



## Brian McLaren: The Church on the New Frontier: An Episcopal Vision

### Open with Prayer:

God of heaven and earth, we gather in your presence.

Speak to us with grace and truth and pour out your love upon us.

May we come together in this time of learning and sharing as people of your Spirit.

We give you thanks, O God, for every blessing and spiritual gift you have given us.

May we use them to be a source of blessing in your world to the glory of your name. Amen.

### Watch Video pausing for discussion

*You are welcome to pause the video for discussion as you feel appropriate.*

*Suggested stopping points are at timestamps 12:15 and 26:35.*

*The following questions are suggestions for discussion.*

### **Discomfort and new ideas**

Brian suggests that there is a correlation between comfort and stagnation, discomfort and growth.

Where do you see this playing out in your church? Your life?

What new ideas have come to you in this video series? What has been your reaction to them?

Have you ever been the minority person in a group? If you are comfortable doing so, please share with your group how that experience made you feel.

Are we more loyal to the past or to the future? What relationships and experiences do you have that speak to the struggle between these two loyalties?

### **The Episcopal Church as the *Via Media***

What changes have you resisted? How does resistance to change affect you?

When have you been an agent for change that was resisted by others? How did that experience make you feel?

Brian talks about people who resist and people who react and how they can play against one another and the escalation that can happen when they stand against one another. His example comes from the Reformation. Where have you seen this scenario play out more recently?

### **The Tertio Modo**

If we are the *tertio modo* (the third way) and not the mushy middle, what is that way? What is your church's role? Your role?

What can we do to be radically free to be constructive, and creative?

"If you are moderate in the face of injustice, you are supporting the oppressor." What does this statement mean to you?

Brian asks, "Do you honor Thomas Cranmer more by feeling that for the rest of time you have to say what Thomas Cranmer said or by following Thomas Cranmer's creative, brilliant, revolutionary example in doing in our time what he did in his time?" What is your response?

## **Our Heritage**

What would it look like for your church to “join the God of the oppressed”? Is this a mission your church would want to undertake? Who are the oppressed in your community? In the world? The mayor of Grand Rapids had never had a church leader come to meet with him to find out how they could help for the good of their city; they only came to complain. Do your town’s leaders hear from your church? If so, in what ways? If not, what would you say to them? “To see where Jesus Christ is in the world and to join him there.” How does this mission sound to you?

## **Our Inherited Assets**

We are led by Bishops – “When your voters will vote for what’s harmful, if you can have bishops who can in a sense challenge you to go beyond what the people are ready for, to nudge them forward, it can be a pretty darn helpful thing in times of change.” Does this statement resonate with you? In what way?

The power of Liturgy – brings people into common prayer, thinking about God, the words we say and the meaning of worship, our mission and our place in the world together. How does the liturgy in your church do this?

Being an historical church – allows us freedom to say “we got it wrong there and we repent and we vow to never make that mistake again.” Do we do this? Why or why not?

What is your favorite hymn? Why? What hymns does your church avoid? Why?

## **Joining Jesus on the New Frontier**

This is not an easy time to be a church. This is not an easy time to do this work. What work do we wish to do as we move into the future? What work would future generations pray that we would have done?

## Close with Prayer:

Good and Gracious God, we ask your Spirit of Truth to be with us as we leave this place of study and prayer. May our joys and hopes follow us and our adventuring continue to enlighten us, bringing us closer to you and to one another. Amen.