

Pentecost - Leadership for Change in Extra Ordinary Time! - Part I

Now that the season of Pentecost is over we enter into a season that is referred to as “The Season after Pentecost” according to the Book of Common Prayer. [pg. 158] In other Christian churches they are often referred to as Ordinary Time – following the Ordinal in counting time. [<http://www.crivoice.org/cyordinary.html>] Beginning with the Sunday following Pentecost, which is called Trinity Sunday, the rest are used to consider various aspects of the Christian Faith until the Sunday before Advent when the Proper is for the Feast of Christ the King.

Having cycled through the better part of the Liturgical Year in this series, I would like to suggest that the rest of these days, until we begin again with Advent, be considered extra-ordinary time. We have been shown the overwhelming theme of God’s power and presence with us as articulated in verse, *“The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress”*. [Psalm 46:7 (NIV)] The essence of these wonderful stories might be summarized in this passage, *“You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world”*. [1 John 4:4 (NIV)]

Most people, I believe, recognize that life is a gift. Without choice in parentage, location or any other accoutrements thereto we are alive. In this country we also believe that every person has certain rights, “We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Life,_liberty_and_the_pursuit_of_happiness] [*The United States Declaration of Independence, which was primarily drafted by Jefferson, was adopted by the Second Continental Congress on July 4, 1776.*] In these words there is something else that should be self-evident, that the fulfillment of independence must also include interdependence. Without the support of a higher power and the involvement of others in our polity there is no possibility of independence! The greatest attitudes that can kill these apparent truths are superiority and selfishness. To all who have received well this further wisdom might be valuable to remember, *“From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked”*. [Luke 12:48 (NIV)]

Leadership:

This is one word that can help us all to play a part that will bring the Season After Pentecost to fruition in our time – Leadership! It must include everyone because I believe that everyone can be a leader in one way or another according to his or her abilities. Simply put, John Maxwell says, *“All Leadership is influence.”* [John C. Maxwell, Injoy, Inc.] Leaders need to practice what they preach as St. Francis of Assisi said, *“It is no use walking anywhere to preach unless our walking is our preaching.”* This point is also made clear by another famous person, Andrew Carnegie, *“The older I get the less I listen to what people say and the more I look at what they do”*. A well-known business leader, Harold Geenen, explained how one becomes a leader when he said, *“Leadership cannot really be taught. It can only be learned”*. [Harold Geenen, was an American businessman most famous for serving as president of the ITT Corporation] All the teachers in the world will never teach anything unless those they teach are willing and open to learning!

I. The beginning of Leadership:

1 Corinthians 13:11-13 *“When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became an adult, I put childish ways behind me. Now we see but a poor reflection as*

in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love."

When thinking about Leadership we need to sense that we are moving forward to a better and more effective way to interact with each other in all areas of our lives together. In a very real way it may be seen as moving from a youthful state to a more mature state of interpersonal relationship.

There must be times when we take time to read and study. I am also grateful to my coaches from whom I have gained so much over the years. I wish that I had been told about coaching earlier, but it is never too late to add positive value to your life in body, mind or spirit.

For most of my life I have been what many people think of as the "boss" because I have been a Rector for the greater part of my almost fifty years as an Episcopal Priest. Since 1977 I have been in a business partnership with my cousin and life-partner, Dwight Tintle, wherein we have been in charge together as "boss". Fortunately early in life I was made aware of the value of TEAM – **T**ogether **E**veryone **A**ccomplishes **M**ore. Gradually I learned that ONE was never a big enough number to accomplish much of anything; as the saying goes, "two heads are better than one". Then I was introduced to the concept of addition and, more importantly, to the concept of multiplication – a mathematical wonder. Addition works but it is a rather slow way of making progress. Multiplication, like compound interest, can bring satisfying results much more quickly in the development of any business or organization. Building with Teams will multiply the diversity of possibilities and ideas that come forth from many people working together.

So why am I writing this to members of churches? What has TEAM or leadership and the concept of multiplication have to do with church? Actually more than you can realize if you think about it. I am sure that you have heard that we are to be "witnesses" and go "forth" and to be "evangelists". These very words today however seems to turn more people off than on. They produce feelings of proselytizing and boasting about our church as the primary way at worst or a better way at best for obtaining a good life. I invite you to rethink and focus on words and methods we use that may affect the whole of your life and the life we share in community – the church or any other organization or business.

Growth and development is very important for every aspect of life. To attempt to maintain the status quo for very long is nothing less than stagnation. One is either losing ground or moving forward. Losing is the easier way because it simply takes little or no effort. Growth and expansion requires the continuing effort of courage, planning, persistence, and hard work. Death is inevitable when one stops living!

2. The Source of Life and Leadership:

Not only is "one" never a big enough number, but there is little joy in "one" as it suggests being alone and unconnected. The fact that we are alive is an example of relationship since we did not come to life on our own. Our family history is an important recognition of our human heritage. As we mature we realize that this encompasses an even greater awareness of universal origin and interconnection with an almost overwhelming mystery of life itself. Coming from a Christian background, I am acquainted with this rich heritage from Scripture. Our early ancestors wrote poetically about such resources and I offer this very well known one here (Psalm 23 -TEV):

*The Lord is my shepherd: I have everything I need.
God lets me rest in fields of green grass, and leads me to quiet pools of fresh water.
God gives me new strength. God guides me in the right paths, as was promised.
Even if I go through the deepest darkness, I will not be afraid, God, for you are with me.
Your shepherd's rod and staff protect me.
You prepare a banquet for me, where all my enemies can see me;
you welcome me as an honored guest and fill my cup to the brim.
I know that your goodness and love will be with me all my life;
and your house will be my home as long as I live.*

To have life in all its fullness we need to celebrate and remain connected to this Resource that was, and is, and is to come. To not utilize such awareness and connectedness is to neglect our heritage and diminish the gift that is ours. For most people this primary source of all that is and will be is called God, and as the Psalm suggests, many have found God to be overwhelmingly loving and caring. As the opening passage from Corinthian's suggests, moving toward maturity we become more aware of ourselves, and our world, increasing in faith, hope, and love. This process eventually brings us face to face with God and in that relationship we come to love even as we are loved. It is in relationship to God and one another that make leadership possible.

3. The essence of leadership:

The best environment for a business or any organization to survive and succeed is leadership. Most of us are happy to be in a democratic country because we are leery of a dictatorship. We do not like to be "bossed" nor told what to do and how to do anything. This is why I speak about leadership and why it produces health and well being for people and organizations. As you know, I find Acronyms to be most helpful and clarifying so here is another one I have to share with you for LEADERSHIP:

(there are five major points with five additional characteristics that define leadership)

- **L**earning **E**nthusiastically
- **A**ppreciating **D**iversity
- **E**ncouraging **R**elationships
- **S**haring **H**ospitality
- **I**nspiring **P**eople.

Let's take a look:

LEARNING – according to the Oxford American Dictionary is *"the acquisition of knowledge or skills through experience, practice, or study, or by being taught"*. The operative word here is acquisition. Everyone's life involves varying degrees of everything mentioned in the definition of learning; however, the acquisition of knowledge or skills is not an automatic happening. It requires a conscientious effort and attentiveness to those circumstances in order to obtain their full value. Leadership is impossible without such openness and involvement consistently throughout the whole of one's life.

ENTHUSIASTICALLY – clearly follows if one is to benefit from learning. Enthusiasm is an essential quality if one is to be considered a leader. Can you imagine going to a sports event and have Cheerleaders who were not filled with enthusiasm? Their leadership would be a comedy and

produce the opposite effect. Whenever we do anything enthusiasm is an important ingredient but without enthusiasm it is almost impossible to get others to join us.

APPRECIATING – is a quality that will enhance everything in our lives. It is a spirit that enables us to have joy and understanding in moving forward and growing. It is generally easy for anyone to appreciate things and circumstances that they naturally like, but it is not so easy to appreciate anything that we find strange or different. This is why a leader will need to make sure that they are open to appreciation when people or occasions do not trigger our natural tendency toward appreciation. Catering primarily to our preferences will only prevent us from new experiences and eliminate contact with valuable people.

DIVERSITY – is always present in and around our lives. It is often said that variety is the spice of life and more people are beginning to realize that diversity and variety is what makes our nation work. Diversity is essential to our lives, especially as we live and work together. The problem with diversity is that we often do not like what we find to be different. We become afraid or jealous and even find it hard to accept those who are different. To embrace leadership we must also embrace diversity – we have little or no choice if we are to be successful.

ENCOURAGING – gives hope and confidence and enables us to have more courage. There are few if any people who enjoy discouragement. We need encouragement and so does everyone else. It is like the oil or grease in human relationships and enables individuals and teams to become leaders. A thank you and a kind word must become an active part of our communication with others. It doesn't hurt to treat you more kindly either.

RELATIONSHIPS – the connection between two or more people or groups and their involvement with each other, especially regarding how they behave and feel toward each other and communicate and cooperate. How a leader regards and behaves with others is certainly important because leadership assumes an involvement with others. Without doubt a leader must be able to espouse cooperation and be apt to listen and speak with sincerity in order to establish and maintain communications.

SHARING – is the ability to have or use something in common with other people. It may involve taking equal responsibility for something along with other people. When we think of children playing with each other you might realize how hard it is for people to share. Children claim their toys as their own. When another child tries to possess it you may hear “no, that's mine”. Unfortunately there are too many adults who maintain the deficiency to “let go” and share.

HOSPITALITY – a friendly welcome and kind or generous treatment offered to guests or strangers. The characteristic of hospitality seems, from my perspective, to be quite absent from our social interaction today. More often than not we tend to fear the stranger and become rather uncomfortable in greeting and accepting new people, especially when their differences from us are rather apparent. If a leader is to bring people together and has difficulty with hospitality one might see how such difficulty can negate any positive or effective leadership.

INSPIRING – Making someone feel more enthusiastic, confident, or stimulated is clearly a basic requirement for anyone who is to be in leadership. Very simply put, you cannot give away what you do not possess. If you are not enthusiastic, confident and stimulated in yourself it will be impossible to expect to extend those feelings and attitudes to others.

PEOPLE – as the song says, “people who need people are the luckiest people in the world”. A leader must have a true need and place for others in their work and lives or their leadership would be impossible.

“No man is an island, entire of itself... any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind. And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee..” This is a quotation from John Donne (1572-1631). It appears in *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions, Meditation XVII*. It basically says that Human beings do not thrive when isolated from others. Donne was a Christian but this concept is shared by other religions.

In closing let me encourage you to be a leader in this new 21st Century and to realize what a difference you can make in bringing positive change and advance to our world. The qualities of leadership as I have described them are comprehensive and essential for growth and development for you and for everyone around you.

As we grow in understanding our Universe, our World, our place on this earth and who we really are as gifted people we have the opportunity to practice LEADERSHIP: Learning Enthusiastically Appreciating Diversity and Encouraging Relationships while Sharing Hospitality and Inspiring People. We need not be coerced nor controlled by others and it is surely not becoming when we try to coerce and control others. When we come together as leaders to interact with one another using leadership principles we always prevail and succeed.