

Evan's notes from Florida Evangelism Conference 2013

1. Don't Make It Harder Than It Is (sermon)

- Sermon on Naaman tells us "Don't make it (healing) harder than it is."
- tell this message to the person to your left...then to the person on your right!
- Naaman let go of his prestige, ego, position, to dip into the dirty foreign river
- we've got to confess what's pushed people away instead of brought them closer
- Let's not make it harder than it IS when it comes to our dress code, Gloria Patri, etc...
- You got to BE before you DO (spiritual discipline before programs/action)
- immerse yourself in the Word (7 times...habitually, again and again)
- Do this so God will be close, and will hear your prayer
- It took Naaman 7 washes. First time nothing happened. Third time, nothing happened.
 - But as he kept it up...he began to get used to the water more and more...and expect something to happen more and more...by 7th time, he was swimming all over the place, SURE that it'd bring healing.
 - Thus, we must go into our uncomfortable situations again and again until something begins to finally happen...and we see God in it!

2. The Six Incarnational Practices (sermon)

- In Hebrew, knowledge is something LIVED OUT, not just what you spout off to others.
- Our Lord became incarnate in order to proclaim the Good News in its fullest, we should too!
- think how "discipleship" happened *BEFORE* "conversion."
 - Jesus spent time with disciples LONG BEFORE they totally understood Jesus/converted.

6 P's

- 1) PRESENCE – God fully present in Christ. God IDENTIFYING with humanity by becoming one.
 - We need to IDENTIFY with the people we don't understand
 - Used to, as missionaries, we would go to *THEM*.
 - But now...everyone has come HERE to USA, so this work takes place next door, if we will be PRESENT and IDENTIFY with others.
- 2) PROXIMITY—no good to learn about others if you don't GO THERE. (Why learn French?)
 - Why learn in Bible about reaching out to the poor if you don't go there?
 - We must HANG OUT with others; we must HANG OUT...IN THE WORLD
 - near/in bars, areas of prostitution, prisons, methadone clinics
 - * Take the time you spend now with Christians...
 - ...spend that much time from now on with NON-CHRISTIANS.
 - if we do not SEE WITH OUR OWN EYES, we'll never get past our fear/laziness
 - at church in worship, take time to SHARE what we've seen each week
- 3) PROVENIENCE – God's grace that goes before...preparing the way.
 - God IS already at work everywhere, preparing people (before church folk)
 - God's ALREADY been to the darkest places in the world
 - Let's not be arrogant in thinking WE are the saviors, etc...
- 4) POWERLESSNESS – Christmas celebrates God's ultimate act of powerlessness...becoming a defenseless baby at the mercy of human parents.
 - no place for arrogance in ministry if the CREATOR OF ALL was this humble
 - we are ALL beggars in need for food
 - we must learn to wash the feet of others
- 5) PASSION – the sacrificial sense of the "passion" of Christ

- we need to learn to suffer well...theology of suffering
- though we wear empty crosses, any Catholic can tell you: Jesus suffered
- we should count it a privilege to suffer what was lacking in Christ...church (body of Christ) must suffer.
- If we SUFFER for others (having come to know and grow close to them), it helps us identify with others.
- We need to stop taking "painkillers" for such suffering.
- Why, in too many churches, must people say "I'm doing fine" on Sunday?
- We can't just "sympathize" with people...we must "go there" by being present.
- Sometimes listening deeply involves discomfort or suffering. This is needed.
- a theology of suffering helps people make sense of pain.

6) PROCLAMATION – NOTICE how this comes LAST...after you have identified with people, hung out with them, become humble/powerless with them, trusted God is already working in their life before you came and suffered for them.

- If you HAVE done the other 5 P's, there will be FERTILE GROUND for proclamation. Remember...Jesus was in the neighborhood 30 YEARS.

3. Jennifer Young-Thompson just left our Presbytery not long ago, but wanted to share how she helped turn a congregation of 17 around to 30-40 people in a short time by simply asking which families had left the church in the past 20 years and gone to visit them, caring for them with great pastoral care, and praying with them in person at hospital procedures/visits. She did a blended worship (traditional hymn followed by praise song, alternating). She constantly encouraged evangelism, getting up to 85 in worship on a Sunday. She would be best friend to visitors when they came in, and then introduce people to their congregation, so they could continue the good relationships and really involve them.
4. Clinic with Glenn McDonald about Disciple-Making in a Fresh Context
 - a) Our mandate as a church is to be **DISCIPLES WHO MAKE DISCIPLES**
 - b) "disciple" is used 250 times in the Bible. "Christian" is used 3 times, not always in good ways.
 - c) Don't be a "vampire Christian" who just wants a little of Christ's blood to set them up for eternal life so they can get back to what they WERE DOING until they die and enjoy eternal life.
 - d) We're typically caught up in the ABC's of: Attendance, Building and Cash – Bodies, bricks, bucks.
 - e) Or we're SO full of programs that you will not have much time with your Family.
 - a. We can succeed at these ABCs or programs and NOT talk about Christ!
 - f) We all receive FORMATION, whether good or bad. We need to be RE-formed.
 - a. Romans 12:2 Don't be CONformed to the world, but be TRANSformed by the renewing of your mind.
 - b. Thus, don't worry about the OUTSIDE look of worship...the order of worship, music, etc...be transformed by the INSIDE out.
 - g) **Transformation only happens from the INSIDE OUT.**
 - a. Pharisees looked at Christ's BEHAVIOR (plucking grain, healing on Sabbath, associating with people you shouldn't be seen with), and judged from OUTSIDE-IN.
 - b. When we go on diets or make "resolutions," we try to change from OUTSIDE – IN by changing our behaviors. This lasts 3 months at most.
 - c. Must first change our IDENTITY...the FRAMING STORY of how we understand our life.
 - i. Then change values, which flow OUT of our identity.
 - ii. THEN change institutions and behaviors.
 - d. If you change your STORY, you change your LIFE

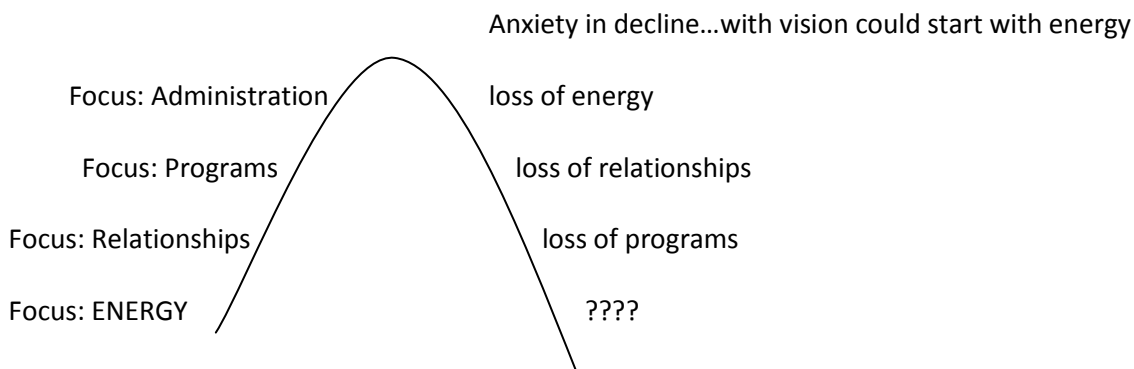
- i. What if you believed you are TREASURED BY GOD? What values/disciplines/behaviors would flow from this kind of identity?!
- ii. What if identity is “Dying congregation” or “Small, old, struggling” congregation? Think of importance of framing story of our identity!
- iii. Drop bad identity and pick up positive identity! Look in scripture!

12 Leadership Commitments for better discipleship

- **Prayer**...take courage in the 365 times it says in Bible: Do not be afraid! I’m with you
- **Publically decide that disciple-making is our core mission.**
 - Visitors who’ve come 3-4 weeks should be able to tell you *without* a “new member class” what the church is asking them to do, and how they can be part of it.
- **A group to keep church on track of its vision** (3 people called/committed to this)
- **Realistic Thinking:** only 20% of those we reach will act/ be very involved.
- **Priority Relationships:** intentional disciple-making relationships work BETTER than programs!
- **Session needs to keep learning**
- **Courage to confront:** loud people have their place and serve a great purpose...but disciple-making should not be thwarted just because a loud person doesn’t like it.
- **Spend 3 minutes each worship** getting someone to speak about “Where have you recently seen Christ in your life.” Could do right before offering. Could even have offering go to something related to that story of Christ working in their life!
- **Remember the Poor.** Too often churches think they’re here for themselves, not for the vulnerable in the world. Charles Loring Brace was a youth pastor whose decision to REMEMBER THE POOR ended up saving an entire generation of immigrant orphans from a miserable life in New York City by putting them on trains to be adopted by those from other states who heard the sermons and saw the kids. - Will YOUR church be a place where such ideas to remember the poor will be heard and acted upon?
- **Priorities:** Keep your “shadow” missions at bay! Don’t let having “best choir” distract you from deeper callings from Christ.
- **Go for low-hanging fruit:** start where the interested lay leaders are.
- **It takes time.**

5. Workshop on Leadership Needs Through the Lifecycle of Congregation

- a. Scripture: Colossians 2, things that undermine systems; chapter 3: things that unite us
- b. Congregations have a basic life cycle of 80 years, shaped like bell-curve



- c. Congregations & people only change when their preferred future is easier than present.
 - d. It's okay if a church doesn't see themselves needing change! (You can't make them)
 - e. Leaders in first ENERGY phase need: vision, energy, health, relationship building, ability to say NO and focus on vision.
 - f. Leaders in Relationship phase need to be good relationship sustainers, coalition builders, cell multipliers (small group makers), develop new leaders, good at saying YES and NO, good at building trust, good at asking "Is this of the Lord?," and not just majority rules.
 - g. Leaders in Program phase need: organization skills, ability to hold complexity, multiply leaders/cells/programs, vision articulator, good at saying NO, discerning people's gifts, broad and effective communication.
 - h. Leaders in administration phase need: vision articulation; coach leaders into taking their place, evaluate and mentor programs and ministries, get up in balcony, stay focused, begin again by restarting! Create space for people to inject new energy/intimacy before decline. Ability to say YES again.
 - i. Declining leadership abilities: need to be pastoral and allow churches to be where they are. Help identify opportunities for new vision/energy/growth. Hospice care for dying if needed.
 - j. OVERALL leadership amidst change: clarity of core values, get up on balcony, be brutal about facts, regulate distress by deepening listening, stay focused, give work back to people, solutions don't come from leadership, protect those who DO speak up.
6. Doug Pagitt speaker
- a. When you adopt someone into your personal family, you don't say "welcome to our family! Here, come sit in on a new member class and join this small group and you'll be fine." (old model: we change them). No, when they join a family, they change YOU and you change them.
 - b. There are 4 ages we've seen in last little bit...and they each stack, existing simultaneously:
 - i. AGRARIAN AGE: the farm is the center. Rural life is the norm. Little House on the Prairie; church leader is a PASTOR who cares for the whole town and symbolizes religion to everyone. Churches are known simply by their location/town.
 - ii. INDUSTRIAL AGE: factory is center; City life is the norm. It's about what you DO not where you're FROM; Churches look like factories; Denominations really come into being and people's mind, competing over each other. Church leader must be a BRAND REPRESENTATIVE and show people not only how to be Christian, but how being PRESBYTERIAN is distinct (and better) from being BAPTIST or METHODIST. Church signs tell you the TOWN and the Denomination.
 - iii. INFORMATION AGE: the school is the center of civilization. Suburbs are the norm. It's about what you KNOW. Knowledge is power. Church signs tell you the town name, the denomination and the SERMON TOPIC so people who want to learn about that thing can come learn. Churches want to be able to disseminate the best information, best theology, etc. Brands matter less. Churches add on large education wings to their buildings. Pastors are "teaching elders"!
 - iv. INVENTIVE AGE: the internet surpasses the school, the factory and farm as game-changer. We're global citizens now, connected to the whole world. We're not getting RID of stuff, but trying to re-purpose and re-use things in new ways. Church leaders need to be MEANING-MAKERS, creators, empathizers, pattern-recognizers. - We had been living in a LEFT-BRAIN world of trying to be organized and efficient. Now more RIGHT-BRAINED *interconnectedness and beauty* is valued.

- Values in our heart change/differ culturally
- Aesthetics, tastes, are culturally generated...not RIGHT/WRONG. Used to dress as a banker from the 1920s. But do we really trust BANKERS these days!?
- Tools have changed. Some churches now try to provide the internet to their surrounding community as a tool/mission.
- People want MEANING more than even truth or authenticity. Church can, perhaps, be the place that helps you discover what you want to BE when you grow up.
- Participation: What message are kids hearing at church? One commercial for a business shows cute face of kid and says "welcome to the world! This might just be the best time ever to be alive!" What a great message!
- world of Abundance: we're no longer in scarcity. It's just about getting things distributed correctly. New churches are started because the leadership is full (negative), not because the pews are full.
- Open-sourced belief: everyone is just as empowered. Ideas (from anyone) are on the same footing. See the comparison of FACEBOOK vs FORTUNE 500
- Ownership: people want a piece of the ownership, and not have to depend on a large system (commercial about being stuck on an escalator).

c. Try things! We get better by doing things.

7. Clinic on VISION

- Vision makes a difference. There were once three stonemasons working. One said in a dull voice: 'I'm cutting stone. Another said in a more up-beat voice (still a little on edge) "I'm making a parapet." But the other glowed with delight and said, "I'm building a beautiful cathedral that will glorify God for centuries!"\
- Creating a vision can be like herding cats! (see EDS herding cats video on youtube! LOL)
- ADVICE: 1) get the right people involved in casting vision 2) Let people off the bus if they realize this is not their thing. 3) get information and questions together beforehand
- Ask this question: What would the newspaper headline say about your church 5 years from now? What would members of your community say about your church 5 years from now?
- Check out book: *Made to Stick* by Chip and Dan Heath
- Nordstroms' vision is tied to a story of a customer who returned tire-chains for an in-store credit. They don't sell tire chains, but THAT'S how good their customer service is!
- What's OUR narrative?
- See Ted Talk by Derek Sivers on How to start a movement: the first follower is key!
- Make a STOP DOING list as much as a TO DO list...don't do what's not in vision (had to say no to keeping college ministries building as storage for homeless people's belongings during the day because they had a different vision. Still loved homeless and interacted with them, but had to say "no."
- Takes persistence over long term. You can't tell that a chick is growing in an egg...but one day it DOES hatch!
- DREAM BIGGER THAN YOU THINK YOU SHOULD!!! Many visions are simply not big enough. You should not "know" you can achieve it, or else it's not a large enough dream.
- Ask for serious commitment.
- It won't ultimately come from OUR EFFORTS ALONE. God will have to intervene, and others must be involved.

9. Mentoring Program for your Church

- Old model is we BELIEVE, then BELONG, then SERVE
- Postmodern is: Serve with others, Belong to the group, come to believe in Christ
- Pastor asked church members to speak to their grandkids about church.
- members came back surprised that their grandkids were quite interested in church, and in talking to their grandparents about faith. It convinced the church to act differently so they could better reach their grandkid's generation.
- Matt 28:18-20 says make disciples of all nations...not PROGRAMS. Also says, "teaching them to obey" not "teaching people to memorize things."
- What is a disciple? It's someone who learns by following, experiencing and practicing.
- Matt 4:19 – triangle showing importance of focusing on UP (knowing Jesus/ spiritual disciplines); OUT (being changed by Christ by going OUT beyond boundaries); IN (community with Jesus...and associating with others as Christ did).
- another way of looking at triangle is: UP: spiritual disciplines, IN: mentoring, OUT: being Missional/engaging community.

Intentional Relational Discipleship (mentoring or triads) should include:

- Intentional leader: looking to disciple others
- relational environment: a place with ground rules and accountability.
- be a Reproducible Process: if I invest in 2 people, they will each invest in 2 people later.
- have a Biblical foundation
- alignment: have a common vision, theology, etc...

What does Mentoring look like in Bible?

- Acts 9:26-30 Paul didn't get through to apostles without Barnabas
- Who is YOUR Barnabas?
- Who's been there for you in the past?

What does mentoring look like now?

- get together every week or two
- go through a reading of the Bible or Engage devotional (which uses bible)
- work with someone who is a step ahead of you in spiritual maturity.
- try TRIADS where one person mentors two people at once.
- Meet for a year or two, then everyone in that group mentor two OTHER people.
- tell the session you're doing this
- if you start mentoring in session, elders can choose who wants to lead/follow.
- process: Mentor does, you watch; Mentor does, you help. You do, mentor helps. You do, mentor watches.

2 Questions that transformed a Men's Church Breakfast:

- Where did you experience God working in your life this week?
- Where did you feel God absent from your life this week?
- let someone share their testimony that morning.
- Pray for one another, and leave.
- a group that started this led to people mentoring *naturally*, not as program

10. Vera White on how to make a new thing sustainable.

- a. Three questions to ask: What is? What could be? What will be?
 - be honest/ realistic, have vision, commit to yourself and others.
- b. Why be sustainable?
 - sustainability gives freedom to follow God's mission
 - imagine the trust lost if your mission fails and people had bought into it!

Ten thoughts on becoming SUSTAINABLE

1. Make sure the mission is God's plan (not just an idea in the shower). Did it come through a discernment from prayer that was later confirmed by other people?
2. Is the mission appropriate for its particular context? (Not everything works everywhere)
3. Is the mission connected with the wider body of Christ?
4. Have leaders examined the cost?
 - a. Have you ever started something before?
 - b. Has it come from spiritual discernment?
 - c. Are you comfortable talking about money and faith?
 - d. Do you have supporters/encouragers to pray for you, meet with you, etc...?
 - e. Do you have a source of income to cover living expenses?
 - f. Is your spouse/family/support system on board?
 - g. Do you personally have deep spiritual practices to sustain you?
 - h. Are you adaptable and persevering?
5. There's a culture of Discipleship/Leadership development
6. Project is properly resourced (doesn't have too little OR too much already)
7. High level of accountability (boring forms/evaluations IMPORTANT) How doing with goals?!
8. Project has support of the community it engages (it's a mistake to not ask for financial support)
9. There's some kind of Growth
10. Sustainable ministry is adaptable ministry

Ideas of HOW

1. Start small (it's about relationships, don't invest in building at first...use free places to gather)
2. Leader has another source of income
3. Group gets together and selects its own leader
4. Group lives in community
5. Let go of the assumption of a full time, middle-class salary. This is missionary work.
6. Develop a business plan that sustains the ministry.
7. Spend resources on mission, not on building, program or salaries.
8. Relationships of mutuality, not dependency (what if Christians joined programs already going on in the community to learn and make a difference...garden clubs, book clubs, ballet groups, etc...)
9. Recognize and nurture role of lay leaders
10. Grow! (your either growing or dying)

Budgets:

- A) Help plan and communicate VISION
- B) Shows Income and expenses
- C) Has income equal to or greater than expenses
- D) Use income to tell STORIES about budget
- E) Helps measure fruit
- F) Stewardship is the work of every disciple
- G) Be creative

H) Pray! Money is one of the most often talked-about things in the Bible. Where your \$ is, your ♥ is.

Last workshop: **Moving Into the Neighborhood**

1. Read Luke 10:1-12 several times, with different people reading aloud. Note words/phrases and thoughts.
2. Missional vs Attractional (Key verse: Jeremiah 29:1-7)
 - a. One is not “good,” the other “bad.” Both can exist. But they are different.
 - b. Attraction model: attract people to worship through sermons/small group; time spent on creating programs that attract people; resources put into programs.
 - c. Missional model: equip people to help model the gospel in relationships until people say, “I want the faith you have.” Time is spent equipping folks to touch people where they are. Resources are to participate WITH the neighborhood. It is the people “sent” who attract with the scent of Christ, which others eventually pick up.
3. We hear a lot about wishing we could get back “prayer in schools.” But Jer. 29:1-7 speaks of moving forward, not backward to the past. Seek the shalom of the new city (even that kidnapped you)...for its shalom is your shalom.
4. Three goals...one year each:
 - a. Year 1: LISTEN to people, listen to your community.
 - b. Year 2: RELATE to the community. Shop where they shop. Share some common experiences yourself instead of just “hearing” them.
 - c. Year 3: PARTICIPATE by seeing where you are invited in
5. Don’t be a hero.
 - a. Jesus (the hero) already came. We’re not here to heal everything or fix it all.
 - b. To GOD be the glory (not us)
 - c. Helping is not good if not relational
 - d. Parable: three people trying to build sidewalk. One says build along the left. One says build along the right. The third says... “Let’s see where people already walk, and build it over the bent grass.” Look for bent grass, where people have already been involved in the Holy Spirit and involved in blessing the community before we got there.
6. Mutual Subjects
 - a. Neighbors in the community are not OBJECTS! But subjects with us.
 - b. We don’t do ministry TO our neighbors or AT our neighbors. It’s with them.
7. John 4:4-26
 - a. Almost the entire Bible is about boundary crossing
 - b. Jesus crosses countless boundaries by speaking with the Samaritan woman
 - c. We must prioritize boundary crossing in our lives and ministries
 - i. How many of our friends are not Christian? (We need to reach out)
 - ii. Take boundary crossing as a spiritual discipline...getting out of comfort zone and reaching out to people on the other side of a barrier.
8. Set alarm for 10:02 so that you can pray Luke 10:2 every day, that the Lord of the Harvest may send out laborers into the field—for the harvest is indeed great, and the laborers are few.