Tougher  
Realities of the Church**

**Rev. Beau Smith**



## **What is conflict?**

- Conflict= the struggle between two or more opposing forces.



## **Is Conflict Good or Bad?**

- It's good and it's bad....
  - Conflict has the potential to break apart community.
  - Conflict has the potential to grow a community



## Conflict & The Bible



- We begin with conflict (Gen 4)
- Conflict between people and God
  - Abraham in Gen 18, Jacob in Gen 32, David (and Jesus) Psalm 22
- Jesus equips for conflict (Mat 18:15-20)
- Conflict resolved in early Church (Acts 15:28)
- Conflict as part of early Church (Paul's Letters)

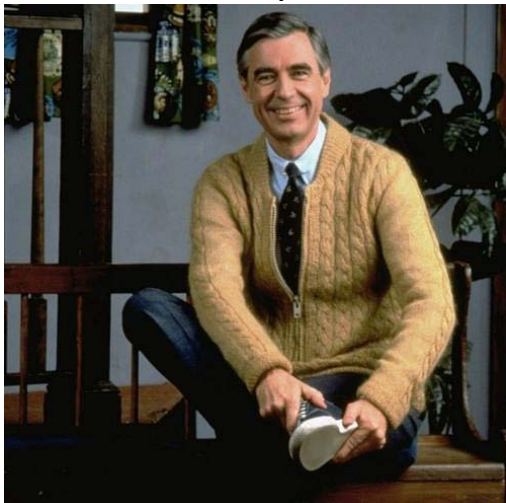
## Conflict & Christian Leadership

- It's about the "how."
  - Christian leadership is distinctive.
  - NOT "get'r'dun," but **how** we do it.
- You (deacons and elders) create your church culture.
  - "Organizations tend to be shadows of their leaders." John R. Childress
  - "A fish rots from the head first."



## **Conflict & Christian Leadership the keys to reaching resolution**

- Cultivating a Non-anxious presence
  - Prayer
  - Self-aware
  - Communication
  - Transparency, vulnerability, and boundaries
  - Triangles and de-triangulating
  - Personality versus Procedure



2<sup>nd</sup> place non-anxious presence (1<sup>st</sup> place—Jesus)

### **Prayer**

#### Serenity Prayer

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference.

Living one day at a time; Enjoying one moment at a time; Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace; Taking, as He did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it; Trusting that He will make all things right if I surrender to His Will; That I may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with Him Forever in the next. Amen.

--*Reinhold Niebuhr*

## Self-Aware

- Be present
- Be sensitive
- Respond don't React
- Know your own preferences and tendencies
- Learn others preferences and tendencies
  - How many issues/conflicts in your church are about the stalwart foundations of Christianity? How many are about preferences?

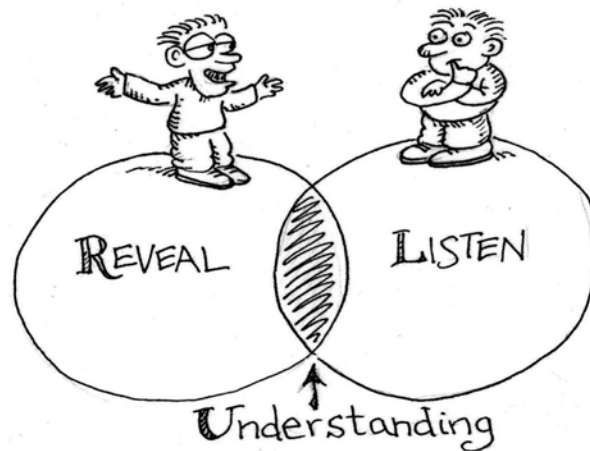
**Know where you end and the other begins.**

## Communication

“The colossal misunderstanding of our time is the assumption that insight will work with people who are unmotivated to change. Communication [depends] on the emotional context in which the message is being heard. People can only hear you when they are moving toward you, and they are not likely to when your words are pursuing them. Even the choicest words lose their power when they are used to overpower. **Attitudes are the real figures of speech.**” — Edwin H. Friedman



## Communication



## Transparency, Vulnerability, and Boundaries

- Transparency
  - Money, Objectives, Motives
- Vulnerability
  - Unknowns, Mistakes, Weaknesses
- Boundaries
  - Personal, Confidential, Maintain Integrity
- Your integrity *is* your witness. Especially to younger generations (The Mac Generation)!
  - Beau pointed out the success of Macintosh and the “young” dollars dominating the technology market. Why Macintosh? Because it looks incredible! **BUT**, also because it works incredible. Macintosh carries with it credibility, authenticity, and INTEGRITY.

## Triangles: the shape the eats churches alive

One person/group will not communicate with another person/group, but will communicate to a third party.

- De-triangulate
  - Direct people to the right person
  - Accompany people to the right person

- Discern the level of import

### **Personality vs. Procedure**

“You can change-up space, but you can’t change personality!”

Rev. George Moore

- 1Peter 4:8-11

Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ.

### **Remember**

*You Create the Culture!*

# **Closing Worship**

**Rev. Steve Nofel**

## WE GATHER TO WORSHIP

Call to Worship (Responsive) see Psalm 34

Leader: At all times I will bless the Lord, whose praise shall ever be in my mouth.

**People: I will glory in the Lord; let the humble hear and rejoice.**

Leader: Proclaim with me the greatness of the Lord; let us exalt the name of the Lord together.

**People: Taste and see that the Lord is good; happy are they who trust in the Lord!**

Leader: The righteous cry and the Lord hears them and delivers them from all their troubles.

**People: Graciously hear us, Lord, for you alone we seek.**

Leader: Quiet us with the peace which passes understanding,

**People: And make us radiant with the knowledge of your goodness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Call to Confession

Leader: Let us confess our sins together. And we will receive not only pardon, but also the spirit of perseverance; not only grace but also gratitude; and not only forgiveness but also fortitude.

Silent Personal Confession

Assurance of Pardon Col. 3:12-14

Leader: As God's own, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, and patience, forgiving each other as the Lord has forgiven you, and crown all these things with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. Friends, believe the Good News of the Gospel.

**People: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.**

Passing of Peace

Leader: May the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

Leader: Let us offer each other a sign of Christ's peace.

## GOD'S WORD PROCLAIMED

Old Testament Reading Esther 2:5-7; 4:12-14

New Testament Reading Acts 8:26-39

Gospel Reading Luke 2:51-52

Reflection "A Hand to Guide Me" – sknofel3@yahoo.com

## WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

Prayers of the People and The Lord's Prayer

## WE GO OUT TO WORSHIP THROUGH MINISTRY

Charge and Benediction