

ONLINE LENTEN STUDY

“40 Days of Discernment - Envisioning our Future Now”

A Lenten study designed to allow us to discover tangible ways to design, develop and instigate new life-giving ministry and mission.

Based on and using the following books:

“Canoeing the Mountains,” by Tod Bolsinger

“Christianity for the Rest of us,” by Diana Butler Bass

“The Great Emergence,” by Phyllis Tickle

“The Church on the Other Side,” by Brian McLaren

(And others)

Wednesday evenings during Lent; online via Zoom – from 7:00 – 8:30 PM

There will be two in-person sessions held later in the study for those wishing to discuss actual issues and possibilities for their own, individual churches or situations.

- Are you aware that culture has changed so drastically that our own communities are a new kind of mission field? (Like Leslie Newbigin described his own Great Britain, when he returned after decades spent as a foreign missionary.)
- Do you fully know that much – if not most – of what our churches are doing are generating dubious success, if any at all?
- Do you wonder why we seem to keep doing the same things repeatedly, despite the definition of insanity (doing the same thing over and over expecting different results this time) proving that it’s pretty much a waste of time?
- Do you feel the frustration so many Christians and churches share that we simply no longer know what to do to be a faithful witness in a world that is so different from the one we used to inhabit?

If the answer to any of these questions is yes, then you may well want to join some of us for a Lenten study designed to get at these very issues.

We will use the books listed above as part of our study, but this “season of discernment” is more than a simple book study. (That most of us realize will not really change a thing after we finish.) It is designed to use these resources as a springboard we can use as a launching point to explore actual, tangible, real ways our churches can use to reinvent / rediscover ministry. Our hope is that perhaps this 40-day study group where we actually dare talking about the “800-pound gorilla in our religious room” will open new and fresh ways to explore God’s call to continued ministry in our changing world.

Call or email Rodger if you are interested in making this Lenten Journey one that might well change everything!

Course Syllabus (tentative):

- Feb. 14th:** Introduction during dinner and worship at Christ, 6 PM (dinner), 7 PM (worship)
- Feb. 21st:** Session # 1: “Canoeing the Mountains,” part 1:
Why is Tod Bolsinger’s metaphor so apt and powerful for this process?
“How do you canoe over the mountains? You DON’T!”
- Feb. 28th:** Session # 2: “Christianity for the Rest of us,” part 1:
Diana Butler Bass speaks for all of us when she talks about the “vanished village” (that includes the extinct “village church.”)
We are already “off the map” that Tod Bolsinger talks about: What are we going to do about it?
- March 6th:** Session # 3: “Off the Map” (Canoeing the Mountains, part 2):
When the river runs out and there’s nothing but mountains ahead, what do we do?
What is possible? What is not possible?
- March 13th:** Session # 4: (Assuming that Session # 3 didn’t end up at a dead end):
“Making the Journey; practical applications and implications.
(Gus and Hal go to church – from Bolsinger.)
- March 20th:** “Spaghetti Against the Wall” (What might stick? What won’t?)
(Canoeing the Mountains, chapter 9 (and others)
Tangible Brainstorm Session – can either happen during or following this session.
- March 27th:** Optional last meeting during Holy Week: Conclusion and reflections.
Tangible ideas to take and commit to God during Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, or Easter worship services.

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