

Unity in Mission 2020 Consultation: Meta-Scribe Summary

Summary format: 1) presentation & conversation listening; 2) questions for future consideration & action.

Why we gathered: Arising from Future Fit (October 2019) was a desire for the synergy and unity of mission across the spheres of influence and the leaders of the Assembly, Agora, Academy & Agency. The agenda for Unity in Mission 2020 was not about pounding out a plan, but following Jesus together in unity.

Day 1: Listening

Pre-conference prayer: “From hoarding to generosity”

Session 1: John Pellowe

- Parachurch should be “out of” not “beside” the church; dysfunctional church is part of God’s design.
- The Kingdom of God is modeled through relationships *and* church’s mission requires the best use of all her resources. Think bigger than our own ministries.
- Leader conflicting beliefs: agencies take resources from the local church and usurp the church’s role, or local churches are empire-building, not doing full mission or are navel-gazing and inward looking.
- In church-agency relationship: all bear responsibility for the full mission of the Church.
- A way forward depends on 4 *Principles: Love, Order, Unity, Voluntary Mutual Submission*.
- 6 *Practices* to employ: *Mission alignment, Mutual respect, Mutual vulnerability, Empathy for Constraints and Risks, Strengthen the Local Church, Personal relationships* (most important)
- *Table conversations:*
 - Use different language & posture: “We’re here to serve you” & “Can we do this together?”
 - Commit to resource generosity, mutual and healthy relationships, & best practice storytelling
 - Redefine “success,” shift to Kingdom metrics, prayerfulness & ask the existential question: Is it important that there be so many agencies? Are we defending our turf? Beyond redefining “success” it’s redefining “mission” and church as the people of God.
 - Awakening the conviction of the Gospel in the local church. The “A’s” serve the Assembly & the Assembly births other “A’s”. All exist for the Kingdom of God; so meet, work & plan together.
 - Fruit comes from obedient collaboration. Not first mechanics or organization, but spiritual
- Time of prayer: repentance, humility, godly relationships & mutuality, a new generation & recalibration.

Session 2: Anthony Brown

- Philippians 2 – disunity makes Church and mission brittle; humility & servanthood produces unity
- *Table conversations:*
 - Unity is something we have in Christ; it is positional. How are we living out our position?
 - When have we served the best interests of someone else?

Day 1: Questions for Future Consideration & Action

- Unity is a journey & a discipline: What one step & practice can be adopted?
- Are their clues in the local for those of us consumed by the scope and magnitude of the global?
- How would ministry empathy, generosity & prayer produce greater unity?
- Can the Cape Town Commitment on the Unity of the Church be before us regularly?
- What would redefining “success” and our metrics look like?

Day 2: Listening

Session 1: Glenn Smith

- “Mission is the mother of the church, theology her daughter” (Martin Kahler)
- We don’t divorce the church from mission or mission from the Triune God
- Secularity, galloping plurality and hyper-individualism/inequalities all impacting church & mission
- Pursue spiritual formation, scripture engagement, education & discipleship in a fresh way
- Hyper-individuality in our culture has produced hyper-individual churches and agencies
- Ask what a transformed community looks like to mobilize for Kingdom presence & foretaste now.
- *Table conversations:*
 - Move against hyper-individuality, while embracing what birthed the movements we steward.
 - Require Kingdom metrics: do we love the place/space or only our church/organization growth?
 - The language has shifted, but we’re still talking theological language Reformation: need a recovering of the vernacular and a global Gospel.
 - Individualized mission drives to weariness; counter-cultural mission requires unity & community
 - Volunteer revolution & redefining success: unified mobilizing for what is going on in neighbourhood requires shifting from organization building to deployment of ministers

Session 2: Panel Discussion (Glenn Smith, John Pellowe, Anthony Brown)

- Self-justification is the enemy of unity & practical steps of servanthood get us to humility.
- The essence of contextualization is not what “works” but how we read the Bible
- Taking Trinity seriously leads to metric change: celebrate whenever the Father brings his lost kids home no matter what part of the family brought them in!
- Learn from “30 & unders” and multi-ethnic communities: speak the vernacular. Younger adults are more comfortable co-existing in the context of place/space. They can instruct; we can be mutual learners.
- When local church does her job people are trained and some will want to serve inside and outside the Assembly. See the church as diaspora; a dispersed people!
- Does money & power have authority? If money leads we won’t get much done! Rethink funding models
- Younger leaders easily talk about partnership and unity & every believer has a part to play.
- Many of us are stewarding organizations founded by movements birthed before we were born: how are we stewarding them toward in this space/place; to whom will we bequeath them; and how?
- Do things together and let the global church teach. A change in language from “for them” or “mission trip” to partnership and how we use money.

Session 3: 4 A’s Panel Discussion (Bryan – CBC; Dan – AIM; Sandra – People’s Church; Enoch - Agora)

- Pastors are often intimidated by money & power; so not sure what do with Agora
- Mission study: #1 enemy of cross-cultural mission in Canada is the missional church
- “Jerusalem” is tired.
- Refreshment comes when we ask who we can serve. When asked, “We need something from you.”
- Need new language and paradigms to mobilize the whole Church for the whole Gospel.
- What kind of form can we have for the A’s to cross-pollinate? Need discipleship circles among the 4 A’s.
- Friendship & trust creates fluidity, networking and generosity. Cross-generational conversations help.

- Sharing training, stories, regular gathering, communication aids traction & collaboration

Session 4: Ministry Presentations

- **Richard (Love Ottawa)**
 - Serving across the “A’s” employs a three-legged stool: relationship, prayer, mission.
 - Work to change how the Church is seen in the city; agencies work with assemblies
 - Prayer & pastor fellowships keep things strong and integral holistic mission simply emerges
- **John Fuller**
 - Our offices are increasingly empty because of virtual work – sharing common resources doesn’t have to be collaborative in project, but simply relational & use of space & place
 - “If you don’t disrupt yourself, it will be a gift given to you by someone else.”
- **Dave Blundell (Hungry for Life)**
 - We try to stay in the background and unknown: no “logo-ing”
 - Impact by multiplying, asking existential questions: bigger impact by being in the background.
 - Asking key questions: How do we become less, not more? How can I help you & multiply?
- **Nick (Steveston BC church planter)**
 - What we did right: prayer walked!
 - Two big shifts: from being pastor to being missionary; from solo to collaboration
 - In the future lone ranger churches and organizations won’t survive

Day 2: Questions for Future Consideration & Action

- Can we share contacts of the participants of this gathering to foster mutuality, prayer & partnership?
- Leaders often lead with big/global/national vision. But unity must be a thing of place. How will we foster locality and place-centered contextualization as a primary avenue for unity in mission?
- A recovery of the “vernacular” and a global Gospel is needed for today’s realities. This must what we say, what we do, & how we do it? How do we invite 30s-and-unders to lead us in this?
- How might a contextualized awareness that we are a nation of immigrants help us?
- A passion for the centrality of Bible is a central theme: how will we actualize this?
- Is the Assembly’s problem with itself & weariness part of identity-crises in culture?
- Mission leaders have assumed everyone knows God is a missionary and every believer is a missionary. We need to keep this call of all believers before the church and model it.
- Should board members be more intentionally included in future discussions?
- **Periphery issues for future attention:**
 - *First Nations:* Why do they seem consistently absent in our work toward unity in mission? What might we learn from them in how we did mission to them so that we do mission together?
 - *Money & Power:* How is unity in mission dependent on how we see and understand these?
 - *The 4 “A’s”:* Are we missing others: sport, politics, health and medicine, media, etc.?
 - *Networks:* the value they have in our call to be connected and relationship.
 - *The soul of the leader:* If unity is not mechanical, but spiritual & the position we have in Christ, then this is a matter of the leader’s spiritual health & faith; of trusting God & walking by faith.