

The Traditional Church In Transition Called to Service in the World

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Session 1

OUR CHANGING CONTEXTS *Pluralistic and Post-Christendom*

CHURCH IN TRADITIONAL SETTINGS

1. Church is a “pillar” institution of society
2. Pastor serves as chaplain to the community

CHURCH IN MODERN SETTINGS

1. Church is marginalized by a pluralistic, secular society
2. Pastor is an entrepreneur in a competitive environment

MEGACHURCH PROFILE

1. Led by entrepreneurial founding pastors
2. Located in suburban settings
3. Serve a metropolitan area
4. Profile their “target” populations
5. Operate programs at a high standard
6. Attract leaders with great ability and long-term commitment
7. Access to substantial financial resources
8. Space to expand their facilities

CHALLENGING THE CHURCH TO RETHINK ITS UNDERSTANDING OF MISSION

Archbishop Rowan Williams

“It is not the Church of God that has a mission, but the God of mission who has a church.”

CHURCH IN POST-CHRISTENDOM SETTINGS

1. Operates from the margins
2. Move from a “come-to-us” mentality to “go-into-all-the-world” commitment

RESPONSE TO THE MISSIONAL CHALLENGE

1. Recognize the church is culturally marginalized
2. Get Cross-cultural missionary training
3. Engage discerningly with culture
4. Be prepared to work from the margins
5. Replace committees with task forces
6. Give ministry and mission back to the people
7. Create flatter organizational structures
8. Recruit leaders from within the congregation

REFERENCE POINTS FOR THE MISSIONAL CHURCH

1. Obedience – faithful to the gospel
2. Discernment – informed and enriched by heritage
3. Critical Contextualization – relevant to its cultural context
4. Inspiration – Sustained by the hope of Christ's return

INDICATORS OF A MISSIONAL CHURCH

1. Proclaims the gospel constantly and creatively
2. Learning to become disciples of Jesus
3. Seeks to discern God's missional vocation
4. How Christians behave toward one another
5. Worships with joy and thanksgiving
6. Emphasizes the need to live out a more complete expression of the Kingdom

CHURCH AND THE WORLD

1. Separation – *Judgmental detachment*
2. Bridgehead – *Protective invitation*
3. Permeation – *Contagious presence*

COMMUNITY IN CONTEXT

1. Complex interactive relationship
2. Gospel must be re-phrased to be understood, and its diversity of metaphors explored: guilt, shame, alienation, etc.
3. Church must itself be constantly challenged by the gospel it proclaims
 - Compromise and selective obedience
4. Aspects of culture that the gospel affirms, fulfills and judges

THE CHURCH IN TRANSITION

1. Consumer Church – Paid and volunteer staff provide programs and services
2. Missional Church – Paid and volunteer staff motivate and equip the congregation for its mission and ministries in the world

Session 2

RE-ENVISIONING THE CHURCH

Facing the Missional Challenge in the Information Age

EVANGELISM IN A CHURCHED CULTURE

1. Church has a large external constituency
2. Many have been socialized into the church culture but not evangelized
3. Invitational strategies still effective for the re-activation of faith

EVANGELISM IN A POST-CHRISTENDOM SOCIAL CONTEXT

1. Church is marginalized
2. Its external constituency has shrunk significantly
3. Religious climate is far more pluralistic
4. Need to reach beyond that formerly-church constituency to the never churchd

NETWORKS OF RELATIONSHIPS

People find their relationships and significance in a range of multi-layered networks

1. Work
2. Recreation
3. Interest groups
4. Location

CELEBRATION AND SMALL GROUPS

1. *Celebrations* are too large a gathering for relationship building, especially with geographically dispersed congregations
2. *Cell Groups* provide intimacy and accountability but find it difficult to integrate new people and become introverted. They may generate good ideas but do not have the resources to implement them

REDISCOVERING BIBLICAL CONGREGATION

Bob Hopkins:

“One of the principal weaknesses of the western church is that we have lost Biblical and sociological “congregation.” What we now call congregation, we believe is something different. This is particularly serious because we define church as congregation and it’s the word ‘congregation’ that carries all our assumptions about church” (Clusters, pp. 32-33)

“CONGREGATION” COMMONLY UNDERSTOOD

1. Church formed by Christendom, focuses on a special (weekly) religious event
2. Housed in a special building
3. Enshrines clericalism
4. Inhibits the liberation of the whole people of God to become involved where it belongs

5. 1 Cor. 11-14 only makes sense in extended family community contexts
6. Need to emphasize the centrality of the medium sized, mission focused group (*Cluster*)

ESSENCE OF CLUSTERS

1. Typically composed of 25-55 adults
2. May consist of a number of cell groups
3. Can be fully inter-generational communities
4. Have a specific sociological, ecclesiological and missional identity
5. Defined by the vision and faith of the core leadership group
6. Small enough to share a common vision and large enough to do something about it

HOLISTIC FAITH COMMUNITY

1. UP – corporate worship
2. IN – fellowship
3. OUT – witness by deed and word

DECENTRALIZE TO MAXIMIZE IMPACT

1. Provide a network of support groups to facilitate witness in diverse contexts
2. Ensure that a decentralized approach to ministry does not result in the fragmentation of the congregation
3. Develop ministries on the basis of gifts and calling
4. Provide a range of “seeker sensitive” fishing pond activities

CONGREGATIONAL CLUSTERS

1. Each cluster is composed of persons with a common commitment to mission in a particular cultural context
2. They are linked together as expressions of the one church

GLUE BETWEEN CLUSTERS

1. *Leadership Huddles* – Cluster Leader support groups
2. *Celebration* – Gathering of Clusters for inspirational worship, testimony and teaching
3. *Matrix* – Providing resources: worship, children, youth, finance, communication

DELIVERING HIGH ACCOUNTABILITY AND LOW CONTROL

1. Bottom up movement based on peer relationships
2. Addressing the key questions:
3. What do you want to see change in your life?
4. What do you sense God is challenging you about?
5. What course of action do we need to take personally and/or corporately?
6. Formalized accountability framework through leadership huddles

CHARACTERISTIC OF MISSIONAL FAITH COMMUNITIES

1. They reproduce
2. They are birthed within cultural contexts rather than planted from outside

ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES

1. Planting
2. Seeding

Session 3

LEARNING TO LEAD IN NEW WAYS
Missional Context of the Information Age

WHAT'S DIFFERENT?

1. Attitudes to authority
2. Availability of information
3. Commitment to institutions
4. Two income families
5. Fewer volunteers
6. Job insecurity
“A recent Wall Street Journal article revealed that four out of ten employees were less than three years in their job. Ten years ago it was about three percent. Twenty to twenty-five percent are temporarily out of work.”
7. Work schedules
8. Longer hours
9. Flexible schedules
10. Travel time to and from work
11. Single parenting

TWILIGHT OF HIERARCHIES

Harlan Cleveland, *Nobody in Charge*

“The shift is now more than obvious: from top-down vertical relationships towards horizontal, consensual, collaborative modes of getting people together to make something different happen” (p. 44)

COMMUNITIES OF THE FUTURE

1. From hierarchies to networks of freely associating groups
2. From vulnerable “spiders” to resilient “starfish”
(Ori Brafman and Rod Beckstrom, *The Starfish and the Spider: The Unstoppable Power of Leaderless Organizations*)

EQUIPPING MINISTRY MATRIX

1. Teacher – light giver
2. Pastor – soul healer
3. Apostle – ground breaker
4. Prophet – truth revealer
5. Evangelist – story teller

CHARACTER OF CHAOTIC CHANGE

Mike Regele, *Death of the Church*

Character of Chaotic Change

1. *Global* – no where to run to
2. *Rapid* – no time to reflect
3. *Complex* – too much information to absorb

4. *Comprehensive* – impacts every area of life
5. *Unpredictable and Chaotic* – cannot be planned for

THE FLAW IN PLANNING

Richard Farson, *Paradoxes in Leadership*

“Planning is built upon the flawed idea that it is possible to predict the future. Yet the future almost always takes us by surprise. Since there is simply no good way to predict future events, there is no sure way to plan for them”

THE TRAPS OF MAPS

Leonard Sweet, *AquaChurch*

NO MAP IS...

1. *Accurate* – a flat depiction that distorts
2. *Current* – quickly out of date in a fast-changing world
3. *Impartial* – which country is in the center and how the boundaries are drawn
4. *Able to get you there* – complexity theory makes a mockery of maps

A NEW LEADERSHIP PARADIGM

- From leading by reading the map
- To leading by navigating on uncharted, stormy waters

THE SET OF THE SAILS

*One ship sails East,
One ship sails West
By the self-same wind that blows;
It's the set of the sails,
And not the gales,
Which determines the way it goes.*

LIVING WITH PARADOX

Charles Handy, *The Age of Paradox*

“Paradox can only be “managed” in the sense of coping with, which is what management had always meant until the term was purloined to mean planning and control”

SCENARIO PLANNING

1. Draw up alternative scenarios
2. Not plans but possibilities
3. Our mental models are crucial to the learning process

LEADERS WHO BRING VISION AND CONFIDENCE

1. Essential qualities: awareness, discernment, decisiveness, trust
2. Distinguish between a “problem” and a “fact of life” – One you have to live with, the other you have to solve
3. Vision and goal – Not just a dream but a direction

RESPONDING TO CHANGE -THE SIGMOID CURVE

1. B – a prompt response to decline
2. C – procrastinators' avoidance or denial
3. A – anticipatory discernment and courage to move to a new trajectory

RECOGNIZING A STRATEGIC INFLECTION POINT

1. Things no longer work as once they did
2. What the church thinks it is doing does not reflect what is actually happening
3. Entrenchment of traditional institutions
4. Lack of cohesiveness and sense of direction
5. Loss of confidence in leaders and one another
6. New competitors
7. Leaders emerging outside structures

CHURCHES AT THE CROSSROAD

Jesus Christ (John 12:23)

"I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds"

CHURCH'S RESPONSE TO STRATEGIC INFLECTION POINTS

1. Overcoming inertia – historical precedents within our tradition
2. Inadequate responses – danger of doing too little too late
3. What determines our ministry focus?
4. Handling change in the church requires special wisdom and skill – the one remaining anchor in the storms of life
5. Shape and movement – institutional responses to change

RE-IMAGINING THE CHURCH

1. A verb rather than a noun– *ekklesia*
2. A people rather than a place
3. A community rather than a gathering
4. A pilgrimage rather than an arrival

THE NEXT GENERATION OF NAVIGATORS

1. Who represents the future of the organization?
 - a. Entrust the future to the brightest and best
 - b. Those who are at the lower end of their personal first curves, and rising fast
2. It is important that the next generation accept responsibility for the second-curve thinking
3. Needs then to be committed to carry it through

LEADERSHIP IN MULTICULTURAL CONTEXTS

1. Recognize the complex interaction between gospel, culture and church
2. Churches must burst out of their cultural bubble
3. Diversity of expressions of "church"