



Ignited Imaginings at Gathering 2019

At Gathering 2019 in Abbotsford June 28 – July 1 Elaine Heath asked us to look at what it means to be missional in a world that is traumatized. These are my musings.

Does our church smell like old hymnals and despair? Are we busy looking fondly back at the “good old days” instead of looking forward to what can be? We are being asked to give up some things we should have given up a long time ago; find examples and practices that make us dissatisfied with the status quo. Status quo is another way of saying stagnant.

The Word became flesh and moved into the neighborhood. God showed us this when Jesus became a refugee as a child and fled to Egypt. Then, as now, refugees were seen as a despised minority. No one wants them and they traumatized. How do we become good news in a world that is traumatized?

We are called to be disciples, someone who bears a strong resemblance to Christ. Listening is a skill we need to use. Our neighbor also has something to teach us – we need to be open to hearing it. We need to practice hospitality by creating spaces where others can be themselves comfortably.

We want to see our churches grow; we want new people to join us. Are we expecting them to conform to our ways and traditions, and then wonder why they are not comfortable and stop coming? Are we willing to step out of our “comfort zone” of how it has always been done and open ourselves to what they have to offer? Too often we end up like the protagonist in the Dr. Seuss book *Green Eggs and Ham* who has decided he does not like green eggs and ham and is offended that Sam is trying to convince him that they are good. Do we decide we will not like things without even trying, or will we give in to Sam’s urging and try it, only to discover that we really do like it?

Innovators and new ideas are seen as odd and strange. We would rather stick with what we have always done, even if it does not work as well anymore. We become anxious as things stop working well, and we are at our worst when we are anxious. We are scared to lose the past. We need to look back, honour the past, and start to look forward to see that God is doing a new thing!

We are called to be the good news in a post Christendom Canada in Micah 6:8

To do justice, love Chesed* and to walk humbly with your God.

*kindness, mercy, forgiveness

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