

WEEK 5: Vision and Practices at The Table

Review

- Jun 3 - The Table Within the Landscape of Anglican History
- Jun 10 - Via Media: Anglicanism as "Mere Christianity" (Compass Rose)
- Jun 17 - How Via Media Plays Out in Today's Cultural Issues (Human sexuality, etc)
- Jun 24 - Sacramental Ontology! Everything is burning with the glory of the Lord!
- Today - vision / practices (how we talk about our place in this larger framework)

EXERCISE:

Name some things that have changed in your life since you starting attending The Table.

Name some things you notice about how we do things at The Table.

What are some words you'd use to describe The Table?

Vision (what we see)

- A multiplying movement of sacramental, missional Anglican churches networked together in a common mission to...

Mission (what we do)

- Encounter / embody / extend the PRESENCE of Christ
 - Sacramental in bread and wine - this is my body
 - Sacramental in life together - the body of Christ
 - Sacramental in mission - meeting Christ in the least of these
- **Encounter**
 - Anglican worship = an actual encounter with Christ in Word and Sacrament, not a "classroom" or a "pep rally"
 - We do this on Sundays - encounter Living Word as we hear the written Word read aloud, the gospel proclaimed... encounter the Body and Blood of Christ in the sacramental bread and wine
 - We ENCOUNTER the presence of Christ in a meal.
- **Embody**
 - Prayer - "Come, O Spirit of Christ and sanctify these gifts, this bread and this wine; May they be for us the body and blood of Christ; Vibrant with life, healing, renewing and making us whole. Sanctify us also, that we may faithfully receive this holy Sacrament. And draw us into your blazing heart, that as your gifts are consumed in us, we might be consumed in transfiguring love and thus become one with you, **that we might become the real presence of Christ for the world.**"
 - We need to do more than "hope" this will happen - Table Groups are where we *learn* to become the body of Christ - embodying the presence of Christ in the World
 - The CHURCH is the Sacrament of Christ! People are meant to encounter Jesus when they come into the orbit of our community.
 - We EMBODY the presence of Christ in meals.

- **Extend**

- But it isn't just "come and see" - we also are meant to practice hospitality, opening space for others to be drawn into the life of God.
- We carry this into our workplaces and third places, not just as individuals but in twos and threes. We learn to pay attention to what God is doing in all kinds of places and relationships.
- We prepare a table to extend the presence of Christ into the world.

Practices (how we go together)

- **Habits eat values for breakfast**

- Culture is created through practices/habits.
- "Values" are often just aspirational - a list of concepts we like. No rootedness in our everyday life.
- Our actual values are revealed by what we do. So we don't ascribe to ideas, we embody practices. Practices root us in our everyday relationships and responsibilities in Christ.
- Our practices reveal our ACTUAL values.
- We want to covenant ourselves to a set of practices that embody and demonstrate our core values.
- The Table is defined by 4 core practices that form us as a community of disciples of Jesus.

- **Welcoming / (mutual submission)**

- Hospitality - distinctly Christian practice of creating space for the stranger.
- Not "entertaining guests" - making room for others to be themselves among us.
- Jesus came "eating and drinking," often accused of being a glutton and a drunkard (Luke 7:34).
- Welcoming people into our homes, opening up physical space.
- Opening up spiritual space in conversations and in our lives.
 - Story Night
- Encounter = God welcomes us at the Eucharist table.
- Embody = We welcome one another in community as we gather around tables in our homes.
- Extend = We welcome the stranger by extending the hospitality of Jesus out into the neighborhood, eating and drinking with our neighbors.
- Includes reconciliation - Jesus has broken down the barriers that keep people hating each other (Ephesians 2:11-22). We seek to live in this.
- Mutual submission (talk more about it in the leadership week)
 - Neither monarchy nor democracy, but a mutual submission to one another out of reverence for Christ (Eph 5:21)
 - Mutual submission is how we discern God's will in our community. Leaders hold open the relational and conversational space for us to listen to God and one another, and discern together how best to live faithfully as a church.

How do we learn these practices? If they're practices, WHEN do we practice them?

- This is the purpose behind EVERY gathering or group we convene. To facilitate these practices, this vision.
- We practice on Sunday mornings, at Table Groups, in DNA Groups, at Story Night, in The Table 101... when we gather for fireworks or a day out at the park.
- Participation in Sunday, Table Groups, DNA, etc, is always *active* (try to be a difficult church to be a passive consumer at), and it's always inviting us into practicing our practices, because that's how we take steps on the journey toward our vision!

“It can only be that God begins in a small way, at one single place in the world. There must be a place, visible, tangible, where the salvation of the world can begin: that is, where the world becomes what it is supposed to be according to God’s plan. Beginning at that place, the new thing can spread abroad, but not through persuasion, not through indoctrination, not through violence. Everyone must have the opportunity to come and see. All must have the chance to behold and test this new thing. Then, if they want to, they can allow themselves to be drawn into the history of salvation that God is creating. Only in that way can their freedom be preserved. What drives them to the new thing cannot be force, not even moral pressure, but only the fascination of a world that is changed.” - Gerhard Lohfink