



Ministry update for Synod 2020

Intergenerational Ministry – Young Adults



INCLUSION OF ADULTS UNDER 50 RESOLUTION

At our last gathering, the Synod passed the *Inclusion of Adults under 50* resolution. The steering committee, comprising of members from most presbyteries, has worked towards identifying issues and challenges that hinder younger people from stepping into leadership in church. A metaphor that has helped shape our work begins with a dining table. Upon the dining table is spread a wonderful banquet of food, around which sits guests. They are eating, sharing and fellowshiping

together. There is another group who have been invited to the table to join in the feast. Will they come and share in the meal or will they leave?

Imagine the dining table is the church and the food is what the church offers through its congregations, councils, ministries, schools and agencies. The people sitting at the table are those who currently offer leadership in the church. The group that have been invited are the next generation of leaders.

The steering committee have wrestled with questions such as:

- Will space be made for others to sit around the table?
- Is the food appetizing to those invited to the table? Is there a variety of different cuisines or is it expected that everyone will eat what is already offered? Who decides the cuisines?
- What utensils are used at the table? Is there a choice to swap out forks for chopsticks?
- Does members of the invited group even want to sit at the table? Why?
- What if there are people who would rather sit around a campfire or sit on the floor? Would those around the table move to join them? Why not?

These are provocative questions that require serious engagement from the church wearing intercultural and intergenerational lens. The committee is currently creating a survey that will allow us to hear the voices of younger members across our Synod and collect data on the state of younger leadership within the church. It is hoped that we will identify answers to the above questions.

NETWORKING

A significant time of my role has been to network with those invited to the table. These have included connecting with young adults (both in person and online), ministry practitioners working with young adults with a particular emphasis on connecting with CALD communities, presbytery leadership and eLM





colleagues. I have engaged with Assembly circles, the National Youth and Children's Coalition (NYCC), Surrender, Intergenerate, NAIDOC weaving and yarn circle and numerous networks online. These connections were made in person, email, social media, regional cluster groups and zoom meetings (post April).

EVENTS

I have also sought to imagine what new foods may be brought to the table. A key objective over 2019-2020 has been to explore how we might cultivate interest based Christian communities for young adults in addition to church based communities. Two events were run. The first was a Spiritual Hiking Retreat held at UC Camping's Adekate Lodge in November 2019 and the second was OmegaCon, a completely online table top gaming event held during Victoria's first covid19 lockdown in April 2020. Both events have demonstrated the exciting potential of how shared interests can become new and renewing doorways to draw people into intentional Christian community.

COLLABORATION

The dining table metaphor has led me to critique the Intergenerational discipleship framework with an intercultural lens. It is important to recognize the Intergenerational framework comes from a North American white middle class culture, and acknowledge other cultures have different expectations and practices in the ways younger and older generations interact. This has begun a journey to better understand the spaces created when intergenerational intersects and overlaps with intercultural spaces.

Together with Chris Barnett, we have facilitated zoom conversations across the Synod to inform our understanding. At the time of writing, we have engaged with almost 50 people across a range of generations and cultures.

Let me conclude by acknowledging how difficult 2020 has been for everyone. In the midst of unprecedented challenges, I like many, have spent too many hours on Zoom calls. Yet I continually give thanks to God for our Synod that prioritizes ministry with all generations, and particularly the next generation. My ongoing prayer is that the Holy Spirit would sustain, inspire and challenge us all, to truly be the light of Christ in a crazy world.

As we push through 2021, I am committed to partnering with ministries across our Synod as we serve the next generation. Please feel free to contact me via email, SMS, phone, Facebook messenger or Instagram (sorry no TikTok or Snapchat).

For more information, please contact

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