

Discussion Guide to A Convergent Model of Renewal: Remixing the Quaker Tradition in a Participatory Culture by C. Wess Daniels (Pickwick Publications 2015)

Introduction

“I don’t want to be an anti, against anybody. I simply want to be the builder of a great affirmation: the affirmation of God, who loves us and who wants to save us.” -Oscar Romero

- Discuss the first quote by Everett Cattell. What do you know of Cattell? As a small group do some quick internet research. How do you think his life may have informed this vision for renewal? What do you think he means by it? Where have you seen instances of renewal as a “falling to the ground and dying” around you?
- What does convergent mean? Is there anything surprising or challenging about the way this word is being used?
- What obstacles and opportunities do you see Quaker meetings/churches and yearly meetings facing?
- What are the three core impulses within the convergent model? Why do you think these things are important for seeking renewal? Is there anything missing from this you think is essential?
- What other parts stand out to you about this chapter? What parts did you gravitate towards? Which parts did you struggle with? What questions are you left with?

Chapter One: Alasdair MacIntyre and the Ongoing Nature of Tradition

“Tradition is the living faith of the dead, traditionalism is the dead faith of the living. And, I suppose I should add, it is traditionalism that gives tradition such a bad name.” -Jaroslav Pelikan

- What is your experience with “tradition?”
- What is the connection between tradition and modernity?
- If tradition is a historically extended argument, what argument(s) do you think the Quaker tradition is making?
- What are the stages of the development of a tradition?
- What are the qualities of an apprentice and how does one become an apprentice to a tradition?
- What do you think Dandelion means when he says, “Everything is testimony that comes from God?”
- What is happening in the example of the gardener (p. 34)? And how does this connect to understanding the nature of tradition and practices?
- Where have you experienced “epistemological crises?” or the “Dissolution of historically founded certitudes?”
- Consider the “questions of continuity.” Where do you see these at work within your own tradition?
- What other parts stand out to you about this chapter? What parts did you gravitate towards? Which parts did you struggle with? What questions are you left with?

Chapter Two: Stephen Bevans and Mission: Developing the Synthetic Model

In the twentieth century the content of the gospel has often been described in terms of a dualism: word and deed, or proclamation and service. This would have impressed earlier generations as a strange construction. The Bible, for example, contains no discussion of strategies of “social service” or “evangelistic

preaching.” Nor is there any attempt to contrast one with the other or to establish the primacy of one over the other. We moderns have managed to introduce into our reading of the Bible a distinctively twentieth-century problem. (Shenk 1999: 20)

Confused their middle-class ideals and values with the tenets of Christianity. Their views about morality, respectability, order, efficiency, individualism, professionalism, work, and technological progress, having been baptized long before, were without compunction exported to the ends of the earth. (Shenk, 294)

Colonialism fostered a feeling among those who were colonized that anything that was really good and worthwhile was something that originated in the colonizing country and that what was in the colony was sketchy, of poor quality, only an imitation of the real thing. (Bevans 2002: 11)

- How have you thought about mission in the past? In what ways has this chapter helped add to or shift your understanding of mission?
- What are the ways in which tradition and mission might be pitted against one another?
- What impact has foundationalism had on the Christian practice of mission in the world?
- What do you think David Bosch means when he writes, “The gospel always comes to people in cultural robes.”
- What are the three stages of development of the Protestant understanding of mission?
- What is contextual theology?
- How does contextual theology overcome some of the issues of other manifestations of “mission” in modernity?

- What are the six models of contextual theology?
- What other parts stand out to you about this chapter? What parts did you gravitate towards? Which parts did you struggle with? What questions are you left with?