

Emerging from Exploring Methodology to Exploring Theology (and not being afraid to do so)
– maybe we're not thinking as deeply as we possibly could about the things we are doing and the way we do what we do

The Subtle Trap of Methodology Madness: Dan's story of going into SoCal not knowing anything about Youth Ministry, having never been in one. He went into the bookstore, found out about YS and used what he found.

PHASE 1

Rethinking Methodology: Changing Ministry Methods as Culture Changes

- We want to shape our message in regards to our culture, while our message ends up being our methods
- We reach out to resources, ideas and the ways of others—we're looking at models of "what it could be like," and [hopefully] adapt those into the culture of our context/church
- Are we subtly forgetting about the theology behind the methodology?
- Could we then have our methodology lead our theology instead of having our theology lead our methodology?
- Why did somebody create Testamints? Evangelism. What's the theology of how you view evangelism when you put out candy like this?
- Why did somebody create Scripture Socks?
- Faith Chips Poker Chips
- Christian T-shirts: "Satan, you're fired!" – evangelistic: Does the average person understand the theology of Satan? For a Christian audience: do Christians fire Satan? Fellowship: for the enjoyment of believers. Could give the impression that Satan is once gone, always gone. If we're firing Satan, we once hired him—so the alternative is to hire Christ/God.
 - Now t-shirts have gone too far and we're just trying to make a buck. These shirts are "cute." Our way of "embracing culture" is to make fun of it. Subtly we are conveying untrue truth to our youth by the inadvertent messages of these Christian t-shirts.
 - Create a discussion based on truth in Christian t-shirts and products
- Through these products, we feel as though we have been evangelistic and we don't have to bother with forming a relationship – we're trying to let God do all the work.

Rethinking methodology usually begins with changing the worship gathering

- What changed in church meetings when we moved from hymnals to putting projection on the screen?
 - Change of focal point: people began to look up
 - Instead of worshipping individually, you begin to worship communally
 - More freeing for movement/positioning in physical
 - Begin to idolize the musicians

American Idolization of Church

- LarkNews.com: sermons on a theatre marquee like a selection of movies
- Where did the idea come from of "sing 5 songs, have a joke/movie clip/ice breaker followed by deep content, and then leave"??

PHASE 2

Rethinking Youth Ministry: Realizing Youth Ministry is not in isolation and culture and theology is beyond an age group

- Because you are within an existing church, you realize that youth ministry fits within the context of the whole church – not in isolation

- Dan heard a song about a river and a horse, and couldn't understand the meaning. So he asked the worship leader what it meant, and the leader said, "I don't know, but it has a catchy tune and everybody likes it."

PHASE 3

Rethinking Ecclesiology (the church)

- What is "church"?
 - Here is the church, here is the steeple, open the doors and see all the people.
 - Church = people. But not according to this...this makes the building the Church.
 - Make it: "here is the church, made up of people, sitting in a building that has a pretty steeple."
- Theology is taught in things as simple as how a room is setup.
 - House Church: was the place of meeting as a group of believers for 300 years
 - ☒ If you're sitting in a house with 25-60 people, what are the values about that?
 - Dialogue
 - Intimacy
 - Community
 - Hospitality
 - Family worship
 - What would they do? communion would be based out of sharing a meal; prayer; Scriptures were read and taught
 - Roman Basilica:
 - ☒ When the Emperor Constantine made Christianity an official religion in 313 AD, Christians were free to erect permanent buildings. They did so by using the plan of the most common architectural design of public buildings, the Basilica, which was the Roman law court.
 - PPT: Progression of Basilica ☒ Cathedral ☒ etc.
 - 500 years ago
 - ☒ addition of pews: separation of people
 - ☒ adding an elevated pulpit area: created a spectator event (vs. house church of interactivity)
 - ☒ Catholics were doing strange things, so this had a spirit of reaction
 - "For a thousand years and more they had been on their feet; now their attention was fixed in a single direction. The nave, which had been entirely movement space, now was mostly seating, with movement limited to the aisles. Such acts as prostration [Hebrew: "worship" = "bow down"] were no longer feasible.

– Oxford History
 - the problem isn't "what's wrong?" with traditional buildings, but we need to understand how the smallest aspects of methodology drive the theology of our people.
 - ☒ Willow Creek isn't letting large worship define "Church," but they're also looking at small group/house church ministry as an opportunity for personal growth
- A worship leader will get up and say at the beginning, "Let's stand up and worship now" or after a message.
 - If you ask an average teenager, "What's worship?" they'll reply, "Singing."
- What "theology" is taught by what you do in a youth meeting about "worship"?
 - Do we create addictions in teenagers about worshipping with music in that they will only be able to worship when they get that "feeling"
- Mars Hill: gathering of 3,000 people
 - Like a boxing ring, with the platform in the center of the room
 - The band was even facing inward on the stage toward the center
 - Rob taught from that center stage, as the shortest distance from any furthest point to where he is
- Include dialogue in teaching: allows the students to think for themselves, instead of us attempting to make them think like we think. But at the same time, the construct of the church has acclimated them to a single way of "learning" through sermons

- Dan's church in Santa Cruz experienced that students were not connecting during the worship experiences, so they began a new worship experience for students/young adults, which became a multi-generational experience over time

PHASE 4

Rethinking Theology (without losing truth)

PHASE 5

Being the Church (instead of going to church)

What do we believe and why?

What is "theology"?

Becoming a "worshipping community of missional theologians"

Key theological questions in today's culture: what do you do?

- Youth art event: sketchbooks are hung up and a tastefully-drawn nude sketch is put up on the wall.
 - Historically it was not a problem, so why not now?
 - Sexuality has become a "dirty little secret," so why not use the opportunity to discuss sexuality in a Godly way
 - Take it down: share with the artist the reason for avoiding problems (sin, arguing, etc.) and affirm their talent
- The Green Notebook: was taught by a freshman-year college English professor that the Youth Minister hid theories and inconsistencies with the Bible from the youth.
- A student becomes a Christian and his/her parents (who aren't Christians) want to meet with you. They want to know if their daughter is in a church that demeans females, as that is what they hear about churches and are concerned.
 - They bust out 1 Timothy 2:11-15 and ask if their daughter will have to learn in quietness and full submission
 - How do you explain the passage in light of having/not having women in leadership roles
- A Jr. High Event is happening and you ask for parental help to chaperone and help with the event. It turns out that a gay couple is the parents of one of the jr. highers in the group. Other parents see the couple holding hands and are obviously not comfortable. Youth don't know how to respond. You asked for parental help and they responded. What do you do?
 - Care for the students: the one whose parents are chaperoning, and the other students who may not be allowed to come back. Make sure they have a place of growing in God.
 - Care for the parents

We live in a context where culture is challenging our theology. The mission of "Love God, love others" is simple. Maybe not simple to do, but a simple thought. But the culture wants to know more.