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Kate's Corner

I'm so disappointed that our conversation on the 29th had to be canceled due to weather.

We will have a congregational conversation about the state of our church on March 3 following our fellowship meal. If you can't come to that, please give me a call so we can arrange a meeting.

Last year we applied for the Center for Congregations Community Grant Program. This is both an educational program – a literal “how to” for designing a community ministry program – and a grant program for which we may apply for a matching grant later this year to help fund the costs of implementing a new community ministry.

Understanding the CMG process requires putting away our own assumptions, experience, and fears for a bit...a humble approach, wondering if there is a more effective way to do ministry than what we have done in the past...

The CMG philosophy describes community ministry as a mutual ministry:

1. Mutual ministries are relational. These ministries allow for people to state their strengths and passions, for friendships and trust to be formed and the minis-

try that results will be done with people, not for people or to people.

2. Mutual ministries are asset-based. We have looked at the



“Mutual ministries are collaborative. They involve congregants, community members and those they wish to serve....

passions and gifts of the individuals of our congregation, assets of our congregation as a whole, and we are in the process of looking at the assets and passions of our community to create a ministry that combines these three asset areas together.

One thing that is an extraordinary asset of our congregation is that we are free of a building. That means if we feel called to minister in a different neighborhood, we can go there. If we feel called to minister out of a unique

sort of building, we can go there. All of the other churches in the program are bound to a building. 3. Mutual ministries are collaborative. They involve congregants, community members, and those they wish to serve, working together to create and build a program to serve a chosen group.

Right now, we are at the stage where God only knows where we are going. We don't know yet. What we do know is that this project is stressful for the core team (Ellen Wilson, Alin Cass, and Pastor Kate), and without the positive support of every member, we can't do this. This is a challenging program for the three of us because it involves having a lot of conversations with people we don't know AND making the time to do so. This is a journey--a long-term process--and letting go of our expertise and criticism is part of the process.

In order for North Christian to move into its future, we must learn more and address our concerns and fears: change and uncertainty cause anxiety. We are on this journey together and that makes all the difference.

Pastor Kate

Disciples Women will meet at Heritage Pointe on Monday, February 11.



Souperbowl!

Who will win the coveted Golden Ladle?

Find out on February 3 at our First Sunday Fellowship. We are so excited that we have a wonderful, large space for our meal, so let's fill it up! Please bring your soup to the fellowship hall prior to worship, and

we will gather there following worship. Soup is \$1 a bowl or \$.25 for a sample. Change will be provided. Proceeds will go toward the Bethany Food Pantry matching grant as explained in the article below.

Food Pantry Update

Exciting News from Bethany Food Bank (at Gethsemene Lutheran Church)

"With the help of a generous matching grant, we are having an exterior door installed for the pantry. We will also paint

the room, get some new shelving and give the place a great new look!"

North Christian will contribute to the matching campaign in three ways:

1. Funds in the offering plate

marked "pantry update"

2. \$200 from the outreach fund.

3. All the proceeds from our Souperbowl fundraiser.

Meet the Stanford Family

We welcomed the Joe & Jenn Stanford family into membership on January 6.



Joe has worked for the State of Indiana (Indiana Board of Tax Review) for the past 25 years. He enjoys sports, playing golf, and playing with the boys. His grandparents (Max & Lucille Smith) and mother (Joyce Stanford) were charter members of North Christian Church. He grew up at North Christian,

was baptized in 1978, and was a member through 1989.

Jenn works at Carroll High School as an Instructional Assistant in the Resource Room (special education). She loves to read, watch the boys play sports, and baking. As a family, they like to attend the Komets, Mad Ants, and Tin Caps games. They love Harry Potter too.

Andrew, 13, is in 7th grade at Carroll Middle school, plays trombone in the jazz band, runs track for the middle school and also enjoys flag football and basketball, and video games.

Jack, 11, is in 5th grade at Hickory Center Elementary, plays trombone as well, runs cross country, plays flag football, and FortNite and other video games. He is looking forward to track and tackle football next year.

Alex, 9, is in 3rd grade at Hickory Center, runs cross country, plays flag football, baseball, basketball, and LOVES hockey though he doesn't play organized hockey, just in the family kitchen. He Plays video games with his brothers too.

Who Are We? (Pt. 2)- article by Bill Tenny-Brittian

What Do You Do?

In the US an introduction typically goes something like this:

“Hi, I’m Bill. I don’t think we’ve met.”

“Good to meet you. I’m Carl.”

“Good to meet you too. What do you do?”

“I’m a ...”

How we introduce ourselves is revelatory. It turns out that our larger culture understands the premise that we really are what we do. However, we need to avoid concluding that one’s vocation is equivalent to who we are. Our vocation reflects a chain of decisions we’ve made to get there and it’s that decision chain that better reveals who we are.

But how would you introduce yourself in relationship to the church? In the vast majority of churches the Pareto Principle is in fact the rule – 20 percent of the members do 80 percent of the ministry while the rest of the congregation seems content to enjoy the fruit of that labor. It can be tempting to load up a bag full of rocks and start lobbing them at all those slackers. But in our experience, a good number of those 80 percenters aren’t lazy or apathetic; rather they’re clueless about who they are as disciples of Jesus. It’s not because they don’t believe the “right things” about their spiritual parentage. It’s that they’re unclear about what they’re called to do and so they do nothing. And if you do nothing it’s difficult to define who you are. In an effort to help us discover who we are, especially in terms of the who we are in the church, back in 1972 the first spiritual gifts inventory was published. Immediately, the North American

church jumped into the “Let’s discover our spiritual gifts” movement. The premise was that if we understood which spiritual gifts we’d been given then we’d naturally gravitate into corresponding missions and ministries. It would help solve the “who we are” and the “what we do” dilemma. The problem is if you find you have a gift of discernment you’ll quickly discover it’s nearly impossible to connect that gift with anything in the “real” world. Few churches have a Discernment Committee because, well, what would they do?!

And so, in most churches we find a repeating pattern.

1. Someone “discovers” a spiritual gift inventory and a wave of enthusiasm builds.
2. People take the spiritual gift test and discover the wonderful gifts God’s given them.
3. There’s great excitement about these epiphanies.
4. No one translates the gifts into real-world applications.
5. Nothing happens as a result of the whole exercise.
6. Time passes until the spiritual gift inventory is a distant memory.
7. Repeat.

Sound familiar? I had a conversation just last week in my small group about this very issue. One of the guys shared with us he’d taken his church’s Discovery Class several years before and found he was gifted in prophecy and wisdom. “But what do I do with that? Go around wisely telling people their futures?”

It turns out that just knowing your spiritual gifts isn’t going to help you answer the “Who are you?” question – largely because it doesn’t

answer the “What do I do?” question. That doesn’t mean it’s not valuable to know your spiritual gifts, but spiritual gifts are the tools we’ve been given to build up the church. They’re only clues to who we are because they don’t help us define what we do.

What Must You Do?

But how do we discover what we’re supposed to do, besides loving one another and so on? The answer to that is found in doing whatever you’ve been created to do. That’s better known as a “calling” in the church. Unfortunately, most church folks have become confused by that term because it’s used nearly exclusively to describe the work of professional clergy. Pastors are “called” into “ministry” and then they’re “called” to a church or to a ministry. You almost never hear of someone being called into farming or processing or grocery shelf stocking. And yet we’d be a poorer world if people weren’t called into these jobs ... not to mention we’d be hungry as well. However, discovering what you’ve been created to do may or may not have anything to do with your vocation. I’m convinced that there are many who are called to particular careers. But it also appears there are those who are called to live out their “calling” in whatever job they happen to have. For instance, my brother manages a bowling alley. Most of the time he likes his job just fine, but there’s no question it’s a job, not a calling. On the other hand, he lives out his calling every day. My brother is a people person. He’s never met a stranger. Spend ten minutes in his presence and your lousy day will begin to turn around because that’s just who he is. He doesn’t gush Bible verses, religious

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platitudes, or expound on deep theological mysteries. He's more likely to crack a joke, engage in a bit of self-deprecation, or shut up and listen attentively. His faith comes out when there's a broad opening – he doesn't try to manipulate the conversation so he can make a faith-point. Watch my brother for an hour or so and you'll have a good idea about who he is ... because of what he does. His calling to what he does is every bit as important and sacred and faithful as my calling into professional ministry – and his calling may be even more important because his faith touches a many more unchurched people than mine does.

I've no idea what my brother's spiritual gifts are, but if I was guessing I suspect they'd be discernment and hospitality. He can discern people's moods, their pain, and their attitudes. Then he befriends them through gracious hospitality. He puts his spiritual gifts to work as he interacts with

hundreds of people each day.

So, what are you called to do? Behind that question is a more revealing question. What must you do? In other words, what are you passionate about? It might be a career that was planted in your heart when you were ten years old. And depending on your life choices to date, that might be your current job. On the other hand, life might have got in the way and you may have made decisions that took you down a different path. (However, if that's what your calling is then you might want to figure out a way to get back on track. It's probably not too late to change your course.)

Perhaps your passion isn't a particular "job," but a need to make people smile or to comfort people in crisis. Your gift of mercy might be so high that you're compelled to launch an initiative at work or at church every time you hear of a local or global crisis. You might find yourself employed at a manufacturing plant spin-

ning a #8 nut onto spindle sprocket as they pass down the line. It was never your dream career, but the job supports your calling as the go-to gal for the elementary school's parent-tutor association. If you don't know what your passion and/or what your calling is there are passion-interest inventories you can take that should help. But conversations with those who know you best often reveal what we cannot see ourselves.

TO BE CONTINUED

About Bill Tenny-Brittian

Bill is the Managing Partner at The Effective Church Group. He began ministry as a church planter in the early 1980s and over the past 35 years he's grown churches from one side of the nation to the other. In 2002 he joined Bill Easum's consultation group and began partnering with churches and church leaders to help them reach their fullest potential. He is the author of nine books and the editor of Net Results magazine.