“Enjoy the View”
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“Wisdom is radiant and unfading,
and she is easily discerned by those who love her,
and is found by those who seek her.”
~ Wisdom of Solomon 6:12

Wisdom. The quality of having experience, knowledge, and good judgment. Commencement addresses are in the news. Every year, colleges and universities ask big-named celebrities, business people, politicians, and philanthropists to deliver commencement addresses. Many college graduates may not remember all that is said in the address (some may not even remember who gave the commencement address!). I have read many highlights from this year’s commencement addresses, and one in particular caught my attention.

NBC Nightly News anchor Lester Holt delivered this year’s address to California State University, Sacramento. Here are his words of wisdom to graduates about reaching career success:

When you think about making it to the top, ask yourself, “What exactly is the top?” Because one of the things I have discovered is sometimes we are so busy climbing that ladder of success, we forget to pause on the rung that we’re on and look around and enjoy the view. And sometimes the view is a lot better than you might have imagined, and maybe that’s the place, that is your personal top.

This quote lingers with me as I reflect on the recent Pew survey revealing the number of Christians has dropped dramatically over the past decade. I know statistics are important, but I pause when churches focus more on numbers and less on the quality of their ministries. Far too many churches look at numbers alone – membership, attendance, and pledging – to evaluate their ministry.

A recent blog post by David B. Lindsey captured my lingering thoughts on the topic of congregational health. Lindsey writes, “These three metrics help us measure church size, which gives us the chance to ‘right-size’ our approaches to ministry. These metrics, however, are not inherent predictors of spiritual health. We also need to attend to the quality of our church’s life of prayer, community, justice, and joy. So why not find ways to measure how we’re doing with the care of souls?”

Is your church focused on climbing to the top and only counting the membership, attendance, and pledging in your congregation? How would you evaluate ways in which your church delivers ministry?

In this season of Pentecost, may you pause and enjoy the view in your ministry and how your church takes care of souls. Although challenging to measure, the care and ministry done in Jesus’ name is a worthy place that in my mind is more important than simply counting heads.

Prayer: Holy One, you call us to care for our community. May we find wisdom to use our hands and our work to worthily glorify your name. Amen.

1 http://www.pewforum.org/2015/05/12/americas-changing-religious-landscape/
2 https://carducc.wordpress.com/2015/05/25/how-do-you-measure-a-congregations-health/