

Keeping the Main Thing the Main Thing!

And the main thing is - -

¶120, 2000 Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church “The mission of the Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ.”

If making disciples is our mission why are we fighting over trivials so much and making sure that everyone and everything is "politically correct" before we can sign off on it.

We have far too many "monitoring" agencies and not near enough "discipling" agencies in The United Methodist Church.

Enough of the “correctness police” already!

During this quadrennium our church’s General Council on Ministries has been involved in a study on restructuring the church. I have read some of their initial work and it is mind boggling.

Our church used to have a General Board of Evangelism - - remember that. Remember Dr. Harry Denman, the great lay evangelist who headed that agency for many years.

Harry knew what the “Main Thing” was! The church knew what the “Main Thing” was - - and then we lost our focus on the “main thing” in the 1960’s we began a long slide downward.

Are you enjoying the slide?

Here is my plan for reorganizing the church for refocusing on the “main thing”

One General Agency - - “Discipleship Ministries”

Do away with all the “power titles” such as General Secretary, Board, Agency, Commission, Chairperson. Use Bible terms such as ministry, mission, evangelize, disciple, missionary, team, member, associate, partner, brother, sister.

The “Discipleship Ministries” would contain umbrella groups that focus on resourcing and enabling all the ministries in local churches "which is the most significant arena through which disciple-making occurs".

The ministry team that would provide oversight and management would be made up of three people from each Annual Conference (1 clergy, 1 laywoman and 1 layman). To be elected by the Annual Conference. I would suggest a maximum term of four years to assure constant turn over. This group would be further subdivided into management teams with oversight of the various functional areas of ministry.

Of course our great mission work of our church would continue. The organization of United Methodist Women does that better than any group I know. Let their national organization and the current Women’s Division of the General Board of Global Ministries have the responsibility of that work around the world.

We have a lot of very dedicated and sincere people doing “busy work” on our behalf in a lot of places around the world. They are very good at what they do and “kill a lot of trees” creating paper-work on our behalf.

The plumb-line criteria for all of that and anything else we do is this - -

Is it producing disciples who love and serve Jesus Christ?

And the main thing is - -

“The mission of the Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ.”

A Jim Lane Commentary
March 13, 2003