



Moving Beyond Comfortable Leadership *The Price of Unsticking Stuck Churches* *A Travel Free Learning Article*

By

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Many organizations, people and churches are stuck these days. Stuck is living in created places with values and beliefs that make us feel secure. Stuck is about being primarily inward focused and narcissistic in concerns, use of resources, and attention. In churches stuck is probable after cycling programming and practices to preserve rather than impact. Being stuck also suggests a larger percentage of time and energy is focused on those already connected to the church rather than those beyond membership and walls. Stuck also emerges when leaders and churches are fearful of taking risks due to disappointing or agitating their base.

As I write this we are seeing this in the stalemate in our government. Neither political party wants to make a decision for fear of losing their base and possibly their jobs. Unfortunately or fortunately deadlines are around the corner. Seems they are willing to jeopardize the financial stability of our country just to preserve their identity and jobs. How scary and sad. Finally, many leaders and churches who are stuck often choose to be stuck. They choose to stay in their comfort zones, living in and with the familiar that creates a safe and secure spot to live.

Many churches face this same stalemate: finances and membership decline, growing apathy in the pew and pulpit, and become less and less an influence in the community. The problem is that living safe and secure works for the short-term, but for the long-term it often leads to apathy, diminishing commitment, atrophy of needed muscles, isolation, and insulation that typically leads one to dysfunction and death.

Let me be quick to say, I understand wanting to feel secure, be safe, take few risks and desiring to preserve peace, and often a job. I have been there on several occasions. Certainly no one wants to be seen as trouble maker or someone who stirs up trouble just for trouble sake. In tough economic times, who wants to risks losing a job! The issue is one of impact, influence and effectiveness. Do you want to be a leader or church with impact, influence and effectiveness or to be seen as church that is safe, secure and insulated from others? How does that line up with the mandate for believers and churches found in the Great Commission?

It seems the Christian message is all about being people of faith (Hebrews 11); willing to go to a place we know not of (Genesis 12); and, putting our hand to the plow and not looking back (Luke 17). The scripture is replete with the commands to fear not. Over 170 times! Yet, believers, leaders and churches choose to stay safe, secure and take few risks—certainly not risks that are so uncalculated that we must call upon faith—a faith that is dead without works (James 1).

I can hear some of you saying, "This guy is calling us to be reckless!" It seems to me that is the challenge of Christ, who broke all kind of stereotypes and barriers, and pushed through fears on every hand that others might know!