

May 23, 2010 MEETING NOTES "It's Not About You"

1. Name one characteristic or aspect of American Christendom that you valued, the loss of which you now grieve (Anne Long)

- Sense of community
- Idea of time set aside for Sabbath
- Offspring will not experience church support/family
- Loss of respect for heritage/tradition of our country
- Deep roots of identity
- Vigorous and growing movement with teens and young adults
- Loss of community of faith
- Talk about "church" and people think you're a little "nuts"
- Feeling weird in a secular culture
- Loss of religion as a valued part of life/society; link of religion to scandal
- Loss of Golden Rule
- Lack of interaction with other generations; lack of influence, lack of continuity

Bob's group:

- People caring for each other
- Interconnectedness
- Explaining cultural references during advent

2. Picture a spectrum with "inherited faith" at one end and "chosen faith" at the other. Where would you locate yourself on that spectrum? (Susan Russell)

- Only one member was in the church he or she inherited; all others are in the faith/church they chose. However, most had started with an inherited faith.
- Some journeys involved many steps, based on life stages, geography, or influence of family.
- One member, without an inherited faith, located herself outside the continuum.

Anne's group:

No one was still with an inherited faith; most with somewhere in between chosen and inherited, with four with chosen faith.

- Wouldn't get to "chosen" if didn't start with "inherited"
- Grew up in this church but chose to stay
- Choice was made as part of spiritual journey

3. Do a free association with the word "mission". What words/images /people come to mind when you hear "mission"? (Bob Winbigler)

- Helping others
- Service
- Spanish missions
- Christian missionaries: going out to convert, serving overseas, with churches sending money and support
- Teaching missionaries, not trying to convert or evangelize

- Meeting changing needs: New Orleans, Haiti, homeless/housing
- Meeting needs in our community: Interfaith Housing for homeless families; great need in our country
- Giving money/time/service
- Define goal: what are you trying to accomplish? Mission statement.
- OCC Missions:
 - ~ Orinda Senior Village
 - ~ Holden School
 - ~ TOPS
 - ~ Winter Nights
 - ~ Interfaith Housing
 - ~ Guatemala (Common Hope)
- OCC was one of original five churches, now 25+ churches
 - ~ Family support
 - ~ Prevent homelessness
 - ~ Permanent housing
- "Being called"
- Economic needs: job loss/unemployment, layoffs in all socioeconomic groups
- Demonstrating love of Christ

Anne's group:

Mormons
 Elsewhere
 Needy
 Homelessness
 Tenderloin
 Our own block
 Spanish Conquistadores
 Self-righteous proselytizing
 Damage!
 Mexico mission trip
 Participation-building community
 Gifts received

4. Name one exciting opportunity you see hidden in the death of Christendom. (Sabine Hathaway)

- Release in our consciousness from the control, manipulation and power of government for religious communities
- Freedom to question
- Opportunity to move forward to become spiritually more active, healthy & engaged in the community

5. Imagine a spectrum with "modern" at one end, and "postmodern" at the other. Where would you locate yourself on the spectrum and why? (Kurt Sunderbruch)

Nancy: post-modern, moving from religious structure/tradition to spiritual

Dixon: Modern, raised by Presbyterian minister, moving toward post-modern

Robin: raised Catholic, "happy to move to UCC", post-modern. Structured "old" church dogma "not going anywhere"

Judith: Post-post modern. People can take religion and structure and use it as it suits them. Buddhism, Sufism, Hinduism.

Liz: Raised in Hawaii as a Congregationalist.

Susan: I don't have to go to church to be "in church", value Sunday school and the structure.

Meg: Raised as a Presbyterian, has been a Fundamentalist; chosen, not inherited.

6. Assess the balance of "head" (or reason) and "heart" (or emotion) in your congregation. Would you say that one predominates, or are they fairly evenly balanced? (David Milnes)

- This church is a highly educated congregation and is less expressive of spiritual emotion in services.
- More head than heart in careful structure/integration of elements in service.
- We were looking for a church with a questioning mind—didn't have to "check our brain" at the door.
- You can be intellectual and still enjoy a rich liturgy, ritual and heavenly music, and appreciate highly decorated churches like the Baroque churches in Europe. But I would not like emotional outbursts.
- I like/am drawn to my childhood traditions, e.g., doxology.
- I think there is a lot of heart in our church—youth/social justice, environment.
- This is my 13th church—this is my only church in which I have felt comfortable; we have a balance of head and heart.
- A strong educational church on the most public level/inner groups (commissions, committees filled with heart)
- I'm uncomfortable with overt, emotional, spiritual expression; not our strong point.
- Are we trying to attract people more like us?