

February 2024
DUPC Sunday Forum Series
Sundays, 9:45AM—Shaw Room

Beyond Resistance

The Institutional Church Meets the Postmodern World

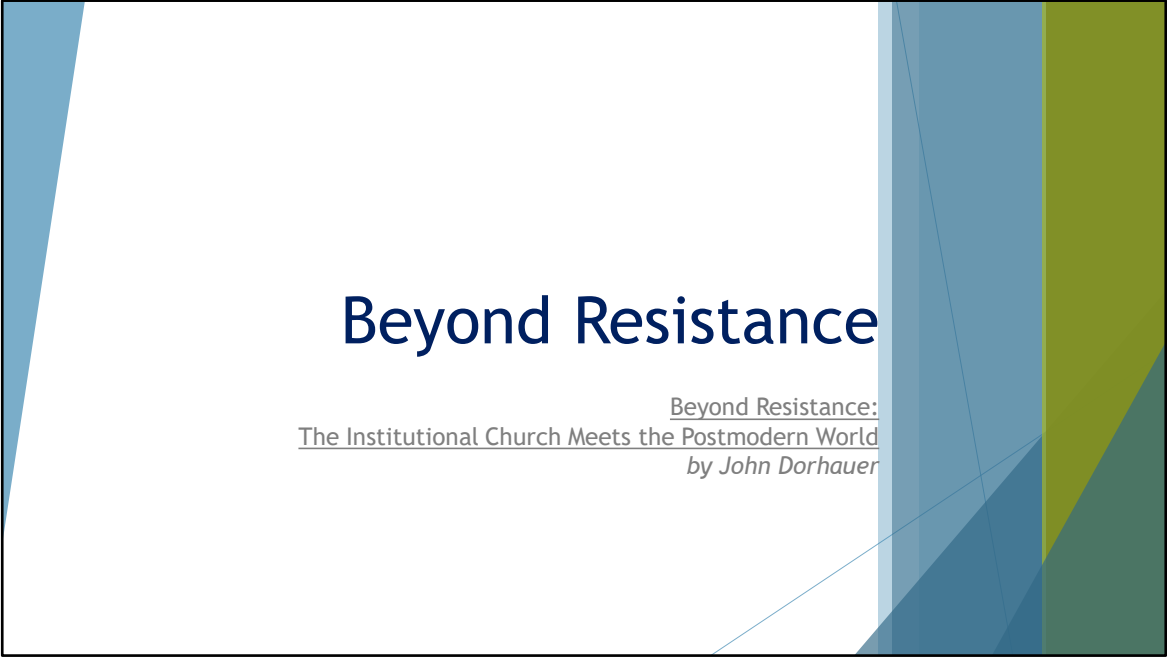
by John Dorhauer

**Come join the discussions of this thought-provoking book led by
several members of the congregation.**

***Beyond Resistance* presents a call “to move the institutional church
out of a modality of denial and into a perspective of hope.”**

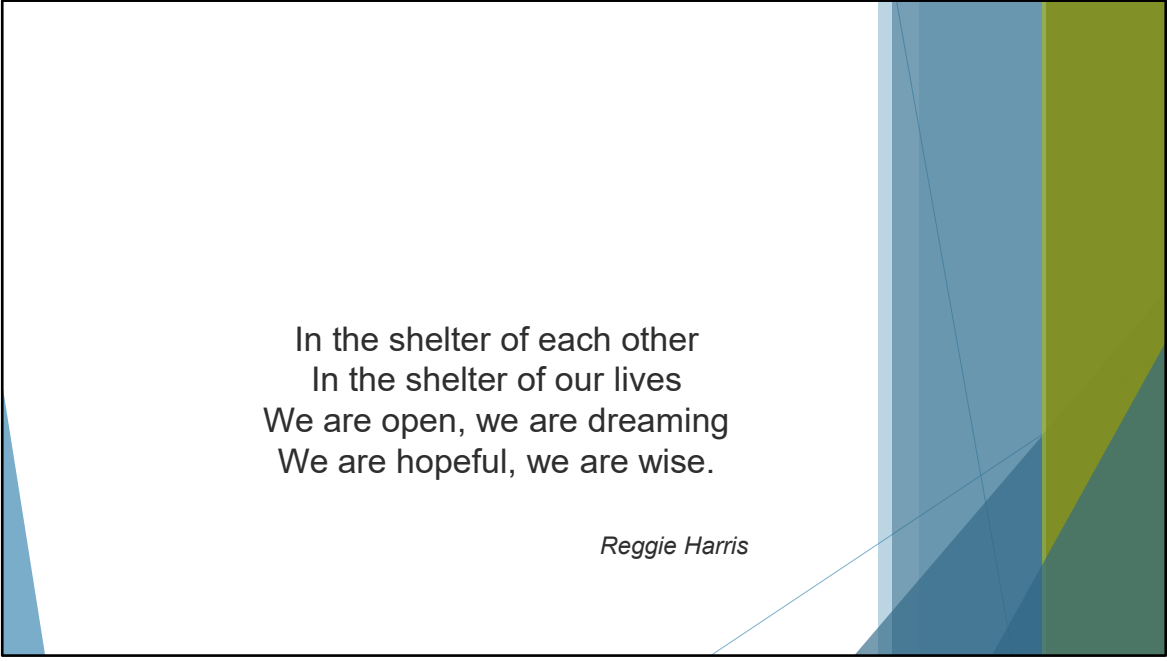
Copies are available to loan.
contact David Lee for more information.

February 18th and 25th



Beyond Resistance

Beyond Resistance:
The Institutional Church Meets the Postmodern World
by John Dorhauer



In the shelter of each other
In the shelter of our lives
We are open, we are dreaming
We are hopeful, we are wise.

Reggie Harris

“The Church was birthed for mission.”

We are called into being for a purpose. Owning our mission with *clarity*, with *passion*, with *purpose*, and with *intention* is what will keep the Church alive and vital and relevant.

What could we be in the world?

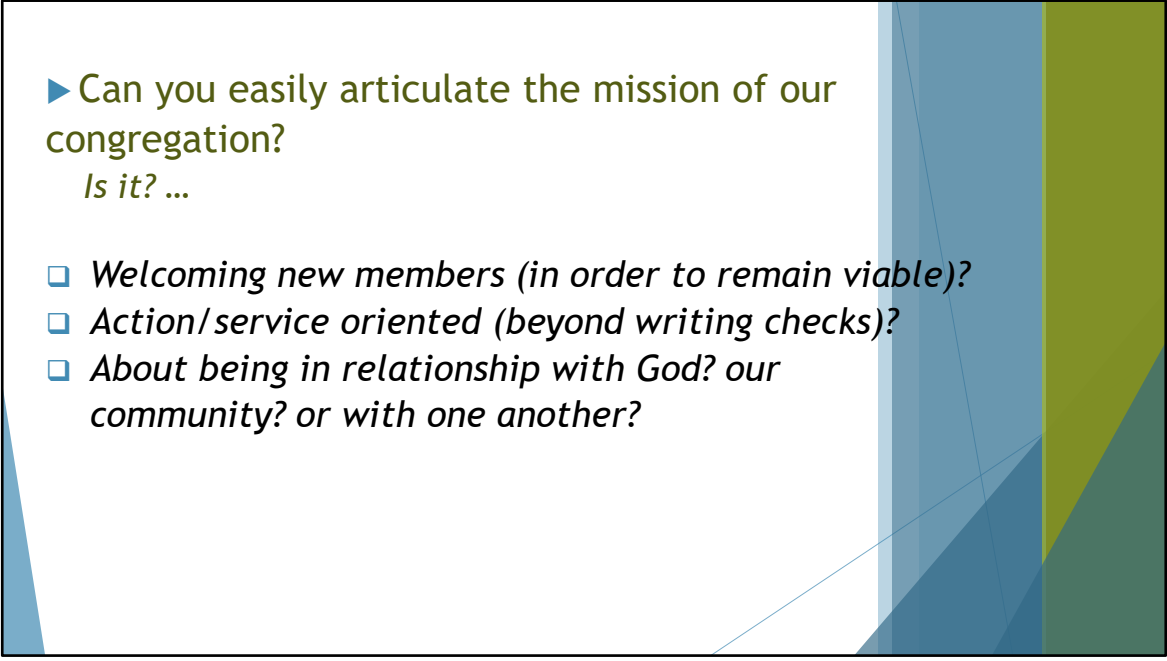
Are we addressing what in our community breaks God’s heart?

Discussion – post responses on butcher paper

DUPC legacy justice ministry – Sanctuary, Joy Class, TAMFS

The Church was birth...

Keep these questions in mind – we will return to them.

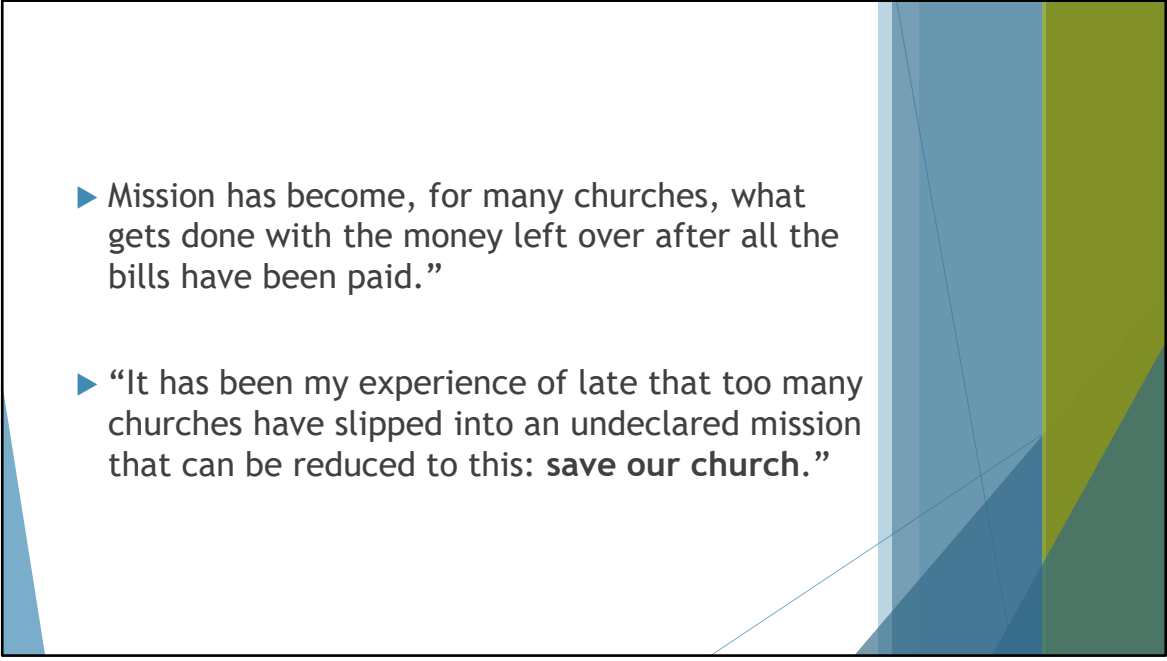


► Can you easily articulate the mission of our congregation?

Is it? ...

- ☐ *Welcoming new members (in order to remain viable)?*
- ☐ *Action/service oriented (beyond writing checks)?*
- ☐ *About being in relationship with God? our community? or with one another?*

Can you articulate our current mission?

- 
- ▶ Mission has become, for many churches, what gets done with the money left over after all the bills have been paid.”
 - ▶ “It has been my experience of late that too many churches have slipped into an undeclared mission that can be reduced to this: **save our church.**”

Question: **Are Session meetings focused on *mission* or “*saving the church*”?**

Could our church building serve our mission – what would that look like?

Why are we facing the reality of church decline?

Declining Birthrates, attributed to:

- Increased focus on careers
- Growing access to family planning services
- Limited support networks

Currently, the average American woman has about 1.6 children, down from three in 1950, and significantly below the “replacement rate” of 2.1 children needed to sustain a stable population.

Cost of Maintaining Aging Property

- For many churches, maintaining buildings has become the mission.”
- Could our congregation walk away from your building and thrive?

How did we get here - Two of many factors

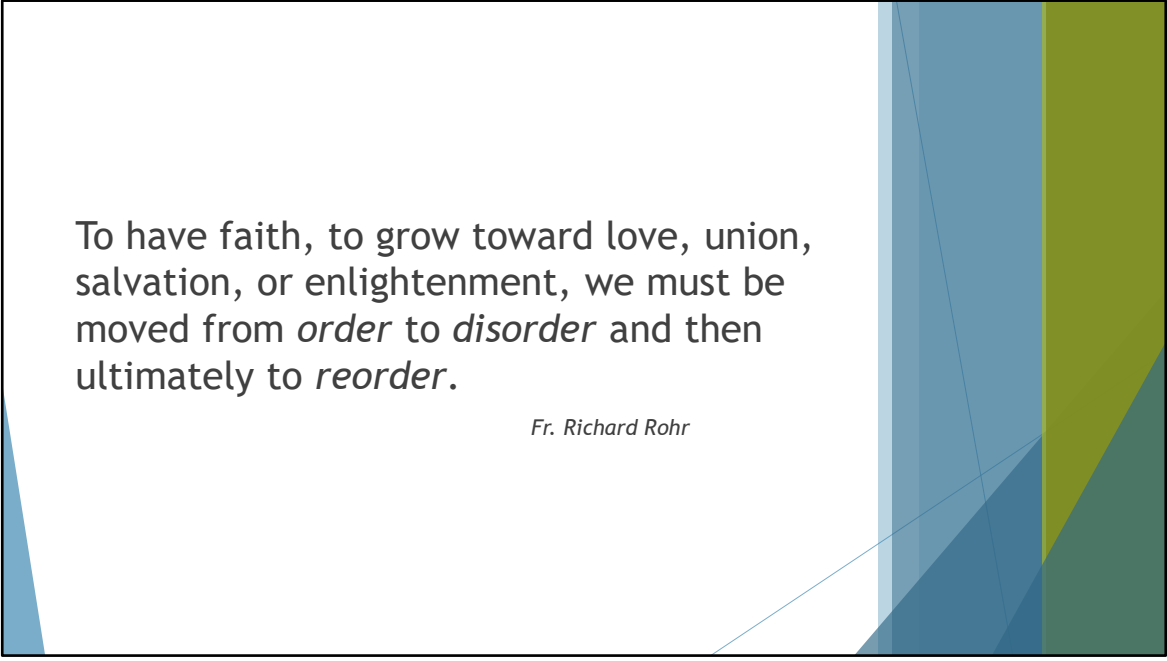
As well as...

Postmodernity

Statement #1: Many Postmoderns do not believe that there is such a thing as universal truth; in other words, what is true for you may or may not be true for me.

Every person in the room has life experiences that make them wise.

Postmodernity=Largely a reaction against the intellectual assumptions and values of the modern period in the history of Western philosophy



To have faith, to grow toward love, union, salvation, or enlightenment, we must be moved from *order* to *disorder* and then ultimately to *reorder*.

Fr. Richard Rohr

Grieving, Believing, Perceiving

“Churches aren’t just called
to die;
*they are also called to believe in
resurrection and hope.*”

And I would add Trusting – trusting in the movement of the Holy Spirit.

Theologian Phyllis Tickle – We are in the midst of an every 500 year church rummage sale

Grieving

“I am not sure we can adequately and properly grieve unless we name what it is that our eyes are seeing, our hearts are feeling, and our ears are hearing.”

“We do not grieve, however, as those who have no hope. We need strategic thinking about what that hope is, and how to be the Church with less. “

What do we miss? What have we lost?

Discuss

What are we grieving? There is much articulated hope about going back to “normal”. Is that possible? How do respond to that “hope” in your context?

Is it possible to reorient our congregation to hope for what lies at the end of all the diminishment?

Butcher Paper –

As for DUPC as it is today, what are we grieving that once “was”?

Believing

What are our non-negotiables? What do you believe about what losses, once sustained, signal the end?

It is very important to adopt a relationship toward the new.

Leaders in the Church are now called upon to make important and wise decisions about what stays and what goes.

Discuss

*How much change can we tolerate
before we say enough?*

Perceiving

Naming and seeing through the weight of our collective grief so that we not be overcome with despair that blinds us to the hope that awaits.

There is much more to see in front of us than a dying church. There is more to perceive than the diminishment of resources. There is more to experience than grief. *It is time not just to hope against hope, but to discover what there is beyond the horizon of our grief that grounds us in hope.*

Imagine

- ▶ What gives you hope?
- ▶ What might be beyond the horizon? How might that look.

Butcher:

Hope:

Beyond:

DUPC Sunday Forum Series: John Dorhauer's
Beyond Resistance: The Institutional Church Meets the Postmodern World

2-18-2024: Nancy Brown

Attendees: Grania Marcus, Carol Samuel, Helen Ganotis, Marily Terpening, Sally Allison, Carolyn DeHority, Bob Carlisle, David Lee, Sam King, Joe_____ (Quaker attendee), Kim McConnell, Jaque Hancock

Zoom: Elaine Johnson, Bill and Joan Mackey, Ed Saphar, Gail Mott, Marie Gibson, and Peg Meeker.

Mission:

- DUPC needs to....
 - Seek justice.
 - Take an active role in active mission.
 - Be specific about what our mission is.
 - Was voiced: Do we have a stated mission?
 - Utilize our endowment for mission.
 - Match our feet to our words.
 - Be the hands and feet of Christ.
 - Open up DUPC's building.
 - Partner and collaborate with building renters/congregations.
 - Quakers and DUPC collaborating with Earth Care team.\
 - Spiritus Christi's food mission.
 - Cameron Community
- It was pointed out that DUPC has strong volunteer history/experiences.

Grieving:

- DUPC is grieving....
 - Members who have left.
 - Lack of children.
 - The impact of COVID.
 - In-person worship; activities; church dinners.
 - Lack of pastoral care and continuity.
 - Eating together (at meetings, gatherings, parties)
 - Need to do more in-person meetings, etc....
 - Miss C-2 worship:
 - Was exciting; music; unpredictable.
 - Maybe do on Saturday's with community and a meal.
 - Miss Women's Group/Young Mother's Group/Sophia Circle predecessor/Women of Word and Song
 - Miss having a lot of people in Couple's Club.
- Cultural demands for time on Sundays.
 - Learn what other churches are doing.
 - DUPC has limited offerings of different kinds of programming.

Believing:

- DUPC can be more for Postmodern people; adopt new approaches that would appeal to postmoderns.
- As DUPC congregants, we all need to be prepared to do our own "rummage sale" of what we are willing to ponder that we as individual feel must be kept and/or can give up, in our own relationship with DUPC.