

REC 100: Revitalizing Mission in the Parish: Part 3



To Revitalize Mission in the Parish Means . . .

- Remaining Committed to Prayer Book Worship as we have approved in the REC
- *Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down* (Marva Dawn book title), the worship of God or the content of the faith
- Rising from a preservation mindset to promotion of the Gospel . . . The dual focus of Holy Altar Table to Mission and Mission to the Throne of God should drive everything we do . . . Therefore mission/evangelism is more than a committee tacked on to everything else . . .
- Resulting in the making of disciples in the Anglican Way into true worshippers through the multiplication of prayer book congregations

First Presentation
Fishing With A Net: The Whole
Community of the People of God
Reaching the World . . .



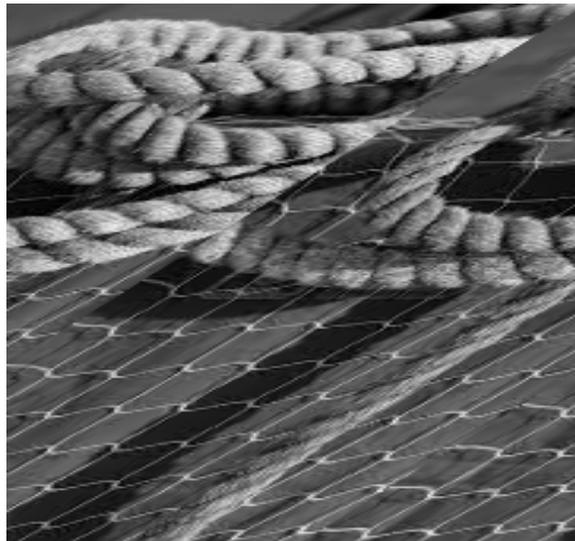
Jesus' and His Disciples Fished with Nets not
Hooks Translating in a Community Fishing with a
Variety of Aspects of a Large Net



Second Presentation
Fishing With A Net: The Whole
Commission By the Whole
Congregation



The Great Commission in Each of the Gospels
Provides a Complete View of All Four Parts of the Net
With Which the Church Fishes . . .



The Gospel Net of the Four Gospels Includes Various Ways For Those Outside to Participate Without Being Members

- St. Matthew's Great Commission: "Making Disciples" by "catechizing" to the Font and the Table, translating various teaching ministries
- St. Mark's Great Commission: The "Kerygma" or proclamation approach of the Gospel, translating into special event evangelism (i.e. preaching missions)
- St. Luke's Great Commission: The hospitality/benevolence approach of welcoming to a meal and healing ministries
- St. John's Great Commission: The sacramental life of the signs of the mystical presence of Christ (i.e. Easter Even Baptisms and Baptismal Renewal)

Thus, the Ways of Belonging Before Believing are Defined by the Whole Great Commission Presented in the Four Gospels . . . Casting a Wide Net . . .

The Gospels Model of the Whole
Great Commission Translates Into
Multiple Ministries Out of And By
the Community of the People of
God . . . Able To Reach Many
Different Kinds of Disciples . . .
Those near, Those Farther Away and
Those Farthest Away . . .

There Were Disciples Near to Jesus . . .
The twelve and even the three . . .



There Were Disciples Who Came along but Who Were Close But Farther Away . . . The Seventy, Nicodemus, the Women at the Empty Tomb, the 500 etc.



Jesus Teaching by the Seashore by James Tissot

Disciples Who Are Farthest Away . . . The Remotest People . . . Gentiles . . . The Magi

. . .



"The Journey of the Magi" (1894)
by James Joseph Jacques Tissot (1836-1902)

The Three Categories of Disciples Can
Be Spiritually and Geographically Near,
Farther Away, and Farthest Away . . .
Which makes fishing for humans
challenging . . .



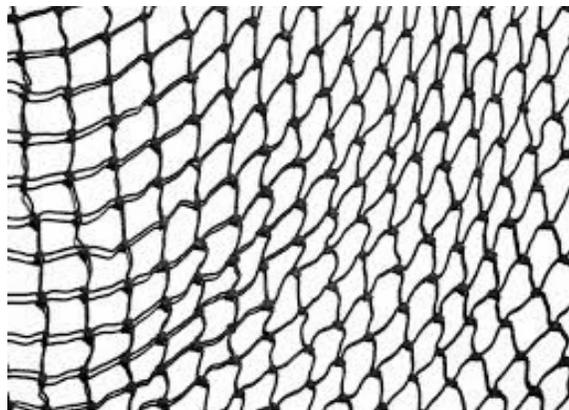
So how does the parish extend its
community to find disciples near, farther
away and farthest away?



We Have Presented How The Church is Called a House in Holy Scripture . . . To get disciples into the House of the Lord to meet the Host, Jesus, we first have to invite them to the front porch . . . Which Means We Need Front Porch Ministries in our Parish



Front Porch Ministries Are Squares in the Net . . . The More Squares the Wider the Net . . . The Bigger the Catch. . .



But Undoubtedly Our Traditional Anglican
Way Usually Finds the Most Difficult
Potential Disciple To Reach: the Seeker . . .



Bringing Us To The Third Presentation:
Reaching those Farthest Away . . .
Unbelievers, Un-Churched, and the
Seekers . . .



So many of our traditional ministries do fairly well reaching those near . . . Less effective farther away . . . And not very successful in reaching the unbeliever . . . (Of course no one is doing all that great of a job in our culture reaching the unbeliever)

The Great Challenge for traditional Anglican Churches, other liturgical churches and increasingly for all churches is reaching the lost and the un-churched . . . What are called the seekers . . . Specifically adult converts . . .

The challenge for traditional prayer book churches . . . We are now two to three generations from other Anglicans who knew the traditional prayer book . . . It used to be we could advertise for those who know the traditional prayer book and receive immediate response and interest . . . But what now when few if any know the Great Tradition of the Anglican Way?

It means we can no longer rely on others to make the converts . . . We have to make Anglicans the old fashioned way . . . We have to be the ones to do the evangelism and make disciples for Jesus Christ in the Anglican Way . . .

The Challenges for Traditional Anglicans Doing Evangelism . . . And Reaching seekers . . .

- Anglicans as a group and for the most part in the West haven't done much evangelism in over a hundred years . . . We used to . . . Then today the word evangelism in the minds of many means door-to-door, or crusade approaches used by various Christian movements and groups during the last century . . . Methods that had appeal up until the Post WWII decades of our culture . . . Now no longer are they as effective . . . Besides . . . Anglicans typically do not resonate to these kinds of approaches . . . Nor will they do them . . .
- The influence of separatist models of holiness . . . Since holiness has often been only defined as being separate to the exclusion of being made whole, "The longer people are Christians the fewer unbelievers they know or even have contact with." Western Christians are many times so separate they've lose contact with unbelievers in any effective way of reaching them for Christ . . . The result is that they don't know what to do with their unbeliever contacts, if they even have them, nor how to lead them to become believers and church members
- So many of the seeker models are not consistent with who we are as Biblical and classical Anglicans . . . So many approaches present the Gospel without catechesis, without a view to making disciples into true worshippers, without the sacrament and without the Church . . . Even being overly decisional in an all too often mechanistic sense . . .

A Word About A Too Mechanistic Approach to Making a Decision for Christ . . .

- I'm not saying that people who receive Christ don't have true saving commitment . . . It's just that not all believers are aware of when they became a believer. Then some baptized as infants actually grow in Christ their entire lives and are not ever conscious of a "decision moment" apart from their baptism even though they still have saving faith . . . Scripture has examples of both . . . Those who believe before baptism and those who believe after (i.e. Household baptisms) . . .
- Some have a Damascus Road experience but most, especially in a post modern culture, come by way of the Emmaus Road discovery and gradual commitment to Christ . . .
- It is grace through faith that saves us not the decision . . . A decision can be an expression of what is already there . . . Faith in the heart can even be there without conscious decisions being made . . .
- The danger therefore with a decision-equals-faith approach is that sometimes it can make people think they believe when they don't . . . "the decision saved me" . . . And it can sometimes miss the more normal, gradual way of coming to saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ . . .

Take St. Peter As An Example

- Andrew leads him to meet Christ . . .
- But it is probably not until later, his famous, "Thou art the Christ" moment when he truly expresses his faith (Matthew 16)
- Then there was his great falling away
- Then there was his involvement with the Judaizers who believed one needed circumcision to be saved . . . That resulted in the first Church Council . . .
- So when was Peter saved?



Take C. S. Lewis As An Example . . .

- "You must picture me alone in that room in Magdalen [College, Oxford], night after night, feeling, whenever my mind lifted even for a second from my work, the steady, unrelenting approach of Him whom I so earnestly desired not to meet. That which I greatly feared had at last come upon me. In the Trinity Term of 1929 I gave in, and admitted that God was God, and knelt and prayed: perhaps, that night, the most dejected and reluctant convert in all England" (*Surprised by Joy*)
- A few days after that late-night walk, Lewis, still pondering the conversation, got into the sidecar of his brother's motorcycle for a trip to the zoo. He later wrote, "When we set out I did not believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and when we reached the zoo I did." Time of salvation is not always known!



Some Seeker Models Are Working Because They Are Incarnational . . .

- Alpha wonderfully builds a seeker model around a meal, a series of presentations of who Jesus Christ is and an introduction to the Blessed Trinity, and a retreat that creates a sense of community . . . These aspects are the heart of the Alpha model that is good, Biblical and right . . . We can build on this part of the program . . . The challenge is what appears to be missing in all the Great Commissions of the Gospels, such as reference to the sacraments (especially Baptism and the Eucharist), the goal of discipleship being worship, especially with the ancient liturgy . . . and the Church . . .
- Christianity Explored brilliantly utilizes the Gospel of Mark to present the Gospel . . . It's model of a Gospel to share the Gospel . . . But this Gospel (Mark) emphasizes the proclamation approach to the Great Commission . . . Matthew's, Luke's and John's approaches that bring out the catechetical, hospitality, social and sacramental aspects of proclaiming the Gospel are not there . . . Perhaps one of the other Gospels could be used to be more comprehensive . . .
- Therefore, Alpha and Christianity Explored are good seeker models that have and can be used effectively. They are better than nothing.
- Nevertheless, we have seen the need to develop a seeker model utilizing the best of these approaches, yet also including the other aspects of the Great Commission in the Gospels that are important to us as classical Anglicans . . .

Therefore . . . What If . . .

- A meal model could be formulated . . .
- That creates a community easily accessible for the unbeliever and the unchurched, to come into a context where the person would be welcome, free to express doubts and concerns, and be accepted as is . . .
- And in this same context be presented an Incarnational model of the Truth, and also hear the Gospel according to the Gospels, or at least a Gospel that gives them the complete Great Commission . . . Through Christ's encounters with various individuals that bring out catechesis, sacrament, worship and the church aspects, involved in becoming a true disciple of Jesus Christ . . . We call it, Veritas: What Is Truth?

Veritas: What Is Truth?

- Offered in the home or at the church or anywhere where a warm, open, comfortable community context can be provided . . .
- Offered over five evenings . . . Of an hour and a half including . . .
- Beginning with refreshments, light Christian music consistent with the music of the church but front porch in feel . . .
- A meal . . .
- A presentation based on Jesus' encounter with Pontius Pilate in which the question is asked that is as relevant today as it was 2,000 years ago, "What is Truth," followed up by presentations from the Gospel of John and Jesus' encounters with various people such as Nicodemus, the woman at the well, the blind man and Lazarus . . .
- Each presentation is ended with a discussion led by a trained leader asking carefully prepared questions . . . Where all are allowed to participate . . . But no answers necessarily provided at this point to permit the unbeliever freely to put his/her thoughts forward . . . Belonging before believing . . . With the long view of making a disciple over time . . .

First: A Presentation on People
Struggling to answer the question,
"What is truth?"

Second: Let's take a look at an actual presentation of one of the power points used in Veritas . . .

Third: Where Does Your Parish Begin?

1. The Parish Must Become a Community Desiring to move from preservation to proclamation, to become a worshipping community on mission . . .
2. The Vestry should create a five-year long range plan . . . With objective, quantifiable goals, with a vision and mission reflected in them, and a strategy for developing a Proclamation Parish with front porch ministries to all three disciple groups/cultures with all four aspects of the Great Commission
3. Present the recorded Gospel Tree sermon, the REC 100 Prospectus and the Revitalization talks to the parish (i.e. Sunday School, retreat etc.)
4. Create front porch ministries
5. Form intercessory teams and Daughters of the Holy Cross prayer groups to pray for the parish night and day . . .
6. Commit to the REC 100 in the church, your diocese and parish