

# *New Church Now Breakout*

## **Bishops in something new – convened by Jeremy Smith, Meredith Gudger-Raines, etc**

Summary:

Our team is about matching gifts with needs at the highest level of the church.

Our team wanted to rethink Bishops away from being general superintendents over a geographic region, as distinct as they are.

Instead bishops would be over a speciality within the church.

We would elect them to an office.

A bishop of missions.

A Bishop over communications.

A bishop over discipleship.

A Bishop over discipleship and worship.

A bishop over appointments, yes, one bishop who is gifted at discernment and matchmaking and accountability over a large region.

Something like that with specialized bishops.

These offices would be able to organize how they would be more effective.

Our challenges are how to How do we avoid a cult of personality and what do we do with the bishops we have now into a new wineskin.

In 2020, we will have 2-3 bishops retiring, and either 2-3 being elected. We have a chance to do a complete reorganization with new people.

## **Death - convened by Lee Carney Hartman, with Nathan Hollifield, Tammy (Edmonds), Maya (Little Rock), Janet (Tacoma:Mason)**

Conversation:

- How do we pull the plug gracefully?
- It's time to let go so the new life can come.
- Anthony and his family's story - pulling the plug, organ donation, new life...
- Experience with dying churches....
- Being present to life in the dying. Totally different energy in fighting disease, planning blood transfusions....vs loving during the dying, being present together....
- Communication is paramount
- Neglected corpse can be toxic, carefully buried corpse is compost ...
- Dying churches are full of dying people

- Dying is something you live through...Dying as a communicator or life....
- We're part of a dead church, not a dying church.
- We are at that moment where re-birth happens and I don't want to miss it. I don't want life support!
- Grief takes time and care. Grief is ok.

Action ideas:

\* Host film viewings for church and broader community, engage conversation and what takes hold there:

Griefwalker

Speaking of Dying (Trudy James)

\* Good Grief. Spend time in Holy Saturday. Discussion prompt.

\* Stories as process. Help people connect with and tell their own stories. "What happened when you said good bye and turned a corner? "

\* Sacraments / Ritual - engage the paradox. Communion is both consuming death, and bread of life.... Baptism is a drowning into new birth....

\* Train some Death Doulas!

\* Conference - please invest in tending to the dying process, so we don't miss the moment! Conference seems geared to problem solving toward preservation, toward life-support. Conference staff understandably vulnerable to job change/loss. Still, we need appointments invested in community hospice care.

\* Call upon folks who are already engaged in hospice care/ Stephen's Ministers / congregational care teams - mobilize/deploy them in this work too. (I can walk with you. It's painful yet natural. It can be beautiful. It can even be playful at moments.)

## *Acts of Resistance Breakout*

Reconciling Churches

- How to pressure the Western Jurisdiction leadership
- How to accompany non-reconciling churches

Resistance through Apportionments

Unconscious Bias trainings as forms of Resistance

How to activate and equip laity to encourage conversation

How to speak out as lone progressive voice in conservative/divided congregation?

## Discipleship Systems

### *Concerns about Complaints Breakout*

**RESOLVED**, In the case of multiple complaints filed against clergy and laity of the Pacific Northwest Annual Conference being received in a short timeframe, we offer the bishop the following guidelines that reflect the priorities and values of our Annual Conference members:

Complaints will be triaged in such a way that those alleging grave and/or widespread harm will receive priority. We believe that persons and relationships are to be honored over institutions and laws, which is what we see in Jesus' life as depicted in the Gospels. As a result, the priorities of this annual conference regarding the process of complaints shall be as follows (ordered from most to least urgent):

1. Sexual abuse (para. 2702.1h) and/or child abuse (para. 2702.1g);
2. Sexual misconduct (para. 2702.1i); harassment, including, but not limited to, racial and/or sexual harassment (para. 2702.1j); and/or racial or gender discrimination (para. 2702.1k);
3. Crime (para. 2702.1c) and/or fiscal malfeasance (para. 2702.1l);
4. Relationships and/or behavior that undermines the ministry of another pastor (para. 2702.1f);
5. Other complaints alleging harm; and
6. Other complaints.

Current Pacific Northwest District Superintendents, already entrusted with supervisory responsibilities, are eligible designees whom the bishop may choose to carry out the supervisory process. (Our preference and request is that only current District Superintendents from this Annual Conference are to be called upon for this supervisory process.)

To ensure that District Superintendents can appropriately attend to their duties as chief missional strategists, District Superintendents are asked by the Annual Conference to prioritize complaints as listed above.

#### **EXPLANATION**

In anticipation of an increase in complaints filed after the passage of the "Traditionalist Plan" we seek to ensure that complaints of actual urgency and harm are prioritized over charges brought to persecute LGBTQIA+ people.

**RESOLVED**, In an effort to ensure that the Pacific Northwest Annual Conference and our local churches can continually live into our mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world, we request that there is no use of conference reserve funds to finance any part of supervisory or judicial complaint processes for complaints that do not cause grave or widespread harm.

#### **EXPLANATION**

Given that any United Methodist anywhere can file charges against Pacific Northwest clergy and laity, we need to protect our assets for the use of ministry rather than forced discrimination against and persecution of LGBTQIA+ people.

SPONSORED BY

Rev. Austin Adkinson, Seattle: Haller Lake

Cyndil Davis, lay Snohomish UMC

on behalf of the working group on responding to complaints

## *Welcoming Immigrant Breakout*

### Storytelling

Shared Commitments moving forward:

In addition to legislation that actively pursues concrete steps forward, the Open Space events this morning surfaced shared commitments around how we do our ministry in the local church all the way to how this body of the annual conference gathers and goes about its work.

- Flatten the hierarchy
- Practice deep presence; contemplation and vulnerability
- Usher in and pay attention to the sacredness of life present in death
- Discipleship systems that are responsive to the whole person where pastors are facilitators rather than imparters of information
- Community engagement is not a program, it's a way of expressing discipleship
- Cultivate alternate giving units beyond worship attendance

Jeremy Smith Notes from others:

We need death doulas to help us be present to dying movements rather than missing out because we keep fighting against dying well.

What is theological pluralism? Are we voting to be libera

Stream of consciousness notes:

Our structure mimics US Government, so that isn't the most efficient

Is there a way to restructure that that gives our Executive Branch different responsibilities? In early days, Bishops were more hands-on; is that an expectation now?

Role of ordained full-time clergy in a new church where there are diminishing resources.

Can a community support a full-time ordained clergyperson?

We want to hear the heart of the Bishop. Why they do what they do. What does a transformational Faith look like? (SPECIALIZATION)

What happens to Bishop Karen on January 1?

Ideas:

School structure

- Headmaster
- 4-5 people are specialized

Large churches staff with multiple clergypersons over different areas and genres.

Circuit is covered as a team.

Jesus sent disciples 2x2, We sent people alone so if they had a team they would not be alone.

Symbolic role of the Bishop.

Bishops are functional instead of symbolic.

No rights to vote but they are symbolic.

Function.

Spiritual leadership and authority = what does it mean?

Do we need to "unlearn" some ideas about what the episcopacy looks like?

How do we empower them to take authority when pain happens on the floor?

Good Shepherds cannot keep the wolves away from the sheep. How can Holy Conferencing and Robert's Rules help or hurt?

Need a Spiritual Bill of Rights.

Bishops should have formational time.

DSW is creating a new structure and coordination is needed between the conferences.

Should not think of this as the "West" leaving. That cuts us off from UM schools/seminaries/churches beyond the West. Make space for Germany and other countries to be part of a liberated Methodist movement.

Need theological education connections and pipelines for advancement from laity to clergy to episcopacy.

Love the idea of splitting the role of bishop into teams. How do you spread them so wide? Do we allow them to structure themselves however? Are there a spiritual authority taken away when the bishop becomes an office rather than a spiritual head?

Bishops team as spiritual leadership team.

Practical ministry team that are part of the bishops office.

What if a DS was able to be a layperson whose speciality was administrative?

What does it mean to be clergy? To be laity? If functional roles are more important than spiritual leadership...

Difference between Kingdom and Kin-dom - pastors level of involvement variety.

We have to have a representative who speaks to the outside world. We need an Oprah and Brene Brown. People want that spiritual nourishment and we have it. We need the Jesus who will go out in the crowds and eat with them. We need money and people to get it out there. We need a bishop of Communications

Bishop Dorff was removed, three bishops took over.