



**WILDERNESS WANDERINGS
FOR A PEOPLE OF FAITH**

LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

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**PRESBYTERY OF SOUTHEASTERN ILLINOIS
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WILDERNESS SIGNS – THE WORLD OUTSIDE

**OUR CURRENT CULTURAL
CONTEXT – UNCHARTED**

PANDEMIC

RESURGENCE OF “VISIBLE” RACISM

“ONCE-ASSUMED” CIVILITY LOSS

CULTURAL UNREST

“RELIGIOUS IDENTITY” HAS BEEN IN DECLINE

CULTURAL INSTITUTIONAL SKEPTICISM

- **DRAMATIC SHIFT IN ADULTS WHO IDENTIFY AS CHRISTIANS – ‘NONES’ ARE GROWING**
- **GROWTH IN RELIGIOUSLY UNAFFILIATED**
- **SKEPTICISM ABOUT RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS**

WILDERNESS SIGNS – THE WORLD WITHIN (THE PRESBYTERIAN WORLD)

- **DENOMINATIONAL DECLINE**
- **CHURCHES AND MEMBERSHIP**
- **DOLLARS**
- **INFRASTRUCTURE**

WILDERNESS CHALLENGE – LEADING FROM A ‘RE-FORMATION’

“CHRISTIANITY IS CURRENTLY UNDERGOING A MASSIVE UPHEAVAL AS PART OF A REGULAR PATTERN THAT OCCURS EVERY 500 YEARS, IN WHICH OLD IDEAS ARE REJECTED AND NEW ONES EMERGE. ULTIMATELY, THE OLD EXPRESSION OF CHRISTIANITY IS REFURBISHED AND REVITALIZED, WHILE A NEW, MORE VITAL FORM ALSO IS CREATED”

THE GREAT EMERGENCE BY PHYLLIS
TICKLE

WILDERNESS CHALLENGE OF LEADING BETWEEN THE “HERE” AND THE “NOT YET” A SEASON OF LIMINAL SPACE

...A UNIQUE POSITION WHERE HUMAN BEINGS HATE TO BE BUT WHERE THE BIBLICAL GOD IS ALWAYS LEADING THEM. IT IS **WHEN YOU HAVE LEFT THE TRIED AND TRUE BUT HAVE NOT YET BEEN ABLE TO REPLACE IT WITH ANYTHING ELSE.** IT IS WHEN YOU ARE FINALLY OUT OF THE WAY. IT IS WHEN YOU ARE BETWEEN YOUR OLD COMFORT ZONE AND ANY POSSIBLE NEW ANSWER. IF YOU ARE NOT TRAINED IN HOW TO ENTRUST AND WAIT, YOU WILL RUN... ANYTHING TO FLEE THIS TERRIBLE CLOUD OF UNKNOWING.

RICHARD ROHR

WILDERNESS CHALLENGE FOR US “DECENT AND IN ORDER” FOLK – WE CANNOT “PROGRAM” OUR WAY THROUGH THIS

“LIMINAL SEASONS CANNOT BE POWERED THROUGH. THEY MUST BE ATTENDED TO, AND THE LEADER MUST APPROACH THE SEASON WITH A STANCE OF UNKNOWING AND WONDER. WE WORK OUR WAY THROUGH LIMINAL SPACE WITH A DISCERNING MINDSET, NOT A DECISION-MAKING MINDSET. THIS CAN BE SCARY FOR LEADERS BECAUSE IT REQUIRES YIELDING AND A DIFFERENT KIND OF DOING.”

OUR CORPORATE TEMPTATIONS TO WILDERNESS WANDERINGS

(DEFAULT RESPONSES TO STRESS)

- **LOOKING FOR NEW GODS – NEW ABSOLUTES
(EXODUS 32)**
- **ROMANTICIZING THE GOOD OLD DAYS -
ONIONS AND SLAVERY LOOK GOOD
(NUMBERS 11)**
- **THESE LEADERS HAVE TO GO – BLAME GAME
(NUMBERS 14)**

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE WILDERNESS

- **WE DON'T GO INTO AND THROUGH THE WILDERNESS TO DIE!**
- **WILDERNESS ALLOWS US TO CREATE THE SPACE TO CREATE AND RE-CREATE A NEW IDENTITY**
- **WILDERNESS IS THE PLACE FROM WHICH WE EMERGE RENEWED TO TAKE ON A NEW LAND**

**THIS IS THE TIME WE'VE BEEN
GIFTED AND GIVEN**

**WE'VE BEEN CALLED FOR A TIME SUCH AS
THIS!**

**WHAT WILL WE DO WITH OUR MOMENT IN
TIME?**

(PALEONTOLOGY)

OUR LEADERSHIP OPTIONS

- **DO NOTHING AND HOPE (THIS IS A DECISION)**
- **TRY TO STOP A RE-FORMATION (UNLIKELY)**
- **RECITE THE SEVEN DEADLY WORDS -“WE NEVER DID IT THAT WAY BEFORE” (DEFLECTION)**
- **CHOOSE TO STAY BOUNDED BY AN ILLUSION OF WHAT HAS BEEN (LAMENTING AND POWERLESS)**
- **HIDE IN ASSUMPTIONS, SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS AND CYNICISM**
- **TRY TO “CANOE THE MOUNTAINS” – INSTEAD OF USING NEW NAVIGATIONAL TOOLS (TODD BOLSINGER) OR**

....OR AS LEADERS, WE CAN

- **AFFIRM THAT WE BELIEVE THAT GOD'S PLANS FOR US ARE BIGGER THAN WHAT WE CAN SEE OR ENVISION?**
- **EMBRACE THIS AS A SEASON OF UNMAPPED OPPORTUNITIES – THERE WILL BE RISKS AND WE WILL FAIL**
- **LEAN INTO WHAT WE HAVE – NOT WHAT WE DO NOT HAVE (RESISTING THE THEOLOGY OF SCARCITY) – BE CREATIVE**
- **ENJOY THE JOURNEY - HAVE FUN!**

**THIS IS OUR STORY AND
OUR GOD-GIVEN TIME!**

**SHARE ONE EXAMPLE OF SOMETHING
HAPPENING
IN CHURCH OR PRESBYTERY
THAT MAKES YOUR HEART SING!
(YOU HAVE 5 MINUTES)**

PLS NOTE: YOU WILL BE TIMED! 😊. THANK YOU!

A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT

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MY PRAYER FOR US WHILE WE NAVIGATE THE WILDERNESS

DREAM DREAMS (JOEL 2)

COLLABORATE (MARK 6:7; LUKE 10:1-3)

SHARE OUR STORIES (DEUTERONOMY 6:7)

REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE!

**A RESURRECTION PEOPLE –
A PEOPLE OF THE IMPOSSIBLE**

UNBOUNDED WE THRIVE!