

Vision 2032 Responses – Pastors of Large Churches
(10.29.2019)

Concerns

Limbo is hurting us as people are leaving
Conference disconnect
Focus on who we are General church might muck things up. Don't make a problem
Lack of trust
Care for CHVRCHES to understand our "why" in reductions
That we will make administration priority more important than mission and ministry
Do not want to lose itinerant system
We are preserving structure over mission
More concerned about institution than ministry
Tension among us: is this a safe place for women, theological differences
Shortage of clergy
Seminary students questioning the United Methodist Church
Polarization of pastors and churches
Mirror culture
Disparity of haves and have-nots economically
Scrutinize dominates
Will there be a job for me
Is this my last appointment
Non-denominational churches starting in many places
Medical career concerns: too young to retire, too old to start over
Keep the local church as the main focus
Resources for teaching new Christians
Loss of holiness and take on culture too much
Shifting of responsibilities and time
Muddy United Methodist Church name in media
Not enough clergy
Not changing fast enough
Not nimble
Our conference ministries suffer with budget cuts
Paying 100% general conference apportionments: we suffer
Loss of shared ministry
Grieving who we used to be
People are scared: losing faith
Reality: will clusters really happen
District superintendents as missional strategists
Local church pastors workload, also able to let go so laity are empowered
Using certified lay ministers to relieve anxiety, put on their back
Process can be a barrier for certified lay ministers and others
Do we have a shared vision, common language for seeing God at work?

Excitements

Training pastors, laity to help with HCI, CAT
Camps: reach new people, raise up leaders
Cluster idea: bringing up laity, connects
For willingness, openness for church to change
More emphasis on the local church
More connectionalism
Money is making us be adaptive
Laity is taking more of a leadership role
New people are coming
People are working together
People are not fighting
Sharpen resources
Doing a new thing
Cutting off the dead branches
Rediscovery of Wesleyan roots: bands, classes
Local churches really do want to serve and make a difference
Reassert as alternative to culture
A strong structure remains for ministry
Church clusters and circuits offer new possibilities
A smaller annual conference structure can be good, hold onto the good
Gathering with others in Christ name even though there may be differences
Relationship building
Budget situation forces us to rethink
What a dynamic time this is especially for young people
Hopeful: massive harvest field potential
Technology opportunities
Empower the laity
Emphasis on mission
The world is smaller and closer

What could we do with a \$6-\$8 million budget?

More invested laity
Less paperwork
More opportunities for lay training
Less isolation: we need each other
Decentralized bi-vocational staff
Cultivating a sense of being a part of something larger: "greater than" (discipleship)
Creative collaboration
Needs to be adaptive
Racing cross cultural expressions

Permission giving for experimentation and creativity

How to discern effectiveness: develop disciple leaders within the laity

Longer appointments

- Must have trust with clergy and laity
- Encourage clergy to seek help, support, learn how to go beyond 3 to 4 years

What are we called to as a conference

Clergy modeling "the world is my parish"

Consistency: stay the course

Shepherding: inviting people into ministry

Stop confusing programs with solutions

How can we develop relationships that are safe despite differences?

Cluster around mission, vision, theology

- Churches are able to have freedom to be who they are

Community with self-differentiation

How do we empower local churches to go into the community and the world with authentic relationships?

Sell the conference center

Make the district offices virtual

"Grassroots" ministry

Less "silver bullet" ministry programs

Deeper discipleship for church members

Creative partnering with Pastor groups

Less conference staff because a culture change is not just cuts

Local church is the primary focus

Spend finances on equipping leaders at the local level

Teach tithing: 10% giving to the conference

Five districts with elders strategically placed to create hubs

Decentralize some conference positions and more part-time positions and less full-time positions

Share resources: wisdom as well

Study other denominations, conferences in our context

Appointment system?

Lay and clergy

One that finds a new authority

That asks the right questions

Physical properties

More online meetings

Cut lunches and hotels and travel

Energy and local churches: re-emphasis on congregation as a locus of disciple making

Pay lower percentage to the general church a portion months until we stabilize financially

Reduce staff, utilize connection of congregations to share ideas

Explore conference alignment or sharing

Broader expectation of clergy involvement in conference leadership

Online leadership training:

- seminary,
- outsourcing,
- local pastors,
- special training

Cluster groups

Mobile work spaces

Use churches for District and conference workspaces

Question or present system: how essential is the conference involvement?

- Flicked management
- Appointments

Start from square one

Connection with him is more local, organic

Moving costs paid by the local church