

## **Luke 9:1-6, Luke 10:1-12 “From Riders to Ryders” Heritage Sunday 6.10.18**

Sources: Stein, Luke; Wilcox, Luke; Norwood, Story of American Methodism;

Today we'll look at Scripture, why we have an appointment system, some basic principles, how it works now, some blessings and challenges. I'll share reasons why Pastors initiate a move, share some trends, and we'll finish with a time for Questions and Answers. I know it's a lot. Let's get started.

There are two ways that churches receive pastoral leadership.

- 1) Churches “call”, ordain and hire their pastors.
- 2) Churches have pastors “sent” and appointment system.

We have a “sent” or “appointment” system. This has always been part of our heritage.

We've gone from circuit riding preachers on horses to renting Ryder moving trucks!

### **Scripture**

- a) Luke 9:1-6 is Jesus sending out the 12 to preach and to heal
- b) **Luke 10:1-12** Jesus sends out 70 (72) 2x2 with general and specific instructions.
- c) He SENT them on a ministry of preaching, healing and deliverance.

**10:2 - The harvest is plentiful.** This isn't the final harvest, and not the end times. It's the **present** harvest (prospects) of seekers and believers who were ready to begin a new relationship with God through Jesus of Nazareth.

**10:2, 3 - I send you** – Gr. verb here is *apostello* from which we get the word apostle. The 12 disciples were apostles and the 72 were “sent ones”, too. All were involved in the same ministry.

**10:4 – purse, bag, sandals, bread, money**– Some scholars say this means they could wear sandals but not carry an extra pair, and others say they were not even to wear the sandals they owned. **Salute no one on the road. POINT:** “Don't draw attention to yourself. Don't make yourself a target. Give appearance of poverty.”

**10:5, 6 – son of peace** – a believer. Peace is fruit of receiving God's salvation. Bring the Good News: “The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.” “It's come near to you.”

- Go with the intent to do good. Bring a good greeting. Assume the best.

**10:7,8 -** Accept their hospitality, just don't let your belly and appetite get the best of you.

**10:8 – eat what is set before you.** Now I know where my parents got that from!

**10:9 – heal the sick in it and leave a word of hope and blessing.**

**10:10, 11– when they do not receive you.** Jesus gave them permission to leave when they weren't accepted but leave a word of blessing/hope. When you and I try to share the Good News and talk with folks about Jesus, whether we are received or not, it doesn't change the fact that God has come to us in the person of Jesus. It doesn't change the fact that the Kingdom of God has come near and is near to all. Some people will have a greater reluctance than others. Jesus knew this.

### **Why We Have an Appointment System: It's Our Biblical Heritage and It's Practical!**

From 1759-1784 – 25 years – Methodists in our American colonies had no ordained Methodist clergy, only traveling lay preachers who could teach and preach. So, Methodists agreed to receive Baptism and Holy Communion at the local Anglican parish church. The Anglican Church (Church of England) always insisted on ordination as a prerequisite for the administration of (those presiding over) the

Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion. Our “founding father” John Wesley was an ordained minister in the Anglican Church, too, and served in England.

When we won our Independence from England, Wesley recognized that changes were necessary in American Methodism. Sheer numbers alone meant that Methodists could no longer go to their local Anglican parishes to receive Baptism, Holy Communion and to worship. How would Methodists and others who were now divorced from the Anglican Church and in a new nation receive the sacraments if there were no ordained clergy?

Wesley requested the Bishop of London to ordain men and send them for full ministry in America. The Bishop refused. John Wesley said (essentially), If the Bishop of England doesn’t want to be bishop of the people of America, and if he will not send ordained ministers on behalf of God and the Anglican Church to the people of America, I’ll send them myself.

***Wesley did an unprecedented thing: he acted as a bishop, ordained Francis Asbury, Thomas Coke, Richard Whatcoat, and Thomas Vasey as Deacons and then immediately as Elders. This historical event happened on September 1, 1784, at 4:00 a.m. in secrecy in Bristol, and the men immediately set sail for America.***

Did Wesley have the authority of Scripture behind him? He thought so. He referred to the Letters of Timothy and Titus, where bishop and elder are same word in Greek: *episkopos*. Both mean overseer or superintendent. ***Wesley saw himself as a “scriptural bishop”, a spiritual bishop.***

**With this act:**

- Wesley applied the example of Jesus, the New Testament, and the early church in sending forth servants to meet his evangelical convictions and of The Anglican Church: to win people to Christ, to form people in the faith, and nurture them in the means of grace.
- He fulfilled the practical need for the administration of the two Sacraments,
- AND He signaled the separation of the Methodist movement from the Church of England; it ultimately permitted Methodists in America no longer to be dependent on the Anglican Church.
- THREE MONTHS LATER, in December, 1784, the lay movement of the previous 25 years became organized as The Methodist Episcopal Church.

Wesley never intended...

- A. To create a Division in the Church of England
- B. To begin a new denomination outside of /separate from the Anglican Church.
- C. Fact: He remained an ordained minister/Elder in the Anglican Church his entire life.

BUT

- the spiritual needs of the people,
- the emergence of a new nation and new form of government (remember, this is one year after the end of The American Revolution)
- and the obvious difficulties inherent in giving pastoral oversight to a church divided by the Atlantic Ocean,
- his evangelical convictions & of Anglican Church,
- dictated to Wesley and others their decision.

## **Basic Principles of Itinerant System**

1. Churches have the willingness to receive a Pastor without regard to race, ethnic origin, gender, class, disability, age, or marital status.
2. Churches and Pastors have a common goal: Make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. The local church is crucial to our goal.
3. Preachers agree to give up the right to select their church or parish.
4. Congregations agree to give up their right to select their Pastor.
5. Both agree to allow the final decision on pastoral leadership to be made by an outside authority who is informed, compassionate, and shares this common goal.

## **How Does Our Itinerant System Work?**

Principle: When a change needs to be made, the Pastor goes, and the people stay.

When there is a need for new pastoral leadership, the Pastor and Staff-Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) meet for prayer and conversation. Both meet the District Superintendent (DS), separately and together for transparency. The DS receives information and recommendations of needed pastoral skills from SPRC. The DS advocates for the local church to the group of DS's (Cabinet) and to the Bishop, the Cabinet offers their view, and the Bishop has the last word.

## **(Illustration) COIN:**

Two sides: Sensitivity to the needs and mission of the local church, congregations AND Sensitivity to the gifts, graces, and needs of the Pastor. What style of pastoral leadership does the church need at this time? What style has been fruitful here?

Two sides: The health of the local church including but not limited to overall vitality, lay leadership, financial stability and resources, whether the church is characterized by patterns of spiritual and numerical growth, or plateaued, or is in decline. AND The health and spiritual leadership of clergy, as well as housing, family needs and salary.

**One characteristic is that we look at ministry as shared ministry and balanced ministry.** We strive not to allow our churches to be Pastor-centered, Matriarch-centered, or Patriarch-centered.

- We're not Pastor-centered but we know and value the influence of the Pastor and the Pulpit.
- We don't want a few dominant personalities to control everything, but we value and understand the influence and the necessity of strong local lay leadership.
- Our heritage shows us that the ideal situation is when everyone finds their worth, sees himself and herself as a minister, and when clergy and laity work together and each has specific duties and certain responsibilities.
- Pastors are not set above the laity, and vice versa. Our ministry is a shared ministry.

## **Blessings of Itinerancy**

**A. Every place gets a preacher.** Primary issue is not whether a church is station/circuit, old/new, weak/strong, classic or contemporary setting.

**B. Every preacher gets a pulpit.** Primary issue is not whether the Pastor is young/old, male/female, seminary-trained or course-of -study, first-career or second career.

**C. Every church gets a variety of ministerial talent and skills.**

Churches may say "Send us an "Evangelist", "Debt Payer", "Shepherd", "Administrator", or "Program Builder." Some churches need a Transitional ministry: once a downtown church (once the center of activity) now finds itself in changing neighborhood and changing population, or a rural church suddenly finds itself in a suburban area and goes from being a quiet and peaceful church to bursting at the seams.

#### **D. Every Pastor gets a variety of opportunities and experiences.**

I have received training in Transitional ministry, specifically following a founding Pastor, and being a successful second pastor.

#### **Challenges of Itinerancy**

##### **1. We have to build trust differently than others do.**

Our time together is about this life and eternity. Church is about relationships. You get attached, we get attached. When the bond breaks, some *churches* make the adjustment better than others. Some *members* adjust better than others, same with *Pastors*. So, we have to find ways to reestablish trust. I may build trust differently with you than I did at my previous places, and you with me differently than your previous pastors.

##### **2. A fruitful ministry may be interrupted if a Pastor's gifts are needed elsewhere.**

**3. Moving can be hard emotionally on children and marriages.** Folks in our military and in business know this. Pastors are no different.

**4. May have a negative impact on a spouse's occupation.** It can be difficult for a spouse to progress in his/her career, especially when advancement is tied into remaining in one job or one location. I know colleagues who have limited their advancement so their spouse can rise or have stability in their work, and spouses who have sacrificed their advancement so their spouse can have a ministry opportunity.

#### **Reasons Why Pastors Move (this is taken from our VA Conference Guidelines)**

- Change of status: from local Pastor to Deacon to Elder; disability, retirement, sabbatical, and career change. My second and third appointments occurred to meet minimum salary standards.
- Churches and Pastors sense that one chapter is ending and another is beginning and sometimes it requires different skills.
- A Church is closing, or there is a change of alignment of churches in an area.
- A Pastor or a church isn't being successful and meeting missional needs, and this can be initiated by the Pastor or the SPRC. Sometimes a Pastor wants a new or different challenge, or the church articulates a need for new leadership.
- The Bishop appoints a Pastor to serve as a DS, or a Conference Ministry position.

#### **Parsonage System**

Our Parsonage System serves the Itinerant System, the Church, *then* the clergy. It enables us to move a Pastor into an immediate residence, and for the work of the Church to continue as smoothly as possible whether or not it's an emergency situation. Of the 800+ appointments in the VA Conference, 2/3 have Parsonages, and 1/3 have Housing Allowances.

#### **3 Significant Changes That Have Happened in Last 50 Years**

- Clergy spouses have always had careers but there were more stay-at-home Moms 50 years ago. Thus, churches expected a "2 for 1" deal. This is not as prevalent now because it takes both spouses working and two incomes to make it.
- Churches and Pastors averaged four-year terms unless there were extenuating circumstances. Today there's no average stay of a UM Pastor in VA but it's trending higher than 4 years.
- We have more racially and minority inclusive churches, more cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments. We've made good progress but still have a long way to go.

### **3 Significant Changes That Have Happened in Last 10 Years**

- The SPR and incoming Pastor enjoy a Meet and Greet before the appointment is finalized, arranged by the DS.
- There's many more clergy couples. Bishops may choose to consider these first in the appointment making process for obvious reasons.
- Pastors used to be able to rely on not having a significant salary reduction when moving from one appointment to the next. This is no longer the case. No promises are made.
- Churches have the flexibility to adjust their salary higher or lower at pastoral changes.

### **Q&A**