

Rev. Dr. Carson O. Mouser

I am one of the rarities of the last century, a native Californian. I was born in a Los Angeles County hospital and my first home was a tent on a beach before my family moved to the San Francisco Bay area where I lived until I entered the United States Air Force in 1969. Throughout my childhood, my family lived what might best be described as a nomadic downwardly mobile life, since we moved every year and a half from community to community and I rarely spent more than a year and a half in any school until high school and we were poor. Thus, I am very comfortable with change and is probably the reason my doctoral work was about change and congregational responses to change.

When I was 15, I was hired to write for a local weekly newspaper beginning a 15-year career as a reporter, editor, and free lance feature writer for newspapers and magazines. Also, I have worked in public relations and marketing for Ohlone Community College, the Mental Health Association of Santa Clara County, and a variety of non-profit organizations. My work experience in journalism is complimented by an A.A. degree in Liberal Studies with a major in Journalism from Ohlone College in 1975 and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Journalism and U.S. History from San Jose State University in 1976. While at Ohlone College I was editor of the college newspaper and was awarded the Journalism Department Award and received a Third Place for Editorials in a statewide competition of Community College Newspapers. In addition, I have graduate coursework in both business administration and United States economic history as well as course work in insurance underwriting, group health insurance and pension analysis.

Along with a 15-year career in journalism, I have experience in the United States Air Force, retail store management and 13 years in the insurance industry.

During the final years of my insurance career, I felt God pulling at my heart and sensed a call to ministry as a Minister of Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), which my wife had

been encouraging me to pursue for many years. I had been a member of the First Presbyterian Church, Pittsford where I served as a Sunday school teacher, member of the Christian Education Committee and on the Board of Deacons. At First Presbyterian, Pittsford my journey of faith was re-awakened, nourished and encouraged to a greater depth, and my call was affirmed by both Rev. Baron Ashfield and Rev. Dr. Earl Johnson. While at seminary I served as a seminary intern at Twelve Corners Presbyterian Church and following graduation continued to serve Twelve Corners as the first Director of Educational Ministries until my ordination to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament in 1998. In addition, I served the Presbytery of Genesee Valley on its Youth Committee during my time with Twelve Corners as well as participating in Youth Conferences at Montreat Conference Center as a small group leader. I have served congregations as pastor and head of staff as well as serving as a Campus Pastor at Paul Smith's College and have served ten congregations either as an intentional interim pastor, a transformational pastor or as an unintentional interim pastor using all the skills and experiences garnered in all my previous vocational work and all the study and research, I have done over the last thirty- five years. I have a Master of Divinity degree from Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School with a specialization in Biblical Studies and a Doctor of Ministry degree from Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, GA. My doctoral work focused on congregational transformation through reclaiming the biblical narrative as the call to be the community of Christ within the specialized area of Gospel and Culture.

During my doctoral studies I created a narrative mission study process for congregations in transition to express their grief over the changes they have experienced, a way to comprehend a new identity and through a focus on that identity and their passion for mission to discern what God is calling them to do both in the context of their local community and their global community. I have used this study process with congregations I have served, and it had been the preferred mission study process used in the Albany Presbytery for several years. My doctoral thesis has been published with the title, "The Promise of Narrative Change: Living the Why to Thrive" and is available on Amazon.

I am married to Tina, who is a retired RN. We have five adult children and ten grandchildren. My interests include contemplative prayer, craft brewing beer, photography, hiking the 46 High peaks of the Adirondacks, golf, travel, fiction writing, poetry writing, and reading, particularly economic history, poetry, local history, and mystery stories.

One of my favorite quotes comes from Wendell Berry, "When despair for the world grows in me and I wake in the night at the least sound in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be, I go and lie down where the wood drake rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds. I come down into the peace of wild things who do not tax their lives with forethought of grief. I come into the presence of still water, and I feel above me the day blind stars waiting with their light. For a time, I rest in the grace of the world, and am free."

This quote speaks to me about creation relationships, Sabbath rest that relieves anxiousness, solitude as a key for clarity, and the mindfulness of prayer.

Two other quotes speak about renewing an authentic spirituality through simplicity and my own inclination as a storyteller to see within scripture a life story for every person and community of faith connecting us to all our ancestors and to all who come after us in the long narrative of God and God's people. The first is "The call to simplicity and freedom for Christians is the call to move from achievement-oriented spirituality to a life centered on a shared vision of relatedness, of gentleness, of compassion, of belonging to one another" by Richard Bower and the second is, "I want my life to be a novel, not a short story," by Joan Didion.