

Notes on Symposium 2023

 **SHIFT** - the theme of symposium this year

Peter Ahn planted Metro CC and is the lead pastor from Metro Community church in Englewood NJ Learning to shift from strength to weakness.

Finding commonality with other people through our weaknesses- Embracing our weaknesses is one of the most powerful things that we can do in our lives.

2 Corinthians 12:1-10

The Vision of Paradise

“I must go on boasting. Although there is nothing to be gained, I will go on to visions and revelations from the Lord. **2** I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know—God knows. **3** And I know that this man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows— **4** was caught up to paradise and heard inexpressible things, things that no one is permitted to tell. **5** I will boast about a man like that, but I will not boast about myself, except about my weaknesses. **6** Even if I should choose to boast, I would not be a fool, because I would be speaking the truth. But I refrain, so no one will think more of me than is warranted by what I do or say, **7** or because of these surpassingly great revelations. Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. **8** Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. **9** But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. “Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. **10** That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”

All encompassing and self absorbing process for pastors. 45 % of pastors are thinking about quitting. Every month 1200 pastors a month either quit or get fired in this country. It is extremely challenging.

When he went on Sabbatical God showed him that the Greatest temptation he struggled with was:

- He wanted to spiritually lust after him – wanted to be invited to speak at conferences, wanted to write books, wanted to be a social media influencer, etc and he realized that that was his greatest temptation.

How do we embrace our weaknesses

1. Be vulnerable and be transparent - embrace our weaknesses

“**9** But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.

The greatest display of Gods power is in our weakness in our barrenness.

In order for Gods strength to work at its maximum capacity the elements of human possibility must be destroyed.

So if want to get to a place where we can experience the maximum power in our own lives we have to embrace our weaknesses and be vulnerable.

How do we do it?

We get together with at least one person [no more than 3 although 1 is enough) of the same sex and confess the darkest areas of our humanity. We can call them soulmates because we share our souls with them.

Proverbs 28:13

Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper,
but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy.

Some of us struggle with shame.

Robert Karen wrote in Feb 1992 in the Atlantic monthly - - "People have creative ways of dealing with things they don't like about themselves, and sometimes they become stronger as a result. But the pathogenic shame belief seems to block creative avenues. It is crippling, because it contains not just the derisive accusation that one is a wimp, a bully, a runt, or a fag but the further implication **that one is at the core a deformed being, fundamentally unlovable and unworthy of membership in the human community.... It is the self-regarding the self with the withering and unforgiving eye of contempt.** And most people are unable to face it. It is too annihilating."

Brene Brown and Dr. Kurt Thompson have spent their entire lives studying shame. They say the only cure for shame "is vulnerability". Brown says "vulnerability is the birthplace of joy, of belonging, of love". She says, "You either walk inside your story and own it or you stand outside your story and hustle for your worthiness."

For someone to be healthy the left and the right side of the brain have to communicate together.

The left side is the informational side of our brain (data, analytical, etc)

The right side is the emotional side of our brain this is where we feel.

In order for someone to be mentally healthy the left and right side need to be in constant communication

Dr. Thompson says the emotion that prevents the left and right side of the brain from communicating (shuts it down) is actually "shame".

He says, "In order for us to get to a healthy place we need to seek that path of vulnerability."

Dierdrick- wrote a book How do we encounter a revelation with God- he says the best way to do that is through the other person- "If you really want to be in the presence of God when you want to repent it should always be in the presence of someone else."

So we need to get together with someone and confess

IMPORTANT: When someone confesses their sin to you make sure you say, → "Because you have confessed your sins, you have been forgiven."

Peter's soulmate "Jeff" who works for LAPD as detective – told Peter after Peter made confessions to him (about his thoughts and things that he was struggling with [*he started getting angry, cursing, he wanted to cheat on his wife and more*]). Jeff told Peter that Peter would lose everything. He would lose his ministry, his wife, his kids. He told him to Stop IT! He said that he is going to journey with Peter and he wants Peter to know that he would not let Peter go down like that and that "If Peter went down, he would go down with him. So don't do it! Jeff told him"

- Being vulnerable will change your life.
- We embrace our weaknesses when we embrace our suffering.

Peter refers to verse 2 Corinthians 12: v8

8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. 9 But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. “Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. 10 That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”

Note: God does not want us to look forward to suffering (Paul prayed, he had a physical issue that he prayed that God would take away and God said no. Paul even prayed and said “I don’t want to suffer anymore”

Jesus prays in Gethsemane that he does not want to die. Even Jesus did not want to suffer
So we should never want to suffer
but when we do, we need to embrace it.

You can’t want to rush it away. We need to learn to embrace it because if we squeeze every ounce of wisdom from it we can truly grow.

Why does God want us to embrace suffering?

Because God wants to break us and when He breaks us He will redeem us.

Its one of the most beautiful things that will happen

Romans 5:3-5

“...Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4 perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.”

God wants us to go through seasons of suffering. Paul says we glory in it because we know it produces “perseverance; character; and character, hope”

Panel of Scholars: Jose Humphreys, David Bailey, Michelle Loyd-Page, Peter Ahn additional 2 speakers unknown.

DIGGS -Shift (verb)- in order to shift you need 3 things: 1. Change, 2. movement, 3. place or space.

PERSPECTIVES ON SHIFT FROM SCHOLARS

Michelle Loyd-Page -Shift is a mental, emotional (of the heart and mind) change that has to occur within. A decision to over to another state of being. Another way of thinking, another way of acting. What this results in is the actual change and that’s when they shift results in a noun,

Jose Humphreys- Shift is about our capacity to adapt. How our formation needs to develop in us a capacity to adapt. About how malleable we are to change.

David Bailey (Charlie P)- spiritual exercises will allow us to stretch ourselves spiritually making us able to shift what the Spirit is doing.

4th speaker- [driving a stick analogy] In order to shift you have to be in the right gear, right state of mind, understanding the context in order to move forward.

Peter Ahn - shifting is about sacrifice. It's a transformational process that doesn't happen unless you are willing to go through the sacrifice to make that happen.

6th speaker- [keyboard analogy] discerning upper case and lower case.

Diggs- shift is a mind heart connection. Being able to make the "shift/change /adjustment" or being honest with what you can't do or what you are struggling with in order for us to keep moving forward.

Post-Pandemic- Coronavirus 2020-2022

Diggs- We had to shift during Pandemic but now we are past it. What has been the most significant change that you are going to have to prepare your mindset for as you move forward. Some things will not be the same. How are we preparing for that?

1st speaker- feels that there is a great recalibration that is going on. Not a reset but a recalibration.

Cultural shift, earthquakes, changing landscapes. What is tolerable what is not tolerable. Do I want to continue to be a part of the church or not?

Peter Ahn- made him think about how to become a digital evangelist in order to move with the shift that is taking place and in order to meet the new generation where they are. He is thinking about hiring a digital missionary. The Pandemic has helped him to see new ways of doing church and thinking about the whole metaverse. Post-pandemic is creating a whole new paradigm shift of doing ministry. In order to keep moving forward he is changing the way he is doing ministry and how ministry can be done.

Michelle Loyd-Page - we are in a state of ever transition, nothing is fixed, nothing is certain so she will not be moved. I will cling to the calling of God on my life. I am not concerned with what other churches are doing to meet the new generation of digital users post pandemic. The people who need to show up to church are going to show up regardless. We are in a state of ever transition so I will cling and center on the one constant and I will be alright. This is how she plans to continue post-pandemic.

Jose Humphreys – The opportunity in post-Pandemia is that the church needs to become more trauma informed. We need to pay attention to how our bodies respond to our environment and the world around us. There is also something Biblical and spiritual about it because trauma has existed from days on old. When we think about shifting as a church we need to realize that people are still carrying the weight of the pandemic in our bodies emotions and mind.

DIVERSITY

Diggs- What should diversity look like in the mindset of a Christian leader?

David Bailey (Charlie Parker)- the way that we engage diversity is a forte as we look towards heaven. Diversity isn't the goal, the reconciling of all things is the goal, Diversity becomes the fruit of the work that we're doing in. This is how we should be looking forward to it.

Diggs- [3:45 on video timeline] What are some ways that people can engage and lean into the culture and racial clash or what are some things that you've noticed that they are doing now?

David Bailey (Charlie P)- "We can't use tools of the empire, to dismantle the empire".

Empire=in opposition to the kingdom of God. “If you have a king of theology without understanding of what the empire looks like then you will baptize the ways of the empire and call it the kingdom of God. That’s looking like Christian nationalism right now but there is a secular version of that too like there are so many people who are so upset about Christian fundamentalism but there is also progressive fundamentalism going on that might take up some of the forms of Marx and some of the things of that nature and so what i want to encourage you to do is to be well-read. Read banned books (understand what is in there) but also read the scriptures and see like----democratic party and not the kingdom of God. So that is the biggest thing that I would really encourage you to do is to be rightly discerned and don’t be scared or intimidated . All truth is Gods truth. If it comes out through Malcom X or if it comes out through Karl Marx, etc it doesn’t matter what the element of the philosophy of the truth is its important to just like be a wider reader, look at the context, see what is happening and be willing to interrogate your own biases. Christians are holding the waters for political agenda and not really for the Lambs agenda.”