

MILE Video - Transcript

So, our theme for this year is 'Go and Do Likewise,' built on the parable of the Samaritan. Many of you read that text or heard it many times throughout our annual conference sessions. And we told you then that the theme was not just for sessions, but it would guide us throughout the year.

We also shared with you that we would use the framework of the mile, the M.I.L.E. to guide our work. The 'M' of the M.I.L.E. is for Ministry that Matters. And it's in three parts: housing, health, and measuring.

First housing. This is not all about building new housing, but it's also addressing issues around policy related to housing. We will have a housing summit or symposium this fall that will help us understand in great detail how we might address issues of housing, and houselessness in our areas.

The second part of the 'M, for ministry that matters is health. And here we're talking about physical health, mental health, public health. This is really a general area here where we're really looking at how we live our lives. And what are those ministries that were engaged in or those that we need to engage in to bring about better health in all of our communities?

The third factor in the 'M' is measuring. We will assemble a team of community organizers and academics to help us understand how to share our impact statements and also how we measure what matters as relates to housing and health. So all that we do, we'll keep track of it. So we'll know where we started. And the direction we're moving in as we do our ministry that matters.

'I' for the M.I.L.E. is for itineration and location; doesn't sound all that exciting. Oh, but it will be because this is our opportunity to look at how we are deploying and assigning pastoral leaders across our area. This will also involve looking at how we fund or how we compensate pastoral leaders and teams will also include in this some ways to incentivize and encourage congregations and ministries to collaborate in ways that they have not considered doing so before.

The 'L' and the M.I.L.E. is lay ministry enhancement. And this is our opportunity to elevate the ministry of the laity and every single ministry setting, I believe that God has called every person to serve, I believe that it is our responsibility to ensure that every person has what they need in order to live out that calling. Now this is not about being called to licensed or ordained ministry. This is simply about opening one's heart and mind to what God has called you to be and to do in this world. The challenge here is for every ministry setting to select at least one person that you will pray for collectively by name as they discern what God is calling them to do in this season.

Again, this is not about licensed or ordained ministry, it may lead to that. But that is not the purpose. We want every person to wake up every day aware of who God has called them to be and be able to live that out. We're working with our conference and district lay leaders to ensure that there are trainings and other opportunities for each of you to join together to study and explore options and ways in which you can be at work in the world in the name of God.

The 'E' in the M.I.L.E. is elimination or eradication of racism. I would love to live in a world where racism was not a real thing for all of us. But we don't. And I don't think our ministry carries much integrity when our own church exhibits and perpetuates racism. Yet we go out in the world and say that the world needs to eliminate racism. I think we're called to a higher standard. And that's for us to deal with our own internal racism as we go out into the world.

So we're already well on our way of creating some learning cohorts. And we're also putting together a resource that you will be able to access on our website. And regardless of where you are on the journey toward eliminating racism in your own self, in your own family, church or community. We have resources there where you can enter the work or enter the conversation. This is not an opportunity for us to say who's ahead or who's behind. But this is an opportunity for all of us to get on board and point in the same direction toward a world where racism and white privilege do not rule the day and every decision that's made. It is a challenge for us, but it is work worth doing. This is important. This supports all of our M.I.L.E. efforts. So 'E' is not the least important. It's just at the end again so we can spell out M.I.L.E. and do the work that God is calling us to do.