

From Ortho-doxy to Ortho-praxis...

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The 5 habits of highly missional people: BELLS #5 - Habit #5 - Sent by GodJulian Doorey - Sermon - Cavy Bap - 18-3-18

(Matt 28:16-20, Acts 1: 3-9, 2 Cor 5: 14-15)

Journey to Easter V

- Easter reflection (Jesus' mission): John 12:20-33: Jesus Predicts His Death: 5 mins: Roly
- Missional habits (Our mission): Part 5, BELLS #5 - Sent by God: 25 mins: Julian

Interview - Angela Cruden - Habits at work (3 or 4 mins; 2 hand-held microphones)

- Tell us a bit about your work situation?
- Can you share a story about Habit #1 Blessing others - from your work place?
- Can you share a story about Habit #2 Eating together (with others) - from your work place?

Prayer for Angela and sermon.

Introduction

We've almost completed our month-long focus 'The 5 habits of highly missional people', based on a book by Michael Frost, an Australian practical-theologian (and the Bible). We've encouraged everyone to join in... Sunday services and home groups. This is framed around the key question: Are we living 'questionable lives' that provoke curiosity in others about our Christian faith? ... are we being missional, a signpost pointing to God? Frost says: To be missional is a set of 5 habits called the BELLS challenge: So far: (1) Blessing others (being generous), (2) Eating together (being hospitable), (3) Learning Jesus (being Christlike) and (4) Listening to the Spirit (being Spirit-led). Finally today, we look at Habit #5 Being 'Sent by God' into mission (being missional). In particular: How do we move from ortho-doxy (thinking) to ortho-praxis (Practice)?

2 Knocking on heaven's door

On a recent morning, I received a knock on the door. I was greeted by a friendly late-middle-aged women (about my age), who offered me a verbal and written invitation to attend a local event. Referring to the screen, the invite said: '[Would you like some Time Out?... Coffee fellowship... All welcome... Come and join us... Food, Fellowship, Fun... Bring a friend... Children's area provided... venue Queen's Drive Gospel Hall... Thu 8 Mar, 10am-12noon](#)'. She had a very pleasant manner... wasn't pushy... didn't talk religion... and answered most of my questions about who was running the event. She said they only hand deliver about 80 fliers each time, as they try to speak to a person at the house. This takes time, compared with doing a letter box drop. After a few minutes I shared that I'm a Christian, and wanting to learn how others do outreach. We exchanged some fliers and she went off to my neighbour. The exchange took about 15 mins. I was impressed with her outreach attempt. This woman was 'sent by God' into mission. I hope it bears fruit.

Sent by God - where & what?

I think the idea of being 'sent by God' can be misunderstood. Where are people sent to and what do they do? Let's look at a couple of passages about being 'sent'. Matthew's record of the risen Jesus' final words to his disciples are called The Great Commission...

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[The Great Commission - #1 - Going away \(Matt 28:16-20\)](#)

¹⁶ Then the eleven disciples (after Jesus' death) went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷ When they saw him (Jesus), they worshiped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (TNIV)

In this passage the risen Jesus tells his disciples to 'go and make disciples of all nations'. It speaks of going (not staying)... going elsewhere... going across borders... going to another country / nation (ethno-linguistic people group)... usually for a long time. We call this overseas mission. Leaving home and going into overseas mission involves... a lot of personal (and other people's) effort, time, cost and discomfort... Bible training... career adjustments... and a sacrifice of family and friends contact (3 yearly visits). You must admit that going to another country and having to learn another language, beliefs, worldviews, values, culture and habits - just to be able to live and communicate the good news and good works of Jesus - sounds like a risky use of time and resources. But it was Jesus' idea that some people will be 'sent by God' into overseas mission.

Luke's record of the risen Jesus' final words to his disciples are a bit different to Matthew. Perhaps we can call this The Great Commission #2...

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The Great Commission - #2 - Staying home (Acts 1: 3-9)

³ After his (Jesus) suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. ⁴ On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. ⁵ For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." ⁶ So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷ He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." ⁹ After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. (TNIV)

In this passage the disciples I think are still in shock from the death of their leader (Jesus) and the loss of their whole purpose for living. The risen Jesus tells them 'you will be my witnesses in (i) Jerusalem, and in all (ii) Judea and (iii) Samaria, and to the (iv) ends of the earth'. Although this Great Commission #2 ultimately includes 'overseas mission' (to the ends of the earth), it all begins with 'local mission' (in Jerusalem). All 4 locations required the same Holy Spirit. The place you already live is the most obvious, but perhaps most overlooked place to do mission. For us this means Dunedin. I'm not against overseas mission... every church needs to have people working overseas long term - the impact on the sending church is invaluable. But it was Jesus' idea that most people will be 'sent by God' into local mission where they live... in Dunedin for us.

Staying is the new going

Recently I read that 'staying is the new going'. A book called 'Staying Is the New Going: Choosing to Love Where God Places You', by Alan Briggs (2015) argues this idea...

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"Have you ever fantasized about traveling to the other side of the world, telling people about the good news of Jesus Christ? Wake up and look around: The world is right here, waiting for the Good News to make itself known. For too long we've outsourced God's work in the world to

missionaries ‘out there’ at the ends of the earth. In reality, God wants us to love our neighbour right next door. He wants us to pray for the welfare of our zip code (post code), to witness to the world outside our window. He wants us to be the church, the people of God, in conversation and meaningful engagement with the people God loves outside the walls of the church.”

God’s mission doesn’t require a passport for most people. You don’t have to cross seas to make a kingdom impact. You are ‘sent by God’ into your local community. Putting it another way... you live somewhere... you have neighbours... you’re in relationships... God wants to work through you as someone ‘sent by God’. The God of the universe is sending you to your area, not me.

Vid 5 - Habits - BELLS - Sent by God - 2m 46s

Imagine being ‘sent by God’

Imagine - what would our lives look like if we allowed ourselves to be ‘sent by God’. Would we put the same effort, time, cost and discomfort; Bible training, career adjustments, and sacrifice of family and friends contact... into ‘local mission’ just as people do for ‘overseas mission’? Are we prepared to learn the languages, beliefs, worldviews, values and habits of contemporary New Zealanders - so we can live and communicate the good news and good works of Jesus? Would all

6 This raises all sorts of other missional questions for us, for example:

- Where would we live and why would we live there?
- What involvements would we and our families commit to?
- Who would we mix with?

etc

In other words, can we imagine being ‘sent by God’? Do we want to be ‘sent by God’?

The 5 Habits

7 Getting back to Frost’s 5 habits of highly missional people (BELLS) we’ve looked at for a month:

#	Habit	Activity & Goal (Frost)	Value
1	<u>B</u> less others	I will bless three people this week, at least one of whom is not a member of our church.	Generous
2	<u>E</u> at together	I will eat with three people this week, at least one of whom is not a member of our church.	Hospitable
3	<u>L</u> earn Jesus	I will spend at least one period of the week learning Jesus.	Christlike
4	<u>L</u> isten to the Spirit	I will spend at least one period of the week listening for the Spirit’s voice.	Spirit-led
5	<u>S</u> ent by God	I will journal throughout the week all the ways I alerted others to the universal reign of God through Christ.	Missional

Three of the habits have an outward focus (Bless, Eat, Sent) pushing us out into the lives of not-yet Christians, inviting curiosity. Two of the habits have an inward focus (Learn, Listen) re-energizing and re-connecting us with Jesus, to avoid burn out. Refer to:

- Habit #5: To be ‘Sent by God’ into mission (being missional)... in Dunedin.
- Frost’s goal: Journal all the ways I alert others to the universal reign of God through Christ.

You and I need to set our own goals and accountability according to our personality and situation.

Moving from Ortho-doxy to Ortho-praxis

8 How do I / we do the 5 habits long-term in some shape or form? How do we move from ortho-doxy (right thinking, intellectual assent, agreeing in theory with the 5 habits) to ortho-praxis (right practice, action, doing the 5 habits long-term)? At this point we move into the psychological world of 'change theory'... how and why do people change? I used to think that providing information, resulted in changed behaviour... a bit like programming a robot. However, I later discovered, that a hugely important factor in change is motivation. For example, a poor Bangladeshi villager will only be interested in an Improved Cooking Stove if they believe there will be a fairly immediate advantage / reward, such as saving money on wood, rather than long-term better health due to less smoke inside ie: the advantage / reward provides the motivation for change.

What might our motivation be to adopt the 5 missional habits? Is there some personal advantage / reward? I can't think of much personal gain to be had such as money and food, or (in Hollywood) sex and power. There may be long-term social capital gains in terms of Habit #1 blessing others and Habit #2 eating together (with others)... becoming known as a generous and hospitable person. Alternatively, people might become annoyed at your efforts to introduce them to Jesus. There will be spiritual rewards in terms of Habit #3 learning Jesus and Habit #4 listening to the Spirit. I'm sure we all want that. However, I think the key motivation is God's compelling love for us.

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God's compelling love (2 Cor 5: 14-15)

¹⁴ For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. ¹⁵ And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. (TNIV)

Jesus dying for you / I... provides compelling love motivation... you / I should live for him, not ourselves. We are 'sent by God' into our community to implement the 5 habits.

DNA - discipleship, nurture and accountability

To be effective, the 5 habits (blessing, eating, listening, learning, sentness) need to be long-term.

10 How long does it take for us to form a habit? Frost sites some research that suggests it takes about 66 days to form a life changing habit, depending on the habit. This is much longer than the 3x rule. We're talking months of intentional practice. We need help from others...

Frost talks about DNA groups / relationships (Discipleship, Nurture and Accountability) - a simple system of accountability to see how we and others are going. This could be home groups, informal gatherings (Mitre 10), friendships (Randal and I), family times, over tea and coffee after church. I'm not talking about setting up a new structure. Find at least one other person / group you can check in with occasionally, and ask some DNA habit questions:

- Who have I blessed this week / month (focus on non-church people)?
- Who have I eaten with this week / month (focus on non-church people)?
- What did I learn about Jesus this week / month?
- What did I hear from the Spirit this week / month?
- How (and to who) was I sent by God to share my faith this week / month?

Habits Card

11 To help us remember the 5 Habits, set some personal goals and facilitate DNA get-togethers, I've made wallet sized Habits Cards. It's the same size as a business / visiting card, so it can go with

you until the cardboard falls apart. There is a gap to write your personal habit goals down. Have a talk in small groups about your habit goals and then write them down when you get home.

Small group discussions.

In future church services we look forward to hearing our habit stories along with faith stories.

Prayer

End