

Life Transformed by Water and the Spirit

Province VIII conference on stewardship and evangelism

March 23-25, 2007, Sacramento

Notes by the Rev. Elizabeth Tattersall

Plenary: Growth with Vision, Numbers and Elbow Grease by Keith Brown

Effective stewardship, evangelism and mission spring from a Godly vision. A Godly vision answers key questions:

Who are you?

Where are you?

Where are you going?

Why are you going there?

These questions should be examined both individually and as a parish.

Two fundamental questions:

Who are you trying to reach?

What kind of invitation are you sending? (the appearance and design of your facilities are a big part of this)

Buildings and grounds telegraph vision. Improvement of facilities can enhance giving and mission and change culture.

People today have higher expectations and lower loyalty than earlier generations.

We need to be able to speak with both words and numbers.

Act the size your congregation is called to be, not the size you are now.

Warm and friendly is not enough.

Workshop: A Welcoming Church by Steve Wendfeldt

People aren't looking for a church, they are looking for Jesus

Say "guest" not "visitor"—visitor implies they are just passing through—"newcomer" ok

Save prime parking for guests—label them "newcomer & visitor" parking

Guests should be able to see Jesus in you

The unchurched are mostly under 40

Why would they want to come to our church? Why would they want to stay?

Most families are not 2 parents + kids

Steve's 2 rules to being a welcoming church:

90 second rule—you must win them in 1st 90 seconds, or they will not return

6 month rule: if they're not working with a ministry in 6 months, you've lost them
1st time they come, ask what they like to do, to get an idea where they might fit in ministry and give them a pledge card. The pledge card says you want them to stay/join.

When inviting newcomer to join a ministry, someone involved in that ministry should invite them.

The only two jobs of Christians are stewardship and evangelism.

Make sure your service times are on phone message and website. Don't use "code", say "worship service", not "Eucharist"

Newcomers are guests of Christ. It's Jesus' church, not ours.

The welcoming team should work in the parking lot.

Welcome children in church, new people are unlikely to feel comfortable putting their children in nursery.

The purpose of Sunday morning is 1. to worship God 2. to introduce those who do not yet know God.

Workshop: Episcopalians and Evangelism: Transformed, Engaged, Passionate Faith by Britt Olson

How do we share the meaningful things in our lives?

Be authentic, transparent—actions and faith must be consistent—be humble, vulnerable

Practice drawing others out so they can share what's important to them—radical welcome

Mutuality, relationship are important, not sharing knowledge

Jesus is the heart of compassion, and this should be visible in our lives. Helping people find meaning is what's important, not getting more members of the church.

Ask "would you like to have a deeper relationship with Jesus?"

Be less concerned about filling the church with people and more concerned with making people full of God.

Each of us has a unique story to tell. Practice telling your faith story. What is the most meaningful part of your relationship with God? Listen 1st, tell 2nd.

Most Americans think you can be an observant Jew or Christian without belonging to a worship community. Community is essential.

The church is a school for love.

People are looking for an experience of God when they come to church.

Many think that church members are roadblocks to genuine spiritual experience.

Basic spiritual needs:

A feeling that life is meaningful and has purpose.

A sense of community and belonging

To feel appreciated and respected—all need to feel they have something to give.

To grow in faith

Practical help in how to develop mature faith

Ask yourself these questions:

When is the last time I had a significant conversation with a non-Christian?

When is the last time I share the reason for faith and hope in my life?

How long has it been since I prayed for someone to have a transformative faith experience?

Has God put one or two people in my mind that I want to pray for and/or share Jesus with?