

MCG Presentation

Evangelism in the UPCSA and evangelizing in the world

1. Introduction:

- Married to Brenda one son Caleb – 13.
- Serve Emmanuel Presbyterian Church. 17 Years. CDP and M&D committee.
- Love the church.
- Keen cyclist – not so much racing, but exercise and thinking...
- A couple of years ago I got to combine my passion for the church and my love of cycling when I rode my bicycle 1100km around around Presbytery to raise funds to support our struggling rural congregations to have ministers.
- I'm going to use my bicycle to illustrate some important points around the theme I've been asked to address.

2. Introduction of the Topic

Evangelism – John 4: The Samaritan Woman at the well.

Jesus has reached out across the boundaries of race, gender and culture to tell a broken Samaritan Woman about Living Water. She leaves her water jar at the well and rushes back to town to tell everyone about the One who gave her living water – “Could He be the Messiah?” She asks? The disciples come back and with lunch, but Jesus isn't hungry – He's had better food. And then He goes on to say JN 4:34 "My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. 35 Do you not say, `Four months more and then the harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. And then in Matthew 9 He says: 37 Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. 38 Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

He isn't hungry because He's seen the woman's life changed, she's gone from being the field (harvest), to harvested, to harvester. The townspeople urge Jesus and his disciples to stay and they stay for two days: Jews staying with Samaritans!?! Incredible – Salvation has come!

When we talk about Evangelism, we are talking about bringing the Good News of God's Kingdom to the world around us.

This good news transforms, lives, communities and systems.

Today Evangelism is a challenge:

- We are intimidated by the task (Is the Gospel still relevant in our techno world)
- We feel inadequately equipped – we don't know how
- We've seen too many abuses
- We're not sure we can provide a community for those who come...

3. The Bicycle:

(Represents the Local Church and the MCG as part of the Church)

There are four sets of important parts to a bicycle

- The Moving Parts
- The Frame
- The Comfort and Safety features
- The rider

3.1. The Moving Parts

When it comes to bicycles – the experts tell us that you should spend the most on the moving parts (Wheels, chains and cogs) These should be as light as possible, as strong as possible, as efficient as possible.

For now I'm simply going to use the wheels as an illustration:

The wheels represent Mission and Maintenance.

The Mission is the front wheel – it must steer.

Maintenance is the back wheel – it provides the drive.

We often contrast Maintenance and Mission and treat them as mutually exclusive – that you can only have one or the other. We also often portray Maintenance as a bad thing.

- **Mission:** Healthy congregations have a clear focus on why we are here.
We are here to be the answer of the Prayer that Jesus taught us:
Your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
This has individual, social and structural implications.
For men in congregations it would be about equipping our men to love Christ, to be great husbands and fathers, to contribute constructively to build a just society and to bring other men to the same place.
- **Maintenance** is about our congregations being healthy and vibrant so that those that we reach can be brought into a community that will inspire them and equip them. It is no good if we run a crusade and people commit themselves to Christ, but the local congregation we draw them into is unhealthy, divided or unfocussed.
Maintenance is
 - the vibrancy of our service,
 - the genuineness of our pastoral care,
 - the depth of our teaching,
 - the sincerity of our relationships.

Now as far as bicycles go, there is an interesting law of physics that comes into play. The more movement there is, the more stable the bicycle becomes.

(Demonstrate by spinning the wheel and balancing it on one finger...)

3.2. The Frame.

The Frame of the Bicycle holds all together. The MCG is part of the framework of the UPCS, and the local MCG is part of the framework of the local congregation. When the frame is cracked or unstable, the bicycle cannot go. Our structures need to be firm and undivided. No part is the whole, all the parts are needed. And ultimately the frame is not a moving part – the focus always needs to be the wheels of Maintenance (Health of the Congregation) and the Mission.

3.3. The Comfort and Safety Features.

Any bicycle needs seats and brakes – they play a smaller role, but if they are missing it could be uncomfortable or dangerous. These are our traditions, rituals and rules and laws. (And our uniforms) If the rest of the bicycle is going well – these play a small role.

Unfortunately, when the moving parts of Mission and Maintenance are neglected, we focus on these things.

3.4. The Rider

We've talked about the bicycle. We also need to talk about the rider.

You can buy a really expensive bicycle, but if the rider doesn't eat properly and train often, the fancy bike isn't going to help at all. The rider is the congregation and for the MCG it is the men in its care. Inasmuch as a congregation and the associations in it may have a clear mission and good health, a solid frame and the basic safety and comfort features, it still needs to transform the hearts and souls of the congregation members.

4. Show the Video

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rk8ERxqCZqQ>

Love, Liberate, Lead and Launch

5. Getting Practical.

So how can the MCG help the church in its priority to Evangelise?

1. Realise it is part of the framework.
While the MCG is made up of Men, Jesus calls us to reach all people.
Women, Children, Young and Old form part of the church.
More importantly: When you reach a man – you reach his family or his future family.
A man should be reached, not only to the MCG, but to the church.

Being a group of men is a means to an end and not an end in itself – the Kingdom of God is family.

2. The MCG should sharpen it's focus on Maintenance and Mission not only in itself, but also in the congregation:
 1. Around Mission:
We live in a challenging world: our statistics show that our men are losing their way
We should be passionate about setting better examples
Guiding our young men
We should LOVE the broken, LIBERATE the captives, LEAD the lost and LAUNCH new believers into a life of Kingdom living.
 2. Around Maintenance
Understanding that, by my definition, Maintenance is the health of the Local Community.
 - the vibrance of our service,
 - the genuineness of our pastoral care,
 - the depth of our teaching,
 - the sincerity of our relationships.
3. Explore ways of doing this:
 - One to one evangelism- Courses equipping our members to share their faith
 - Group outreaches – revivals etc
 - Social Projects – Doing repairs at a school or orphanage
 - Mentoring – our young men
4. Ensure that we don't become distracted by Frameworks, comfort and safety features.
5. Finally and Most Importantly:
Focus on the rider – The congregation member and MCG Member.
 - Teach, Equip, Inspire and Transform.
 - **Teach** them to read the Word and to Pray
 - **Equip** them to share their faith by Word and Example
 - **Inspire** them to look outward
 - **Transform** them by involving them in events that will give them the boldness to try.

6. Conclusion.

The sad statistic is that the longer one is a Christian, the less likely one is to share one's faith. It seems that in many cases people get on the bicycle and focus on the seat and the frame and forget about the wheels. Slowly but surely the wheels slow down and stability is lost.