“That’s Just Rude!”
New Perspectives on Old Practices

Rev. Mary Sue Dreier, Ph.D.
Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Mn.
**Law and Promise in Congregations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LAW</th>
<th>PROMISE/GOSPEL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spiritual (2\textsuperscript{nd}) Use of the Law</strong> – (exposes sin and kills) DEATH</td>
<td><strong>Sinners Justified by Christ</strong> (by grace through faith alone) RESURRECTION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Civil (1\textsuperscript{st}) Use of the Law</strong> – (creates order for life) CREATION</td>
<td><strong>Believers Reborn by Holy Spirit</strong> (Christian freedom and vocation) NEW CREATION</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand throne of God.” Heb. 12:1-2
Rethinking . . .

• So great a cloud of witnesses

*Remembering God’s faithfulness!*
“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand throne of God.” Heb. 12:1-2
Rethinking . . .

• So great a cloud of witnesses
  *Remembering God’s faithfulness!*
• Letting go of the heaviness
  *What old practices don’t work anymore?*
“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.” Heb. 12:1-2
Rethinking . . .

- So great a cloud of witnesses
  
  *Remembering God’s faithfulness!*

- Letting go of the heaviness
  
  *What old practices don’t work anymore?*

- Confessing the sin that clings so closely
  
“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand throne of God.” Heb. 12:1-2
Rethinking . . .

- So great a cloud of witnesses
  *Remembering God’s faithfulness!*

- Letting go of the heaviness
  *What old practices don’t work anymore?*

- Confessing the sin that clings so closely

- Getting in the race
  *Practices set in motion by the gospel?*
“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.” Heb. 12:1-2
Rethinking . . .

- So great a cloud of witnesses
  *Remembering God’s faithfulness!*
- Letting go of the heaviness
  *What old practices don’t work anymore?*
- Confessing the sin that clings so closely
- Getting in the race
  *Practices set in motion by the gospel?*
- Fixing our eyes on Jesus
  *Favorite Bible story or Bible passage?*
Getting in the race . . .

Stewardship:
Everything that follows after you say, “I Believe.”
Getting in the race . . .

Expanding Our Vision:
Globalization – responsible for the whole earth
Communalization – together
Ecologization – human and nonhuman world
Politicization – just & merciful political forms
Futurization – kingdom “now and not yet”

Getting in the race . . .

This I Also Believe:

We are fundamentally relational (Trinitarian).
We were created to give.
Disciples are givers.
People like to give.
People like to give to people.
People want to make a difference with their money.
People give to what they believe in.
Money follows vision.

Others? Yours?
Fix or Transform?

Technical change – Solutions to stewardship problems

Adaptive change – Transforming stewardship culture

- Adaptive change stimulates resistance because it challenges people’s habits, beliefs, and values. It asks them to take a loss, experience uncertainty, and even express disloyalty to people and cultures. Because adaptive change asks people to question and perhaps refine aspects of their identity, it also challenges their sense of competence. Loss, disloyalty, and feeling incompetent. That’s a lot to ask. No wonder people resist.

*Heifetz and Linsky, 2002, Leadership on the Line*
Getting in the race . . .

Forming a Missional Stewardship Culture:

“Pay the Bills” TO “Live the Vision”

“Pay-the-Bills culture depends for success upon a constituency that has been raised in the church and long taught the importance of faithfully supporting the church financially. We also have good reason to believe that many churches cannot afford to assume that such a constituency will come in steady supply into the future. Long-term demographic and church attendance trends suggest that churches will simply not be continually repopulated with life-long churchgoers who are well educated in the faith. If so, it appears that a Pay-the-Bills approach will increasingly produce poor results. Less committed and less well-formed parishioners may need to be brought into their faith and the vision of the church much more solidly before they are willing to share their dollars generously.”

Emerson & Smith, 2008, Passing the Plate
Take My Life, That I May Be

Take my life, that I may be
Consecrated, Lord, to thee;
Take my moments and my days;
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.
Take my hands and let them move
At the impulse of thy love;
Take my feet and let them be
Swift and beautiful for thee.
Take my silver and my gold,
Not a mite would I withhold;
Take my intellect, and use
Ev’ry pow’r as thou shalt choose.
Take my love; my Lord, I pour
At thy feet its treasure store;
Take myself, and I will be
Ever, only, all for thee.