

Helping Outsiders Become Insiders in a Digital World

Rethinking Assimilation For a Digital World

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Defining Terms

- Archbishop Trent 1919
 - Evangelism is the task of proclaiming Jesus Christ as God
 - and Savior, persuading men and women to become His disciples and responsible members of His Church
- It is a modern idea that evangelism and assimilation/connectedness are separate issues when in reality they are intimately connected.
- We think win and then assimilate when the reality is assimilate and then you will win them
- The word Disciple “μαθητεύσατε”, always has the concept of assimilation/connectedness in its etymology. Mt 28:19

Defining Terms

- **Acts 2:41-47**

- Those that believed were added to the church (universal and local)
- They that were added all continued... (Incorporated)
- *“You are a member of God’s very own family ... and you belong in God’s household with every other Christian.”*
(Eph. 2:19)
- As simple definition: To include in a larger whole and to make one with the whole becoming not only part of it formally but sharing its values and participating in its life.

Defining Terms

- Connected Incorporated or engagements are part of common vernacular but however, if the words are used they have to be defined.
 - For example FB in the digital world defines engagement as anyone who came to your page. I.E. We had 2340 engagements.
 - Connectedness demands a much deeper involvement and implies a bond that has been made nurtured and sustained.
- In this presentation I will not use the word engagement as it is not the common definition used in the digital world that would define assimilation, incorporated or connected. The words assimilate incorporated or connectedness will be used and are definable in the process of the work to be done.

3 Big Issues We Need To Address

- Because we are in this crisis time people are more open to change and faith than in times of a stable societal equilibrium. Looking afresh at fields ripe to harvest is a now issue. (Receptivity Resistance Axis)
- This receptivity will wane as the crisis subsides and life comes back to normal. This is of God and:
 - His prevenient grace is working
 - He will use all this together for good
- The World is moving from analog to digital quickly and learning how to connect people in a digital world is a new paradigm we need to understand. We will in the future be a “both and”, not an “either or” world

Some Best Practices In The Digital World To Connect People

- Understand the principles of assimilations are consistent over time and in a variety of contexts. It is their application that will change:
 - Example 1: Relationships are the primary glue that connect people to the church. How do we build relationships digitally as well as in an analog environment?
 - Example 2: Small groups not only build relationships but further the discipleship pathway. How do we do small groups in a virtual environment?
 - Example 3: For people to feel they are part of a group they want to make some contribution to the life of the group. What does ministry look like in this new world?
- These 3 issues are non-negotiable in a digital connection strategy

Some Best Practices In The Digital World To Connect People

- Develop A Connection Team
 - For the Analog world: For the Church Gathered Physically
 - For the Digital World: For building a virtual but real community.
- The skill sets necessary are different but need to work together.
- Remember; Everybody's business can become nobodies business.

Some Best Practices In The Digital World To Connect People

- The 4 Best Tools in a digital world are:
(Actual results currently documented)
 - Text (text to Church)
 - Email
 - Facebook
 - A well planned calendar. Automation encouraged

Some Best Practices In The Digital World To Connect People

- Oikos still works: Most views and engagements occur through a friend or relative. Encourage everybody to share;
 - The church FB posts that seem appropriate to your oikos (Shares have a plus 70% viewership)
 - A friend is an important bridge in Connecting new people to the church. Encourage train and resource people to connect with their friends through social media.
 - The most effective way to build an online community is to have the people on it sharing it.

Some Best Practices In The Digital World

Connect People

- Funnels Work:
 - If you've ever responded to a Facebook or Instagram ad offering something free, you are at the first step of a funnel.
 - To get that item the link requires you to give some digital information. It gives people a reason to give you information about them.
 - Name
 - Email
 - Cell Phone (Optional)
 - The link for the promised item is given and quickly
 - A digital follow up strategy is developed. Moving from an event to a discipleship pathway.

Some Best Practices In The Digital World To Connect People

- Relationships Matter
 - Anyone who understood anything about assimilation and the process learned quickly it was the 95% rule. People who have friendships stay, people who don't have it leave. People without relationships leave regardless of age, gender, marital status, theology, preaching, music, etc.
 - The scripture and human nature tell us that if we ignore this in a digital world we will neither reach people or connect people.
- Doing it digitally is easier with the under 35 crowd as they are already doing it naturally and there are plenty of apps both in the secular world and the church (Group Publishing, Life Tree)
- There are 59 "one another" Statements in Scripture. Thinking about what that means in a digital world is still imperative.

4 Big Ideas

- Getting as many of the people in your church to have 2 practices on Facebook, Instagram and twitter builds the online fishing pool;
 - Like your page
 - Share your posts
- Urgency is created. Since the online experience is new for most churches and their people, will fatigue set in? This is a question; Will the church be larger or smaller, less effective or more effective, a brighter or dimmer light in society? Can this recent online spike peak and wane like the virus itself, or will it propel the church to new heights? In many respects the outcome is up to us.

4 Big Ideas

- 40 % of people over the age of 60 do not engage with any social media. 70% of this age group use text. This segment of our constituency needs some special help and training. The risk of disconnect is high yet the impact could be great.
- Churches that loved lost people and engaged before the crisis then will continue to do it in this new digital world. That value needs to be nurtured.