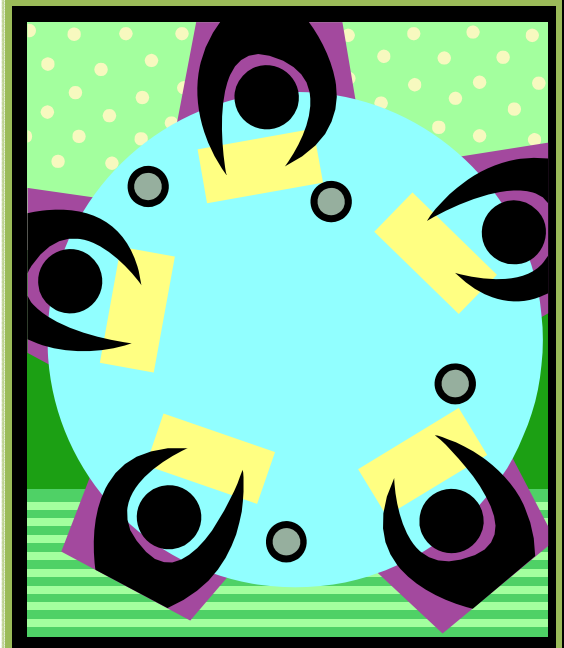


2009

American Baptist Churches of Michigan
Annual Equipping Event
Report of the Conversation Cafés



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American Baptist Churches of Michigan

Theme: Renewable Energy

2009 Annual Gathering

Clergy Equipping Event

Conversation Café

Narrative and Results Submitted by Dr. Trinette V. McCray, Facilitator/Trainer

I applaud the Planning Committee of the 2009 Regional Annual Gathering and Clergy Equipping Event for utilizing the emerging format for engagement and dialogue, the Conversation Café. The two Café experiences:

Friday, October 16th **Clergy Event**

Compelling Question: What does it mean to foster a generation of Christian leaders?

Saturday, October 17th **Annual Gathering**

Compelling Question: What are our resources for navigating through tough times?
How are we using our resources to be salt and light?

This report will consist of three parts:

- I.** Clergy Event
 - a. The summary of the major themes that emerged from the Conversation Café
 - b. The statements from the Café grouped into the Major Themes
 - c. The raw data (notes) from the Conversation Café.

- II.** Annual Gathering
 - a. The summary of the major themes that emerged from the Conversation Café
 - b. Statements from the Café grouped into the Major Themes
 - c. The raw data (notes) from the Conversation Café.

- III.** Summary notes from the facilitator

I. Conversation Café Clergy Event
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A. Summary of the Major Themes that Emerged

Four major themes emerged from the clergy conversations around the compelling question:
What does it mean to foster a generation of Christian leaders.

- ❖ **Involvement of Young Families**
- ❖ **Leadership**
- ❖ **Youth**
- ❖ **Mentoring/Coaching/Training—Discipleship**

B. Major Themes and Statements: *What does it mean to foster a generation of Christian leaders?*

Involvement of Young Families

- Raising children in the church – must have young families
- Discipleship – work together as family – include them
- Include the young adults
- Give them a sense of ownership, use their ideas, give them credit and encourage them
- Support younger generation, new families by educating and developing
- Build spiritual maturity through communities

Leadership

- Empower, enable new generation to lead differently
- Must be given ok by elders
- Delegation – here is project, you run with it
- Realize they're not going to do it your way
- We are not deliberate in raising up future leaders has experienced church which buries within congregation
- Provide opportunities for testing their wings
- Be intentional in integrating new leaders giving the ministry to the people
- Creating opportunities for the realities of leadership
- Need to be relational and intentional
- Giving all freedom to use gifts as they feel led without pre-conceptions of acceptable usage
- Early serving opportunities
- Give them a sense of leadership
- New leaders must be given permission to lead differently and/or in new ways
- There need to be opportunities for hands-on experience
- Matching personality with leadership
- No void in leadership

Youth

- How do you attract the young people?
- Include them in church ministry
- Point out the positives in these kids, point out their Christ-like actions
- Planned system for summer
- Interesting Sunday school classes and settings
- Involve younger people in worship
- Make sure to bring kids into church
- Encourage kids when they do something Christ-like
- Teach young ones the importance of church
- Camp
- Youth, catching them at an earlier age
- Helping children understand the word of God. That makes them be a good leader.
- Passing on Christian beliefs to next generation

Mentoring/Coaching/Training---Discipleship

- Motivate the next generation
- Mentor young kids with big brother/sister in church
- Invest in the people
- Give it away, share, train
- Should be no void in leadership – someone always available to fill a void or need, should be a pool of leaders

- Support younger generation, new families by educating and developing
- Creating opportunities for the realities of leadership
- Passing on Christian beliefs to next generation
- Teaching the younger generation the importance of the church
- Teaching the next generation to deal with contemporary issues with Christian beliefs
- Nurturing, education, developing
- Helping people identify their gift and their personalities/temperaments and developing spiritual formation
- Imparting a sense of purpose
- Discipleship – from teaching what we as a church believe to mentoring – this is key to getting people in and keeping them
- Mentoring
- Stir up the gift – healing to discover and commence to use their gift
- Importance also to pass the knowledge from one generation to the next to build on knowledge
- Imparting a sense of purpose
- We need to encourage the gifts we see in others as Christ-given gifts
- Keep focus on Christian goals with gifts
- Nurturing, education, developing
- Intentionality
- Moving a Christian generation forward
- Discernment
- Faith growing – recognize role in “planting seed” or “helping grow”
- Education, empowering, continuity of church loss of generational mentoring – can we recapture
- Exploring passion/need intersection
- Inviting all skills to find direction in Christ’s mission
- Older people living passion for Lord
- Encouraging spiritual gifts – part of who they are
- Cross-generational Sunday school
- Intentional time-consuming relationships
- Providing classes in leadership development
- Teach on leadership qualities
- Mentor down the generations
- Church has to be intentional in leadership development (mentoring) help youth discover their passion

C. Raw Data (Notes) from the Conversation Café.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO FOSTER A GENERATION OF CHRISTIAN LEADERS?

- Raising children in the church – must have young families
- Motivate the next generation
- How do you attract the young people?
- Include them in church ministry
- Discipleship – work together as family – include them
- Mentor young kids with big brother/sister in church
- Include the young adults
- Give them a sense of ownership, use their ideas, give them credit and encourage them
- How do we effectively present the gospel to young people – VBS – do kids only remember the treats and not the gospel? Where is the focus?
- Live it
- Point out the positives in these kids, point out their Christ-like actions

- Invest in the people
- Give it away, share, train
- Should be no void in leadership – someone always available to fill a void or need, should be a pool of leaders
- Support younger generation, new families by educating and developing
- Celebrating the church
- No void in leadership
- Planned system for summer
- Creating opportunities for the realities of leadership
- Passing on Christian beliefs to next generation
- Teaching the younger generation the importance of the church
- Let the church roll on
- Teaching the next generation to deal with contemporary issues with Christian beliefs
- Continuity
- Nurturing, education, developing
- Interesting Sunday school classes and settings
- Involve younger people in worship
- Make sure to bring kids into church
- Helping people identify their gift and their personalities/temperaments and developing spiritual formation
- Imparting a sense of purpose
- Discipleship – from teaching what we as a church believe to mentoring – this is key to getting people in and keeping them
- Mentoring
- Recognize importance of building
- Intentionality
- Moving a Christian generation forward
- Discernment
- Imparting a sense of purpose
- Stir up the gift – healing to discover and commence to use their gift
- Importance also to pass the knowledge from one generation to the next to build on knowledge
- Empower, enable new generation to lead differently
- Must be given ok by elders
- Delegation – here is project, you run with it
- Realize they're not going to do it your way
- How do you get rid of the leader that's been there for years?
- How are you going to work around that person? I don't know the answer to that question
- Some are there for years but they don't continue to lead
- If that's your leader model it becomes a stumbling block
- Don't just throw them out
- Ask, what is the benefit and the detriment to their staying in that role
- If they're in place for 35 years, well they're also accustomed to that and we're looking to shift that
- We are not deliberate in raising up future leaders has experienced church which buries within congregation
- We need to encourage the gifts we see in others as Christ-given gifts
- Keep focus on Christian goals with gifts
- Provide opportunities for testing their wings
- Be intentional in integrating new leaders giving the ministry to the people
- Faith growing – recognize role in “planting seed” or “helping grow”
- Education, empowering, continuity of church loss of generational mentoring – can we recapture
- Need to be relational and intentional
- Exploring passion/need intersection

- Exploring willingness to use skills in secular settings before church
- Is it value placed on skills higher in secular?
- Is it person's value of church?
- Inviting all skills to find direction in Christ's mission
- Giving all freedom to use gifts as they feel led without pre-conceptions of acceptable usage
- Older people living passion for Lord
- Encourage kids when they do something Christ-like
- Encouraging spiritual gifts – part of who they are
- SHINE (Spirit Helps Inspire Needed Expression)
- Teach young ones the importance of church
- Cross-generational Sunday school
- Early serving opportunities
- Camp
- Intentional time-consuming relationships
- Not just young people
- Children
 - How motivating young people
 - How do you get young people in the church
 - Including them in the church
 - Discipleship – being able to disciple young families
 - Family as church
 - ***Mentoring Process***
 - Give them a sense of leadership
 - Present to them the Gospel understanding of the gospel
 - Integrating core value
 - Investment NOT just a number – we are here to reach out to others
 - How do you live out the Kingdom?
 - Invest in people
 - Find out the passion of young people
 - Live the gospel
 - Point out the Christ-like behavior of children
 - Providing classes in leadership development
 - Youth need help discovering their passion
 - Foundational issues
 - Personality of leadership
 - Practical use of spiritual gifts
 - There is an expectation over people of faith
 - Feed and encourage a generation until they are able to fit into those crowns
- Hire Christian leaders within home church
- Cultivate, talents relate to mission: letting gifts be known to individual that they are from God
- Encourage the gift in others
- Provide opportunity to see others services and service self
- Be intentional to integrate new members to understand urban
- Church has to be intentional in leadership development (mentoring) help youth discover their passion
- Teach basic foundation to address contemporary issues
- Relate personality to ?
- Youth, catching them at an earlier age
- Helping children understand the word of God. That makes them be a good leader.
- Hang an expectation above each person
- Feed, encourage and foster – walk, run, fly
- Able and nourish
- (What did we hear? – Need to define terms – leave question so open – SHINE – Spirit Helped in Needed Experiences/Expression)

- Leadership is related to spiritual maturity
- Leadership recognizes vision, direction & purpose
- Not all people's abilities and gifts are willingly offered to congregation for church leadership
- Spiritual gifts
- Matching personality with leadership
- Are there appropriate resources for leaders
- Is there training and ongoing support for leaders
- There need to be opportunities for hands-on experience
- New leaders must be given permission to lead differently and/or in new ways
- Seek spiritual maturity
- Build spiritual maturity through communities
- Mentor down the generations
- Keep youth involved in church tasks
- Leadership is not equal to elected positions
- Look beyond gifted/talented abilities
- Importance of clarity of vision and purpose
- Intergenerational relationships
- Teach on leadership qualities

II. Conversation Café Annual Gathering

A. Summary of the Major Themes that Emerged

Four major themes emerged from the question:

What are our resources for navigating through tough times?

- ❖ **People**
- ❖ **Spiritual Resources**
- ❖ **Preparation**
- ❖ **Resources (General)**

B. Major Themes with Statements: *What are our resources for navigating through tough times?*

• **People**

- Life community – even though we speak same language we do not always understand each other
- Relationships with other pastors
- People – are we utilizing them?
- Networking with other churches and people in sharing cost (joint VBS, division of need for clothes, baby items, food)
- Be open to others needs
- Listen, help, encourage one another
- Role of pastor has changed – knowledge about town's agencies, being prepared, being pro-active, identifying potential problems, having vision for future
- Open to change, compromise, open hearts, open minds

Spiritual Resources

Holy Spirit

- Prayer
- Jesus Christ

- Holy Spirit – Pentecost – figuring out how to lift our sails to take advantage of the power of the Holy Spirit
- Spiritual power, Holy Spirit, strength of the Word
- Good prayer life, prayer partner
- Perseverance
- Bible – cannot be watered down
- Stay focused on spiritual resources
- Trust
- Faith
- Seek God’s will in all questions
- Discipleship matters
- Discerning the tough time

Preparation

- Need to be prepared
- Pre-planning in good times
- Preparation
- Lifetime of preparation
- Evaluation using spiritual gifts in the congregation
- Promoting, networking
- Vision is central in tough times

Resources

- Networking with connecting to
- Be open to others needs
- Open to change, compromise, open hearts, open minds
- Vision is central in tough times
- Discipleship matters
- Evaluation using spiritual gifts in the congregation
- Define the end point
- Time management
- Promoting, networking
- Awareness of where we can send people (community, resources, shelters)
- Congregations
- Multi use buildings
- Technology
- Neighboring churches
- Awareness of where we can send people (community, resources, shelters)
- Share experiences

C. Raw Data (Notes) from the Conversation Café.

What are our resources for navigating through tough times?

- People
- Networking with connecting to
- Holy Spirit
- Prayer
- Jesus Christ
- What are tough times?
 - ABW – Younger generations not picking up

- Economy
- Languages due to different ethnic groups coming to us
- Different cultures – need help to learn English, find work, health care, citizenship, transition
- Also true of generations
- Holy Spirit – Pentecost – figuring out how to lift our sails to take advantage of the power of the Holy Spirit
- Need to be prepared
- Be open to others needs
- Sailing – constant work
- Where do we find common ground?
- Listen, help, encourage one another
- Spiritual power, Holy Spirit, strength of the Word
- Life community – even though we speak same language we do not always understand each other
- Open to change, compromise, open hearts, open minds
- Good prayer life, prayer partner
- Discerning the tough time
- Relationships with other pastors
- Pre-planning in good times
- Vision is central in tough times
- Discipleship matters
- Evaluation using spiritual gifts in the congregation
- May or may not be realistic about tough times
- People – are we utilizing them?
- Define the end point
- Time management
- Promoting, networking
- Perseverance
- Networking with other churches and people in sharing cost (joint VBS, division of need for clothes, baby items, food)
- Awareness of where we can send people (community, resources, shelters)
- Role of pastor has changed – knowledge about town’s agencies, being prepared, being pro-active, identifying potential problems, having vision for future
- Bible – cannot be watered down
- Congregations
- Preparation
- Multi use buildings
- Technology
- Neighboring churches
- Stay focused on spiritual resources
- Trust
- Look beyond tough times
- Be grateful for whatever time we are in
- Turn to people for support, skills,
- Faith
- Lifetime of preparation
- Share experiences
- See God’s will in all questions

Second Question at Annual Gathering during Conversation Café:

How are we using our resources to be salt and light?

- Send out our people to be among the larger community
- Make proactive, instead of reactionary decisions
- Willing to look and be able to make changes, making sure we are responsible to the kingdom of God first
- Need major commitment to prayer to get through these times
- Missions focus, people, staff, building, congregation, get people in and out of church involved, train, equip, support
- Ecumenical Council identifies resources and needs and sharing the burden
- Focus Hope – distributing to seniors (Staples) gets government subsidy
- After school tutorial – education
- Our response of faith – being bold
- Door to door evangelism (target children)
- Holding Bible classes and reaching un-churched
- Bringing in more young people
 - o Helping to meet their physical and spiritual needs
 - o Expanding the utilization of resources
- As an encouragement to the community by some
- How to motivate the pew warmers

III. Facilitator's Note:

The goal of the Conversation Café experience was the following: (as established with the Planning Committee)

- To engage the constituency in a dialogue process that will bring all voices to the fore and gain input from the diverse participants;
- To create space for the Annual Gathering to be an experience of hopefulness and energy;
- To generate emerging ideas and sense of strengths that can be claimed by the Region and local churches as we do ministry in the current and future context and social, spiritual and fiscal climate.

With these intentions in mind, I will summarize our attaining these goals by referring to the following:

What have we heard?

What is emerging?

How do we feel?

1. What have we heard?

I would summarize the comments shared during the Conversation Café in terms of what we have heard as such:

-The participants in the 2009 Annual Gathering

- Our foundation in God motivates us to help in tough times
- People are a resource
- The Holy Spirit is an ever-present resource during tough times
- Be open to others' needs during tough times
- Be open to change
- Need to be prepared for tough times
- Stay focused on spiritual resources during tough times
- Vision is central in tough times
- Discipleship matters

2. What is emerging?

- Networking is necessary to advance mission during tough times
- Expand the utilization of resources for these tough times
- A dependence on spiritual things
- Open to change, compromise, open hearts, open minds
- Recommitment

3. How do we feel? (Evaluation and comments as a result of the Conversation Café format)

- Energized
- Connected
- Relational
- Hopeful
- Resourced
- Enabled to use Café model in their local church
- Encouraged
- Enlightened

The Clergy Equipping Event Conversation Café

1. What have we heard?

I would summarize the comments shared during this Conversation Café in terms of what we have heard as such:

-The participants in the Clergy Equipping Event

- We need to be intentionally open to God's Spirit
- Discipleship through and with families is important
- Give younger people a sense of ownership
- Involve younger people and youth in more hands on leadership
- Motivate the next generation

- Mentoring and coaching is key
- Impart a sense of purpose to the next generation
- Encourage the gifts
- Stir up the gifts
- Help people identify their gifts

2. What is emerging?

- Thinking differently about leadership – everyone is a leader
- We need to rethink how we accept leaders
- Create opportunities for the realities of leadership
- Teach and Disciple the next generation
- Pass on Christian beliefs to the next generation
- Include youth in church ministries
- Invest in people; invest in relationships

3. How do we feel?

- A feeling that the Conversation Café model is a useful tool to engage local church members in dialogue around issues that matter
- Energized
- Hopeful
- Renewing
- Engaged

Conclusion:

I again commend the American Baptist Churches of Michigan for this breakthrough experience of incorporating the Conversation Café model within an Annual Gathering and Clergy Equipping event. This is the first experience like this undertaken by a region in the ABC. I would ask that forward movement could be gained if attention is paid to the items in the sections **“What is emerging.”** The goal of the Café model is to help to unearth the wisdom and common interests that exist among a diverse group of people. The unearthed wisdom shows up in what emerges after having asked the right question.

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