

7 Marks of Vital Congregations (even during Covid-19)

Mark #7: Ecclesial Health

Share in reading aloud the entire scripture texts and quotes below:

Matthew 15:1-9 *“So, for the sake of your tradition, you make void the word of God. You hypocrites! Isaiah prophesied rightly about you when he said: ‘This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines.’”*

Colossians 2:8-19 *“Therefore do not let anyone dis-qualify you, insisting on self-abasement and worship of angels, dwelling on visions, puffed up without cause by a human way of thinking, and not holding fast to the head, from whom the whole body, nourished and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows with a growth that is from God.”*

“Ecclesial health . . . nurtures and supports the health of pastor(s), staff, and all called to lead. It means that all are aware of how decisions are made, and are valued voices in envisioning process and procedures. It means being a church that has clarity in mission, core values, and what it means to be the church which the budget reflects. It works against unhealthy dysfunction, toxic environments, and obsolete and irrelevant buildings. -PCUSA Office of VCI

“In an institutional context, I believe God cares whether the institution’s goals are noble and . . . whether their methods for reaching those goals make sense. God is please, I believe, when I can make connections between my activities and an outcome that makes a positive difference in the world.” Sarah B. Drummond, Holy Clarity.

“Mediocrity may be less demanding, but it is ultimately a spiritual and social disaster. When communities choose a maintenance mode for extended periods, they are facilitating their own deaths.” –Christine Pohl, Living Into Community

Sample Reflection and Discussion questions:

- 1) Revitalizing requires adjusting to new circumstances.
What parts of the scripture and quotes feel familiar or new?" How would you re-name this mark in language for today’s culture and citizens? (Institutional Integrity?)
- 2) During Covid 19 distancing for personal health, how has the congregation maintained its organizational integrity and communal health?
- 3) What are the dangers of “institutionalization?” What are the benefits?

bjc – 12/17/2020