



BILLIONAIRE PRIORITIES

- Richard Branson and Jeff Bezos – rushing into space
 - 7/11 “Billionaire Richard Branson reaches space in his own ship.”
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- *What do you think about this?*
 - *How is this a priority for the wealthiest?*
 - *What do you think of those who ask why they are not seeking to solve poverty or hunger as a priority?*

COMMENTS:

- I don’t want to judge them... How much is envy or judgement?
- Some encourage others to make a difference. (ie, the Gates.)
- I love it because they are seeking to answer questions about the impossible.
- It’s hard to reconcile Bezos’ treatment of his employees and his pursuit of this project.
- Entrepreneurs look toward the money before the people.

CONGREGATIONAL PRIORITIES

- A congregation that has clarity of identity knows well and is able to articulate its priorities.
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- *How clearly defined are your congregation’s priorities?*
 - *Are others than the pastor able to articulate the priorities?*
 - *What connection do those priorities make with neighbors?*

COMMENTS:

- When we talked about changing the church name, people got really concerned -- holding on to the identity was a priority.
- We are identified as a “loving congregation.” Getting beyond that simple statement is difficult.
- To have clarity of identity you need a robust vision.
- One off priority action can water down your vision and focus.
- It’s hard to shift the legacy priorities. “The organ and music is god here!”
- The symptoms can be mis-identified as the problem.

COVID - RHEOSTAT

- Rheostat – “an electrical instrument used to control a current by varying resistance.”
 - “Covid precautions are not an on and off switch, but more like a rheostat.” -D
- The Delta variant is now prominent in every state.
- The rate of infection is growing again in our region.
- People fully vaccinated are testing positive.

LISA ALLGOOD INFORMATION FROM MONDAY, JULY 12

- The Delta variant is in all 50 states and currently makes up more than 50% of new cases in the US and 80% of new cases in the Midwest
- The Delta variant is 60% more infectious than the original variant Alpha, and about twice as infectious (200%) as the original virus. That means it has and will continue to spread very rapidly, particularly in unvaccinated people.
- Those who have both doses of an mRNA vaccine are more than 80% covered against Delta. Those who only have one shot are about 30% covered. The J&J shot is also effective at about 65% coverage.
- The Delta variant has shown that it can evade certain elements of the vaccine.
- New COVID cases in the US are above 20,000 per week for the past several weeks. Hospitalizations and deaths are also increasing in 42 states.
- 99% of deaths are in unvaccinated people.
- The Delta variant has infected some vaccinated individuals. Generally symptoms are mild but they can still be infectious.
- Globally, although this varies greatly by country and region, 25% have received one dose and 12% have received two doses.
- Spikes are beginning globally, again primarily in unvaccinated individuals.

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- ***How are you experiencing this time?***
 - ***What rheostat like experience are you having with this?***

COMMENTS:

- I have experienced a “brain fog” while having COVID.
- As an employer, when can I require vaccinations of employees?
 - You can at anytime, with care and standards set by the organization. As with all things, personnel policies need to provide provisions for exceptions and appeals.
- Regarding rheostat, once the standards were lax, it is almost impossible to restrict again.

REAL TENSIONS CHURCH LEADER FEEL

Cary Nieuwhof | “5 Very Real Tensions Every Small to Mid-Sized Church Leader Feels”

[\[LINK\]](#)

1. THE DESIRE TO KEEP THE CHURCH ONE BIG FAMILY.

- “This pressure is huge. ...The reality is even when our church was 40, those 40 people didn’t know each other—really.”
- “The goal is not to create a church where everyone knows everyone. Create a church where everyone is known.”

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- ***What have you done or are you doing to create a church where everyone is known?***
 - ***How might talking about the church as one big family not well serve the church?***

COMMENTS:

- We may find ourselves in a mindset of family order as in our actual family.
- Being relatively new to the church the family concept puts me in an “in-law” position. At times this makes me feel like the “family” doesn’t need me.
- This past Sunday we had visitors who were being left out during fellowship because everyone was talking to their “friends.”
- As siblings in Christ we are equally received and accepted. Even when people leave, they are still considered family.
- Koinania – community that is vibrant.
- During the pandemic the deacons and elders have their group that they maintained community with, by reaching out to them regularly.

2. THE PEOPLE WHO HOLD POSITIONS DON'T ALWAYS HOLD THE POWER.

- “...but often there are people—and even families—whose opinion carries tremendous weight.”
- “This misuse of power is unhealthy and needs to be stopped.”
- “When the people who are gifted to lead get to lead, the church becomes healthy. When we got healthy, we grew.”

- ***How have you experienced this dynamic, what did you do or not do with it? Why did you choose action or inaction?***

COMMENTS:

- We have changed the places people are serving.
- Legacy families often hold power that has nothing to do with being in official position.
- We have tried to move to selecting people who are gifted and graced for the positions they are being asked to serve.
- My last church had a mis-abuse of power. I felt useless and disillusioned. Since arriving in Florida I have been healing and finding hope. My current church is more interested in people, than power.

3. THE PASTOR CARRIES EXPECTATIONS NO HUMAN CAN FULFIL.

- “Many small church pastors are actually more burnt out than large church pastors.”
- “The key here for those who want to grow past this is to set clear expectations of what you will spend your time on.”

- ***What tactics have you employed to put boundaries around your capacity, time, and expectations?***
- ***What do you do when others disagree with your choices?***

COMMENTS:

- You need to be able to delegate and empower the other leaders in the church.
- Communicating our boundaries and being clear on them.
- Go into the position with a clear understanding of what you can do.
- Churches need to be honest when presenting the MIF – ambiguity and misinformation automatically sets up incoming pastors for failure.
- Having real conversation to watch out for over-functioning and under-functioning expectations.

4. TRADITION HAS MORE PULL THAN VISION.

- “The past has a nostalgia to it that the future never does.”

- “The challenge for the leader is to cast a vision that is clear enough and compelling enough to pull people from the familiar past into a brighter future.”

- *What do you do with members or leaders that want to live in the past when it comes to nostalgia and your church?*
- *How does “Clarity of Identity” help you pull people into a bright future?*

COMMENTS:

- A compelling vision moves people toward the future.

5. THE NATURAL DESIRE TO DO MORE NOT LESS.

- “Often the key to reaching more people is doing less.”
- “By doing a few things well and creating steps, not programs, you will help more people grow faster than almost any other way.”
- “Complexity is the enemy of progress.”

- *What does progress look like for you? How is it/is it not connected to growth?*
- *If you were to name a singular focus or target for your church, what would it be?*

COMMENTS:

- There is plenty going on in simplicity.
- How do you build to the vision that is cast rather than programs that seem to add more opportunity?
- A sense of worth does not come from a full calendar.
- Don’t compete.

ALONG THE WAY...

1. Breathe deep.
2. Dance like no one is watching.
3. Watch the snacks.
4. Ask: Where do I see God in all this?

Let’s all keep talking –
Every Tuesday at 10am and 3pm
www.vibrantpresbytery.org

