

Mount Hawthorn Community Church

Conversation Notes

Dave & Angie Andrews Trip
17th November 2013

TOPICS RAISED

SESSION	TOPIC TITLE	INITIATOR
1.1	Letting go NOTE: I don't think this conversation happened?	Paul Meleng
1.2	The practice of gratitude	Rani Wood
1.3	God & creativity: art, music, writing, dance ... whatever	Jen Barnard
1.4	Meeting and greeting new comers and making them feel welcome without invading their privacy	Bevan Marshall
1.5	What do boys need to move from child to adulthood	Tyson Menck
1.6	How do we engage Steve/Erica, Matt/Bethany in conversation about how we support/engage them	Peter Oliver
2.1	How do better care for each other?	Gail Lantzke
2.2	How do we support each other in our engagements with our community (whichever is the one to which we feel called	Lynden Prince
2.3	How can MHCC support refugees and agencies who are supporting refugees?	Tricia Marshall
2.4	Recognising and working with diverse talents	Rob Damhuis
2.5	God, Christianity, MHCC and the environment	Luke Hays
2.6	Home Group "about nothing" – How might this work?	Leigh Richmond

ACTION PLANS

Topic Code: 1.2**Topic Title:** The practice of Gratitude**Initiator/Recorder:** Rani**Recorder:** Thelma**Participants:** Caryl, Fleur, Gail, Greg & Hannah, Heather, Julie, Leigh, Marita, Melanie, Rob, Rose, Thelma,

Notes

1. We need to engage in gratefulness/gratitude of God's love
2. A lecturer at Murdoch has written a book called Gratitude
3. I can respond with gratitude to a situation but I want/need a rhythm of gratitude
4. Practise gratitude regularly
5. "Speak of your gratitude" more often/be aware of your mercies/blessings
6. Does gratitude mean being thankful for stuff that shouldn't be possible or that is harsh and that happens to you?
7. Practice gratefulness daily; God who gives us breath
8. Ignatius Examen: "what at the end of the day are you grateful/ungrateful for"// what's life draining/life-giving?
9. Karl Barth: Gratitude is the hallmark of Christianity
10. How do we move the gratitude philosophy from our personal one to a wider group?
11. South Africa: the attitude of the black people in SA under apartheid of gratitude/joyousness/"joie de vie"
12. Gratitude & contentment go together; once content you can be more grateful
13. Western world with so much stuff are not deeply satisfied as many of those living in the 3rd world e.g. Poverty/Indonesia
14. People who are dying are grateful for every breath- I don't want to wait till I'm dying to live gratefully!
15. Michael-Carr Greg keeps a gratitude journal online- we could do the same
16. Alternatives? Tweet/Face book our gratitude each day
17. "Sleeping with bread" a book on the Examen: write down what you are most/least grateful for each day
18. Group decision
 - a. to practice gratitude daily between 6-8am(or another time) &
 - b. meet after church on Dec 1 to see how we're going
 - c. possibly continue this/do it as an Advent practice ourselves/with MHCC??

Topic Code: 1.3

Topic Title:

Initiator/Recorder: Jen Barnard

Participants: Jen, Tony, John, Fleur, Sarah

Notes

Chocolate Sundays: Art and God

Groups getting together to write songs from the people of the church - pairing with musicians as well. Including kids.

Creative without judgement.

Listening out for God

Playful creative afternoon

Creative way of connecting God to work/other people.

Mindful art - whatever form

Groups that might get together for a creative purpose(writing, sewing, art - combination) to serve others or ourselves.

Forum to express creativity.

Find a way of connecting a bunch of people

Topic Code: 1.4

Topic Title: **Meeting and greeting new comers and making them feel welcome without invading their privacy**

Initiator: Bevan Marshall

Recorder: Bevan Marshall

Participants: 3-4 participants

Notes - *including summary ideas, suggestions, recommendations, plans for actions....*

- With no pastoral care person at MHCC in the present environment, many people appear to slip through the cracks.
- I personally enjoy meeting new people and introducing them to like minded regulars.
- However, the expectation that “the church” should meet our needs is not realistic; we must take responsibility for our own actions.
- Two cases were mentioned by those attending where apparent breakdowns in communication seems to have led to folk leaving MHCC.
- *I mention in private that they were Caroline and Catherine.*
- Caroline’s departure was painful in the emails that were generated, but as I said to those gathered, she was an intermittent adherent and did not disclose her phone or email contact to the general group.
- We were not involved with her private life so we could not keep pastoral care tabs on her ; she seems to have resented this lack of concern, especially when she had been ill.
- Catherine was a slightly unhappy lady who Tricia and I had for some meals and others from MHCC were also trying to contact her without success.
- This specific information was not publicly distributed for Catherine’s privacy ; hence it appeared that she slipped away without an apparent concern from the MHCC group.
- But how much do we make known to all and sundry without creating gossip, as we (Tricia and I) experienced in our last church where the prayer chain resulted in a “gossip chain”.

Topic Code: 1.5**Topic Title: What do boys need to move from child to adulthood****Initiator:** Tyson**Recorder:** Irene**Participants:** Tyson, Michael P, Michael A, Irene A, Graeme J, Paul M, Luke H, Nick O, Catherine K, Rob D

Notes

- What happens when kids move from child to adulthood
- The issue is broader than just boys – how do children become adults. How can we support boys and girls to become adults?
- Previously as a community we have chosen to de-emphasize differences between children and adults in the life of the community (ie children are just as much members of the community as adults)
- Discussed male initiation – it is the community (tribe) role to educate the young as they move to adult. This is something not done by parents. In initiation the child is taken away from normal environment and parents into a learning/challenging situation. Allows for space to discuss issues that may not come up with parents, helping them through challenges to adulthood.
- Kids need other adults they can go to when they need help, they are not always able to discuss things with a parent. Can we make space for this to happen?
- Mentoring rather than parenting
- Need male role models outside the immediate family
- Need for safety. There is a need for trust.
- This is an on going experience – bigger than just a ‘weekend initiation’ experience
- Not just boys from MHCC who have challenges in moving from boyhood to adulthood. Can this process include boys from our community beyond MHCC?
- MHCC needs to link to external programs not try to do this ourselves since there are other programs already set up eg Pathways to manhood or Fathering project
- We have had boys/men weekends but there is an issue of expressing vulnerability in the larger group. Smaller group situation may be better?
- Model of adults doing things together and having fun, including children in this and children will learn informally through positive interaction
- Fathering is made more complex by work and distance from children
- This conversation is ongoing for our 6 -13 age boys – what action needs to happen?
- Nothing can replace parenting and extended family – where does MHCC fit in?
- What to do to intentionally foster relationships between the men, young men and boys growing up
- Suggested that should do something in near future, men and boys get together? Smaller group events?
- Suggest get someone from ‘The fathering Project’ to come and talk
- Need to have another conversation at a future date

Topic Code: 1.6

Topic Title: How do we engage with groups such as those run by Steve/Erica and Matt/Bethany about how MHCC can support, and engage with, them?

Initiator/Recorder: Peter Oliver

Participants: ????

Notes

- Important that identification of the support needed comes from them, not us.
- Important to meet with them regularly.
- MHCC is a place where those involved in these communities can come occasionally to recharge.
- How can people involved with these groups better communicate what they are doing to the wider MHCC community. (Acknowledged that this is an issue for a broad range of things that MHCC members are involved in. Not just our involvement with these groups.)
- Do a skills audit of MHCC? What skills do we have and which people are willing to put the time and energy into putting these skills at the service of people outside MHCC?
- Josh and Elise are also people who might like to benefit from this conversation.
- We could provide money to these groups to buy in services that they need but that we cannot offer. Attendance at conferences for example.
- Use social media for communication with these people?

Topic Code: 2.1

Topic Title: How can we better care for each other

Initiator/Recorder: Gail Lantzke

Participants: Tim, Julie, Gail, Alyssa, Rose, Caryl, Peter Oliver, Melanie, Thelma

Notes

Several people reflected how much they had appreciated Ken in his role as pastoral care worker.

In the absence of a pastoral care worker it was suggested that a pastoral care group would be helpful. This group could keep an eye on needs within the community.

Home groups are a place where lots of pastoral care can happen.

Inviting people home for lunch after church helps us to get to know people. Buying in pizzas could be an easy way to do this.

One family is planning to do weekly meals at their home and invite church members.

What are people's needs? - physical, emotional, spiritual, loneliness.

Sometimes the person themselves doesn't recognise their need but are very grateful when some-one reaches out. Sometimes they don't think to ask for help. Sometimes they don't want to ask for help.

Do we care about each other?

Do we want to care about each other?

What stops us from caring for each other? ?Time

We need to find a balance between caring for ourselves and caring for others.

As members of our community we need to try to keep it on our radar.

We have responsibility for one another under the Spirit.

Topic Code: 2.2

Topic Title: How do we support each other in our engagements with our community (whichever is the one to which we feel called?)

Initiator: Lynden Prince

Recorder

Participants (initials)

Notes - *including summary ideas, suggestions, recommendations, plans for actions...*

Topic Code: 2.3**Topic Title:** How can MHCC support refugees and agencies who are supporting refugees?**Initiator:** Tricia**Recorder:** Elise**Participants:** Ross, Sarah, Elise, Rose, Lindy, Alyssa

Notes

General discussion about the desire to engage with the volunteer work, agencies and individuals who are supporting refugees. Discussion about previous experience

Trisha; providing information, activities and points of discussion in a work setting (Bentley Hospital) during refugee week. Having information in the lunch room regarding stats on refugees, personal stories and the geopolitical environment that refugees leave allowed people to take on the information at their own pace and have conversations amongst themselves, including between work colleagues with differing opinions and experiences.

Also contact with Asetts, Carad and Amnesty International.

Sarah; Volunteering through Curtin Volunteers to provide homework support to families in the Somali community. Particularly enjoyed engaging at with mothers and children.

Elise; Contact with families and other agencies through work. Most closely with Metro Migrant Resource Centre (MMCR-Mirraboooka) and contact with schools who run Intensive English Centres (IEC). Discussed the work of Anne Sorenson at MMRC who runs drama programs with adolescents from newly arrived families, engaging around family and cultural conflict and sexual health.

Discussion about the desire to change the community conversations regarding refugees to be more factually accurate and less demonizing.

Possible Actions:

-Put together a kit that could be displayed in community spaces such as libraries during Refugee week (similar to that previously created by Trisha in a work setting). This could include

- stats on refugees, personal stories from refugees and the geopolitical environment that refugees leave
- Refugee week is in June.

-Host a 'Community Speakers' event out side of church time (on a Saturday evening or Sunday afternoon) with invited speakers to come and provide the community with lectures, panels or debates regarding refugee issues.

- Share information about events other agencies are already undertaking in the community through Church announcements and MHCC discussion list.

-Share information about the work individuals are doing in the community so we can pray, provide practical support and just generally be aware.

-Continue to provide financial support to agencies such as Carad.

-Have a speaker from Carad on a Sunday morning

-Have a meal with others from MHCC and continue the conversation and planning.

Topic Code: 2.4

Topic Title: Recognising & working with diverse talents

Initiator/Recorder: Rob Damhuis

Participants: Rob, Ian, John

Notes - *including summary ideas, suggestions, recommendations, plans for actions....*

Outcome desired: communities thrive on INTRA PERSONAL relationships where the strengths and weaknesses of each individual are known, celebrated and used to the greater good of the community. In this way each person feels they contribute, feels special and the 'tall poppy' will diminish. Because people feel a part of the community, there will be a greater sense that they want to bring people into the community, rather than becoming inwardly focused.

Ideas to find out talents: carry out skills audit of church to find out what people's talents and skills are. Develop skills matrix of natural, spiritual and learned skills.

Challenges

1 uncovering those talents that people inherently don't want to reveal. These are generally those things that they either feel insignificant, or they have just done 'forever', or sometimes just don't want to reveal for a reason.

2. Not pigeonholing people into areas just because they can do the job, or are good at it.
Potential solution: treat others as you want to be treated, respect, dignity & mercy.

Time was short so we didn't delve too deep.

Topic Code: 2.5

Topic Title: God, Christianity, MHCC and the environment

Initiator: Luke Hays

Recorder

Participants (initials)

Notes - *including summary ideas, suggestions, recommendations, plans for actions....*

Topic Code: 2.6

Topic Title: Home Group “about nothing”

Initiator/Recorder: Leigh

Participants: Leigh, Peter O, Thelma, Marita, Melanie, Heather

Notes

The lack of current home groups (HG’s) was mentioned by a number of people, as well as the value of HG’s to people in the past.

The idea of this HG would be to have no fixed focus, but which would operate according to the needs and interests of the participants.

We made a pact to begin in the New Year, and trial the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month. We will begin on the second Tuesday of January 2014.

Leigh will make the first one happen at her place, but we will move around various houses to reduce the burden on any one person.

So, Tuesday 14th January, 7.30 p.m. & Rae Street Leederville. The inaugural meeting of the HG about nothing.

Anyone is welcome. You didn’t have to be part of the discussion on Sunday.