

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church  
Proper 9 Year C  
July 3, 2016  
The Rev. Grayce O'Neill Rowe

One time after we had moved into a new home, we had trouble connecting to the internet - go figure!! We called the cable man and when he saw the wiring in our house he said that he would have to turn us in for a rewire. Turn us in for a rewire - made me feel like a criminal - certainly made me wonder what on earth he meant. Turn us in for a rewire. Not too long before this happened I had read about the theory that states that the human brain is wired for the experience of God; that there are three lobes in the brain that have been wired to react when religious words or images are received by the brain.

If you think about this, this theory of being wired for God, you might realize, like me, that this opens up all kinds of possibilities. I can just see people being hooked up to all kinds of machines to determine if conversion has really taken place. Maybe there could even be some kind of system wired from the pew to the pulpit so the preacher can detect if a spiritual or religious connection is being made.

We run into difficulty with this, however, when we consider that we are not all wired for God in the same way. For example, consider the Episcopal Church – it is pretty easy to see that people are wired in many different ways. People react in many different ways to religious words and images.

And then consider families. Take my family for example. If you were to see my two brothers, Andy and Gary, standing with me, it would be quite obvious that we are siblings – we look so much alike. We look alike but in many ways we are extremely different – so different that it is hard to believe that we come from the same family. And in the area of religion and spirituality – we are so different that there are some subjects that we can not even talk about. We are clearly wired differently.

You know, I can't help wondering, since we are wired so differently, do you think that perhaps I could turn my brothers in for a rewire?

And wouldn't it be easier in the church if we could just turn in everyone who thinks differently than we do – just turn them in for a rewire? Oh, the possibilities are endless.

Until, of course, we return to the Gospel – to today's Gospel and we realize that Jesus sent the seventy out saying nothing at all about the need for all of us to think the same – saying nothing at all about the need for all of us to react in the same way – saying nothing at all about all of us being wired in the same way.

If we use today's Gospel as an example, we can see that Jesus gave very few instructions. Oh, he told the seventy what not to take – no purse, no bag, no sandals. He told them that their work was urgent. And he told them only two things to say. It was either: "Peace to this house. The kingdom of God has come near to you." Or, if the people were not hospitable – if the people were not welcoming so that the seventy were not able to stay among them, the seventy were to say: "Even the dirt of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you. Yet know this: the kingdom of God has come near." That's it – that is all that he said.

No catechism to teach. No doctrine to swear belief in. No mandate that everyone must be wired in the same way. Just these brief instructions.

So what were the seventy to do – what were they to do with no explicit instructions about what they were to say about God? My guess is that they went out and shared their experiences of God – they shared their experiences of Jesus. They went out – wired perhaps in many different ways – perhaps experiencing Jesus in many different ways – and they shared what they had experienced. They shared the love – the healing – the tremendous gift of new life that they had experienced in their relationships with Jesus – each in their own way. They shared what their experiences of Jesus had taught them about a God who forgives, a God who loves up close and personal. They shared what their experiences of Jesus had taught them about a God who raises up, a God who brings new life.

And the people who welcomed them - they had no test to take. It did not matter if they experienced God in the same way. It did not matter if they all agreed on the hot topics of the day and I am pretty certain that throughout all of history there have always been hot topics of the day. It did not matter if they were all wired in the same way. All that mattered was that they

welcomed into their midst someone who had experienced the love of Jesus and who wanted to share that experience. No need for rewiring – just welcome the messenger – just be exposed to the good news of God’s love – and the kingdom of God would come near. They were not told what they had to believe – other than the fact that God’s peace – God’s love would bring healing and new life.

And for those who were not welcoming – for those who did not want to hear about this experience of love – they were not sent in for rewiring – they were allowed to be – even if it meant they would not experience the healing love of God’s kingdom.

Just think of what this means for us today. Just think of what it would mean - if in our families and in our churches – just think of what it would mean - if we would become less concerned about everyone thinking the same – less concerned about everyone reacting in the same way – less concerned about whether or not we are all wired in the same way. Just think of what it would mean if we put our focus on celebrating and welcoming the many and diverse ways in which we each experience Jesus – the many and diverse ways in which we each experience God – the many and diverse ways in which we each understand scripture. Just think of what it would mean if we just celebrated and welcomed the many and diverse ways in which we each understand and react to the hot topics of the day. Just think of the healing that could take place. Just think of the joy. No rewiring necessary.

We are each one of the seventy that Jesus sends out to ministry – we are each one of the seventy that Jesus sends out into the harvest. Jesus does not call us to be wired in the same way. Jesus does not call us to react in the same way – Jesus does not call us to think the same. As a matter of fact, we do not have to have seminary degrees – we do not have to be great thinkers – or gifted speakers. Jesus calls us – just as we are – warts and all and sends us out to share with the world our individual experiences of God. Jesus sends us out to share our experiences of being loved, to share our experiences of being forgiven, to share our experiences of being healed. And he tells us that each time that we are welcomed – he tells us that tremendous healing will take place.

It is as simple as that – just to let people know how God has touched our lives. God will do the rest.

