

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR PLENARIES

Plenary 1: Gayle Gerber Koontz “Treasure in Clay Pots: Church as Mission”

1. What attitudes toward the church’s “mission” and “missionaries” characterized one or more of the congregations or parishes where you have been a participant? What attitudes have shaped you?
2. Do you think the concept of the church as mission draws too tight a link between the communication of the Christian gospel and the church? (My son and daughter-in-law invite their coaching colleagues and friends who do not go to church over to their home to express the love of Christ, but they would not invite them to their congregation because the coaching families would feel alien as outsiders to the language, the assumptions, the practices, and the level of preaching they would encounter there.) What barriers need to be overcome for specific congregations or the wider church to be able to display the gospel for such (middle class) neighbors in the U.S.? For others in contexts in which you live and move?
3. From your experience, which of the following suggestions from the perspective of the **church as mission** most challenges your understanding of mission? most urgently needs to be embodied? Why?
 - a. the church needs to focus on becoming a repenting, forgiving body at least as much as an exemplary model of a righteous community
 - b. missionary proclamation of the gospel needs to include breaking boundaries of enmity and injustice within the global church
 - c. priority should be given to missionary efforts which focus on points of enmity, violence and economic conflicts in the world
 - d. the way the church’s evangelization is carried out should be peaceable—humble as well as bold, persuasive not coercive, listening and learning before speaking
 - e. communicating the gospel is more fully and adequately done (demonstrated) by groups of Christians than by individuals (“see how they love one another”).

Plenary 2: Michael Gorman “Becoming the Gospel of Peace”

1. Name one aspect of the presentation about Paul that you found particularly interesting or significant in considering the church as mission? Why do you think this is significant?
2. What strategies might the church utilize to name, repeal, and replace (cultural allusion intended) the three heresies, or quasi-heresies, identified in the talk?
3. What are some of the concrete implications of Paul’s understanding of peace and peacemaking for the missional practices of the church in North America—or at least in your context?

Plenary 3: Shane Claiborne “Resurrecting Church”

1. Shane talks about "exegeting our neighborhoods." Describe a little of your own context. Where do you see God at work, and where do you see the principalities and powers working against the Kingdom of God?
2. Where have you seen (either in history or in our day) effective public protest that has a distinctive faith element?
3. What does love require of us at this moment in history?

Plenary 4: David Fitch “Engaging the Antagonisms of Our Culture: The Peculiar Challenges of Mission in a Post-Christendom World.”

1. Offer a brief example of an antagonism your congregation faces, whether it runs through the congregation itself or runs primarily through the surrounding culture.
2. What are the ways your church engages that tend to inflame this antagonism? What tactics or approaches might diffuse and make space for presence amid the antagonism?
3. How do you see/understand God working within this space toward reconciliation in Christ?