

## Deliberative Discipleship Deliberative Democracy

*“Surely this great nation is a wise  
and discerning people!”*

Deuteronomy 4:6

***“Difficult Conversations and  
a New Way of Talking”***

## Deliberative Discipleship Deliberative Democracy



## Key Issue

The mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century civil society where people worked to address public problems in voluntary associations, including religious organizations, has significantly eroded.

Today, many citizens are reluctant to become engaged in civic life much less politics, and trust in government is at an all-time low.

## Key Questions

### Question #1

Should the Church play a role in revitalizing civic life and helping American society become more just?

If so, Why?

If not, Why not?

## Key Questions

### Question #2

What prevents faithful, citizen believers from discussing and acting on society's messy issues?

## How can we address public problems?

“The standard answer is that we need better leaders. **The real answer** is that we need **better citizens.**”

Thomas Friedman

## St.-Martins-in-the-Fields Ten Point Charter

#10

*We are committed to identifying and affirming what is good and identifying and opposing what is evil, and living as best we can in the mess in the middle.*

## Premise

Deliberative dialogue is a form of communication aimed at finding the best course of action.

The deliberative process has the potential to complement the Church's social teaching and policy work, especially at the parish level.

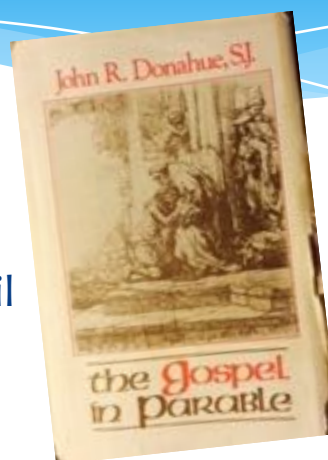
## Where do we find deliberation in the Gospels?



## Parables

“The parable is a question waiting for an answer, an invitation waiting for a response. It does not really “exist” or function until it is freely appropriated.”

John R. Donahue, SJ



## What are the Parables?

### C.H. Dodd

- \* Drawn from nature or common life
- \* Arrest the hearer by vividness or strangeness
- \* Leave the mind in sufficient doubt about its precise application to tease the mind into active thought
- \* Engage us with minor characters and challenge us to make some judgment

## What are Common Problems? Today's Parables

- \* A community issue of broad concern for which choices have to be made by diverse groups of people.
- \* There are no clear right or wrong answers as the issue involves value conflicts and underlying paradoxes that are difficult to resolve.
- \* "Solutions" are rarely found, and the conversation will always continue, yet deliberators are encouraged to make judgments regarding positive actions.

## Parables of the Vineyard Workers



Matthew 20



Coalition of Immokalee (FL) Workers

## The Church and America's Common Good?

- \* Churches as “schools for democracy” in Colonial and Constitution eras
- \* Social Gospel Movement
- \* Civil Rights
- \* Immigration and Refugee ministry
- \* Social and policy statements
- \* Advocacy efforts

## Common Issues

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA	NATIONAL ISSUES FORUMS INSTITUTE
Caring for Creation	Climate Choices
Our Calling in Education	21 <sup>st</sup> C Mission for Schools
Caring for Health	Health Care: How Can We Reduce the Costs and Still Get the Care We Need?
Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All	Making Ends Meet: How should We Spread Prosperity & Increase Opportunity?
Race, Ethnicity, & Culture	Racial and Ethnic Tensions
The Body of Christ & Mental Illness	Mental Illness in America
Immigration	Immigration in America
End of Life Decisions	Life and Death Decisions

## Small Group Discussion

- \* How do parish members work with **church teaching documents** – social statements, messages, and policy memos - that speak to public issues?
- \* Are there difficulties or hindrances people experience when asked to discuss these **church documents**?



## Deliberative Dialogue & Responsibility Ethics



## Deliberative Dialogue

\* *“To deliberate is to carefully weigh civic actions, laws, or policies against the various things that people hold dear in order to settle on a direction to follow or purpose to pursue.”*

*David Mathews.*

## Responsibility Ethics

“Responsibility ethics recognizes human beings primarily as **dialogical creatures**. It sees human beings as answerers who live through response and interaction. The focus is on discerning what is a fitting response within the **extremely complex situations** of contemporary life that always include manifold **competing demands and moral challenges**.”

Willer, Roger, Community of Moral Deliberation and an Emerging Responsibility Ethic, Journal of Lutheran Ethics, 2014

## Pope Francis



Pope Francis gave the deliberative democracy network a gift by calling Americans to the noble work and common responsibility to engage all citizens in dialogue.

## The Deliberative Democracy Process



[Shaping Our Future: How Can Higher Education  
Help Us Create the Society We Desire](#)

## Three Primary Forms of Politics

- ▶ Adversarial Politics
- ▶ Administrative / Expert Politics
- ▶ Deliberative Politics

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## Adversarial Politics



## Expert Politics



## Deliberative Politics



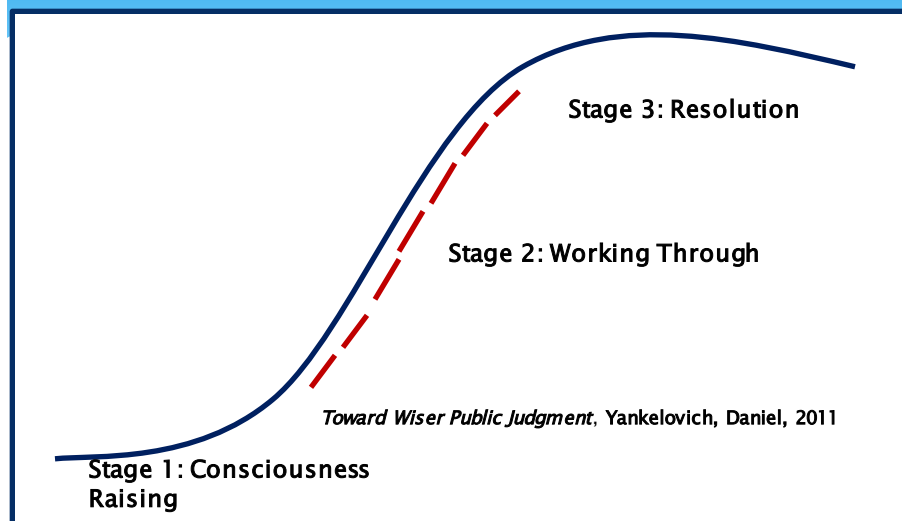
## Three Forms of Communication

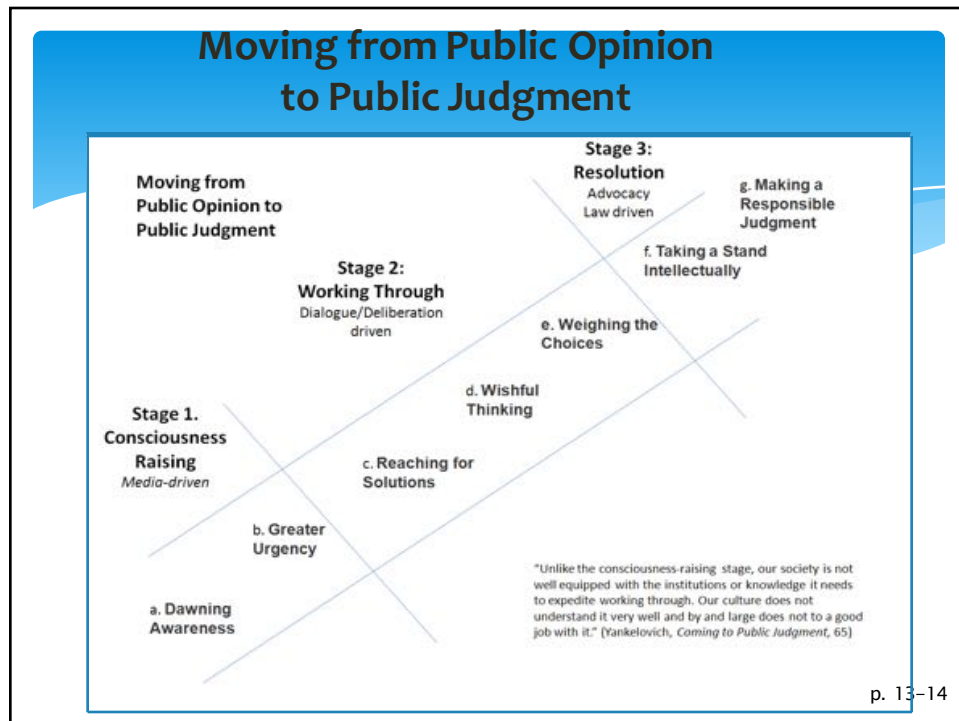
- \* Debate
- \* Dialogue
- \* Deliberation

### Three Key Communication Tools for Interactive Community Problem-Solving

Debate	Conversation	Deliberation
Contest	Explore	Choose
Compete	Exchange	Weigh
Argue	Discuss	Decide
Promote opinion	Build relationships	Make decisions
Seek majority	Understand	Seek overlap
Persuade	Seek understanding	Seek common ground
Dig in	Reach across	Framed to make choices
Tightly structured	Loosely structured	Listen
Express	Listen	Usually slow
Usually fast	Usually slow	Clarifies
Clarifies	Clarifies	Complementary
Majoritarian	Non-decisive	Decisive

### Public Opinion to Public Judgment





## Four Key Tasks of Deliberative Practice

### ► Issue Analysis

- Reach consensus and name a common problem
- Frame multiple approaches to the problem

### ► Convening

- Seek an inclusive group of participants

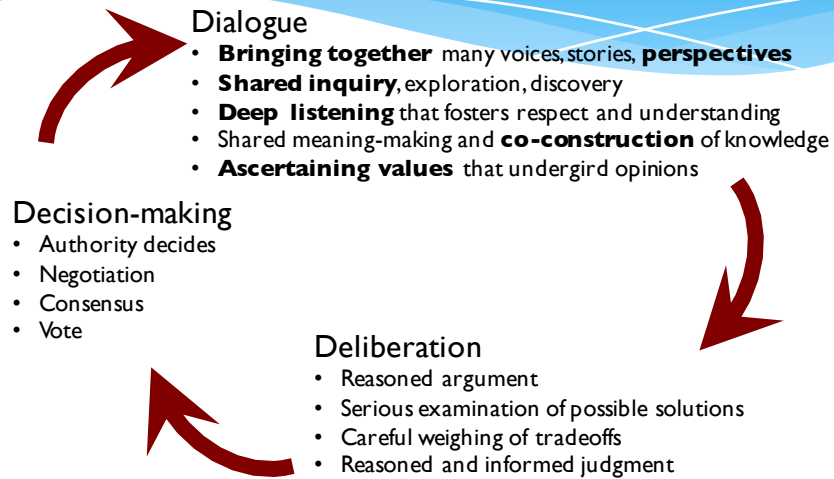
### ► Facilitating & Deliberating

- Provide neutral and skilled moderation for participants to deliberate and make choices/judgments

### ► Reporting

- Share the results with the appropriate decision makers

## Decision-Making informed by Dialogue and Deliberation



*from Democratic Dialogue—A Handbook for Practitioners*

## Positives & Negatives of the Deliberative Process

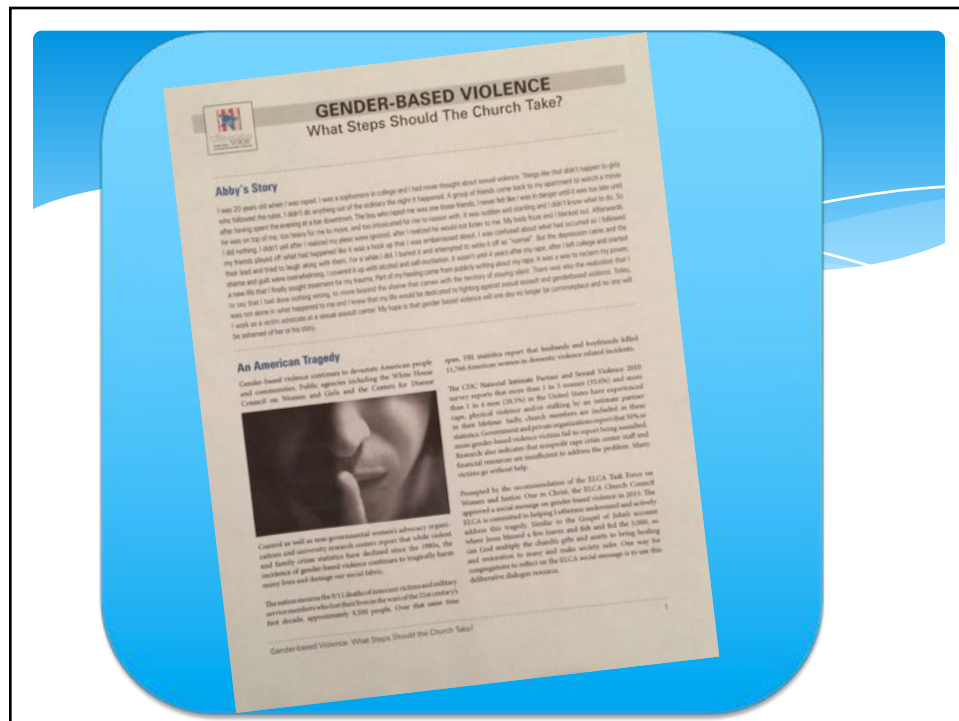
### \* Positive

- \* Citizens are involved and trusted to share ideas.
- \* Civil discussion is supported by neutral facilitation.
- \* Increased participation in democracy.
- \* Transition from expressing personal opinions to making collective choices.

### \* Negative

- \* The process requires an extensive amount of time.
- \* Convening diverse groups of people is very hard.
- \* Convincing elected leaders to trust the public's voice in the midst of the lobbying culture is a challenge.





## Active Citizen Believers

Active Citizen Believers help build stronger,  
healthier, and safer communities.



## For more information contact

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