

A More Excellent Way

We may speak the language of organizational structure and mission, but if we do not have love in our hearts for those who are intended to benefit from them, our efforts will have no more effect than a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal whose influence fades away with its clamor.

We may speak about Servant Leadership and clear lines of authority, we may have compelling strategies for organizational effectiveness and renewal, but if we have not love for people, it is all in vain. We may distribute our resources with the utmost efficiency and give our lives to save the world, but if love is not our motive, the world will be none the better for our effort.

With love we will be very patient and understanding as we interact with other cultures.

With love we will not feel boastfully righteous as though we have all the solutions to the world's needs.

With love we will never assert our superiority, never selfishly seek praise for sharing with others that with which we have been so abundantly blessed.

With love we will never inflate our ego at the expense of those we have come to serve.

With love we will always be slow to expose the failures and shortcomings of others.

With love we will not be resentful when our service is taken for granted.

Love never gives up. As for theories and strategies, they will be superseded; as for organizations, they will cease. For our planning and our institutions are incomplete, but when our actions are guided by love and justice, they will hit the mark.

We are limited in our understanding; we see in a mirror dimly. We are baffled by problems, and lasting solutions elude us. But we are learning bit by bit and we long for the day when love will rule the world.

Thus, faith that God has a plan for the world, hope that all can realize their human potential, and love that knows no boundaries – these three endure – but the greatest is love. Make love your goal.

Edgar Stoesz, with gratitude to St. Paul (I Corinthians 13) Adapted from *Beyond Good Intentions* by Edgar Stoesz