



## LEADERSHIP

- Pandemic emergence...
- At the end of the long road...for many we have arrived at the end of the pandemic.
- Churches are lifting all previous Covid restrictions.

***To what extent do you see us at the end of the Covid experience?***

***How do we know when "it's" over?***

***Does leadership and membership accord over these issues? What happens when they do not?***

### **COMMENTS:**

- We haven't seen a Covid-19 patients at our hospice unit recently.
- And yet, maternity wards are filling up with expecting mothers with Covid-19.
- This Sunday is our first time back in sanctuary. Congregation masked. Seeking advice: Do you have choir masked? Do you store away Bibles and Hymnals?
- We have limited our choir to three people well spaced still...and about 20+ feet from anyone (no mask). We are not planning to offer hymnals until maybe July, if all goes well. Congregation is on honour system about masks, but I still interact with people using a mask (my mask says "Fully Vaccinated") just so that people know it's still ok to wear a mask to make others feel comfortable.
- We have to be careful, but not scared. "People are looking for radical change to go back to the way things were."
- We are completely back and gradually the masks have come off, and the doors have been closed to keep the cool air in.
- Looking forward to a more interactive life.
- Broward County is still at 60% vaccination and struggling to get more. Some zip codes are at 30%.

- Even vaccinated, I function as if I'm at the learners permit level. I know I'm not ready for life without Covid guidelines.
- I am concerned that we are letting the guard down too soon.
- Very few are wearing masks in Key West. Our church is completely open and I worry about the little ones (children). Too soon is too soon.
- Pandemic is now turning into Endemic (always present in a certain population or region) – it's not leaving us. The church has to adapt.
- It's a weird time that we are in. Some are 100% living within guidelines, while others have completely disregarded the guidelines.

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- The pandemic called for risk management.
- In risk management leadership seeks to minimize risk and keep people safe. (All our safety precautions can be seen through this lens.)
- This made for great experimentation in the church, unlike has been seen in decades. (Change, shift, reformation...)
- "Danger, danger Will Robinson!" *What's the danger?*

What's the danger?

- That the great experimentation will stop.
- That we have become risk managers and miss the moment this presents for the gospel!

**Do you see this as a moment of great opportunity?**

## **RISK TAKING**

**For the sake of the gospel, this moment of opportunity will call for risk taking over risk management!!**

*"The rupture of our former model of doing church has opened doors for risk taking that wise leaders will recognize. Rather than revert back to 'normal,' thoughtful leaders will recognize that this is our chance to reverse the ominous trends of the last 20 years."*

*- Bill Wilson, June 1, 2021, [\[LINK\]](#)*

- It is about recognizing the "seasonal" shift –when is the moment to shift from risk management to risk taking for the sake of the gospel?
- Because risk management is where we have been it will be easier to stay in that "space" over taking bold leaps.
- *This is NOT flipping a switch! It is flipping our leadership mindset and motivation.*

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## **RISK TAKING LEADERSHIP**

### **FIVE CHARACTERISTICS**

1. **“We acknowledge that we are in the middle of a crisis that is larger than we have realized. For many of us, a sense of urgency that has been lacking needs to be fed and funneled into some hard conversations.”**

***How do you connect this pandemic with the previous couple decades in the life of the church?***

***What is your sense of urgency in your church?***

***Do you have what it takes to have the hard conversations?***

**COMMENTS:**

- Phyliss Tickle’s: The Great Emergence | Friction becomes violent and dangerous. We are beginning to see the strain in relationships.
- I confess that I have a hard time because I want to make everyone happy in the church.
- We are not truly speaking of God’s truths. I need to be braver as God’s messenger of Love. I will try not to be fearful anymore.
- We have presided over the decline in the church. We have not been faithful in proclaiming the Gospel.
- Blaming Covid is the big lie of the church. The pandemic did not make your church die or thrive.
- Only 60% will return to in-person worship.
- I have been pondering this for a long time. The pandemic exasperated it.
- Quit doing church, and start being church. This is the great reboot.
- Service provision model, for the purpose of creating credibility.

2. **“We spend more time reconnecting with our reason for being and reconnecting with those priorities. We go back to Acts and devour those stories and lessons.”**

***How do you connect with your own “reason for being?”***

***How do you do with with quiet, personal, theological reflection on your priorities? Are you doing such reflection?***

***Who are you accountable to for being connected to your reason for being?***

**COMMENTS:**

- The church was formed through prayer. Reformation.
- Active theological reflection. Have accountability in the process.
- We need to ask ourselves: “What is God calling me to be?”

3. **“We confess that much of what we do and how we do it is simply preference and not Gospel priority. We humble ourselves and acknowledge we’ve drifted far from the focused church Jesus envisioned.”**

***“Much of what we do is simply preference and not Gospel priority,” do you agree or disagree with this? What can you point to?***

***What is your process for editing what you do?***

***How does/does not the expectations you have for yourself align with those church members have of you? And, does it align with Jesus’ priorities for you?***

**COMMENTS:**

- “What are you calling me to be?”
- At times it is like living two lives. Personally, I am living for Jesus and in the church I am an activity director.
- If I have a potluck I would get 100 people and if I had a prayer meeting I would get five.
- If the Gospel is really practiced than you’ll have social justice.
- Church people want to be radical without the work of ministry.
- I feel the Book of Order shuts down my spiritual life. Am I building the Kingdom of God or maintaining a church?
  - I challenge you to read the Foundations section of the Book of Order regularly to see the richness of the theology.
- Look at the needs versa the wants when sorting out the priorities.
- Matthew 4 – Jesus’ priorities were preach, teach and heal. If I’m not doing at least one of these, then I’m not doing what I need to do.

4. **“We put aside personal comfort and preference and embrace the idea of being part of a gospel movement rather than a member of a church club.”**

***How do you tell the difference between a gospel movement and a church club?***

***How has our education and system prioritized being a church club over being a gospel movement?***

***What might be done about that?***

**COMMENTS:**

- Movements have a clear vision and mission.
- In a club the tools become the ministry rather than something that serves the ministry.
- Grassroot movements do not have membership. They gather with a common call.
- Membership has been cheapened by being a member of the building (tribe, locality) and not of the movement.
- All ministry is transitional.
- A person’s call begins with the corporate recognition of the Body.

- Ministers tend to maintain just enough to get along.
- How would it be if we functioned as if the church only had one year of existence left?
- It's not just at the pulpit, it's also in the nartex, at Session, on phone calls, in the office...
- All churches die. The rate at which it dies depends on the extent to which the church fulfills its mission.
- We need to pick up our crosses daily. The Gospel must be intentionally picked up and carried into the world.
- Love for the lost.

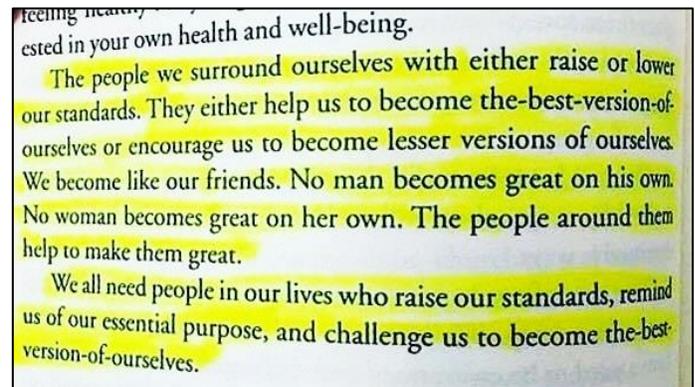
**5. "We personally pledge to engage in and participate in some form of risk taking that makes us uncomfortable, so that our church may not only survive but also thrive. We commit to criticize less and pitch in more."**

***What is one risk-taking behavior you can name as you consider your ministry? (Yours, not the church's!)***

***How has our thirst for comfort prevented us from being the leaders we are called to be? ...from being the disciples we are called to be?***

**COMMENTS:**

- I have begun a radical self care.
- I have been trying to focus on the 80% in my church – the ones with quieter, less disruptive voices.
- Criticizing less may be more about our heart, than our outward activity.
- In the Gospel of John – you get the God you practice.
- Having the courage to say the necessary things that people do not want to hear. We generally have a thirst for comfort.
- Stay in tough conversations.
- Gratitude first in our conversations.



**ALONG THE WAY...**

1. Breathe deep.
2. Walk and engage in theological reflection.
3. Look at the label.
4. Ask: Where do I see God in all this?

**Let's all keep talking –  
Every Tuesday  
Conversations at 10am and 3pm**  
[www.vibrantpresbytery.org](http://www.vibrantpresbytery.org)