



New Faith Communities

North Carolina Conference

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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NEW ROOM SOCIETY

Newsletter / November 2020

HUMBLE WORK

by Rev. Greg Moore

“After all, what is Apollos? What is Paul? They are servants who helped you to believe. Each one had a role given to them by the Lord: I planted, Apollos watered, but God made it grow.” — 1

CORINTHIANS 3: 4-6

We church planters are not known for our humility.

We are more likely to be called, “charismatic” or “creative” or, when people are being honest, perhaps some other less noble names.

But there is one moment in every church planter’s life that humbles even the most, “charismatic” among us: leaving.

Handing off what we have helped create for another person to lead is an intensely vulnerable task. Knowing that another person is going to come along and see all of the blemishes, all of the unfinished plans, all of the ways the ministry took flesh in our imperfect image...well...it’s humbling. This sort of thing will even make the “charismatic” Apostle Paul say, “What is Paul?”

Mercifully, vulnerability is not terminal with Jesus. More than that, it one of the ways that Jesus saves us. There is simply no way to share in the ministry of a God whose life entails something like the Ascension without learning to entrust others to finish and perfect our work.

Ultimately, this isn’t just a church planter phenomenon. Everyone eventually entrusts their life’s work to others.

In this newsletter, you will hear from some veteran planters, people who have been pressed into the saving work of sharing something they began with others. Their witness, along with the long witness of the church, is that by God’s grace, other saints come along and offer their work alongside ours as a grand cooperation towards beloved community. What feels vulnerable and humbling at first quickly becomes honoring and hopeful in the eternal company of Jesus and his disciples.

Some plant, some water, and in all of it, God is present promising life.

As I write this, I am preparing to hand off the role of Executive Director of New Faith Communities to The Rev. Tim Catlett as I prepare to take a new appointment within our Conference. To all of you in the New Room Society and the \$10Club, it has been among the deepest honors of my ministry to serve in this role alongside you. I am eternally grateful for all you have taught me, and for the grace you have shown me.

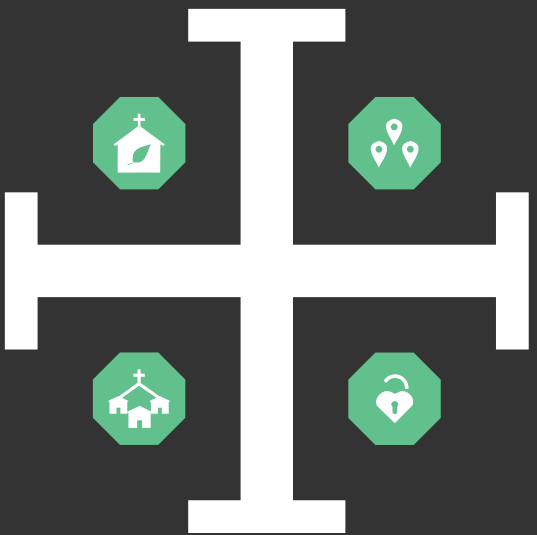
To Tim, and to all those who come after me in this role, I offer you my incomplete, imperfect work, and trust that, by God’s grace, you will perfect it. ✚



PLEASE SUPPORT OUR PLANTERS

with your prayers for communion to be celebrated in new ways in their lives and in their communities.

- | | |
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An order of laity and clergy dedicated to embodying apostolic hospitality for new people to be gathered into communion with Jesus Christ.

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REV. LISA YEBUAH

THINGS WE LEARN & SHARE

Starting a New Faith Community in this corner of Southeast Raleigh where new life is taking shape in an old church building, here are some of my reflections on church planting.

Build a system of accountability to preserve culture + vision. Early on at SERT, I stressed over things like the church's finances or how many committees we should or shouldn't have. Ultimately, the thing that was most important was having a crew who kept me and our church community accountable to our vision - who we believed God was calling us to be. This team helped course correct whenever we began to drift away from our core values and guiding principles.

Be honest about who you are and realize everyone will not be FOR you. Personality-driven spaces will eventually hold a pastor/planter hostage; however, to pretend you don't have particularities as a human being is also not helpful. For example, I tend to embody

a joy-full presence with a prophetic edge. In some communities and to some people, that is a compelling reflection of Jesus. To others, it's not. And that's okay. I've learned not to shape-shift simply to be validated, as well as having spiritual practices to keep me grounded when my inner-critic gets loud.

Know your parish and allow your neighbors to keep you honest. If you don't know the people who live, work, and play in the community to which you've been called, you'll find that your church will resort to turning inward, or as a planter, you'll start to pander only to the people already in the "pews." Your surrounding community is who'll keep you focused and honest. Ask yourselves: Who are the game changers in our community? What are the places and people we should celebrate? How do people engage one another where we are planted? Ultimately, every parish-driven planter should ask themselves, will we be missed if our church expression disappeared? +



REV. JON E. STROTHER

CHURCH PLANTING

It's been twenty years

since I helped in planting a church. Our mission then, was: "to make disciples of Jesus Christ who make disciples of Jesus Christ...." As I reflect on that adventure, one filled with much joy, many challenges, and occasional heartbreak, I offer the following advice; borne as much by missing the mark as by the occasional times of missional alignment, which is only and always the result of grace.

Remember who calls you "Beloved" and calls you to follow: the gifts of solitude, community, and compassionate service - "Once we have made the choice to say, "Yes, I want to follow Jesus," the question is, "What disciplines will help me remain faithful to that choice?" If we want to be disciples of Jesus, we have to live a disciplined life." — Henri Nouwen

Learn to rely on more than your "Queen" - Investing inordinate time and energy on supporting experiences of worship without an equal or greater commitment to forming disciples will support the notion that "Jesus is to be worshipped but not followed."

Work to shape "Missional disciples" not "Consumerist Christians." "I found myself looking at the Risen Christ. But instead of facing me as I thought he would be, he was turned around so that he had his back to me. And do you know what he was looking at? He was looking at the world out beyond him. That's what he seemed most concerned about - not for the renewal of my vineyard.....but for the redemption of the world. If the redemption of the world is what (Christ) is most concerned about, it ought to be what I am most concerned about too." —Stephen A Seamands +

Suggested websites for further reading:

- contemplative-activist.com/tag/henri-nouwen
- mikefrost.net/books/surprise-the-world
- vantagepoint3.org/a-working-parable-for-such-a-time-as-this



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