

June 16, 2024

Dear Friends,

Six weeks ago, I talked to you last about the call process for a lead pastor. I want to update you on that process. If you love the TV show Seinfeld, you know that the show is about nothing. If you looked at the bulletin board, you would see that the needle has not moved a bit and it looks like “nothing” has happened. While we have interviewed multiple candidates, you might say that “nothing” has happened.

If this update is about nothing, then I want to talk about something, like dating.

There are many ways to initiate a date. For some of you, you locked eyes on your beloved at first sight and never looked either way and lived happily ever after. You are the exception to the rule. For others it can be quite involved and take much time finding the right one.

For some it starts by an invitation from the prospect: “Would you like to go on a date?” For others it requires an intermediary, like an official matchmaker, a “headhunter” in business parlance, human, computer or otherwise, only for you to ask, “how did they make that match?” Some of you may have succumbed to Aunt Jane’s powers of persuasion: “Do I have the perfect person for you!” while you roll your eyes and suffer through another long evening.

Before the first date, hopefully, you have done your intelligence and found the speeding ticket, the first marriage or the protest march. This is much easier now with the internet than 30 years ago, when Carolyn and I met her close friends one

Friday night. By 7:30 a.m. the next day, Carolyn had a report from her friend who knew someone in my hometown who knew my parents. I had no similar source of information.

Some first dates the conversation can be hard and energy draining. Are they really interested in you? Other first dates are full of smiles, laughter and energy, but only after they figured out how to work the mute button on their computer.

“Do you wanna go on a second date?” Number one emails you. Number one pleads with you. Number one calls you, but you don’t pick up the phone. Instead, you call number two that made you laugh and ask for a second date. They say “Yes!” And you are thrilled! So you tell number one begging for a second date that you are not interested. But two minutes later, you look at your emails and number two that makes you laugh, says that someone else is in the picture and it is serious. While number two said “yes”, now they say “no.” You are heartbroken. You wonder will it ever happen?

Now Aunt Jane sees you and asks “So how’s it going?” You know she is not asking about your health. She wants to know are you dating anyone. Oh, the pressure!!! I know that well. I was in my mid-30’s and unmarried in the 1990’s when that combination either meant I had too high of standards or a fear of commitment. I had someone exclaim to me, “I am not getting any younger!” Now you might think that was Carolyn who was also in her mid-30’s and unmarried. No, it was my niece, who desperately wanted to be a flower girl and saw me has her ticket. Oh, to marry for all the wrong reasons!

Dating is one of those intense, time-consuming activities and you may simply have

nothing to show for it. And you rather would not go into all the exhausting detail with your family. Similarly, ironically, is the call for a lead pastor.

But one of these days, I am hopeful – no, I know it -- I will announce that it is time for you, the family, to meet that special one we found. So be patient and prepared. About that day and hour no one knows, but only the Father.

Tom Counts
Chairman
All Saints Call Committee for a Lead Pastor