

# ***REFLECTIONS***

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**The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.**

*Acts 11:21*

## **A Lay Led Congregation**

In the mid seventies, my parents moved from my home town in northwest Texas to Lakeway, a residential development on Lake Travis outside of Austin. It was a good move for them but it was a little strange for me. It was a little strange because where they moved was a place that I did not call home; but there was one place that I did feel at home. It was the Lakeway Church.

The Lakeway Church was a place shared by Protestants and Roman Catholics for Sunday worship. Each Sunday morning the Roman Catholics met for early services and the Protestant services followed. On our visits there, we joined Mom and Dad at the later service. Daddy sang in the choir and Mom sat with us in the congregation, although she sang in the choir too when we weren't there. There was always a visiting preacher from another of the churches in the area so each week the service had a different flavor; but there was one standard practice every Sunday. The congregation stood and sang the hymn, *Let There Be Peace on Earth*.

When the congregation sang that song it came with such genuine warmth and with such energy that I knew that the words they were singing came from the heart. I had to choke back tears every time that I heard them sing it. My tears came as a prayer for peace but they also came as thanksgiving for the deep love of God that swelled from the congregation. In this little place God's love blessed me. And it blessed the others too.

As I think back on that little church, I am reminded of the circuit riders that visited churches in the early settlement days. A preacher may happen by a town no more than every few months; yet the church remained the center of activity in each community. The people regularly came together in worship services that they had planned.

That's how it was in those days at the Lakeway Church. The laity planned the service, the laity arranged for the visiting clergy, the laity planned the music, and the laity conducted the service. I found God's hand to be more powerfully present in this little lay led congregation, and more true love pouring forth for Jesus there than in most pastor centered churches I have attended.

I wonder if there is a lesson in that.

*"You are the light of the world,"*

*Richard* +

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