

August 12, 2020

One of the churches I served had an elementary and middle school. One of the things for which I wasn't prepared was the pastoral needs of the school families. Our world has changed immensely and people are finding religion in a multitude of places outside of Sunday morning. Many of my school families didn't have a church home. Most of them considered the school to be their religious home. The weekday school chapel was worship for their week.

I was often asked (and honored to be asked) to officiate at funerals, baptisms, and weddings of school families.

It was interesting to me that I never once saw most of these families on a Sunday morning. I had a chance to ask a couple of them about my observations.

They told me that their religious and spiritual needs were being met by the school and they saw no need to go to Church on a Sunday morning.

Throughout my ministry, I have been fascinated by what motivates people to wake up on a Sunday morning and come to Church. I've wondered what Church will look like in the future. I've wanted to experiment with our traditional Church service but never have figured out the best way to do it.

It is with all of this in mind that we are introduced to the Rev. Nadia Bloz-Weber on the Way of Love Podcast. Bishop Curry's conversation with her will be baffling for some of us while others will find it wonderfully intriguing. She is anything but a traditional priest based upon our traditional ideas. But she is meeting people where they are outside of the traditional Sunday morning worship. Is this type of ministry undermining the traditional church or is it a logical extension of how we worship?

The podcasts have gotten longer with Season 3 but I encourage you to listen to her conversation with Bishop Curry. Some of it may not resonate with you but it might give you a glimpse of what a family member or friend may be searching.

One of the things I've wanted to do since arriving in Fredericksburg is to start a sidewalk service for all the out-of-town guests. I would find a location on a Saturday or Sunday on Main Street. There would be three participants – one musician, one lector, and someone to pray. The musician would constantly be playing/singing, the lector would constantly be praying a series of prayers, and the prayer person would be praying one-on-one with anyone who asks for prayer. This hopefully would be a place where you would hear Jesus' words, "Come unto me, all ye that travail and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you." Matthew 11:28 It would simply be a place of "worship" to fill whatever need you may have. If you wanted to listen to the music for 30 minutes and then move on you could do that. If you wanted to listen to prayers from many yards away, you could. If you wanted to pass by without making eye contact you could do that as well.

Jesus taught his disciples in a multitude of ways. One was breaking bread and teaching the faithful as he gathered his disciples and apostles together to prepare them for the world. Another was Jesus going out into the communities to preach to people where they were.

I'm fascinated to see where God will ultimately lead us. If I had to guess there will an infinite number of ways to worship. Church will be the primary vessel but I wonder if Sunday morning will be the normal path.

Note: Click on the picture of Rev. Bloz-Weber to be taken to her website.