

“Here2Stay” Report 2015

KEY WORDS/PHRASES that kept re-occurring across the nation:

H2S is NOT A PROGRAM / IT IS NOT JUST FOR CHILDREN

1. We long to create a culture of discipleship

- We are about building disciples as a focus which will lead to mission
- We need to create a Culture change -life focusing on 24x7x365
- We need to understand our role is to make disciples who make disciples
- Discipleship applies to any age - all ages - need vibrant Christians at any age - then great things will happen

2. We long to see Lifelong faith formation

- The focus has to be larger than simply keeping our children and teens.
- It is about empowering families through intentional discipleship using the 10 pillars.
- People need to experience change - need to see the change - create environments so people can experience it in action.
- Long term - Deep Authentic Relationships take time

3. We long to see intentionality in all things

- We need to focus on achievable steps from “Here2stay” for each pillar.
- We need to bring the conversation into the congregation regularly
- The church needs to stick together on this issue – to see intentional action that leads to positive outcomes.

4. We long to be Relational

- Formation almost always happens in the context of relationships
- We must move from programs to relationships
- We need up the “anti” on relationships and move from surface level to depth
- Keeping our focus on “relational” programs/environments/spaces

5. We must consider our Language

- We need to change our language.
- Tell a different story
- Affirm our gatherings as a “way of life” rather than calling it a “program”
- The Language we use is a key to bring about a change in Mindset.

6. We long to see a Paradigm shift / Think differently

- Think outside the box /Take risks
- Hold loosely existing paradigms - don't be precious / Need to redefine our terms
- Educate for 7 days a week thinking (not just Sundays)
- Influencing UP to change paradigm.
- Stop other programs to release people's time
- Facilitate empowerment rather than dictate direction
- Changing the goal posts of success. – values driven
- Evaluate what we are doing and prepared the stop doing what is not effective - Redefining success
- Shift from giving information to creating experiences – it is not about data transfer but positioning young people to experience Jesus
- What would it look like to lay idea of family over what we already do at church?-What would stay or change?

A Process by one group that is well thought out:

1. Are we operating with a shared understanding of our mission, purpose what does it mean to make disciples?
2. Do the things we do promote programs or relationships?
3. Are we willing to make changes, make decisions, let go?
4. What are our existing paradigms?
5. Are we connecting with people to enable relationship to enable faith formation?
6. Does what we do create space for our mission of making disciples? (is the main thing the main thing?)
7. What do we need to re-calibrate, re passion or re-discover
8. Everything is on the table (measurement must be anchored in keeping the main thing the main thing)
(And it needs to be in spirit of love / not a critical review)

7. We long to see Intergenerational community / Holistic

- Emphasis on Intergenerational not isolation
- All are valuable
- Start talking about discipleship - Integrate thru the plan for all ages
- Embrace community as family
- Need to hear all voices at all ages
- Allow children. And young people to participate in church and community life
- Overcoming fear factor of older people to engage with younger generation

8. We long to redefine the term “community of faith”

- Church is not a place “I attend” but rather a place “ I belong”
- We need to redefine what a “successful “church is
- Structure of church re-visited – what does family mean in this context? Need to understand how and why we do “church” as we do
- End goal doesn’t change - methodology needs to change
- Regular stock take “by leaders” would be a good and easy step forward around the ten pillars
- Getting parents to think differently – they are often pressuring for age based programs.
- Too much focus on programs. We look for “quick fixes by running programs
- Community clubs/organizations are clear with expectations for involvement, is the church as clear?
- Family goal for lifelong discipleship versus church’s goal for lifelong institution
- Focus on community needs and people (not programs)
- We need a changing view on the role of Church - empower the family
- Changing a culture of what it means to be a part of a church - how do we do this in a church that is established?

9. We understand we must “start somewhere”

- Make a plan to start
- Identify start points
- Look at one topic a month
- choose a pillar and start there
- Focus on one each Sunday for the whole community
- One change at a time

10. We see the value of Partnership

- We don't need to do it all - partner with others who are doing things well in certain areas
- Partner – with schools / camps / parachurch / ministries / local church / families
- Partnering with others who do different things.

- Whole of life ministry, no retirement
- Many want to change but don't know how.

BIG ISSUES AND QUESTIONS:

1. Change - letting go of the past road blocks / needs to come from the gate keepers in the church
2. Many churches are living in a culture that doesn't exist anymore.
3. We are time poor - what does this mean for our priorities?
4. Can we have research please on the people who aren't here to stay - what about the ones who leave?
5. The breakdown of Intergenerational relationships within the church needs to be addressed.
6. We need to ask the question - why did u come to worship? Have to / tradition / come to worship Jesus
7. What do we do for those who don't have families that have a faith?
8. Many adults are not strong enough in their faith to mentor the kids?
9. How do we link this with mission?
10. How to reach "out of loop" families - those who have left - how do we build connections and communities with them.
11. Can one space have all ten pillars operating at the same time? What could that look like?

Comments on the 10 Pillars:

1. Family

- Marriage courses / parenting courses / date nights / family events/ grand parenting courses
 - Identify families who already do home ministry / devotions, get them to mentor new families.
 - Cluster families together to do life - family to family support
 - Do not place too many burdens on families so they have time to serve together
 - Ensuring that family doesn't become exclusive
 - Christian families involving children from non Christian family.
 - Encourage families to serve together
 - Share life / share faith experiences
 - Equip families to disciple their kids at home. Enhance what is already happening to make these intentional.
 - To encourage families to worship together. Bringing families to serve in this way together. Create safe places for kids to ask the hard questions.
 - It needs to be easy for families. Small tips rather than big programs.
 - Meet around meal tables with other families regularly - no fuss
 - Prepare our kids, not protect them
 - Give kids time – gift
 - Mystery meals – connections points for families
 - Parents baptising their own children
 - Take your kids with you
 - Need to equip families to live out their faith at home
 - Teach basics-practice them together a learn how to pray as a family
 - Help families to develop a spiritual plan
 - Formation can occur, during the week and be celebrated together with God's family on Sundays
 - Model faith as more than jobs and obligations ...have deeper important conversations together at church...over meals at home... during rites of passage celebrations
 - Discerning Truth -Answer children's questions.
 - Serve the Parents
 - Equip Parents Provide Resources
 - Family gatherings and family activities i.e. camps
 - Help Parents to understand their role in passing on the faith - "PAY IT FORWARD"
- Changing culture of "isolating: ourselves/families. Having open homes

2. Intergenerational Connections

- create Intergenerational experiences outside the norm (church) - camps / mentoring
- Creating spaces for Intergenerational collisions
- Gather as households rather than age similar
- Stepping back from children's church to a more Intergenerational approach
- Take groups from one church to work with people in another church or community. Cross generationally doing tasks together. Break individualism mentality.
- Create opportunities for meaningful conversation between generations - adopt a grandparent.
- Develop extended family within the church community
- Include whole church community in discussions and decisions about change and way to love forward - ownership / Intergenerational
- All age worship together
- Intergenerational weekends
- Intergenerational groups for 30-50 people seem to have an advantage = good natural connection and also big enough to do tasks together.
- Not about age – it's about interest
- Can't shift generational connections with just one generation – need the whole church
- Creating spaces/opportunities for generations to come together/share learn from each other
- Key thing -sense of belonging to Christ not to the 'Church'- but to each other

3. Mentoring and coaching

- Building healthy relationships - getting along side each other
- Mentoring families intentionally
- Authentic relationships
- Generational connections and mentoring and coaching are so linked!
- share life/ share how Faith Experience have been real - give relevance to everyday life
- Authenticity of personal faith exposed
- Ask young people to identify older people to mentor them
- Give Kids permission to question- empower them
- Mentoring "above" and below -youth being mentored and mentoring
- Families mentoring families

4. Serving in Mission

- Family mission opportunities
- Linking serving on mission with responding with compassion to overcome volunteer tourism and be authentic
- Daily regular serving in real life not just one day of our overseas event
- There's a Gap-we are doing things for our young people, neglecting to get them involved in serving
- Encourage families to serve together i.e. Visit the sick
- Youth to help with Practical jobs for people in the community
- Let the children/youth serve where they are

5. Peak Experiences

- More peak experiences for the church community as a whole
- Peak experiences can be different for every person
- Establish intentional Peak experiences - camps, Passover /Lords supper. Share stories/foot washing
- Celebrating special moments

6. Rites of passage

- Rites of passage - needs to be more intentional. We need to follow this up and reinforce it into the future of the young person as well. Ensuring we convey a message of value for our youth.
- Alternative to “schoolies” for rites of passage
- Be Intentional about - testimony , contribute to ministry, transitioning to becoming Member of the church/communion, baptism
- Rites of passage not an end but a beginning

7. Encounters with Jesus

- Creating space to hear from God / Space so people are not so time poor.
- kids and adults encounter Jesus together
- Listen to others stories of change

8. Big Story of the Bible

- Ask people – Where are you in the BIG story?

Ways to fuel this conversation:

1. Technology

- Forum to share ideas and testimonies
- social media campaign
- Repository for local stories
- Data and feedback
- Books and recommendations
- Follow up emails - highlighting a key element and encouraging us to implement
- 3 minute spots from young people staying
- Collating and curate resources are that already working

2. Leadership

- The message spoken at pastors conferences
- From platform, - Vision needs to be promoted -- allocation of resources - time / money / energy / personal
- Leaders who model it
- A team or key leader/regional support
- Put it on agendas in your denominations
- That the Denominational leaders give you the opportunity to present to gatherings. - people needed to be empowered to tell the story
- Leaders need to empower natural networks and families – not to control them.

3. Prayer

- specific prayer morning
- Praying for it and intentionally living it

4. Resourcing

- Resources to take back to leadership and congregations
- Take the principles learned today and develop a whole church learning program that all age groups study including extension activities for families at home.
- Practical steps people can engage with
- Reproduce the training in our own context
- Tools to help us equip our leadership
- Develop a coaching resource/ training

- Workshop each one in the local context.

5. Connecting and Networking

- Visit and listen to what other churches are doing
- Inspire each other to network and support each other
- Keep each other accountable
- Churches in communities coming together to share ideas / success stories
- Regional groups for regular gatherings and a annual state wide gathering.
- Local speakers continue the conversation
- Making connections with local opportunities doing some of this eg. Kids hope
- Connecting new folk to existing resources - life together - Intergenerational

6. Share the stories

- Encouraging and empowering people to share stories and testimonies
- Recognizing what is happening in families and celebrating the stories
- Celebrate local heroes
- Tell one other person about thisit can grow relationally
- More case studies and data about how this model is working.
- Young peopleshare stories about why they stayed

7. Continual Re-imaging

- Get supporters to fuel the fire
- Core team that invests in H2S it keeps it in people's mind. Practically on the ground in each state
- Develop a coaching service for others to fuel it
- Include information about being an agents of change