

Blackhawk Presbytery Council Report
April 9, 2018
Presbytery Assembly Meeting

The Blackhawk Presbytery Council met in February and March. We are beginning our process of looking into the future. In February we began to discuss how the Council would begin to live out one of its responsibilities, which is to “continually develop, evaluate, and recommend to the Presbytery Assembly the ongoing vision, priorities, and actions for Blackhawk Presbytery.” John Rickard suggested the Council members read the book *Participating in God’s Mission: A Theological Missiology for the Church in America (The Gospel and Our Culture Series (GOCS))*, 2018, by Craig Van Gelder and Dwight Zscheile.

At our March meeting, we delved into the book to help us take an in depth look at who we are within our local congregations, our neighborhoods and surrounding areas, the Presbytery, the nation and the world. John Rickard is leading the Council through this process.

Highlights of our discussion included:

The current guidance that Blackhawk Presbytery has for guiding us include:

- Vision Statement
- Book of Order
- Secondary things that are assumed we do (part of our culture)
- Traditions, to include Reformed/PCUSA, Blackhawk, Christian
- Nostalgia
- Geographies
- Ocean

What possibilities do we have to use in our future?

- Assets/Gifts/Skills

Meta Trends (learned from book)- Are we in DENIAL?

- Demographics (age, immigrants, money)
- Crisis- Can we compromise to respond to the crisis?
- American culture, assume everything will be a success, measure success by numbers
- Multi-cultural and move away from melting pot
- Anti-institutionalism
- Religious options- smorgasbord of faith

Existential Realities

Membership in Blackhawk: 10,500

Versus

Attendance on Sunday: 5,000

Instead of looking at God through the eyes of the church- Look at Church through the eyes of God...

- Relationships
- Authenticity- spiritual

Definitions

Church- political gathering
Ecclesia- God's people gathered

How do we form presbytery life at this level to be...forward thinking...move conversations to deepen relationships.....responsive to concerns for our congregations

Geographies

Rural, Suburban, Urban
Rust Belt
Declining population
Older
White
E-economy that feeds isolation
Breakdown of community, authority, experts (truth)
Everything negotiable
Global
Seasonal- snow birds

Next meeting is April 24

Agenda- Discuss the following:

The Future...

What can we Control
What we can change
What can we Not Control
Conversations of our society

How do respond to the above

And what does that future (control/not control) mean for-

Presbytery common life
Leadership Development
Congregational Life

How are we going to implement our vision, given the realities, with what is important to us. The institution is going to collapse but we can guide it into a sustainable future.

Over the next four to six meetings we will work toward developing a plan and preparing for implementation.

Respectfully Submitted,
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Blackhawk Presbytery Council Moderator
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