

September 19, 2010 Meeting Notes

Group #1: A Living God and the God Message (Susan Russell)

*When was the last time you experienced worship as provocative?
Why?*

- Revisiting former church— "it's awful", "scary", not what I'm thinking now
- Frank's sermon about the glaciers. What should I be doing? (Visit to glaciers)
- Current events meet ancient truths (positive)
- Visit to missions (evocative for kids)—threatening and frightening
- Wellness or illness of the community
- Homeless sermon—identified problem and spur to action
- Best sermons provoke action
- Should be a balance of provocation and comfort
- Too much provocation = too much secularization?
- Passion (quilts on the pews)
- Deeper relationship with God
- Inspirational - Frank's sermon today
- Filling you with something greater, a greater call, beyond your own concerns
- Provocation = different emotions, experienced as a group
- Feeling the presence of God as a community
- What new forms bring new experiences?

If Dober Street Presbyterian (traditional mainline church) and the Church of the Second Chance (need to atone for your sins) are thought of as two ends of a spectrum, where on the spectrum would you place our church?

Most placed us closer to the mainline church, with some thinking we were more towards the middle because we do expect action from people.

What can we bring to the larger group that will help form the new vision of our church?

- More circular conversations, talking over Frank's sermons as a group
- Who do we want to be?
- God's presence in our lives and also something beyond (transcendent)
- God has influence; the focus is not on power
- God is loving and inspiring, showing us our best selves
- God as comforting and empathetic

- What is the role of praise? Change in the role of music, from praise to gospel (telling a personal story)

Group #2: Scripture: Its Power and Purpose (Bob Winbigler)

Questions:

How would you describe your own present relationship with the Bible?

What have you experienced that has helped that relationship grow and deepen?

What can we bring to the larger group that will help form the new vision of our church?

Report to group:

- Conveyer of message to believing community
- Tool for beginning the discussion
- Metaphor for interpreting current events
- Repository of "Holy Spirit" (possibly incomplete)
- Important key concepts that don't bear excessive scrutiny
- We bring ourselves to it; we must allow it to give back to us
- Literal tool for dealing with contemporary reality, or perhaps *aesthetic* tool for dealing with life today
- Scripture speaks to use personally to give comfort, guidance. Vehicle to have conversation with God. (Bible story becomes more than "their" story but "our" story.)
- Important to be part of common understanding of church.

Group #3: Evangelism Begins at Home (Roger Samuelson)

What pops into your mind when you hear the word "evangelism"?

- Originally thought of as "getting new members"
- Update would be to work on our own individual spiritual renewal
- How are we touched by God?
- "Evangelism" has had a negative connotation (telling vs. listening)

Think of, or tell of, an experience when someone shared something of his or her faith and experience of God with you in ways that were real and meaningful.

- "Within the seven seas, all are brothers"
- "Giving out" vs. "the rules"/ reaching out from our own journey
- Narnia...Lucy lost (C.S. Lewis)
- Without the shadow, one cannot see the light
- Inner search/strength gained on the journey *from* addition

What can we bring to the larger group that will help form the new vision of our church?

1. Expand parish callers
2. Investigate Stephen Ministry

3. Tolerance/unconditional love
4. A balance of our inner faith journey with outreach
5. "Church hopping"/visiting/cooperative occasions
6. The value of faith journey testimonials

Group #4: Theology: From Professional to Amateur (Kurt Sunderbruch)

Do a word association with "theology." What comes to mind for you?

Doctrine
 Scholar
 Argument
 Religion
Dogma
 Spiritual framework
 Interpretation
 Scripture
 Astrology
 Sunday school
 Ideology
 Fun and playful and challenging
 Analysis
 Academic
 Martin Luther
 Nonsense
 Arcane
Theoretical perspective
 Complex

If your pastor were to say, "This [the forming and sustaining of Christians] is going to take more than one hour a week," would you agree, disagree, be open to exploring that, or would you leave to find another church?

- Agree—Need to do it for yourself first, then you will seek out others. You have to cultivate it and be open to exploring it.
- Agree—Kyros vs. kronos distinction. Thoughts strike during the week. Kyros = flexible time (time can stand still), kronos = chronological time.
- Agree—Would spend more time in intimate study group/personal growth group.
- Old assumption—every newcomer is already "churched". Now, *not* to be assumed. Example: Scouts, never been to church before.
- Need to make it enticing, interesting. Engage people, share thoughts vs. just a lecture. More seminar style.
- Need/try: Therapy to identify feelings—brief, sadness, joy, fear, etc. (Especially for guys).
- Want transcendence, magic moments, "help" to get in touch with what's beyond rational or intellectual. (Though *not* anti-

intellectual.) Augustine rejected astrology - afraid of irrationality.

If Frank said "more than worship, commissions, Guatemala...":

- Like Bible study
- Education and structure very helpful-all your life
- Less rigidity
- See things you didn't see when younger
- Can be needy at anytime-teen, end of life, etc.
- *Be still* (stop fighting theology) and know that I am God
- Metaphor: Butterfly-pursue spirituality and it eludes you. Sit still and it alights on you.
- Meditation/quiet time-Be here now (even in church)

What can we bring to the larger group that will help form the new vision of our church?

- Sub-question: How will we increase our membership?
- Open doors *re* what we can offer? New ideas expressed. Not everyone has participated.
- How to meet someone's need? For outsiders to say, "I need that."
- Ex charismatic leader - for young people? (Institutionalized) (all on one person) (love/hate 'em)
- A certain amount of *leadership* is needed. Have vision, embody direction.
- Sub-question: Become more decentralized? Ignore upper bureaucracy?
- Other direction? Have a bishop?