

EC05

embracing church

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-- these notes are my collections of these presenters material, it may not be exactly accurate, so if you get mad at something don't instantly be mad at them --

Jay Voorhees:

"My daughter had her friend over this weekend and my youngest daughter wanted to play too.. I told my oldest daughter and her friend that they had to include the youngest daughter.. they included her, but they didn't embrace her."

There is a difference between Inclusion and Embracing

Brian McLaren:

Bible Study on Mark 7: 1-21 & 21-?

Glandian Carney:

Core Values: How can we allow for the freedom to craft concepts that will..

- Deepen trust
- Express creativity
- Provide a safe environment
- Engage all in problem solving
- Resolve conflict
- Create internal support

• What drives these concepts?
• What values support this freedom?

• Core Values

- To reinforce a Christ-like culture to treat all people with dignity and respect.
- To create an environment that fosters care, fairness and cooperation.
- To affirm and develop a partnership in the culture of the church that cares about the whole person ... mind, body, and spirit.
- To promote an atmosphere that will encourage and support the vision and mission of the church, and allow it to flourish.

- Do people feel cared for when they come into your community?
- Are you making an environment of grace in your community?
- The wholeness of the person stands with dignity and commitment.
- Excluding people we limit the goal of evangelism.

• Group Notes:

- if these are just handed down by leadership or committee then it's not going to work. the people need to embrace it.

• Purpose Statement

- We as a caring community want to foster an environment of trust that will encourage individual affirmation.
- We want to create a safe space where all people feel valued, accepted, and supported through the expression of grace. We need each other, we need an environment around us that acknowledges and celebrates our diversity while

encouraging unity.

- Grace is an environment of freedom, trust, open to individualism, create growth, unity hope and change, would speak to the character and capacity of individual, outward flowing, productivity dealing with dreaming, impact on mission, environment of inclusion not exclusion, fosters mutual respect, affirming, creates a safe place where people can belong, grace is a place where people know your name, awareness with grace, spiritual environment within grace, where people are loved.
- Don't & Can't do it alone.
- What would my community look like if I opened the doors to create a caring community?
- Story: reflection on the first breakfast. "peter, do you love me?" "dude, you know"... when peter is old, a young man comes to peter and says "man, you do love a lot".. and peter responds, "you don't really know what love is till you learn to sing the blues".. you gotta know what is on the outside.
- Jay Voorhees:
 - An importance of Naming.
 - Exclusion: "this is a place where we struggle" as leaders
- Socio-Economic Exclusion
 - Boundaries based on economic prosperity and class.
 - Often focuses on ministry "to" people rather than "with" people
 - Based in the myth that poverty or lower social status is a character flaw (protestant work ethic) since after all "God helps those who help themselves."
 - New Church Plants - look at the ratio of newly planted churches in affluent communities to those in lower class communities.
 - How often do we socialize with people who are at a "lower" economic level than we are?
 - How do those of us in ministry respond to the regular phone calls asking for assistance?
 - exclusion based on STATUS
- Racial-Ethnic-Gender Exclusion
 - Boundaries are based on physical and sociological categories.
 - Buys into a colonial mindset of "us" and "them"
 - Often assumes stereotypes of the other as a justification for not reaching out. "they won't want to come to our church"
 - How are we willing to change our worship and other practices to include other traditions and cultures?
 - Are women given significant roles in worship and other practices of the church? beyond tokenism
 - Are we being truly inclusive or simply buying into "tokenism?"
 - exclusion based on IDENTITY
- Theo-Ethical Exclusion
 - Boundaries determined by theological, ethical, or political beliefs
 - Based in a desire to categorize beliefs as right or wrong.
 - Deborah Tannen "Argument Culture" we don't facilitate conversation it's about who wins and who loses.
 - Seen in divisions such as Protestants or Catholic; Conservative or Liberal; Pro-Choice or Pro-Life

- This was the realm where Jesus and the Pharisees experienced their greatest tension, in that Jesus ate with and healed persons who were theologically and ethically challenged according to the Pharisees
- exclusion based on BELIEFS
- These overlap and groups will talk in different groups, we have to get into the same mode of language.. we'll talk more on that tomorrow.
- God is more Expansive than we can imagine. It's part of what Jonah got in trouble. God said go to ninevah.. he ran away.. he went.. and they were cool.. and here's what he said.
 - Jonah 3: 10 - 4: 4
- We are a lot like Jonah that we are afraid that God's love IS endless.
- It may not be fair, but Jesus said.. "it's my kingdom."
- Questions for Discussion - Socio Economic
 - are the notions of postmodernism and the Emerging Church primarily reserved for people of means who have access to resources, technology, etc.?
 - Is there more talk about the plight of the poor than actual engagement with persons in poverty?
 - What is the message of hope for those whose "backs are up against the wall"
 - Read some Howard Thurman
- Questions for Discussion - Racial/Ethnic
- Questions for Theological and Ethical Exclusion
 - How do we balance judgment and embrace?
 - What are the moral and theological absolutes that demand exclusion, and what form would that exclusion take?
- Brian McLaren: quoting someone else "what if each side is trying to fix something, but they are blaming the other side for not fixing..(i think that's what you meant)"
- Day Two
- late arriving: question from Tony "where does mission come into play with embracing church?"
- brian: we live in a world of empire and colonialism. we start at chapter 2 instead of one, that we forget the creation. if we get anything is that God created the Kingdom. (paraphrased)
- james cole: made some star wars joke that didn't work, but suggested a book by Sharon Welch "After Empire."
- participant: "when two beings come together is to me mission"
- participant: "the myth of scarcity sometimes drive us to not see God or embrace our mission"
- brain: "what if Jesus was trying to create an alternative kingdom?" "be like the birds (sermon on mount)" he's saying they are provided for in our view of scarcity. there is a deconstruct of the current empire and creating a new empire. "what if we experience conversion that we become incapable of living in our old world." "when you get rejected it destabilizes the status quo, and the system starts to fall because you are one less person keeping the status quo." "i am excited to see/feel that i am becoming a bit more converted today."

- participant: “who would Jesus say our enemy is today.”
- brian: when a conflict arises you can either run from it, try to solve it, or live with it ... (something like that) excerpts from a future article with sojourners
 - we will stop answering questions that are framed badly
 - we must start raising new questions and issues that need to be raised
 - we must answer questions with questions
 - we must go cleverly deeper, Jesus touched the deeper level over the surface level
 - we must agree with people whenever we can. survey the gospels and you will find Jesus say “you have answered wisely”...
 - we must speak through action, not just words
 - we must tell stories
- on homosexuality
 - it’s terribly framed badly, there are absurd number of subjects grouped in with homosexuality, it’s the result of....
 - it’s not to be oversimplified, (utilized a x/y graph to draw where people are all over the spectrum over, “two buckets”)
 - what do we do with heterosexual people who are inclusive of homosexuals, do we exclude as if they were homosexual..?
 - Jesus, would distract them from the issue, “what if before we talk about homosexuality we talked about intersexuality... “why do you have to surgically alter people so that they can fit into two buckets?”
 - “what kinda culture requires people to be surgically altered?”
 - we can talk about mental illness: the bible doesn’t give us any guidance to schizophrenia except as demon possession.. somewhere in the in betweens we find how to be with that person
- Acceptance is not approval
 - we can withhold acceptance to show a lack of approval.
 - the case of slavery
 - colonialism, segregation
 - book suggestion: “king leopold’s ghost” they never protested colonialism, they protested slavery. britain should still rule the world, they should just do it humanely
 - the case of women leadership
 - the case of gay attenders, members, leaders
- we must answer the questions “the other side”
 - how will they treat their own homosexual children and friends who have not repudiated their homosexuality? and how will they deal with those who do not agree with their policy on homosexuality?
 - where will the lines of unacceptability be drawn, and what will be the biblical hermeneutic that prevents an anything goes mindset? and how will they embrace those who do not believe homosexuals should be embraced until they repudiated their homosexuality?
- participant question: “what do you say with love the sinner but hate the sin”
- brian: “it’s a good saying, but it always has a judgment on the sin by the person saying..”
- participant: “how did you deal with the pedophile”
- brian: “the laws in the state of maryland have helped us... but there is a lot of fear on both sides, these guys are afraid for themselves and what they will do.”

- brian: cs lewis: “i’ve realized that all my life i’ve been about to deal with one person, and that’s me.. i see my flaws and hate myself and bring myself down.. but since i love myself and desire to be as much as i can be. “
 - when you can’t hate the autism/down syndrome and love the person.. it’s part of them..?
- glandion: on Christian practices (led a meditation on what is above the line, the image we portray, then below the line, the things that we deal with, feel, etc.)
 - when we think of practices we think of them as above the line, the things we do, the appearance we put forward
 - you have to allow grace to come to the very essence of life stuff, below the line
 - practices are things people have done over a period of time, God’s people have done over a period of time that sustains them in grace
 - i meditate every day to invite God to deal with my own sense of pride, lust, etc. as it’s important for me to have my own transformation and change
 - the result of transformational prayer, to me, leads me to community
 - the practice of prayer, communion is an important practice for growth
 - what are the things that transform you? that take you above the line and below the line
 - this is not new, the sustaining piece of the church is the practices that sustain the heart and then society
 - a survey question: what is the most meaningful experience for your spiritual growth. answer was discovered as small groups that they could be real, they could discern a picture of who a loving presence is, and Jesus is that model. Jesus emerges as a spiritual guide. find mentors that can work with you through this process.
 - it’s messy, but follow the practices to help you go below the line
- jay: dorothy bass “ practices are ways to sustain our ways of life, but the other new practices that help us sustain away a life..”
 - the practice of forgiveness, how are we developing an ethos, are we staying with our rage or are we finding a place for forgiveness
 - forgiveness & apology begets the embracing
- glandion: story of benedictine brothers who walked meditatively across the campus, went into a room and then come out with a suit and on a fire truck with siren. they came back around 30 minutes later and came back out of the room with their robes on again, walking meditatively. what a dynamic. there are times we must be intent on putting out the fires to sustain the place of rhythm of grace & life.