

# The Ecclesial Calling

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Preaching and Leading in  
Times Like These

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# Ecclesial Leadership Today: Challenges & Opportunities

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- ❑ Unprecedented times for leadership of the Great Commission mandate & the Great Commandment motivation to, in and thru the “Church” (ἐκκλησία *ekklēsia* – communities of faith)
  - ❑ A need for ecclesial leadership that is mission oriented but in the context of character forming priorities & culture transforming motivations.
  - ❑ We need ecclesial leaders who believe, become and behave with a sense of divine calling for times like these.
  - ❑ And we need ecclesial leaders who can effectively communicate the essentials of the faith with clarity, relevance and integrity.
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# Ecclesial Leadership's Three-Fold Mission for Times Like These

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- ❑ Renewing minds to think Biblically & Christo-centrally.
  - ❑ Nurturing sanctified hearts to serve “kenotically” – like Jesus served.
  - ❑ Equipping holy hands for service know by its excellence, innovation, integrity & humility
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# Ecclesial Leadership for Such Times as Then, Now & Next

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- A personal journey over the past five decades impacted by several experiences, encounters and insights.
  - The historic Wesleyan essentials of renewing an inquiring mind, nurturing a loving heart and equipping holy hands for competent, compassionate, sacrificial service to the least, the left and the lost are among the touchstones of my journey.
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# Renewing Minds

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- ❑ In times like these we must intensify our commitments to producing mature followers of Christ through the disciplines of the renewed mind – the Church must return to the center of cultural engagement as both a thought & practice leader.
  - ❑ Ecclesial leadership is driven by the Great Commission mandate to go and make disciples teaching them to obey all that Jesus commanded Mt. 28:20.
  - ❑ Jesus spent more time teaching than in any other single activity.
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# Stretching Renewed Minds

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- The early Church Fathers believed that followers of Christ should be broadly skilled both in and beyond the teachings of Scripture and the Church in their search for truth.
  - Serious scholars throughout the history of the Christian movement emphasized following Jesus with minds transformed rather than conformed to secular paradigms.
  - Luther taught that Christ's followers needed to *study not only languages and history but also singing and music together with the whole of mathematics - Wondrous ability fit for anything*
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# Stretching Renewed Minds

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- John Milton believed that a complete and generous education *is one that fits a person to perform all the offices, both private and public, of peace and of war. (Tractate on Education)*
  - The goal of learning is to *repair the ruins of our first parents by knowing God and, out of that knowledge, to love Him, imitate Him and be like Him. (Of Education: 1644)*
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# Stretching Renewed Minds

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- C.S. Lewis, in a sermon entitled “Learning in War Time” challenged the students of his day to take time for a thorough education even in the midst of national turmoil.
  - *To be ignorant now would be to throw down our weapons and betray our uneducated brethren who have, under God, no defense but us against the intellectual attacks of the heathen. Good philosophy must exist, if for no other reason, because bad philosophy needs to be answered.*
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# The Wesleyan Quadrilateral & Renewed Minds

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- ❑ I have embraced Albert Outler's model of the Wesleyan approach to revealed Truth that both informs & transforms.
  - ❑ **Scripture** – the ultimate revelation of Truth
  - ❑ **Reason** – the renewed mind's grappling of Truth's revelations for times like these.
  - ❑ **Tradition** – historic understandings & applications of Truth's revelations
  - ❑ **Experience** – the “feet-to-faith” of revelation in terms of impact and transformation to serve the present age.
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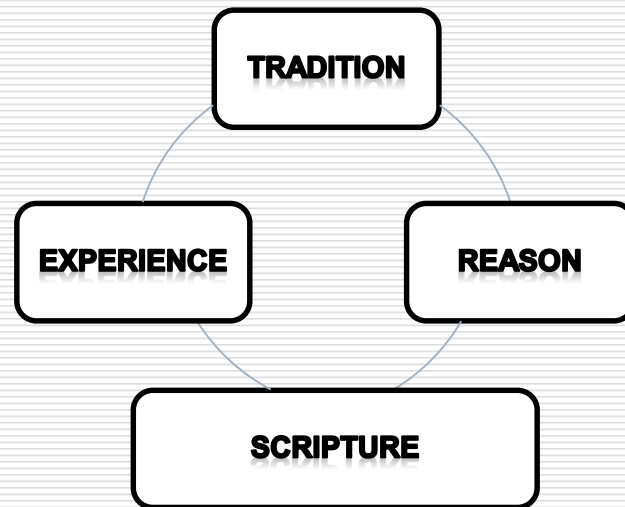
# Not an Equilateral!

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# The Quadrilateral's Limitations

The problems Outler saw if the quadrilateral is seen as an "equilateral," and all four "sources" for authority and truth discerning are seen as equally weighted.

□ The search for Truth can start with any of the four touchstones but **Scripture** must always be the "home plate".



# The Spirit & the Renewed Mind

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- The Holy Spirit functions as the “coach” to help us run these bases successfully.
  - Jn. 14: the catalytic role of the Holy Spirit as Comforter, Tutor, Companion and ever-present Teacher who helps us recall, understand, appropriate and apply the Truth He reveals.
  - The Spirit helps me move from the limitations of human thinking to revelation – to move beyond reason and personal experiences to deeper, broader and more comprehensive understandings of revelation and the applications needed for my calling.
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# Stretching Renewed Minds

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- ❑ We must stretch our minds as ecclesial leaders to know God in every expression of creation and discipline of human learning.
  - ❑ We must, as stated in Harvard's founding purpose, *lay Christ as the only foundation* seeking to catch God at work in every place, plan, process and person.
  - ❑ We must anchor our understandings of Truth to the authority of Scripture.
  - ❑ We must communicate our ecclesial leadership in ways that challenge to reach for the *highest levels* of learning so that we and our flock can be grounded in the *deepest levels* of revelation.
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# Stretching Renewed Minds

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- I believe that as we master the disciplines of the renewed mind, we honor Paul's command *not to be conformed to the world but transformed by the renewing of your mind* Rom.12: 2.
  - So let us honor the faith of our fathers who served God's purposes in their times by renewing minds for our times studying to show (ourselves) *approved unto God, workmen that need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth.*  
2 Tim.2: 15.
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# Nurturing Sanctified Hearts

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- ❑ One of the great challenges of the life of the renewing mind, however, is that left to itself learning can lead to arrogance, isolation and self pre-occupation.
  - ❑ The greater the knowledge we acquire, the more critical it is that, with the learning, we nurture a holy love for God and all He loves.
  - ❑ Knowledge is the blossom of the exercised mind. Holy love is the fruit of the circumcised heart.
  - ❑ We not only must stretch renewed minds, we also must nurture sanctified hearts
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# Nurturing Sanctified Hearts

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- ❑ The Great Commission focuses on *teaching them to obey all* Jesus commanded.
  - ❑ His other “Great”, the Great Commandment Mt. 12:30-31, is the key to employing our knowledge for the ultimate good of humanity.
  - ❑ The Great Commission’s *teaching them to obey* is the **method** of renewed mind discipleship.
  - ❑ The Great Commandment’s call to love God, our neighbor and ourselves is the **motivation** that conforms and transforms the hearts of informed disciples.
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# Nurturing Sanctified Hearts

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- ❑ To nurture sanctified hearts we must hold the lamp of revelation in one hand and the cross of Christ with the other.
  - ❑ To **comprehend** Jesus as the Truth we must be motivated by love **apprehending** Him as the way & the life in every dimension of learning, living & serving.
  - ❑ The love of God provides both meaning to and motivation for the pursuit of Truth.
  - ❑ Our leadership produces life as well as light when it becomes the means to change both hearts and minds.
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# Nurturing Sanctified Hearts

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- *Good teaching (preaching) cannot be reduced to technique; good (preaching) comes from the identity and integrity of the (preacher). In every (message) I (preach), my ability to connect with my (flock) and to connect them with the subject depends less on the methods I use than on the degree to which I know and trust my selfhood – and am willing to make it available and vulnerable in the service of (preaching) (pg. 10). Adapted from Parker J. Palmer's The Courage to Teach (1998).*
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# The Motivation of Perfecting Love

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- ❑ Our preaching & leadership must be punctuated with the convicting, conforming and comforting presence of the Lord's love.
  - ❑ We must possess a palpable sense of His presence in all we do and with all we encounter.
  - ❑ Such love is the evidence that in Him our intellectual, social and ministry lives have their meaning
  - ❑ To learn and never be satisfied is wisdom – to teach (preach) and never be weary is love.
  - ❑ *Tough Minds and Tender Hearts* - Trueblood
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# Nurturing Sanctified Hearts

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- ❑ The sanctified heart is the “value added” expected by the vast majority of those who follow Christ-centered leaders.
  - ❑ For those of us who believe that the call to ecclesial leadership is a means to invest deeply in the lives as well as the minds of our “flocks”, the principle of self-sacrificing, other serving love ([ἀγάπη](#), *agápē*) rings true.
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# “Holy Hands” Leadership – The Jesus Kenosis

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To think clearly and love deeply requires us to serve sacrificially, extending/lifting “holy hands” (I. Tim. 1:8) with agape love motivating our service.

- The implications for leadership in understanding the “lead like Jesus” kenosis model of Ph. 2:1-18. Greek: κένωσις, *kénōsis*
  - Kenosis gives us a deeper contexts for what has come to be called “servant leadership”.
  - The emptying of **privilege** not of **essence**.
  - The ultimate sacrifices of true humility
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# Servant Leadership – The Jesus Kenosis (Greek: κένωσις, *kénōsis*)

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- The Kenotic model requires that we focus on the needs of the led in our ecclesial leadership more than on my needs as the leader.
  - Note popular leadership theories that are predominantly leader-centric.
  - The Kenotic model focuses us on the “who” and “why” (character and motivation) of leadership rather than just the “what, when, where and how”.
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# Benchmarks of Kenotic Preaching & Leadership

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- ❑ The sweet savor of uncompromised obedience characterized by **integrity** and God-honoring **humility**.
  - ❑ Professional **excellence** so that we engage with authority & clarity.
  - ❑ **Innovating faith** to go where others have not gone before – new wineskin risk taking.
  - ❑ A call to **Noble sacrifices** for the least, left & lost.
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# Kenotic Leadership of Humility, Integrity, Innovation & Excellence

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- ❑ Ecclesial leaders' minds are renewed and hearts sanctified so that our hands can do the Father's business as revealed in the life of Jesus Christ.
  - ❑ Kenotic leaders do that business by not only thinking clearly and loving deeply but also by a self-emptying, other-centered service known for its humility, integrity, innovation & excellence.
  - ❑ Renewed minds and sanctified hearts are validated by the *full measure of the work their holy hands perform*, the creative ways in which they do it, the integrity and humility that flows while they do it and the price they are willing to pay to see their leadership calling achieved for God's glory.
  - ❑ Kenotic peaching leads to redemptive, restorative and renewing action. It is a call to "hands" more than just a call to "arms".
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# A Kenotic Leadership Profile – What It Looks & Sounds Like

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## Purposed

- ❑ Kenotic (Christ-emulating) leading and preaching **connects intimately to the purposes of God** in relation to creation and particularly humanity - the crown of that creation.
  - ❑ Recognizing that we are created in the image of God and given the responsibility of caring for His creation, we preach & lead with a sense of divine calling to be good stewards of creation in general and humanity in particular.
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# Whole & Holy

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- Kenotic (Christ-emulating) leading & preaching challenges **to achieve our full potential** in body, mind and spirit.
  - We encourage opportunities for both personal and societal transformation so that our flock's *whole bodies, minds and spirits are preserved blameless.* (Adapted from I Thess. 5:23)
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# Scripture-Anchored

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- ❑ Kenotic (Christ-emulating) preachers & leaders **embrace the Divine perspectives as reflected in God's Word.**
  - ❑ We seek to help our charges appropriate the Holy Spirit's gifts and graces initiating a positive, practical and respectful dialogue with the world about the implications of such perspectives.
  - ❑ In our preaching & leading we seek to avoid the stridency evidenced by some Christians which too often limits the impact and embracing of Christ-centered ideals.
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# Intentional

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- ❑ Kenotic (Christ-emulating) preaching & leading **moves beyond cognitive learning and skill acquisition to intentional discipleship** as their ultimate objective.
  - ❑ Christ-emulating leaders analyze the outcomes of their efforts and explore the underlying morality.
  - ❑ Through the intentional integration of faith, learning and living, Christ-emulating leaders examine their professional missions and motivations asking how the fruit of their labor relates to the purposes of God.
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# Compassionate Sacrifice

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- ❑ Kenotic (Christ-emulating) preaching & leading **embraces a Great Commandment motivation** to address poverty, illness, exploitation, discrimination and oppression in the world.
  - ❑ We challenge our flock to develop and demonstrate compassion for those who, for reasons of culture, social position, political oppression, economic condition, race, gender and ethnicity are denied the basics of life's opportunities.
  - ❑ In our preaching and leading we seek to address & resolve human meaningless & suffering by understanding, going, teaching, serving, loving and, if necessary, dying. (David Livingston)
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# Transforming

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- The Kenotic (Christ-emulating) leader's leading and preaching **reflects the major biblical themes of justice, mercy and humility** (Micah 6:8). All three of these are evidence of the transformation that comes when the mind is challenged to see and the heart is motivated to serve the world like the Christ.
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# Present-Age Faithfulness

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- Kenotic (Christ-emulating) leaders **think clearly and love deeply providing noble service** distinguished by its excellence, innovation, humility and self-sacrifice. Kenotic leadership serves the present age and changes the world's future.
  - David was laid to rest having served God's purposes in his generation. Acts 13:36
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# Embracing the Ecclesial Call to Kenotic Preaching & Leadership

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- *Prepare yourself full, pray yourself hot and preach yourself empty.* Dr. Julian C McPheeters
  - A desperate & needy world awaits the self-emptying service of ecclesial leaders who by the Holy Spirit can lift up and extend holy hands to transform their world.
  - So let us learn, love, serve & preach as ecclesial leaders calling others, by both word and example, to emulate the mind, heart and hands of our Jesus!
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