

Missional Imagination:

What is God calling us to be and to do in the 21st Century?

Presenter: Stephen Harrison

A changing and challenging world calls us to use imagination in our thinking and acting in mission. Stephen's sessions will provoke us to open ourselves to new ways of seeing, being, dreaming and doing in response to all God is calling us to do and be in the 21st Century.

Session 4: My car has a couch: Imagining a different future

Missional imagination comes to the fore when we begin to listen to God's call and dream about the future. In this session we will explore how we can reimagine church, health, faith, sustainability and effectiveness.

Suggested Reading

Faith Formation in a Secular Age: Andrew Root

Introduction

I am fascinated by the possibility of driverless cars.

Maybe because I have been commuting two hours from the Gold Coast to Brisbane and back for ten years.

It is not so much the technology that excites me....it is what a car might become when it no longer needs someone driving it.

Certain things constrain cars right now....driverless has the potential to remove those constraints. If all cars were driverless and accidents were eliminated. The insides of cars could be anything, within reason.

So I imagine that a car might have more of a couch in it. With a TV.

Or maybe a meeting space. Or a spa.

Maybe you could book a car depending on your needs for the day.

So what about the church?

What are the things that right now make us keep doing the same thing?

It is of course all in our thinking. In our ideas of what church is.

That it is primarily a house of worship...and then something else.

Site Office not Cathedral

"We have corrupted the word church by constantly using it in a non-missionary sense."

Lesslie Newbigen

What underscores some of our thinking?

Three Levels of Secular

Andrew Root – Three Levels of Secular

Sacred/Secular Planes // Bound by Things

Sacred/Secular Space // Bound by Institutions and Ideologies

Sacred Scepticism // Blocked by Ideas

So what does this mean for us?

Church is a place (where the community goes)

Faith: what it is exactly we are asking of people? Commit = belong to church.

Belong to church means go to Sunday service (and maybe some other stuff – giving, bible study)

Sustainability of this model is based on people coming to church and giving money and us replacing those people as they leave or die.

As a place and a community we have to pay for buildings and pay for clergy. This costs and so we need more people to pay.

Health therefore is having enough of those people .and that they are engaged in our activities worship, bible study, service.

Effectiveness is doing what we can to ensure people come to church. So tweaking worship. Being friendly [don't get me wrong. I like these things. I encourage churches to do these things. There is a bunch of stuff we do that drives people away] BUT....

This is only one way of being church....

We need to be able to pull all this apart and dream of something different.

One way of doing this is through the thought experiment where we lift some restrictions or reframe the questions we are asking

Watch this...

Video: Alan Watts – How would you really enjoy spending your life... if money were no object?
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZJCOiegKAIY>

What would we do if tomorrow we had no money and no buildings – just people?

1. **What might ‘faith’ look like?**
2. **How would you measure effectiveness?**
3. **How would you know you are being faithful?**
4. **How would you know you are still Anglican?**

Operative ecclesiology – A side track

The Healthy Whole Church

Integration vs Segregation

“the health of any culture depends on the vital interactions among at least three generations”

Ernest Boyer

Sensitivity vs Indifference

“The post-modern post-absolute culture of today hears with their eyes and thinks with their feelings”

Ravi Zacharias

Participation vs Observation

“... during the last 150 years, our social institutions have gradually removed young people from significant social roles in service to the common good or the reign of God and relegated them to passive roles as students, service workers and consumers.”

David White

Normativity vs Superfluity

“the church is to be understood as a web of core practices which at the same time mark and constitute the church”

Reinhard Hütter

Activity:

What would we do if money wasn't an issue?

- 1. What might ‘faith’ look like?**
- 2. How would you measure effectiveness?**
- 3. How would you know you are being faithful?**
- 4. How would you know you are still Anglican?**

In doing all of that we also need to remember as we discussed yesterday who we are and what we value....

Hillsong Vision

Compelling Vision - Hillsong

This isn't my church.

I wrote one. The church I belong to...

A vision for the kind of church we want to be

What is our compelling vision?

Activity: The church I belong to... [15 min]

Write statement in the style of the Hillsong Vision.

Write three...