

Oakridge & Marpole (January 20, 2016)

5 people from 4 out of 27 congregations/organizations (15% representation)

WHAT IS GOD DOING?

- The great success of ESL programs run by churches (e.g., Trinity Baptist) to provide welcome, teaching, support; frequently accepting the offer of faith in Christ
- In our own congregation, the welcoming, loving, joyful acceptance of a very diverse group of people. Evidence of the Holy Spirit bringing joy, peace, patience, gentleness, love, faith, hope in surprising and beautiful ways. “They love you here even before they know you.” Many caregivers of other faiths regularly bringing their clients to join is because they see such evidence of value and blessing. The parable of the Great Banquet come to life.
- Granville Chapel is sponsoring refugee families; bare minimum that organizations should be doing in terms of taking care of those in need
- Union Gospel Mission’s outreach missions
- Coastal Church on West Georgia has energy that attracts!
- any Bible-based small group / home group
- Power 2 Change and Focus are befriending overseas college and university students at Langara College
- God is directing newcomers and visitors to the church to seek out information about Christianity, social interaction and friendship, help in settlement matters, ESL. Large numbers are coming from mainland China and South America. Many stay, though some return to China having been influenced by Christ and sharing their experience back home.

WHAT ARE THE SPIRITUAL AND SOCIAL CHALLENGES?

Participants were asked to answer either 1a or 1b and then either 2a or 2b.

1a. What are the main spiritual challenges confronting your neighbourhood? Are these the same as or different from the ones confronting your parishioners or ministry participants?

- Not really sure of the main spiritual challenge, but perhaps “materialism.” Most of us are so wrapped up in getting and enjoying our things that spiritual things are neglected.
- Affluence is a spiritual challenge and I also view it as one of the “spiritual forces of evil.” Affluence is being promoted/pursued for “self.” Affluence should be view as a gift to benefit others, to affect positive change, social justice, meetings needs, etc. Locally and internationally.
- lack of knowledge of the Scriptures

1b. St Paul says “ our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against ... the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places” (Eph 6:12). What spiritual forces especially mark your neighbourhood? Which ones threaten your people?

- affluence = indifference. Cambie shows increasing signs of materialism and affluence. It may be materialism, it may be cultural and an ignorance of the gospel
- tolerance!!

2a. What is the most damaging social injustice impacting your neighbourhood? What are its main effects? In what ways, if any, does it affect people in your church or ministry?

- real estate
- lack of affordable housing
- young couples / families struggle to make ends meet – requires two incomes, thus stealing time away from family, social, spiritual gatherings or interactions; people are forced to move to the suburbs
- marginalization: the problem that most affects the members of my church is that people forget their existence – except to complain when there are empty “Disabled Access Only” parking stalls. This extends to others who are on the outskirts of society as well. The marginalized feel insignificant because they are treated as insignificant.

2b. What is your neighbourhood’s greatest wound? Similarly, thinking about your parishioners or ministry participants, what is their greatest wound as a group?

- rising house prices
 - more condos = isolation
 - multi-occupied single homes [secondary suites]
 - pricing families out of the community
 - increase in poverty, involving more boarders within the neighbourhood
- lack of youth participation in church life