

The most-read Tribal Church posts

January 4, 2016

Here are Carol Howard Merritt's most-read posts of the year:

- 1) It's time to change the way pastors get paid.** What do we do? Do we go the way of attrition? Do we allow pastors to be starved out, until we all get jobs as baristas?
- 2) You are a pastor.** Being a pastor informs it all. It's my vocation. The manure in the vegetable garden. All of this makes sense, in my day-to-day work. But it becomes complicated when I tell someone that I'm a pastor, and they want to know where I serve.
- 3) Five liberal excuses to do absolutely nothing.** The person has been robbed and beaten. He's bleeding on the side of the road. Unlike the Good Samaritan, we step over him. But we have really great reasons.
- 4) Falwell's damage and our response.** I went to a Bible school, where students sometimes imagined that they were the good people and everyone else was a bad person. It was a warped view, for sure. But at least we just passed out tracts.
- 5) How do we get people to church?** It's easy to say that people used to care about God and now they don't. But I think the picture is more complex than that.
- 6) A woman's guide to getting coffee.** Coffee is a power play, but it's also a sign of hospitality. It's how we greet one another, especially in church.
- 7) Why we don't like Donald Trump and what that means for the church.**
According to our constitution, our government has six goals. Businesses have one.
- 8) Actually, we have plenty of money.** We have people who are working with younger, more diverse groups. They have communities made up of the people we need in our denominations. And we are starving them out.
- 9) Why I support Planned Parenthood.** I was a serious sign-carrying pro-lifer who thought that the devil lived at PP. But I didn't have any other choice. I went.

10) What the church can't do for pastors. A friend was going to seminary, and she became very disappointed that someone in her home church did not send her a birthday card. When I heard this story, I thought that the church probably did her a favor.

11) Pastoral care: How much is too much? I loved the pastoral visits, but hated the complaints that I wasn't doing enough. My time was consumed with those complaints, and I wasn't able to dedicate any time to the things that gave me joy and made the church more vital.

12) Overcoming the culture of nice. Mid-rant, I said, "I don't want to be a pain, but..." My friend stopped me midsentence. "Yes. Yes, you do," he smiled. "You want to be a pain. You don't know that about yourself?"

13) Deconstructing patriarchy, one ritual at a time. I love weddings. I even like the parts pastors aren't supposed to enjoy.

14) On being yoked. I shake her hand and say, "Yes, I am Brian's wife. My name is Carol Howard Merritt." As she introduces me to her husband, I wonder if I should have added the "Reverend" to my name.

15) Just buy the book already. The Internet loves to disdain the celebrity Christian. If anyone sells too many books, builds too big of a platform, or just gets too big for his or her britches, we like to bring that person down a notch or two.