

How? Why?

Usually we consider folks who harm us as bad, evil, enemies. Sometimes they are. Actually most of the time they are like us. What hurt us, they thought, was a good idea. How? Why? Didn't pay attention. Didn't think it through. Went along with the crowd. Followed the leader, took the easy way. Doing things right looks unnecessary.

I kept asking myself why I had suffered injury? They were Church leaders, brother clergy. Over the years I have seen others injured, some close friends. A pattern appeared. Often a quick decision made on partial information, the exercise of authority. Deeper down there is a misunderstanding of the role of the pastor - leader. In the LCMS from the beginning and for long after the words "shepherd of souls" were in common use. Pastor is Latin for shepherd.

CFW Walther said the reason for LCMS rapid expansion was not its conservative Biblical Lutheran Theology but its pastors reputation for "seelsorger". Congregations looking for a minister heard about LCMS pastors and wanted one like that. "You know the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them,. . . It shall not be so among you" Mt 20:25. We no longer talk about shepherding souls. I know too many of our people who left the LCMS to find real gospel care, too many pastors and teachers driven away.

Some folks are problems. Some folks get into problems. Some have problems thrown at them. What do we do? Jesus said we are to love our enemies like the Father loves them. The seelsorger cares for the one who hurts. The Pastor's primary task is Gospel, especially to love, care for the people with problems. It is seldom quick and sometimes messy. CEO clergy do not have the time or inclination. District and Synod leaders juggle many tasks and roles.

We adopted the Dispute Resolution model to deal with problems. I have been so involved. Everything is unrecorded, secret, behind closed doors. Letters I had written were the focus. They could not be read, the truth or reason for them was off the table. Those letters were not even sent to the members of the church that filed charges. When I suggested the church should operate by the 8th commandment, the laughter was ignored.

DRP is a "dependable process", it makes problems go away. Usually people leave - angry. DRP was created because under the prior system the "wrong" people won. When I worked at the jail we had a "dependable process" for punishing inmates. Under it, certain inmates were immune from punishment. Interesting! The Lutheran Clarion June 2016, <http://www.lutheranclarion.org> has a history of Dispute Resolution Process.

How? Why, does this all happen? The Eighth Commandment: "You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor. What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not tell lies about our neighbor, betray him, slander him, or hurt his reputation, but defend him, speak well of him, and explain everything in the kindest way." If we did what the

Word of God commands, speak up, defend, support those injured, I am convinced changes would happen. Had my brother pastors , principals been using us as substitutes, filling in, speaking up, we would not have spent years impoverished. Were the DRP not “dependable” rather supported the injured, righteousness would be seen.

I am impressed when high officials resign, refusing to support wrong policy. It is unheard of in the LCMS and there have been astounding wrongs. There is a time when it is good to stay when it gives opportunity to fight in the seat of power for what is right. I was terminated 4 months before scheduled retirement for speaking truth. I did not expect it would lead to termination.

Prov 16:4 “The LORD has made everything for its purpose, even the wicked for the day of trouble”.
 2 Timothy 3:5 “holding the form of religion but denying the power of it. Avoid such people.”
 Heb 4:13 “No creature can hide from God. Everything is uncovered and exposed for him to see.
 We must answer to him.”

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The following is a logic diagram of proper conduct under the 8th Commandment.

