

Table discussion on Missional Church Leadership

(#3 - Saturday morning)

Following the Primate's address, The Most Rev. Fred Hiltz asked groups to reflect from "The heartbeat of the church"

Joy, Hope, Pain

Group One

Describe a time when our Church made our heart glad.

- When we took ownership of our mistakes in the Residential Schools – and apologized
- When our Church declared its inclusivity
- When our indigenous brothers and sisters realized they could have their own diocese and there was dancing! (General Synod, Ottawa)

Hope:

People are beginning to accept change and that the Church exists beyond our buildings.

Pain:

When people who claim to be divided to the Church cannot hear others. Hurt people.

Group Two

Heart made glad by ordination of women, truth and reconciliation apology.

Heart aching due to current marriage canon debate.

Failure to really draw in youth into the church. It always seems to be going overboard, so it's exciting but doesn't last, or complete failure to engage them.

Acknowledgement of first nations gives hope, as does continued work with them.

Seems easier to think of things which bring heart ache, in terms of the larger church body. Hope and gladness seems to be mostly on the parish level.

Heart ache... things take so long in the church. Years of discussion, to the point of getting frustrated with the discussion.

Question posed: are we servants of God, or friends of God? Do we, as a church, know what God is doing?

Imbalance between being in the world and of the world.

Prayer that we would be more rooted in Christ, rather than having our faith simply an “additional” part of our lives.

Prayer that we would be God’s friends rather than God’s servants.

Needs to be, as Fred said, “me, Jesus, and everyone else.”

Greater church needs to have a stronger sense of family.

This Provincial Synod gather lacks a time when everyone meets and gets to know one another.

Small groups are the best part of this provincial synod.

As a church we can do things more meaningful for community and fellowship.

Heartfelt prayer that God’s will be done.

Group Three

Church makes you glad:

- Helping people after catastrophe
- Joy in seniors services in their homes during the Christmas Season
 - Developing new initiatives and/or places for community / people involvement
- Play parks at church property
- Do a summer camp program that is so good for children who may not be able to get another positive experience
- Have to be creative in getting people involved positively to see the Church involved in high school graduations
- To see ecumenical functions in our communities; there is only one God.
- To see young people being nurtured for involvement in Church
- Put theology
- To see religions talking more
- Denominations sharing the same buildings in several communities

Makes heart ache:

1. Some people will not let go when new ideas are put forward
2. Proposals requested –

- a. Summer camp was number 7 on our list when we should be helping / working with young people/children
3. Hard to find people for particular functions / jobs
4. 3 B's – bucks, buildings and butts
5. Having to close church buildings (sad – but has to be done)
6. Ache to see young people being bullied for attending church
7. Ache to see churches not try new things for your people for spiritual fulfillment
8. Ache to see church attendance going down

Group Four

Hope/Sadness

Small church with very few people but the faithful few are still there and working to spread the gospel.

University chaplain who attracts young people to the church. Student reflection on her growing ability to forgive through her experience in the church. Unusual people who have joined the church.

Noon hour services at the cathedral which attracts very different people who form the community at to the church.

Outreach with sex workers. Church providing space for a group who provides services to sex workers. Leader asked the administration “Isn’t this what Jesus would do?” The church has become a safe harbour for the sex workers.

“The church has left the building.” Providing space for many community purposes. Cannot just be about ourselves anymore.

Working with at-risk youth. “Safe harbour.” Help in a variety of ways.

Higher-level issues being addressed by leadership rather than the details of administration. More emphasis on mission than procedures.

Financially secure church able to spend energy on community support, outreach, etc.

Fundraising does not stay in the parish. Unfortunately, not a common situation.

Outdoor services. House to house publicity to encourage people to attend.

Ecumenical outdoor services. Church in the park.

Personalities preventing people from working together. Need to encourage community. Have parishes become too small to do effective work and need to work with the large community.

Too conflicting approaches: maintenance vs mission. Maintenance looking inward vs mission looking outward. Missional church not worried about future. So much money tied up in cemeteries.

Visioning meeting turned into discussion of finances. Discussions breakdown when money becomes the topic. Mission work asks a lot and if the money is not forthcoming perhaps something else needs to be done. Money is quickly raised for worthwhile projects, eg \$30,000 for a refugee family.

Buildings preventing mission work.

Prayers for the Church

Keep up the good work.

For joy in Christ's call for us and passion in what he calls us to do.

That we would become more forward and outward looking.

That we move past our petty inward-looking concerns and see the bigger.

Not be so connected to things/buildings.

Group Five

Conducting a Conversation Circle

- Good things; getting back to community

Talked of good things that are making our churches to search outside the Church walls

Experiences of how the Church is working outside the walls

- Give Christmas dinner to hunger
- Men inviting men to breakfast once a month; all different denominations
- Men helping people repair things and this done in and out
- One a month serve lunch to those who have nothing
- Young people helping young people, helping a family out who has moved to the country

Heartache

- Being lightning rod to help people heal, through their stories
- Learn and grown
- We need to step out for all that has been done in Residential Schools
- Talking helps to get stories out
- Not the number of people getting married in Church as there used to be
- Fellowship – people just want to have fellowship first
- Church centre of community; people are the Church, they need to be put together
- Two Churches. People judge people... (*can't decipher*) this divides us. Why do people come to Church?

- But come together through prayer. Then there is joy.
- Pray for Rector and Church become the heart of community; family grows
- Bring humble, hearing the issues of the Church; disciples of Jesus

Group Six (Dream Team)

From “The heartbeat of the church”

- a) When churches became more open to all people, classes

Church being welcoming to all people and walking with folks in the journey of life.

People realizing the church is open and safe to share the story and for the church (those of us who are in “the church”) to be vulnerable in our response.

Stronger sense of community.

Following our faith doesn’t mean we need to be perfect

- b) Last synod, hearing people speak and what they said. The hurt and the pain.

The linger pain still felt in the process of trying to restore right relationships with indigenous community’s.

Group of people being left out (university age), or feels that way.

Lost of prominence in society.

Lack of understanding by majority of society as to the role and place of the church.

Having to closes church.

That while stronger sense of community can be felt / experience we are still sometimes territorial and don’t always feel welcome when we have to make a move into a new church community (mergers, closers, etc.)

Having to close churches.

- c) Restoration of right relationships with indigenous people

The discussions around the marriage canon, is giving hope ... that we are talking about it and that many are willing to keep coming back to the table to discuss.

Safer Church, the hope that we will be able to stop the abuses that have taken place in the past.
What is your heartfelt prayer for our Church?

That we spread goodness

That we continue to reflect on the past, move towards the future.

Continue to reach out to those groups/people we have closed off or out in the past.

The church will regain its voice.

We sincerely discern the needs of our communities that exist outside the walls of our churches.

The church can be less of a fortress and more of sanctuary. (Colton Scott).