NWC Rural Ministry Webinar- Sep 22- *summary reflections from Dr. Marty Giese on expectations*.

Another dynamic to explore when ordering our lives and ministries is the innate tension around the **expectations** of pastors/leaders.

***So what might we recognize important when it comes to expectations, both at a congregational level and a personal level?***

In 1860 Charles Dickens published his classic work ***“Great Expectations”***

The story had nothing to do with pastoral ministry, but the Title might apply. ☺

One of the things I was least prepared for in entering pastoral ministry decades ago was the massive amount of expectations attached to the pastoral role. And over the years that reality has grown, not diminished!

The cumulative weight of expectations can be categorized:

Ex. **Inherited Expectations** –

It is not unusual for congregations to expect that their current pastor will fulfill all of the best functions of all of his or her predecessors **and** bring fresh abilities to the mix.

Within this matrix appears the matter of **Group expectations vs Personal Expectations/capacities.**

Early in my first parish I discovered that it was hoped that I would be a dynamic pulpiteer like the revered Rev. Hosendorf, an effective personal evangelist like Rev. Ellingson, nearly omnipresent in personal visitation like Rev. Sommerfeld, endlessly available and unhurried like Rev. McQuiod, uncompromising in doctrinal integrity like someone else, winsomely personable with all people, tenderhearted and deeply wise – especially in hospital visits and at times of death, able to lead an effective turnaround, active in the community, and deeply grateful for the below minimum wage compensation. (I was 23 years old.)

In addition, my upbringing equipped me with self-expectations. I expected to succeed. I expected to see measurable recognized results in ministry. And I expected to be tireless.

In my second parish (age 40) far-sighted visionary and capable organizational leader were added to the previous list. ☹

“Houston, we have a problem.” ☺

**To all of these expectations of a Shepherd we add the aggregate expectations attached to popular ecclesiastical metaphors – i.e. What we collectively expect a church to be.**

These metaphors tend to have generational adherents.

Ex. **Builders** – a Church should be a sanctuary from the pressures of the world.

**Boomers** – a Church should be an aggregate of effective ministry programs.

**Becomers** (millennials) – a Church should be an incubator for creative expression

**All** – a Church should be a hospital for sinners (the place where all problems are solved, and all hurts are healed.)

- a church should meet my needs.

**More Recently** – a church should support and promote my political bias.

\* How should we respond?

1. The new normal requires revisiting the “old truth.” (Eph. 4 is key.) God says that He has given Pastor/Teachers to the church “*to equip the saints for the work of the ministry”*.
2. The new normal requires honesty and transparency with ourselves and our congregations regarding our own abilities, inabilities, and disabilities.
3. The new normal requires clarity and perhaps, confrontation of the popular, unbiblical metaphors defining the role of both pastor and local church.
4. The new normal requires very intentional effort on shifting congregational focus away from the consumerism of our culture and the primary question ***“What can I expect from my church?”*** to a missional focus and the primary question ***“Why am I (are we) here? – “What does God expect from me/us in representing Him to those around me, our community, our region, and the world?***
5. The new normal will require significant editing and mission alignment *of*

*all programs/ministries/activities within context in light of a realistic assessment of individual and corporate capacities.*

***How do we teach/lead our churches into this changing of expectations?***

1. Begin the conversation!
2. Identify and quantify the challenge(s).

*What are you currently attempting personally and corporately that is well intentioned, but unsustainable (and perhaps, unbiblical)?*

Of that list (long or short) *what needs to be deleted, delegated, or redesigned?*

1. Take action prayerfully with the item that is the “least costly” to change and work your way down the list until you reach a point personally and congregationally of sustainable effectiveness.