

John Cleghorn. *Resurrecting Church: Where Justice and Diversity Meet Radical Welcome and Healing Hope*. 2021.

Book Discussion – 5 Weeks: Listen – Learn - Live

Goals: During and by the end of this book discussion, we hope participants will. . .

1. Learn about Caldwell’s journey so far and understand “church” in new ways,
2. Listen and learn from other churches’ experiences,
3. Discover their imaginations sparked and see new dreams emerge about how God works in and through us and a congregation, and
4. Find their own faith journey transformed and deepened.

WEEK 1:

Introduction

Chap. 1: The First Church of the Island of Misfit Toys

Chapter Focus: What are some ways historically and currently “church” is defined, and how does intersectionality challenge and deepen those definitions?

Sibling Churches’ Stories: Be alert to other churches’ stories and what we can learn from them.

Your Story: What has been your experiences of “church,” both positive and negative? How does your story of church intersect with Caldwell’s (or your present home church if you have one)?

Key Terms/concepts: Reformed Theology

Chap. 2: What Happens at Intersections

Chapter Focus: What are some important “intersections” discussed in this chapter? Why did you pick those particular stories?

Sibling Churches’ Stories: Be alert what we can learn from other churches’ stories.

Your Story: In this chapter, John describes his experiences with intersections; think of your own experiences of “intersections.” In what ways could you identify God at work (or not) either at the time or with hindsight as you reflect on your own intersections?

Key Terms/concepts: Intersectionality

WEEK 2:

Chap. 3: Is Anyone Out There?

Chapter Focus: What is or has been the dominant story of mainline Protestant churches over the last century, and what is the minority or alternative narrative emerging?

Sibling Churches’ Stories: What can we learn from the stories of other congregations?

Your Story: What was your experience of church, prior to Caldwell, and how has it shaped you and your faith?

Key Terms/concepts: Majority minority. Theological abundance. Social justice

Chap. 4: The Church of Both/And

Chapter Focus: How can we understand and explain the benefits of diversity and intersectionality, of “both/and”

Sibling Churches Stories: What can we learn from other churches’ stories?

Your Story: Where have you been confronted with a “single-axis” way of thinking either your own or other people’s or institutions? How did you respond? What can we learn from these encounters or challenges?

Key Terms/concepts: Single axis thinking. Both/And. Diversity – Intersectionality. Critical Inquiry and Critical praxis. Liberation.

WEEK 3:

Chap. 5: Centering “Othered” Views of Scripture

Chapter Focus: How do we read Scripture?

Sibling Churches Stories: What can we learn from other churches’ stories?

Your Story: Which reading of Gal. 3:26-28 most challenged you? Why? Which resonated most with you? Why? How might this chapter change the way you read Scripture and the questions you ask? How might this chapter affect how you “read” the world and which voices and peoples you notice are present or missing?

Key Terms/concepts: “Othered.”

Chap. 6: The Church of Both/And: Justice and . . . (Everything)

Chapter Focus: Justice lies at the center of our Scriptures and can be experienced in many forms. Where is your own experience of justice deepened or challenged as you think through the categories John uses in this chapter?

Sibling Churches Stories: What can we learn from other churches’ stories?

Your Story: Where in our congregation do you most experience a sense of Justice? How do you share that good news beyond the walls of the church?

Key Terms/concepts: Justice

WEEK 4:

Chap. 7: The Both/And of Repair and Reconciliation

Chapter Focus: How can we think in life giving ways about repair and reconciliation and their relationship?

Sibling Churches Stories: What can we learn from other churches’ stories?

Your Story: What does reconciliation mean to you? What does “repair” mean to you? How do you think they relate to each other? How can these concepts and experiences guide one’s relationships with other people and /or institutions?

Key Terms/concepts: Repair. Reconciliation

Chap. 8: Possibilities and Potential Pitfalls

Chapter Focus: What are the myriad ways diversity and intersectionality brings blessings but also pitfalls?

Sibling Churches Stories: What can we learn from other churches’ stories?

Your Story: What risks have you taken to live into Christ’s call to be co-creators with Him of the Beloved Community or the Reign (Kingdom) of God on earth? What blessings emerged from that risk? What pitfalls? What did you learn?

Key Terms/concepts: Beloved Community. Polity. Congregational vs Connectional Churches

WEEK 5:

Chap. 9: Lessons Learned

Chapter Focus: What are the “lessons learned” that are discussed in this chapter?

Sibling Churches Stories: What can we learn from other churches’ stories?

Your Story: Have you been “transformed as a disciple” (p. 179)? If so, in what way? How has this transformation affected your life - within the congregation and in everyday life?

Key Terms/concepts:

Chap. 10: Liberation . . . In Christ

Chapter Focus: In what ways has revisiting Paul’s story opened up new ways of thinking about one’s individual faith journey and about the church’s role in becoming a just, merciful, faithful reflection of God’s inclusive love?

Sibling Churches Stories: What can we learn from other churches’ stories?

Your Story: What are your experiences of being imprisoned (however you define that) and of being liberated as part of your faith journey? We are all a work in progress, so where are you being called at this moment to step away from the power and privilege you may have in order to follow Christ more faithfully?

Key Terms/concepts: Liberation

Epilogue