

Facilitation of Discernment Processes

As convener of the Ministry and Counsel Committee of the Grand Rapids Friends Meeting (Quakers), I have facilitated processes on two levels. The first level is that I provide one-on-one support of individuals in need and facilitate “clearness” committees. These are discernment sessions that Quakers use to help an individual in crisis (or decision-making) in a two-hour session in which several people in a circle ask open and honest questions of the person “in focus” to help that person discern his way through a particular problem or life situation.

The second level is that of being the coordinator or facilitator of persons and resources within the committee and beyond that to the wider community in serving processes that lead to solution to problems, finding “clearness,” sometimes resolving conflict.

Dialogue Facilitation

In this regard I have filled a dual role as well. The first is that of being facilitator of dialogue groups; the second is that of organizing and deploying teams of dialogue facilitators for various purposes.

One example is a series of programs in churches in West Michigan which I have developed with a small team. Called “Got Inclusion?” it is a two-hour session of listening to stories of gay Christians and then engaging in small group dialogue on the issues as they apply to church beliefs and attitudes and the treatment of gay persons in the churches.

The second example is that I recently organized a team of dialogue facilitators for a pastoral leadership conference in connection with the play “Seven Passages: The Stories of Gay Christians.” I recruited, organized, “trained” and deployed these facilitators for a dialogue conference involving about 200 pastors from West Michigan.

Facilitating Data Management for Strategic Planning Processes

Much of my experience in the education and non-profit sectors has involved serving strategic planning processes, especially with regard to good data management, tracking progress and measuring success in attaining strategic and program objectives. I do this through the correlation of objectives, standards, indicators, measures and finally automation of the reporting of these results.