

HYPOTHESES FOR DISCUSSION

#1: CHANGING CONTEXT – DESTABILIZING EFFECTS.

Major changes in North American culture and the Southwest, in particular, have destabilized ministry and mission.

The following items have changed the culture and context in which we do ministry, as well as changing the congregations that provide the ministry: a more secular society, race and class, immigration, lifestyles and the changing makeup of families, consumerism, changing neighborhoods and work environments, technology and weakened congregations. These are just some of the factors that have destabilized ministry and mission.

HYPOTHESIS #2: CONFUSION ABOUT VISION, PURPOSE, AND GOALS

Across the CCSW, there is confusion about the Region's vision, purpose and goals.

Most persons do not know what vision is guiding the CCSW; there is a lack of clarity of purpose of what the region should be doing and why. This confusion about vision, purpose and goals disrupts the relationships that tie the Region, the Areas and congregations together.

HYPOTHESIS #3: LOSING OUR CONNECTION WITH ONE ANOTHER.

Across the CCSW, in congregations and Areas, we are losing connection with one another.

A sense of community is disappearing across the region; we have lost our understanding of being family. More often than not, churches are going their own separate ways without considering making connection with even nearby congregations within the denomination. Contributing factors are the various ways that autonomy and covenant play out.

HYPOTHESIS #4: WILL THE REAL CCSW PLEASE STAND UP!?

There is confusion about the identity of the CCSW: is it a place and staff? a vendor of religious services and goods? or a covenanted community called by God for mission?

These three “notions” are key among a variety of understandings of church and the CCSW that inform our thinking, expectations, and even our behavior. Without clarifying who we are as church and the CCSW we lack a crucial foundation for deciding our ministry and structure for the future.

HYPOTHESIS #5: CCSW HISTORY – A BLESSING OR A BURDEN?

The history of the CCSW is both a blessing of strength and a burden that impedes new life and growth.

There is much to celebrate and draw from in the history of the evolving Regional and Area structure. However, past experiences can hinder new creative and open ways of structuring our life together.

HYPOTHESIS #6: A CLIMATE OF TRUST – LOST AND BEING FOUND

Openness and trust across the CCSW has been eroded over recent history, leading to inconsistent results of ministry and mission.

A loss of trust leads to ineffective ministry, conflict and division. Mistrust and suspicion reflect the ways of a broken world rather than the unifying ways of the Gospel. History, geography, diversity, sin, various agendas and egos are some of the factors that lead to a loss of trust.

HYPOTHESIS #7: STEWARDING OUR FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Leadership and financial resources within the CCSW are at risk due to a lack of compelling vision and poor connectational life.

Resources needed for ministry dwindle in a context of mistrust, conflict and confusion. In particular, financial resources and leadership suffer during such periods; this is occurring in the CCSW.

HYPOTHESIS #8: A STRUCTURE TO SUPPORT MINISTRY

The current structure of the CCSW is perceived to be inefficient and/or ineffective to implement the ministry and mission of the Region.

Questions are present about the usefulness and effectiveness of the CCSW organizational structure. Ambivalence and dissatisfaction accompany an unsettling sense that the structure is not working as it should.

HYPOTHESIS # 9: COMMUNICATION AS CENTRAL TO OUR LIFE TOGETHER

Ineffective communication has plagued the ministry and mission of the CCSW, especially in light of its size, diversity and complexity.

The lack of good communication is a common complaint concerning the ministry and mission of the CCSW. Faithful and fruitful ministry and mission in the future will require improved information flow so that this complex Region can work cohesively; good communication is central to trust and collaboration.