

Reflections On Time With Mt Hawthorn Community Church

To begin with we'd like to say thanks
for the invitation to spend this time with you ...

It was a privilege to get to know you
and a privilege to get to a sense of
the courteous, hospitable, respectful community you are creating

We thought it might be helpful to give you a little feedback
about what we have seen and heard while we have been here:
in relation to your church gatherings and groups and
in relation to the other groups you encouraged us to engage

1. Your church gatherings and groups

a. It was a pleasure to be with in your Sunday gatherings

to see people's enthusiastic participation in the open conversations

When talking with people about these open space conversations during
the week they said they found them inspiring, exciting, and encouraging

b. It was a pleasure to be with the group who gathered last Saturday

to consider how to connect more with your own local community.

We noticed that people were surprised to find out how much others
were doing already, that had gone largely unnoticed because they were
not running high-profile formal church programs, but taking low-profile
informal personal initiatives in their own homes and/or streets. These
initiatives served as an inspiration for people to do more, and to find
better ways to support people who were inspired to do more.

c. It was a pleasure to be with the Wiggly Woo crew during the week

We were struck by the quality, energy and creativity of the program and
the squeals of pure delight and grins of sheer joy on the faces of all the
participants, parents and children, leaders and onlookers alike.

Over lunch people we talked with some people who are involved in it
and it would seem that as long as they can sustain the quality, energy

and creativity they will continue to be involved, and as long as it brings innocent enjoyment to parents and children they will keep coming back.

Wiggly Woo seems to be a perfect point for developing community connections, and the people who attend make lots of connections. If there were two or three more people from the church each session who were free to make connections the possibilities seems endless. But we agree its imperative that Wiggly Woo NOT be used for proselytization.

d. It was a pleasure to meet with the Elders during the week.

We were very impressed with the conversations conducted by the Elders - they beautifully embodied and modeled the courteous, hospitable, and respectful qualities of the culture you want to create in your community.

Without betraying any confidences, we can say that one of the things we talked about was pastoral care. And we suggested they might like to consider A Place To Belong's strategy of developing Circles of Support around people who feel the need of greater ongoing pastoral support.

We will also pass on a paper using the trinitarian frameworks we have discussed as a Community Development approach to Pastoral Care.

e. It was a pleasure to meet with some Young Adults during the week.

We were also impressed with the conversations with the Young Adults – they too beautifully embodied the courteous, hospitable, and respectful qualities of the culture you want to try to create in your community.

Without betraying any confidences, we can say that one of the things we talked about was faith development. They said they found it interesting to interview people and to listen and learn from their faith/life journeys.

We also passed out flyers to a two-week live-in community orientation course we run in Brisbane, which they may like to take up some time.

f. We also met with Peter, Tony and Claire about teaching and learning.

It was really difficult for Claire because her son Edan was feeling unwell.

But we did have a conversation about oral and written communication and the possibilities of developing special groups for people with greater cognitive needs to engage theology (eg the theology of the atonement).

2. Other groups you encouraged us to engage

a. It was a pleasure to meet with people in the Lockridge community

We met with Steve and Erica and Gary and Tanya. And it gave us the opportunity to discuss the challenges that they face in their community.

Most of what we discussed was confidential, but it what we can say is they really value their relationship with and the support from MHCC.

b. It was a pleasure to meet with people in the Hilton community

We met with Clint and Michelle and their friends. And we had a great discussion about intentional Christian community in their locality.

Some came on Saturday to explore their relationship with MHCC.

c. It was a pleasure to meet with people in the Forestdale community

We met with Jay and Asher and their friends. And we also had a great discussion about intentional Christian community in their locality.

Some came on Saturday to explore their relationship with MHCC.

d. It was a pleasure to meet with people in Scripture Union

We met with the Scripture Union community mission unit and explored the distinctives and dynamics of Christlike community development.

One came on Saturday to explore their relationship with MHCC.

e. It was a pleasure to take part in the Community Conference

Steve and Ian on behalf of MHCC hosted a meeting of thirty plus people from different groups who met on Saturday for five hours to connect with others involved in Christian community development experiments.

They decided to meet regularly, perhaps three times a year, to support each other, to share their stories, and to explore common interests.

In conclusion...

We would like to thank MHCC for the opportunity you provided for us to participate in and contribute to these very significant conversations.

We are very encouraged by the quality of your community life together and your capacity to support other community groups around Perth.

Dave and Ange