

## **Relational Mission: The Octagon**

The Octagon is tremendously important.

Having a strategy of evangelism is important in this day and age when we have so many programs out there to help Churches grow.

Emerging, postmodern culture – programs don't really work that well.

There must have been a way that they did Evangelism that was not dependent on dragging in rather than reaching out?

Every place in the New Testament where there was a strategy of evangelism, it led the Church to grow.

First news back from China – 500,000 Christians from 200 years of Western Missionary Effort.

Tze Chung – after 50 yrs of the Cultural Revolution, there were 100 million Christians.

Banner Headlines – Jesus sent out the 12 with a very clear strategy.

**<sup>5</sup>These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. <sup>6</sup>Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. <sup>7</sup>As you go, preach this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near.' <sup>8</sup>Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give. <sup>9</sup>Do not take along any gold or silver or copper in your belts; <sup>10</sup>take no bag for the journey, or extra tunic, or sandals or a staff; for the worker is worth his keep. (Matthew 10:5 – 10)**

**<sup>1</sup>When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, <sup>2</sup>and he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. <sup>3</sup>He told them: "Take nothing for the journey—no staff, no bag, no bread, no money, no extra tunic. <sup>4</sup>Whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that town. <sup>5</sup>If people do not welcome you, shake the dust off your feet when you leave their town, as a testimony against them." <sup>6</sup>So they set out and went from village to village, preaching the gospel and healing people everywhere. (Luke 9:1 – 6)**

He gave a place to go, people to find and a particular way of doing things.

Can I really identify with the 12 disciples, the 12 thrones judging the people of God?

In Luke 10 we are told the same strategy but 72 others are included.

**<sup>1</sup>After this the Lord appointed seventy-two<sup>[a]</sup> others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. <sup>2</sup>He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. <sup>3</sup>Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. <sup>4</sup>Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road. (Luke 10:1- 4)**

Astonishing evangelistic strategy – sent them 2 by 2 ahead of him to the towns he was about to visit.

That's a real clear strategy set within a context of difficulty. Like lambs among wolves, sounds great?!

Many Christians find themselves surrounded by spiritual predators.

They're uncomfortable about sharing their faith. The dominant culture is losing its moorings and is becoming less and less tolerant of Christianity.

Jesus had a very clear strategy.

- 1) Team – 72 others are sent in pairs. Jesus was so committed to team and community that he sent two people to get a donkey! How do we train people not to even witness until they have found their partner?

Community would be much easier to develop. They would leave the individual reality.

- 2) Identified a specific time – the harvest had come, the time was right. The Kairos for these particular places was at hand.

I am going to these places, not wasting my time. The Spirit is doing something! We will find there is a prepared place.

Wagner – soil testing! If we can go after the harvest that is ripening then by the time we have harvested this, another will be ready.

Philippines – first, test which island is most responsive! All the missionaries go there apart from the odd Apostle.

My guess is this: in your context there is a harvest, it may not be the one you are looking for though! Over the age of 60 is ripe, they want to come back to God!

Why are we so enamoured with reaching young people? - Why?

Why is it the cultural bias towards youth? It's almost idolatry! Who has a passion for the over 60's? They have all the time and all the money!

Jesus – the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.

There is a **time** under heaven for everything. In your community there will be a harvest! This is more than a general strategy.

Send a **team**, don't hire individuals!

**Target** – If a man of peace is there your peace will rest on him.

**<sup>5</sup>"When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' <sup>6</sup>If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; if not, it will return to you. <sup>7</sup>Stay in that house, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house. (Luke 10:5 – 7)**

Youth work – in any group of kids you are looking for the one who likes you. That kid is the one who warms the temperature! We always look for the gate keeper to any community.

Don't speak on the street corners! Any minute now Jesus was going to say get your soap box out and preach! But he never did.

Matthew – "The worthy person".

Peace rest on him – Jesus is just speaking standard Aramaic. Go to a place and say "Shalom". **Mean it when you say it!** If there is a flicker there when you say "Peace". Mean it when you say, "How are you?" – but not in a creepy way! Do people want to engage with you?

If they do, stay with them, in their house. Do not move around from house to house! Hear that Evangelists!

John Wimber – "Having found the person of peace, mine out the vein" Who is their network or extended family? They will know who will respond to the message next!

There was a **Target!**

**What a message to bring** – "God is very near you. What do you think about that?" What a fantastic message, share it and it will move people!

This challenges our traditional model of evangelism to the core.

Multiple stories of what happens when people find their people of peace. Strategy did not depend on cultural acceptance – Christendom model.

**Task** – Share the words and works of the Kingdom. Can I pray for you? What do you need? Heal the sick, cast out demons! This is for ordinary people!

**Person of Peace** – The key that unlocks the whole process of Jesus' style evangelism!

**Who is the person of peace?** – It's the person who likes you, who want to spend time with you! Look for the one who is open!

Youth workers – always want the difficult one, not the one who is begging us to convert them!

They may not be particularly attractive to you, but they are attracted to Jesus in you;

**<sup>16</sup>"He who listens to you listens to me; he who rejects you rejects me; but he who rejects me rejects him who sent me." (Luke 10:16)**

"If they receive you they receive the one who sent me!"

Who follows you? What is the good thing in you that they are following? Jesus! Just start discipling them and assume they are following Jesus!

We need to develop perception – look at spiritual depth in the Heptagon – Open your eyes! The harvest is ripe! Teach others. Testing the temperature.

**Presence** – Jesus modelled it by being Incarnate. Put up his tent but he was here for a while.

Proclamation often falls on deaf ears because we are not present in the community.

**Wear yellow shoes?** – An attempt to be with people, the people we are trying to reach.

This has often helped in the proclamation. Communication is first what people see rather than what they hear.

**Communicating the Kingdom** – Are you present with your family and friends? Family – why are so many ministers kids not in the Kingdom? Not trying to add shame. Are you really with them? Presence is the platform for proclamation!

**Passing Relationships** – "On the hoof / on a plane"

Robert Schuler – guy wants to become a Christian. Passing relationships we can respond to! We are not there to persuade, we are there to share what God has done in us. We give our witness of what is happening now. The spirit – as we learn to perceive we can recognise what is going on.

**Permanent Relationships** – We can often overdo it with our parents! I don't think you are going to argue us into the Kingdom! Prayed for them every day rather than trying to take every opportunity.

We need to walk with people over a long period of time.

### **Preparation and Power**

We need to recognise that only God can prepare a person. How do I find God?

There is a preparation that will go on. Who knows how many links there will be in the chain of grace? **My responsibility is to respond to the person of peace and deal with what they want to talk about.**

We respond to the preparation of the Holy Spirit. Good works that have been prepared in advance for us to do!

Significant means of preparation for the Gospel is the Power of God working in them. We need to be ready and willing to pray for non-Christians to receive things that can only be miraculous. Power encounters lead to openness!

'Power encounters' is a New Testament strategy. Just pray for him! Signs of the Kingdom.

Bishop came to induct Mike – sense God wanted to heal someone.

Healing brings breakthrough – often put off by some of the representations of power ministry. Let's not throw out the baby with the bath water!

**Acts 16** – Story of Paul moving across Asia Minor. When they reached the port of Troas, Paul had a vision of a man from Macedonia who said come over and help us.

How does Paul find a person of peace – he went to the Synagogues. Look for a place of prayer - Lydia, dealer in purple and high fashion. Share the story of the Messiah, come and live in my house with all the models!