

Saturday Afternoon Discussion Groups Notes

Children & Youth Ministry Breakout

This was a topic of conversation at many of the 2013 Regional Gatherings and the conversation continued at GC. In light of the concern expressed at the Regional Gatherings, the EFC haemorrhaging faith report and our life experiences, we wanted to hear from a small cross section of the FMCiC representing healthy ministries to see and hear how they are utilizing everything that God has already given them. The cross section included a large urban church where the youth ministry is 100% led by volunteers (Lakeview FMC, SK); a small rural church where the youth ministry is 100% led by volunteers (Mewassin FMC, AB) and a large urban church where children and youth ministry are led by one full time associate pastor. From the presentations, questions, answers and group conversations, four important themes overlapped:

1. Church leadership support. They were all backed completely by pastoral staff to do what was best for the children and youth, even in times when the children/youth leader's idea differed from pastoral staff ideas. Healthy ministries have the support of the pastors.
2. Teams. The lay or paid leaders all used the body of Christ to run the ministry. They each gave control to other people who were gifted in their areas of weakness but also in their areas strength.
3. Relationship. These teams placed their relationships with the children/youth over the execution of any event; if they would love the kids then the kids would love to come.
4. Be the church. Healthy ministries get the kids connected to the congregation through mentoring with other adults and serving in various roles during the worship services or other ministries. "They will know they mean something to you if you give them something meaningful to do."

Submitted by Wes Wood & Kim Henderson

Engaging our Communities Breakout:

As a topic of great interest at many of the Regional Gatherings in 2013, this afternoon session was well-attended with a great deal of small group interaction. Rev. Darrin Lindsay (Kingsview FMC, Toronto, ON), Rev. Keitha Ogbogu (Hampton Place FMC, Saskatoon, ON) and Rev. Greg Elford (New Heights FMC, Mission, BC) shared regarding the community engagement approaches that their churches have been taking over a number of years. Participants were asked to discuss together what "takeaways" they gleaned from the brief presentations. The following represent the key learnings that rose to the surface:

1. Ask & Listen. Ask people in the community: what is important to you and what are the needs in the community. Take the time to listen to what they have to say, without preconceived ideas about what we think the issues are.
2. Serve. Find simple ways to meet the felt & expressed needs of the community. In the churches that presented, they were uncomplicated ministries; homework help, providing food, helping raise money in the community with bake sales, making space available for community groups, etc.
3. Build authentic relationships. It's not just about us ministering to others, but being open & aware that we will also be ministered to. Showing that we really care, that people are not projects for church people. We will have opportunities to meet challenges and we will also be challenged; focus on learning together as members of the same community.

4. Pray! This should probably be number one... Relationships, real relationships can/will be messy. People have real problems, and we are also real people, so we will run into challenges. The whole process must be bathed in prayer to be truly authentic & effective. Be diligent in seeking the ways that God is guiding you: where to serve, who to serve, how to serve. We are called to go out, ask the Holy Spirit to guide us in the best ways to show the love to Jesus to others.

Submitted by Darrin Lindsay & Dan Sheffield

Building Spiritual Passion Together in our Movement (Renewal) Breakout

Premise guiding our discussion – Renewal (Spiritual Passion) comes as a result of taking discipleship seriously.

Working definition of Discipleship (supplied by Cliff Fletcher) -Discipleship is an intentional, organic and transformative relationship that Jesus modeled for each of us to live. The purposes of discipleship include: (1) Nurturing church family (fellowship and Christian conference) ; (2) Learning God’s Word & Worshipping; (3) Moving towards God in prayer; and (4) Participating in God’s mission in the world.

Each of these four elements were discussed. There was a presentation/ story followed by group discussion about “what was working” and then a look for themes.

- 1) Prayer (Cliff Fletcher) themes that emerged, suggestions that were made
 - We need to discover together as churches what prayer is
 - Be very intentional about prayer
 - The best way to “train” people is getting them to pray
 - Make prayer a “normal” part of what you do – both in praying as an individual and praying for others
 - Praying for others – taking a risk to do that, creating space for that was a large theme
 - Times to add prayer – before church, small groups, fellowship times, before and during meetings – perhaps for every item (again be intentional)
 - Suggestion for group prayer – pray for one item at a time and be comfortable with silence

After the break, Ken Roth prayed for a renewal of spiritual passion in our movement.

- 2) Mission/ Evangelism (Aaron James) themes that emerged, suggestions that were made
 - Remember prevenient Grace (look for where God is at work and join Him)
 - Be intentional and create a culture where “going on mission” is the norm
 - Include people early
 - Err on the side of Grace when dealing with people who mess up
 - Prayer is essential
 - Find/ develop/ release leaders (disciple makers)
 - Use the arts as a way of reaching out
 - Offer courses and programs that meet community needs
- 3) Word and Worship (Glenn Boyde) themes that emerged, suggestions that were made

- Worship is responding to the God who is there and is meant for more than an hour per week
 - Discipleship is more than “information transfer” and happens beyond Sunday as well
 - Practice the Means of Grace
 - We need to have teaching and conversation about what worship is – more than music, more than an hour
 - Church communities need to model forgiveness
 - Make room for feedback and dialogue in gatherings
 - Look for ways to encourage and facilitate cross generational mentoring in the area of worshipful living
- 4) Christian Conference/ Fellowship (Adrian Collins) themes that emerged, suggestions that were made
- People connect at deep levels as we share together stories of what God is up to in our midst so we need to provide time and space for those stories to be told (perhaps making this a normal part of small groups if it is not already)
 - Leadership needs to model openness and vulnerability
 - Eat together
 - Learn to do life together beyond “programs”
 - Retreat together as a church/ group/ board/ etc.
 - Be intentional – learn each other’s stories and pray together

People were encouraged to follow up with each other on stories or ideas they heard and to continue these types of conversation back in their own church settings.

Bruce Kellar shared a story about a person in his life that he is trying to share the Gospel with. It is not a complete story. It is in process. It reminded us all that we have personal responsibility when it comes to renewal or revival. This cannot be simply a matter of “somebody should do something” or “the church should do something” or “the denomination should do something”. The prayer for revival needs to include “And Lord begin with me. Renew me.”

We closed in prayer for our churches.

Submitted by Cliff Fletcher

“The FMCiC what do we need from it...does it need from us?” Breakout

The results may not say that the local churches are doing well

Skewed to what the church is - our system may reflect what is being offered

Could a low #4 actually indicate denominational health

Post '90 model turned to connections within local communities

No questions on conflict assistance or transitions

1,3,6 top scores provided that #6 is truly healthy

Are lay people aware of what's available by way of web resources - maybe our web resources are overwhelming
- disorganized - easier to navigate via google

2 what does this score actually say?

Can we leverage #3 to help build #2

Life plan could and should be used to help #2 but = right concept/poor tool

#11 what are we asking re deployment - local gifts, clergy, NLT resourcing

#12 are we listening/connecting - our NCD scores are low in inspiring worship is there a correlation

The surveys have been educational

Submitted by Greg Ford and Rick Hamilton