

New Word Alive 2011 - Reaching out through the local church – speaker notes

Teaching block 1. Embedding evangelism into your strategy

What's your verb? What's the action that drives your church.

Acts 2 :42 – Heb20:25

Lifeboat station

Evangelism not the natural default mode – natural is to be consumers rather than ambassadors = why Jesus says go so often. Harvest plentiful issue is workers

(tomorrow looking at reaching disinterested – nobody on site here that doesn't know many – ½ million people we know heading for eternity without God – question is do we care?)

Embedding evangelism in your church involves reengineering every part of the strategic process

- HO: 4 stages

1. Missional because: A great question to ask is whether everyone knows their because. Is everyone clear that their primary mission is to save lost people? If you asked people running ministries etc at your church, 'why are you doing this' would they say 'in order to win people to Christ' and 'in order to equip Christians to win people for Christ' or would they say don't know or because we like doing it or because it meets our needs.

Embedding evangelism into a church starts with teaching the priority of the lost on a regular basis. Jesus was clear why he came (Mk 2, etc)

'It is not so much, as someone has said, that God has a mission for his church in the world, as that God has a church for his mission in the world. Mission is not just something we do (though it certainly includes that). Mission, from the point of view of our human endeavour, means the committed participation of God's people in the purposes of God for the redemption of the whole creation.' Christopher J.H. Wright, Truth With a Mission: Reading Scripture Missiologically (Cambridge: Grove Books, 2005), 14.

'The God revealed in the Scriptures is personal, purposeful and goal orientated. The opening account of creation portrays God working toward a goal, completing it with satisfaction and resting, content in the result. And from the great promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3 we know this God to be totally, covenantally and eternally committed to the mission of blessing the nations through the agency of the people of Abraham.' Christopher J. H. Wright, The Mission of God, Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative, IVP, Nottingham, 2006. p63

How? Assume there are always unbelievers present and talk direct to them. Teach values beyond the quality of our curtains (window dressing our life). Teach Luke 16:0

2. Missional however: Embedding evangelism starts with understanding the mission of God and then develops as we see the need for that mission within our context.

Jesus: looks over Jerusalem and weeps then says ...

Embedding evangelism into a church is fuelled by spending time with unbelievers, talking to them and finding out why they think as they think and where that leads them in their attitude to God, themselves, other people and the world. The more offended we are by human rebellion and the more compassionate we are to lost people the more motivated we'll be to give our life to being eternal life rescue workers.

How? Prayer walks & community involvement. The art of asking questions. The power of bringing them to God in prayer regularly.

3. Missional therefore: Easy to focus on groups and teams and services and programmes and all sorts of great things which are very helpful to Christians already coming but worth asking how the time and energy we pour into activities contributes to the mission of the redemption of all creation.

How? Have a process plan – so each activity knows how it contributes. (Know its UKBC – unique kingdom building contribution). Aim: all know why they do the activities they do. Eg toddler group

4. Missional let us: Evangelistic church is a church where the vision for the lost is owned by everyone rather than what the professionals do. Ie switch from evangelism just being what the evangelist does in an evangelistic course or talk to the bigger plan that we are all involved in the work of evangelism

How? Ensure everyone knows their mission field (PoP); Help everyone know their evangelistic style & gifting; Ensure everyone knows what evangelistic opportunities the church is putting on together and which stage on the journey they are aimed at.

Warning: strategy not about corporate techniques but a means of ensuring our activities are intentional.

And as we've seen, intentional missional church starts with a clear understanding of where we're heading

- how get islanders to main land?

Clerkenwell: Started with small group – said, should we just buy a mini bus – or let's think about the area we're in and the lack of opportunities people have to hear the good news of salvation...

Cut a church down the middle and know that evangelism is its passion.

Clerkenwell: Colleague left, wrote letter – you care more about non Christians than Christians. Yes...

So what? Analyse all your activities and where all your energies are being spent as a church – how much are those energies contributing to the great mission of God?

Discussion 1. What proportion of your church's energies are focussed on evangelism?

Teaching block 2. The four locations of evangelism

Temple courts = daily life = public square (not hidden away)

Homes = doing life together (eating and teaching each other)

Synagogues (Jesus, apostles etc went to synagogue & temple) = teaching and prayer and worship

Upper rooms and public halls – house in Capernaum in Mark 2, upper room for last supper, room praying at resurrection etc, , Areopagus (acts 17:19), hall of Tyrannus (acts 19:9) = useful venues in terms of size and also where people from wide backgrounds can come together.

Church buildings – not till later but also useful to enable people to come together (though big difference between a church in rows and a church which enables participation.... EPIC and layout models of church)

Issue in our context is that a dichotomy is presented between these venues – either or

- partly polemic justifying a new approach or critique of an over emphasis – but no church saying just meets on Sunday (All Souls pioneered fellowship groups and mission to youth on council estates by building a youth project 'clubhouse' way before the terms missional communities or fresh expressions had been thought of!)
- partly a confusion of ecclesiology – ie difference between a church gathering of people of God and an evangelistic project which Christians involved in – does a skateboard park evangelistic initiative need to become a long term church? Only if impossible to transition a local church to welcome new people and for the new people to integrate...

The four locations – see HO

Teaching block 3. The missional community model

Discussion 2. Which mix of locations fits with your context?

Video: Relevance of the cross

Teaching block 4. Process evangelism

Mark 8

Slides of bridge diagram

The four steps – see HO

Discussion 3. Ideas at each stage of your context

Teaching block 5. Overall strategy planning

- entry points:

- course first: adv is non churchy, especially therefore if church quite high octane (Christians focussed). Introduces people to gospel, music and prayer – go to church 1st time after WE away.
- mission events first: adv is gives a focus for mission once a year, especially if an overall plan (see cycle of events)
- compassion first: adv is starting with serving community and can be done through year (not just an annual hit); adv also that easy for people to get involved. Key is that compassion activities lead onto gospel explanation events – always give a reason for the hope...
- church first: adv is if church well known in area and safe place to go AND services geared so accessible to outsiders; key is that people move on from attending to repentance and faith...
- community group first: adv is natural place to meet and build friendship and talk over a mealtable. Challenge is moving people on into a church family where can use gifts, meet with more people etc.

Key is that you decide – all valid but not all as effective in your context:

- Battersea: A course worked – supper, intro to Christianity, getting used to more charismatic style service
- Battersea 'liberal elite': supper parties and course in homes worked as more natural social medium
- Clerkenwell: church first as socially a course etc was scary – also our strategy was to look people in eye and say 'come to JC on Sunday AM and guarantee will make you think'
- Clerkenwell Women's group: developed out of 2by2 then parenting course then CE then BS group

- regular cycle – see HO (options 1&2)

- communicable strategy – point to HO

Dream is that everyone at JC knows why evangelism is part of our DNA – and increasingly as people come to faith by evangelism we get them involved in promoting the vision for evangelism). Rom 10: 13-15