

From Our Pastor...

United by our Leadership

Part 6 of the Series

For more than twenty years, Ingleside has been a remarkably united church. Across those two decades, we have learned some important truths about our unity – some of which I am recounting in this series of articles.

In earlier installments (read them all at www.ingleside.org), I have addressed (1) why we should talk about this topic now; (2) how unity is both a gift and a goal; (3) seven dimensions of our spiritual unity; (4) how we are united by what we believe – our doctrinal unity; and (5) how we are united by a common purpose. This week, let's look at how **healthy leadership** promotes unity in a church.

First, the Bible teaches that a church needs clearly identified leaders. As Paul and Barnabas planted churches, the Scripture says that they “appointed elders for them in every church” (Acts 14:23, ESV). Likewise, Paul instructed Titus to “appoint elders” in all the churches on the island of Crete (Titus 1:5, ESV).

Second, the Bible says that leaders should set an example of what it means to follow Christ. Paul exhorted Timothy to “set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity” (1 Timothy 4:12, NIV). Similarly, Peter challenged the leaders of the churches in Asia Minor to “shepherd the flock of God” by “being examples to the flock” (1 Peter 5:2-3, ESV).

Third, leaders should help the church overcome challenges to unity in order to make more disciples. Do you remember the situation in Acts 6:1-7? As the church grew, some widows were overlooked and there were “rumblings of discontent” (v. 1, NLT). The Apostles provided strong leadership – clarifying roles, enlisting new leaders, securing the support of the body – and the result was that unity was preserved and “the number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly” (v. 7, NIV).

Finally, the Bible says that leaders should be honored and followed. Paul instructed the believers in Thessalonica “to respect those who labor among and are over you in the Lord” (1 Thess. 5:12, ESV). “Obey your leaders and submit to them,” the book of Hebrews says, “for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account” (13:17, ESV).

I am thankful that our church family has long embraced a biblical pattern of strong, empowered, accountable leadership. As a result, our leadership partnerships are healthy, and our leadership roles are clear. To put it simply: under the Lordship of Christ, we are congregationally governed, led by the Senior Pastor and staff, with accountability to the Overseers, to accomplish God's purposes by mobilizing every member in ministry, all for the great glory of God.

So, whether young or old, a newcomer or an oldtimer, a worshiper at 9:30 or 11:00 a.m. (or perhaps at 8:30 a.m. or 6:30 p.m.), at Ingleside we are united by our common leadership. Please pray for every leader at Ingleside and for me – that we will lead with “skillful hands” and with “integrity of heart” (Psalm 78:72, NIV). **God intends for our leadership to be a key element of our unity at Ingleside.**

I'm grateful for God's favor on our journey together across the years. And I am convinced, *the best is yet to come!*

Your Pastor and Friend,



Tim McCoy