

October 4 Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean to belong? How do you know if you belong? How do you know if you don't belong? If you're comfortable, can you share some examples?
2. What do you think makes up identity? What are the things or categories you would include in talking about your own identity? What does it mean for you to claim the particularity of your own identity? How do you gauge the difference between what is privilege and what is solidarity?
3. When you think about belonging, how do you determine what spaces are for you? Is there anyone who you think may feel displaced by your presence? How do you sort that out?
4. *Winnie said...there is an identity about belonging. My Auntie listening from her wheel chair, the sound of the language that still brings tears to my eyes for both nostalgia and my own sadness at lack of understanding – at loss. The place where any actions that break the conformity of community means we that can not go home, our churches will not welcome us on Sunday, our children will not be baptized into our traditions, love becomes a scandal. Sometimes it can feel like dying to contest our communities norms.*

If you think about this in the context of church – of church traditions – how does breaking from those community norms have the possibility to empower and bring life? How does breaking from community norms have the possibility of damaging people, of excluding people, of stealing life from people? In what ways do those who break from community norms become wanderers?

5. Race, like caste, is false and made up. It's not natural, it's not inevitable, but it's persistent and it's very real as a tool and a framework for generational oppression. They are philosophies that say that something is natural which is not natural, but then becomes a part of what we believe is true in the ways that we order the world because we have made an order in which our prejudices are lived out by oppression.

Can you think of any ways this has happened in Canada? And currently, are there ways you see this happening today – here in Canada or around the world? How can this way of thinking begin to be addressed? How do you go about working this out?

6. Winnie said...*The caste system, the category of “perpetual uncleanness”, is not actually a usual way of thinking for North Americans. The idea of uncleanness sounds so backwards. Even so, we apply that kind of thinking to physical ability, health and disease, to skin colour, as well as to gender and sexuality. Certain bodies are perpetually not beautiful, or whole, or right, or are the site of sin. We internalize it. We exert power to perpetuate it. We rationalize it and theologize it. It’s a way of thinking that happens all around the world.*

In what ways do you see this idea of ‘perpetual uncleanness’ applied to things like gender, sexuality, health, physical ability, or race? In what ways do you see this idea being rationalized or theologized? In what ways has the Church contributed to this? In what ways do you think the Church can begin to help undo this kind of thinking?

7. Winnie said...*By faith Abraham and Sarah’s descendants are to remember that God was in the wandering. Provoked the wandering. Maybe IS the wandering or is for the wanderer.*

Why do you think it is important to be reminded that God is in the wandering? In what ways do you think God could provoke wandering? What would it mean if God is the wandering, and is for the wanderer?

8. Winnie said...*The world is seizing up around us. We can all feel it. By faith we ask “what are we called to do now?”. And what might you and I do to believe that God has come amongst us, like us, for us, to us, with us? Not to just comfort our fears, but to point to who is truly terrified for whom each breath is a truly an act of faith.*

Who is it, in our culture, that God might point to as being truly terrified? What do you think creates that terror for them? What could be done for them? How would you work at helping them find a place to belong?

9. Winnie said...*We have to find our way all together. All of us. And the being together has to make us more not less.*

What do you think it takes to bring people together in a way that would ‘make us more not less?’