

Notes from March 27, 2011 Re-envisioning Town Hall Meeting

Group 1

How do you react to the topic of the church in the Public Square?

Don't go in a power-trip direction.

TV? Valid or Power Trip?

Christian family preaching their faith.

TV Brand idea

CHURCH NAME was "Community"

How do we continue to connect with Community? Who knows what we are?

How do we develop our role?

Public Square is more global.

Social Justice –Winter Nights

Community knows we do good works.

Do we know why we do them?

Faith – wide variety.

Any commonality?

Being a seeker

Find ways to tell and to live our story.

UCC is timid (heard at PSR)

Trying to be all things to all people.

Do we have any heroes?

Robert Schuller

Buddhism

Can't look for hero for a fix.

Why do we have to have a "hero"?

No visible elders in the church

In 100 years – mystics or?

Moving toward spirituality (individual)

Religion carries us forward.

Group 2

“Centered but open”

Study religions in school.

Our best contribution – What makes us distinctive?

Must know yourself

Have faith based

Two extremes

We are all changing – not cast in concrete

Should stand for something

Hard to respect others if you don't believe in yourself

What moral principles apply?

Believe as Christians develops moral approach

Centered but open: will not be talked about outside the church

Do we need to refer to Jesus in following teaching principles like Golden Rule?

Relating personal faith to six words – “Do no harm”, “God is love”

Whose voice is loudest prevails.

Foundation of faith should not be taught in school.

Teaching of religions in school appropriate

Question is of background of texts.

Elementary students too young

High school age time to teach religions- cannot be faith based

Influence of creationist

Group 3

1. "Feckless v. bland"

2. "caring" v. "challenge"/"pastors v. preachers"

1. Not true! Christianity does much

True! Christians more concerned with "making nice" rather than preaching Gospel, acting faith

Good assessment of C right now

Lost voice as prophetic people

Institutional church supports status quo

Different experience on individual level

Not as Bible directed

Personal growth in OCC

Caused by human compulsion for social acceptance/political correctness

Personally been stimulating/ not bland

2. "caring" as internally focused

"challenge" as looking outside

Systemic sin that causes problems

Liberals not together as force to look at challenges in society

How to be prophetic voice of change

Hesitancy to challenge status quo in the public square

The Right wing of church has dominated the public square by avoiding church/politics limits

Caring function of pastors is important

Caution v. preachers leading beyond the reach of congregants

But preacher as prophesizing: helping congregation to re-envision spiritual life

Understanding ethical meaning of Jesus

We all need to be heroes

Teaching people how to preach their lives

Issues to preach:

Year of Jubilee

Open and affirming

Homelessness and poverty

Education

More involved in politics

 With allies

Climate change/environment

Faith Fair

Diversity of faith/one God

War

Public Forum

Group 4

How do you react to the distinction between faith and ideology

Where do you and your church tend to turn for allies in the public square?

Could you imagine building a relationship with an evangelical church or individual Christian?

Can you imagine a more mainline and moderate Christians cooperating to get their message on television on the internet? What would it take?

Faith and ideology

Don't know all answers but not fixed but values guide my actions

Turn to God for guidance

 Constant interaction

Ideology creates boxes, rigidity, like law, absolute, deterministic

Faith – internal process, conversation

Ideo. – external structure

So where does our direction come from – accountable to the gospel/what is basis of our actions?

Ideology – etymology – the study of ideas

Relationship building with evangelical churches

Areas of common concern

Poverty, climate change

Red flag issues – abortion, gay marriage

Other liaisons – Catholic church – we work closely for Winter Nights

As individuals – Catholics are more liberal on social issues – Christ centered

UCC has Christian centered statement of faith. We have common points of faith – can be a bridge

UCC had ad campaign but ran out of \$ and we don't "badger until we get in the door"

How you live your life, use electronic media – don't set the bar too high.