

District Assessment Weekend

District Superintendent's Address to the Candidates

Welcome

- Embarking on a new adventure
- You are the inaugural class of candidates (but not guinea pigs)

History

- This weekend is part of a personal dream that has come to be shared by many.
- This event is one component of the larger system we call “Center for Ministry Development, started almost five years ago.
- Started out of a motivation to help future ministers develop their full potential and so that the minister begins their minister with confidence and competency.
- Attempt to assist the Board of Ministry in evaluating your readiness for ordination with some objectivity.
- The Center for Ministry Development is composed of the following:
 - Pittsburgh District Training Center – Dr. Cookie Tressler
 - Recording Keeping – Rev. Nathan Zipfel
 - Assessment Center – Rev. Paul Willette
 - Shepherds’ Advance – Rev. Raymond DiCamillo
 - Teaching/Coaching Churches – Dr. Ken Culbertson and Dr. G.A. Hankins
 - Director – Rev. Ron Schermerhorn

The Call

- It is both SACRED and SECULAR
 - Ministry is not a job; it is a calling.
 - The call sustains you when things aren’t going well.
 - It is a call to sacrifice and serve in the Spirit of Christ.
 - It is your invitation to participate with the Holy Spirit in growing the Kingdom of God, spiritually and institutionally.
 - It is lived out in a fallen world among fallen people who may be redeemed and entirely sanctified.
 - The call comes from God but it is implemented through the human frailties of the called.
 - God doesn’t always called the gifted and the equipped; but He always gifts and equips the called.
- God Calls You
 - Parents don’t; pastors don’t; circumstances don’t call you into the ministry.
 - There is an inner conviction, unshakable, that you are responding to a Divine initiative.
 - You are being invited to use your gifts and graces as part of a group that God and history has set apart.

- This is a holy calling with great rewards for faithfulness and dire consequences for sinful disregard.
- The Body of Christ Confirms You
 - You cannot be called apart from the confirmation of the Body.
 - “It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and us” to commission Paul and Barnabas into a special assignment on behalf of the whole church and Kingdom.
 - Confirmation comes through affirmation of your gifts and skills.
 - Confirmation comes through results as you minister within the Body and among the unchurched.
- The Church Consecrates or Commissions You
 - Whether you are independent or denominational, there has to be a church that acknowledges your call. I don’t believe that a person is really called apart from this. I would even go so far as to say that a call remains valid only as long as it is connected to the Church. Our own denomination suggests that someone who remains unassigned as an ordained elder is in danger of losing their credentials.
 - The Church doesn’t owe you a place of service; you owe the Church for placing its confidence in and approval on you.
 - I think the Church should require from you:
 - Faithful service – no slacking or laziness or coasting.
 - Fierce Loyalty – attendance, allocations, verbal support.
 - Loving Criticism – lovers’ quarrel, at worst.
 - Christ-like Example – Expect of yourself what you expect from others.
 - Ordination is not a right. It’s more than a privilege. It is your identity.
 - Handle your ordination with care. The Kingdom and the Church and your identity may be damaged through carelessness or deliberate sin.
 - When tempted, think about all you can lose.
- On the Pittsburgh District, you are asked to join in advancing the cause of Christ through our core values:
 - Strengthen Local Churches
 - That’s your responsibility, not mine.
 - What looks like intervention should only be seen as resourcing.
 - If it becomes intervention, you are not doing what God called you to do.
 - Develop Leadership
 - Learn to empower people to do the work of ministry.
 - Too many pastors are delegating responsibility and giving the impression that their job is to manage the worker bees.
 - Empowering leadership involves more work than you believe you have time for. It involves:
 - Delegating
 - Training
 - Extending authority
 - Resourcing
 - Encouraging
 - Trusting
 - Following-up
 - Rewarding

- Giving up credit
 - Taking the blame.
- Building Community
 - Enlarge the vision and experience of your congregation to include the wider Church of the Nazarene.
 - As a pastor on this district, Eastern Nazarene College is your college.
 - Encourage participation in Work & Witness.
 - Announce everything that comes from the district or its auxiliaries and let your people choose what they want to be involved in.
 - Encourage zone participation and participate in the zone and district events designed for pastors.
 - Promote allocation payments as support for ministry beyond the walls of the local church.
 - Rejoice with those who are rejoicing and weep when others are suffering.
- Be Missional
 - The Great Commission calls us to reproduce the Kingdom in others.
 - Personal Evangelism
 - Starting New Churches
 - Teaching your congregation that they are commissioned and sent by God to reach lost people for Christ. Must become part of the DNA of your congregation and not an add-on program.
 - Discover what it means to be in a healthy church.
 - Ask God for a burden for lost people that never weakens.
 - Be on the lookout for new church planting opportunities.

Conclusion:

This is a journey of divine importance. Most of you have been on this journey for awhile now. It is not a solitary journey, even if it seemed to be at times.

As a result of this assessment and the subsequent coaching, you may become the first ministers in history to start your ministry with more confidence and more competence than any others who have preceded you. You may become the first ministers in history to know more about yourself, your call, your skills, the expectations, and your potentials than any who have come before you.

We are here to serve you and encourage you. We are here to help you evaluate yourself and your call, even as we try to evaluate you and your call ourselves.

I am proud to be your superintendent. And all of us want to be proud to call you our colleagues. God bless you as you embark on this journey.