

Cognitive Polyphasia

The ability to hold contradictory views together at the same time.

(Coined by Ben Page, CEO, Ipsos Mori).

Eg during the election people wanted to vote for a party offering Swedish levels of public services and American levels of taxation.

Application: forensic evangelism

An example of cognitive polyphasia in attitudes to God would be:

Expecting God to welcome us with open arms but deal with all the evil in the world

The answer is to challenge people on the reality of sin and allow the Spirit to bring a conviction of our need which isn't just felt but forensic – we have a structural deficit before God because of sin which falls short of his glory.

Happiness Deficit

A 2002 ICM poll revealed that 4 out of 10 people think life has got worse and are feeling ever more despondent. "We are healthy, wealthy and wise. Wages are up, unemployment is down.

In material terms, we've never had it so good. Yet we've never felt so bad" says Richard Reeves. (http://www.sfb.com/speakers/richard_reeves/articles)

The ICM survey makes this interesting point: "The biggest contributor to life satisfaction seems to be a healthy set of personal relationships." But the pressure of time and 'relationship risk' means people are more likely to observe Friends on the TV than invest in them in person. According to Professor Robert E. Lane at Yale University. 'There is a kind of famine of warm interpersonal relations, of easy-to-reach neighbours, of encircling, inclusive memberships, and of solidary family life.'

According to the journal of happiness studies (yes there really is one) "our data suggest that effort and hard work offer the most promising route to happiness. In contrast, simply altering one's superficial circumstances (assuming they are already reasonably good) may have little lasting effect on well-being."

Application: testimonial evangelism

- Solidary = unity of interests = the gospel (Eph 4)
- Happiness is found in a contrite heart, knowing spiritual riches and membership of God's eternal family

- Know your hope:

Christian difference 1. I know who I am

– Identity from Relationship protection of ultimate comfort as 'God's dearly loved child'

Christian difference 2. I know what I'm here for

– Meaning from Role purpose of eternal significance as 'God's creation transformer'

Christian difference 3. I know where I'm going

– Comfort from Rest hope which surpasses knowledge of 'God's happy ending home with him'

The Because Approach guide.

Andrew Baughen.

Good to go.

Keswick School of Evangelism
Top Up Session 2010



Invention of lying

Ricky Gervais lives in world where there are no lies so he invents lying. Because no one has experienced it before, when he lies everyone unquestioningly believes him. So when his mum is dying and she says she's scared, he says: "Death is not an eternity of nothingness; You go to your favourite place; There's no more pain; You can dance like you used to love to do; Everyone gets a mansion; You're young again; All your friends are there; It lasts for eternity; there will be free ice cream for everyone: Say hello to dad.

Also says if you do bad things you wont get to go to this place – you'll go to a terrible place. He's asked: 'What is a bad thing?' Main ones are things like hurting people, doing things to people they don't want done. Then asked: 'if I do one bad thing don't I go?' His reply: 'you get 3 chances. The man in the sky gets to decide which place you go to. Even if you get bad stuff in this life he makes up for it by giving you good stuff in next life.' Then he's asked 'How do you know this stuff?' 'The man in the sky told me.'

Application: presuppositional evangelism

1. Discover presuppositions
2. Point out the holes in the logic
 - Preconditions
 - Inconsistencies
 - Arbitrariness
3. Suggest an alternative

Tim Keller (The Reason For God): "I urge sceptics to wrestle with the unexamined 'blind faith' on which scepticism is based, and to see how hard it is to justify those beliefs to those who do not share them. I also urge believers to wrestle with their personal and culture's objections to the faith, At the end of each process, even if you remain the sceptic or believer you have been, you will hold your own position with both greater clarity and greater humility."

Inception of dreams

When we fall asleep or watch a movie our prefrontal cortex (associated with logic, deliberative analysis and self awareness) goes quiet and the visual cortex becomes even more active than usual as we engage in "sensorimotor processing" of the intense flood of the senses from the moving images on the big screen and the Dolby surround sound. In effect we become unbound by the normal constraints of the world and 'lose ourselves' in the movie. Similar to Jesus' use of fasting and assumption-smashing storytelling.

Application: idol breaking evangelism

- The so called rational approach blocks people from thinking deeply
- happy endings the stuff of fairy tale and Disney movies
- why ask these questions? 'Don't worry about God and just enjoy life'
- The The expulsive method of idol breaking:
 1. Step into their story: what is their idol and what need does their idol claim to meet?
 2. Show up the idols as destructive frauds: fool's gold of no lasting value.
 3. Show off the gospel as subversive fulfilment: present Christ as the One in whom we find rest and his promises as treasure in your heart.

Gift remorse

In Joel Waldfogel's 1993 paper, "The Deadweight loss of Christmas" he argues that the majority of people are better at buying things for themselves than buying gifts for other people. The issue is that the recipients of gifts would not generally have been willing to pay what it cost to provide the gift and would have gained more value with the same amount of cash if they'd bought something for themselves.

Waldfogel points out: 'The size of the deadweight loss depends on both the giver's acquaintance with the recipient's preferences and the recipient's knowledge of her own preferences.'

This research helps explain the phenomenon of gift remorse – where we look forward to receiving a surprise present but then end up being disappointed. The consequence is that we lower our expectations for next time and don't trust anyone but ourselves to choose.

In Chris Anderson's book "Free: The Future of a Radical Price" he demonstrates how people's purchasing decision is radically altered if the offer has no cost attached. Free can be attractive to people but often it is viewed with suspicion that there must be a catch. A free gift is unusual because rather than abundance the prevailing view is that we live in a world of scarcity – a protective attitude that lives in fear of losing whatever is held and feels enough is never enough. In a world where up to eight minutes of a half-hour TV show are spent telling me what I should buy and why I'm not complete without it, it's easy to think we're suffering from scarcity when actually the only lack we're a victim of is perspective.

Application: Game changing evangelism

When Apple launched the iPad the Wall Street Journal said: "last time there was this much excitement about a tablet, it had some commandments written on it." Stephen Fry on the BBC website said that 'to call it much anticipated is the understatement of the year.' Apple describes the iPad as "our most advanced technology in a magical and revolutionary device at an unbelievable price."

But of course the great sadness is that there isn't as much anticipation and excitement about receiving afresh each day THE most advanced technology (Grace) in a divine and revolutionary device (Jesus) at an unbelievable price (free).

Game changing evangelism helps people to see how the gospel of Jesus is radically different from what people expect and transforms us more than we could ever dream possible:

- The God who gives knows us better than we know ourselves.
- The gift of salvation is quite unlike anything you've received and gives far more than you could ever ask for or imagine – nothing less than the very source of human flourishing.
- The value of the gift of Jesus is that he gives willingly in love and pays completely by his death.
- In John 4 Jesus offers a spring of water welling up to eternal life. The problem, as Jeremiah points out, is that so often we drink from cisterns cracked and dry – cisterns that put an attitude of scarcity in us rather than a heart of abundant grace. Christians will powerfully share the good news of grace when they have a perspective of abundance and a resultant attitude of generosity.