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UNDERSTANDING OUR RESPONSIBILITIES, AUTHORITY & ACCOUNTABILITY

MARK ELLIOTT, AMS

Most of us have heard the old preacher story that is told to remind us that from generation to generation (both in family and organizational life) we pass along process better than purpose. A little girl was helping her mom prepare the Christmas meal. When mom cut the ham in two and placed it in the pan, she asked her, "Mom, why do you cut the ham?" Her mom's response was, "Because that's what my mom did." Grandma was in the next room, so the little girl ran and asked her, "Grandma, why did you cut the ham in two before you put it in the pan?" And grandma said, "Because that's what my mom did." As luck would have it great-grandma was also there, so out came the question again. "Great-grandma, why did you cut the ham in two?" The reply this time was different, "I didn't have a pan big enough to hold a whole ham, so I had to cut it in two and put it into two pans."

As an astute observer of the American culture, I would suggest that as a whole, we have failed to retain the purpose, basic understanding, and balance behind

three critical Biblical principles in our culture: responsibility, authority, and accountability. These principles are found in the trilogy of parables in Matthew 25. I would suggest that these three fit together as much as the three parables in Luke 15: lost sheep, lost coin, and lost sons.

In what we call the Olivet Discourse as recorded in Matthew 24, Jesus bridges a discussion of the destruction of the temple and the end times and the ensuing parables of the Kingdom in Matthew 25 by starting in 24:45-51:

Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the

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WELCOME

AARON HOUSEHOLDER

the Heartland Church Network's Associational Mission Strategist

Aaron came to faith in Christ and was called to serve in vocational ministry as a 17-year-old. Thankful to walk with Jesus daily, Aaron points to his amazing wife, Melanie, and three wonderful kids as evidence of God's grace.

In 2005, Aaron and Melanie moved their family to Lincoln, NE for Aaron to begin as Senior Pastor at Southview Baptist Church. He has remained faithful to that calling and to raising up disciples, and praying for churches to start in our region.

Prior to coming to Nebraska, he pastored at First Baptist Church in Venus, Texas and Waldemar Chapel in Haltom City, Texas.

Aaron has a heart to not only reach out to the community around him, and lead others to do the same, but also to serve pastors. As an IMB Journeyman in South Africa, Aaron had the honor and pleasure of working with African pastors. He learned then that he loved working with pastors and ministry leaders to help them grow as individuals or as churches.



Aaron enjoys friends, food, travel, reading, and cycling. He is looking forward to getting to know all the pastors and churches of the Heartland Church Network.

AARON'S GIFTS & STRENGTHS

Wisdom	Restorative	Includer
Shepherding	Activator	Ideation
Hospitality	Connectedness	

"Jesus and others - the Gospel and relationships - are my life."

QUOTES FROM TWO SEARCH TEAM MEMBERS:

- Aaron's administrative skills appeared to outrank other candidates. We should expect great administrative outcomes. His local cultural awareness of HCN's existing churches and value of diversity will continue to make HCN a forward moving organization. I believe he has the necessary leadership skills to maintain and/or establish committees to carry out the three-prong approach of connecting, supporting and starting churches. (Doris Lassiter)
- Aaron has proven to have a heart for the HCN through years of service in various capacities while pastoring one of our leading churches. He has served as Moderator and currently leads the Connect Work Group while serving on the Administrative Work Group. He has extensive missional and denominational experience: service as a missionary, leading his church to plant with the NAMB, and writing for LifeWay Resources. He has unquestioned character and a godly, supportive wife and family. (Steve Holdaway)

CELEBRATION

OF SERVICE: MARK ELLIOTT

BY: Ryan Johnston, NAMB CPC

In January of 2002 you wrote to us as an association of churches, "If the Lord continues to tarry, 2002 will provide many new opportunities and challenges. I can already see great opportunities to further develop and expand our associational structure and ministries so that together we will radiate the light of the world across the heartland and around the globe." To all of us who have participated and watched this network it is clear this has been and is being accomplished.

I could write about your ministry accomplishments over the last 20 years, but there is not enough room. How you led us to become an association that sustained itself, brought our marriages closer together through personal investment and retreats, led us through conflict, and helped our churches in transition to bring in Godly men to shepherd us. There is no way to even begin to fully express the impact you made by bringing men and women in to invest in us through conferences, events, and bringing Midwestern Seminary to us through CLD courses. Then there is every pastor, planter, and mission team that you

genuinely cared about and impacted in some way or another. There is no way to express the full breadth of all that God used you to do. All of that said, you have simply been a gift to us as you have faithfully worked day in and day out.

I know my experience has been shared by countless others. You have devoted yourself to the work in ways few would or have. You have genuinely sought the Lord, loved the church, worked to see the expansion of the Kingdom, and loved us. Although you have done most of this behind the scenes, underneath us by supporting us, this is a small way of moving you to the front for a moment and honoring you for the work you have done. Thank you for your 20 years, we are better for it, our region is better for it, and the church you have so deeply loved in this region is better for it. The Heartland Church Network has radiated the light of the world throughout the heartland and around the world under your leadership.

We are Grateful.



Where no oxen are, the trough is clean; But much increase comes by the strength of an ox.

Proverbs 14:4

RESPONSIBILITIES, AUTHORITY, AND ACCOUNTABILITY

CONTINUED

drunkards, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Much like Jesus does moments before the ascension recorded in Acts 1:4-11, He again redirects the disciples questions, concerns, and focuses on the end times to the purpose God has for them.

And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

I would suggest that the parables of Matthew 25 provide clarity and specifics for what "a faithful and wise servant" will be doing as they await the return of their Lord and Master. We too should take heed to what the parables say and more importantly strive to do what they say because, "Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing" (Matt. 24:45-46).

I will come back in subsequent weeks and speak in depth to each of the parables, but for today, let me lay out the big picture—a 30,000-foot view. **The three parables speak to various responsibilities that we individually and culturally have been given.** The Parable of the Ten Virgins (25:1-13) clearly tells us that we have the primary responsibility to provide for our own needs. The Parable of the Talents (25:14-30) speaks to the responsibility we have to steward wisely all that God gives us.

And the Parable of the Judgment of the Nations (31-46) addresses the responsibility we have to care for those in our "culture" who cannot care for themselves. A quick clarification, the Greek word translated as "nations" in most English translations is better translated as "ethnic group," "culture," or "people group." It does not refer to a geopolitical ethnically diverse nation, but to how each specific ethnic group or cultural group cares for its own.

When I speak of the principle of "authority" I am referring to the resources, abilities, and decision-making power we have been given to meet our responsibilities. In the Parable of the Ten Virgins, we see five who knew what would be happening and made the appropriate preparations using their knowledge and resources. We also see five who chose not to prepare to meet their responsibilities in the given situation in a timely manner—they were called foolish. We see a similar picture in the Parable of the Talents as two of the servants acted responsibly with the resources they were given while one did not. And in the Parable of the Judgment of Nations (ethnic groups) we see two primary responses. One group had wisely stewarded their resources and were not only able but accepted the responsibility to care for those in need. And one group either didn't have the resources because of poor stewardship or were not willing to accept the responsibility to care for those who had genuine needs.

The principle of personal responsibility is one that our culture too often ignores. You can't read the three parables in Matthew 25 and not see a stark contrast between what happens to those who accept responsibility and steward wisely their authority and those who don't. Not only were the five virgins who failed to prepare called foolish, but when they showed up to the wedding feast late saying "Lord, Lord, open to us!" they heard, "Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you" (25:11-12). The servant who didn't accept his responsibility nor steward wisely the talent given him

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RESPONSIBILITIES, AUTHORITY, AND ACCOUNTABILITY

was called “wicked and lazy,” and his one talent was taken from him and given to the servant who now had ten talents. But even worse, the master said, “Cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

In the Parable of the Judgment of Ethnic Groups, the self-focused group heard, “Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.”

Maybe you have never looked at the parables of Matthew 25 in this manner. Maybe the way I am defining and describing the principles of responsibility, authority, and accountability are new to you. Let me encourage you to read Matthew 24 and 25 and keep in mind that God is more interested in how well we are fulfilling our purpose than He is about how well we know the signs of the end times.

MARK'S INSIGHTS

Mark Elliott is in his 29th year of serving as an Associational Missions Strategist. He is passionate about serving the local church and shares weekly insights on current cultural issues impacting the local church.

Please visit www.heartlandchurchnetwork.org or call the office, 402-551-0608, to subscribe to Mark's weekly articles. You can also find previous articles on our website.

AMS TRANSITION PROCESS

TRANSITION PROCESS

January 6 *Search Team Voted*

January 15 *Admin Work Group Voted*

February 5 *Executive Board Voted*

March 16 *Official Start Date*

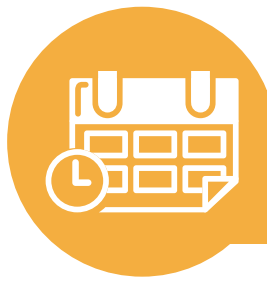


"When a new AMS has been recommended by the search committee, approved by HCN, and has officially stepped into his role, Mark will immediately step back and begin to serve in a supportive role for a minimum of 30 days and a maximum of six months."

On February 5 the Executive Board voted unanimously to accept the Admin Work Group Committee recommendation of accepting Aaron Householder as the new Associational Mission Strategist.

On March 16 of this year, Aaron will begin serving the churches of the Heartland Church Network. He will be the fourth leader in the 62-year history of this association

Please continue to pray as this process moves forward. It is a transition for the Association as well as for Southview Baptist Church.



LOOKING AHEAD

Pastor Fellowship Lunches

Join Mark and other pastors as they discuss current leadership issues that pastors are facing. This is a time to help one another from your own personal experiences and gain wisdom from other pastors who have gone through something you are currently encountering.

March 7
10 am in Lincoln
Bethel Baptist Church
..... ❖

March 8
10 am in Albion
Saving Grace Bible Church
..... ❖

March 10
10 am in Omaha
HCN Office

Each One Teach One

MARCH 12, 2022



11 AM - 4 PM
COME AND GO
LUNCHEON

2100 S. 51ST ST
OMAHA, NE 68106

RSVP AT 402.551.0608 OR
EMILY@HEARTLANDCHURCHNETWORK.ORG

Please join Heartland Church Network
in celebration of:

**Mark
Elliott's
Retirement**

We're asking guests to bring a postcard with a memory or quote from their experiences with Mark.

Minister & Spouse Retreat

This is a short time of restoration for ministers and their spouses and a chance to connect on a deeper level with other ministers in the network. The cost is only \$25 per couple and the invitations will be mailed out in March. You can help us by making sure we have up to date contact information for you.

SAVE THE DATE FOR THE ANNUAL

**Minister
&
Spouse Retreat**

April 29-30, 2021
Lied Lodge Center
2700 Sylvan RD
Nebraska City, NE 68410

ANNIE ARMSTRONG EASTER OFFERING

MARCH 6-13 WEEK OF PRAYER

Each Easter season Southern Baptists have a focused offering for North American Missions. Every dollar given goes to train and resource more than 2,200 missionaries and their families involved in church planting and compassion ministries who share the life-transforming gospel of Jesus Christ across the United States, Canada and their territories.



Now may the God who gives endurance and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, according to Christ Jesus, so that you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ with one mind and one voice.

Romans 15:5-6



LIFE CHANGER MISSIONS

Changing Lives One House at a Time

SIOUX CITY, IA

JUNE 12-18



Early Bird Registration for Life Changer Missions 2022 ends February 28th! If your church is interested in registering, now is a great time to take advantage of this early bird cost savings. There are only 84 slots total open this year and people are already beginning to register.

heartlandchurchnetwork.com/life-changer-mission.html



HEARTLAND CHURCH NETWORK

CHILDREN'S CAMP



JULY 18-22

CAMP OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

LOUISVILLE, NE

Be on the lookout for more information about Children's Camp 2022. This camp is for children who have completed 2nd - 6th grades. Junior Leaders must be 14 and have a recommendation from their pastor.



HEARTLAND
CHURCH NETWORK

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UPCOMING EVENTS

March

Pastors' Wives Appreciation Month

- 6-13 Annie Armstrong Week of Prayer
- 7 Lincoln Pastor Fellowship
- 8 Northeast Pastor Fellowship
- 10 Omaha Pastor Fellowship
- 12 Mark's Retirement Party

April

- 18 Lincoln Pastor Fellowship
- 19 Northeast Pastor Fellowship
- 21 Omaha Pastor Fellowship
- 29-30 Minister & Spouse Retreat

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