

Helpful ways to Inspire Living Out the Gospel on Mission in Others

Based on Interviews done by Rettland Dvorak

Purpose:

The purpose of this document was to record what other church leaders found as helpful ways to inspire others to live more missionally minded. What follows is a condensed list and description, based on interviews with these church leaders. I have compiled them, and articulated them in the hopes of providing helpful methods ideas and images for other church leaders to implement in encouraging the church in missional living.

Appreciation/Empathy for other Cultures



If we do not appreciate other cultures, than it will be difficult to reach people outside of ourselves. Sometimes we can use this difference to make another culture seem exotic, or interesting, but make sure to see express their culture as more than just what appears to be enticing. We are all made in the image of God, and every culture and person, though fallen, is able to experience grace. The picture I used in this section is called a kintsugi, where gold is used as a bonding agent for broken pottery to emphasize its imperfection. In a similar manor, God emphasizes our perfection and makes us whole in Christ. We need to be able to see a culture as something redeemable by God, beautiful in its imperfections. There are a few different ways that we can show acceptance/appreciation of other cultures.

1. Make sure you have people from that culture as leaders in the church.
So many churches I see have a single culture staff, which says to people from other cultures looking for churches, that they won't listen to them.
2. Have cultural training programs
This needs to be a bit more interactive, a purely information program will be forgotten, and neglected.
3. Sing worship songs from other cultures

One of the best ways to communicate that you appreciate them, is to communicate how they communicate.

Talk about specific real prayer needs



Having an active prayer group will often lead people into caring more about the community they live in. When people offer specific needs to others in prayer, not only does it allow the whole group to be more vulnerable with each other, but it also is a great opportunity for ministry. First it can break stereotypes of what was presumed to be a problem for a group of people, by stating what is actually going on, and what would actually help to fix it. Second, it helps people get involved with the broader community, giving them a group identity. Third it shows others that we love one another through our united prayers and help. And fourth, prayer is often a powerful way that God uses to guide people closer to him.

Just as important to the request, is the praise. This will help in a multitude of ways. It allows us to see that God is at work. It shows that a person is valued beyond the need that they had. It builds faith in God, and not our own strength.

Some helpful guidelines for prayer would be:

1. Remember prayer requests, and keep up to date with them.
2. Prioritize prayer in smaller community groups over larger groups.
3. Solidify theology on the sovereignty of God, for when God answers prayer in ways you did not expect. (His will be done).
4. Celebrate in extravagant ways when prayer is answered positively.

Don't fundraise for endless causes, but for Missionaries



People are bombarded endlessly, day in and day out, by the plethora of nonprofit charities and agencies, parachurch organizations and operations, and humanitarian efforts and causes. Fundraising for them just adds another straw on the proverbial camels back. These institutions are not bad, but in helping inspiring others in living out the gospel on mission, this can also be a copout, where people just throw money at it, check their box, and forget about them. Rather than seeing those the ministry ministers to as people who have a variety of struggles (like us), they are seen as poster children, and trophies showcasing how much we care about the less fortunate. What these organizations do in helping the less fortunate is great and much needed, but the areas of growth it instills in their donors is just more financial giving.

What then is the answer to this? How should we fundraise? The answer is missionaries. Supporting individual missionaries intimately connects the church with missions. Not only are they directly supporting those who have dedicated their career to ministry across cultures, it also allows the missionary to support the church through sharing their own experiences. Plus, there are many ways to support a missionary other than just cash money, that will also inspire missional living in others, things like:

1. Prayer
2. Coordinated short term missions
3. Networking
4. Conferences/speaking events
5. Mission updates

Stories



Sharing stories is a great way to get people more connected within a church. It helps people see how their story is meaningful and how it connects to God's story. When we are able to share our stories, we also are able to practice our testimony, and be more comfortable in sharing the gospel with those who have not heard it, have not received it, or have rejected it. There are a vast number of other benefits to sharing our stories, such as sanctification, but we will focus on it's benefits in inspiring living out the gospel on mission, and how to go about the approach to implement them.

People's life stories encourage vulnerability, as well as helps people see things from a different perspective, both of which are vital in dealing with things cross culturally for missions. Missionary stories can also leave an impact on listeners seeing what God is doing in other contexts and cultures, which will broaden peoples understanding of missions. It will also deepen peoples understanding of missions as they learn about deep issues people have within the church.

Now that I've given the sales pitch for life stories, here are some helpful tips in setting them up:

1. Build an appropriate space for life stories, as people will be exposing themselves, and will be vulnerable, it needs to be done in a manner that will honor them.
2. Be ready to give comfort and encouragement to those who are sharing.
3. Stories can take up a varied amount of time, be willing to be flexible timewise.

Live what you lead



Nothing deflates motivation like hypocrisy. When people see someone preaching/teaching about missional living, and yet do not live it out in their own lives, it either leaves a sour taste in people's mouths, or gives them an excuse to not follow what was taught. Conversely, when a leader lives out what they teach/preach/lead, it may even inspire people to live that way. At the very least people are able to look at them as a practical example of living it out, when that is often the hardest step to overcome when doing something.

Carrying this burden all by one's self, however is too large to handle. Though it starts with one-person inspiring others, the more the merrier. This will allow iron to sharpen iron, strengthening them in areas of weakness, as well as provide multiple examples for others to follow in multiple perspectives.

So, if you're wondering how you can inspire your church into living out the gospel on mission, perhaps you should ask how to inspire yourself.