

CLPD Day: Icons and Imagery
Joanne and Jayson Cox-Darling

10.00-4.00, Wesley's Chapel

Timings are approximate

- 10.00 Welcome and prayer
- 10.15 Communication theory and theological framework
- 11.15 Coffee
- 11.30 Examples and Good Practice
- 1.00 Lunch and activity
- 1.30 Social media introduction
- 2.30 Coffee
- 2.45 Examples and Good Practice
- 3.30 Closing worship

Session 1 – Communication theory and a theological framework

Introduction

Quick fire hopes exercise for these two sessions

Our aim for today:

- Provide a theological and educational framework for using multimedia and online media as Local Preacher's – in worship and in life.
- Interactive sessions
- Good practice discussion for using multimedia tools and for engaging in social media
- Inspiration and laughter along the way!

We believe that the Spirit is at work in the fabric of creation (Col 1:16-17), and that creativity is a gift from God that we can use to worship God and to be attentive to God's leading in our lives.

We will try to keep to time as much as possible, and we are committed to giving ample time for examples and activity

Each of you has a resource pack to take away with you. We will go through most of the content, but you are invited to take away the resources and look over them in the next few days and use them to inspire your personal devotion, leading of worship, preaching, and life!

Educational and theological framework

Educational rationale

Learning styles recap

- including how visual media is a valid way of learning (emphasise that a blend is OK.)

Handout include Honey and Mumford.

Also reintroduce Fleming - Visual/Auditory/Kineaesthetic

Reflect – how do you learn?

Reflect – where do you notice God most powerfully? How does this relate to your learning preferences?

Why might it be important to use a range of media?

Theological rationale about engaging with these tools

Romans 12 The Message (MSG)

12 1-2 So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.

This passage has often been used to critique the use of media tools, viewing media as something dangerous and sinful.

As a child, I was not allowed to watch ITV! There is a famous Billy Graham quote about the horror movie 'The Exorcist' where Graham says that 'the devil is in the very celluloid that the film is made on.'

By using the paraphrase from the Message, however, perhaps we are able to see Paul's language a little bit differently to that, and to be more open to where God is at work in our streets and cultural lives.

Barbara Brown Taylor puts this embodiment of our following of Jesus, more poetically:

To make bread, or love, to dig in the earth, to feed an animal or cook for a stranger – these activities require no extensive commentary, no lucid theology. All they require is someone willing to bend, reach, chop, stir. Most of these tasks are so full of pleasure that there is no need to complicate things by calling them holy. And yet these are the same activities that change lives, sometimes at once and sometimes more slowly, the way dripping water changes stone. In a world where faith is often construed as a way of thinking, bodily practices remind the willing that faith is a way of God.

When I read the gospels, I do see Jesus withdrawing alone to pray. I see him climb mountains, take a boat trip, and pray in a garden...but in these examples, I see Jesus engaging with the world around him.

Mountains are where God speaks.

Boats allow Jesus to calm the storm and to walk on water.

A garden becomes the stage for the final act of Jesus' earthly life – Eden, Gethsemane, Revelation. Gardens matter.

When I read the gospels, I see Jesus tell stories. I see Jesus heal people (and kill plants). I see Jesus write in the sand, spit into mud, and sheave corn. I see Jesus at a party. And I see Jesus argue with his parents and on one occasion, a foreign stranger.

In the last century, as media technologies have developed and become our entertainment and educational processes, there has been a move to having a fourfold theological framework.

4 ways to look at if and how we use our contemporary culture.

The central question is – is God in a multimedia culture, and if so, where?

- **ACCEPTANCE** – Complete assimilation and adoption of culture. Jesus healed people on the Sabbath (eg Mk 3:1-6), hung out with all the wrong people (Lk 19:1-10, Jn 12:1-8), and cared for a family wedding (Jn 2:1-12) and a sick mother in law (Mt 8: 14-18).
- **REJECTION** – Complete resistance to the use and engagement of contemporary resources. Jesus turned over the tables in the temple (Mt 21: 12-13). Paul tells us to be free from any immorality and sinfulness (Col 3:5-10)
- **BOUNDARIED** – Creates something of a paradox – that culture is both something to be engaged with, but also creatively subverted. Jesus tells a popular fable story, but twists the ending in the Good Samaritan (it should have been the Good Jew) (Luke 10: 25-37). Jesus argues with the Syro-Phoenician woman (Mt 15:21-28)
- **RECONSTRUCTION** – a wholesale redemption of culture, imbibing culture with new meaning and transforming culture into something more meaningful, grace-filled and holy. Jesus broke bread and shared a Passover cup (Mt 26:17-30).

(based on Neibuhr's 'Christ and Culture' with the Jesus references and parallels to Heidi Campbell's work later being added by Joanne Cox-Darling)

REFLECT

Which are you most sympathetic with?

What about your congregation? How might this affect your approach to this session, to using multimedia in worship, and the response of the congregation?

The reality is that, just as in the educational framework, all of these can be true and important to us at any one time. It also helps us to engage with the responses from our congregations, some of whom will be schooled in one or other of these perspectives.

It opens up for us the key question of WHY we are using media, rather than WHAT we are using.

By approaching our planning from the WHY perspective, enables us to explain what we are doing to our congregations, and help them to see its relevance and impact.

How are you engaging with the culture(s) around us, in your day to day life?

What was the last TV programme you watched?

What was the last book you read?

Which movie did you last go and see?

Which movie has recently been nominated for the most Oscars ever?

Who is number 1 in the singles chart?

Which newspaper has the widest circulation in the UK?

If we only ever listen to Premier radio and watch GodTV, we are not going to be encountering places where the Spirit of God may be brooding her way. Our challenge is to find ways of expanding our comfort zones in order to be surprised at some of the opportunity that we might stumble upon.

My personal assumption and working place begins with the Spirit being at work in the world, and Jesus being an incarnate human being who literally got his feet dirty, at let abused women wash them with expensive perfume. This is not to say that everything is good, right and holy – and that everything could be used in worship.

But it is about being willing to be transformed by the renewing of our minds by the power of Spirit, not by distancing ourselves from the world, but by being alert to the grace of God in everything that is around.

Paying attention.

Being present and attentive.

"In the hurried and technological society in which we live, we may have to be intentional about practices that help us to recognise the goodness of God revealed in creation. Many of us live our lives and work in contexts that are divorced from the rhythms of the natural world. We have lost our connection to the soil. Our food sources, and the skills of making things with our hands, We rarely notice the rising or the setting of the sun. We gulp our food without tasting. We rarely pause to look at the flowers or into the eyes of a child. Our pace of life affects our capacity to appreciate the goodness of God. We may simply be too busy or distracted to notice and receive the beauty that surrounds us. The demands of a hurried life and the dominance of technology cloud our awareness. Slowing down and learning to pay attention to the moment may be a path to affirming God's essential goodness and presence."

Mark Scandrette, 'Soul Graffiti: Making a Life in the way of Jesus'

CHALLENGE – next time you are in a bookstore or music store (on or offline), find something that you would never normally choose. You might hate it, but that's ok – it's about being open to what might be around.

DISCUSSION in tables about content thus far.

Session 2 – Examples and good practice

Quickfire introduction activity –

WHAT multimedia tools are available to us? (include poetry, paintings, music, movies, adverts etc.)

WHY might we want to use multimedia tools (multimedia here in it's widest sense)

Depending on the timing of the session, you may want to add short illustrations for these points

- Because it looks pretty
- Illustration
- Provocation
- Challenge
- Because it's different
- Because it makes links to what is happening in the world
- To prove my point
- To fill the time
- To shock
- To give me a break from speaking
- To galvanise people for action

Examples of using visual content:

- Christian content Piano Guys The Mission/ How Great Thou Art as a way to lead into a service during Lent <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CHV6BjuQOZQ>
- An advert Pepsi ping pong video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v7YQT6BCuAE> - used in a sermon on the chaotic movement of the spirit, priming us for action
German coastguard <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gmOTpIVxji8> – use to discuss Pentecost, listening to God, or cultural intelligence
- A book – BFG atlas - <http://holdthisspace.org.au/the-atlas/> - The book of Acts as this first 'living off the map' spirituality, encouraging us to also live off the known map and to notice the spirit of God at work
- Testimony – Frontline Friday blog post and accompanied video <https://vimeo.com/194527159> and accompanying blog reflection and questions <http://www.london.anglican.org/articles/glimpses-of-god-at-work-in-canary-wharf/>
- Clips and fillers (countdowns, backgrounds to Powerpoints etc.) www.sermonspice.com
- Secular music – Linkin Park 'What I've Done' as prayers of intercession [story of Exeter] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8sgycukafqQ>
- Physical space
Stations of Kings Cross - <http://www.stationsofthekingscross.com/>
Jesus on the Tube - <http://www.antoniarolls.co.uk/collection/jesusonhetube>
Labyrinth project - Mark Wallinger - <https://art.tfl.gov.uk/labyrinth/>
- Photography
Stations of the Cross - HFASS Haiti <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/nadiabolzweber/2012/03/stations-of-the-cross-2010-made-entirely-from-news-photos-from-haiti-earthquake/>

STATIONS OF THE CROSS ACTIVITY

Good Practice:

- Work to your own abilities (if you aren't sure, don't use it, or ask a young person!)
- Creativity and engaging with mixed learning styles don't always mean a video clip
- If you are using a video clip always have a plan B (EG ping pong balls video as narration)
- Stream live if you can. Always carry a backup file.
- If you are using pictures or images, make sure that you provide the references
- Make sure you know who has the rights to the images you are using (you don't want to be sued)
- Let the images do the hard work for you. Don't always go for the easy option
- Trust your congregation to be able to respond emotionally and intellectually to imagery
- It's not always about the sermon
- If the lyrics are important, print them out
- Expect criticism. Have a personal test: 'why am I using this...' Are our motives holy?
- A picture can paint a thousand words – so sometimes, just shut up!
- Copyright

Further resources

The President and Vice President this year are focussing on **Holiness and Justice**. There will be a range of resources available during their presidency in order to help congregations and local community groups to engage with these themes. Check out 'Theology Everywhere' blog <https://theologyeverywhere.org/> and the artwork commissioned for the year by Revd. Ric Stott.

Damaris Trust - <http://damarismedia.com/> - film study guides

Picture book theology - <http://www.picturebooktheology.com/> - how to use children's picture books for theological reflection and education. Not an easy site to navigate, but once you've got the principle of the piece, it's more intuitive and might provide an interesting resource for the now ubiquitous 'children's address'

Scripture union CONNECT bible studies (Chocolat being their best seller) - <http://www.scriptureunion.org.uk/Shop/Musicandvideo/ConnectBibleStudies/10037.id> - a range of downloadable resources for small groups using contemporary media.

Jonny Baker worship tricks - http://jonnybaker.blogs.com/jonnybaker/worship_tricks/wtindex.html - a whole encyclopedia of ideas which have been used in reflective and contemporary worship. It takes some sifting, but there is plenty of inspiration in two online volumes.

Cartoon parables - https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCxjFrYB_P7QZBVK2UZ2kY3A - RodtheNey YouTube channel has a number of videos, including a powerful Parable of the Sower. The advantage of some of these videos is that there are no words.

Godly Play method of story telling, wondering and response <http://www.godlyplay.uk/> - an excellent resource, but requires training to use it properly (the training is excellent)

Session 3 – Life online

ACTIVITY: During break – handout of social media logos <http://www.kensquiz.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/SMLOGQ.pdf> – how many can you name, and how many people have these accounts?

Introduction

Spent the morning in the world of multimedia – now going to spend some time this afternoon thinking about the resources and tools of social media.

This session will:

- Exploration of the world of social media and a theological framework
- Examples and good practice

Exploration of social media world and theological framework

VIDEO of social media stats 2011 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3SuNx0UrnEo>

REFLECT – how do you feel/what do you notice about your own emotions having read these statistics

Social Media is a complicated media form – it is not as simple as facebook and twitter!

<https://conversationprism.com/>

POINT – this is a huge topic and has broad categories. Social media is not just about Facebook and Twitter. This session is only slightly touching the surface of all the issues and all the possible examples

- You need to be clear what you want to achieve out of your use of social media, and use the right tool for the job
- You do not need to be involved in all of these, but you might want to consider some dedicated communications training so that you can develop a coherent communications strategy
- Need to remember that you are the centre of social media, and that complex algorithms exist to filter what you receive, but also who you broadcast to – Fake news, echochamber
- The software is often inexpensive, the hardware can be more expensive
- Missiologically, people around the world are engaging in social media. How are we being Christlike in our engagement?

Missiologically, this is where many people around the world spend their time

Jesus told us to go to Judea, Samaria and the whole world

What if that meant to go to Worship, Wandsworth, and the world wide web?

In the earlier session we looked at a 4-fold model for engagement. The same framework can be applied here (and indeed Heidi Campbell has done just that. There is a copy of the last few pages of her book in your packs)

ACCEPTANCE - new media are used and adopted, seen as neutral tools to enhance the life of the community

REJECTION - any new media is approached with caution due to problematic features or results it generates

RECONSTRUCTION - the technology is reshaped or redeemed in some way in order to make it more palatable or more usable to the organisation. E.G. 'I am Second' or GodTube

BOUNDARIED – centrally determined guidelines or rules of engagement are provided in order to both protect the individual, and to protect the wider image of the organisation. This is about the values of the group as well as the safety of the individual. E.G. Methodist Church social media policy

REFLECT – which are your more sympathetic to? Is it the same or different to your response earlier? If different, why do you think that is?

The same theological framework exists, and again may not be mutually exclusive.

The pastor and theologian Shane Hipps, in his formative book 'Flickering Pixels' reflects:

'Christianity is fundamentally a communication event. The religion is predicated on God revealing Godself to humanity. God has a habit of letting God's people know something about God's thoughts, feelings, and intentions. God wants to communicate with us, and God's media are many: angels, burning bushes, stone tablets, scroll, donkeys, prophets, mighty voices, still whispers, and shapes traced in the dirt. Any serious study of God is a serious study in communication, and any effort to understand God is shaped by our understanding – or misunderstanding – of the media and technology we use to communicate.'

If we take Hipps seriously here – our use of communication is also about how we are able to notice something about the nature of God.

Social media is a particular form of complicated media, and we can use it for many purposes (NB handout of 'the social web' <http://www.yolevski.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/thesocialweb1.jpg> and the handout on social media typologies <http://justadandak.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Different-Types-Of-Social-Media-Users-2.jpg>).

- We need to be aware that communication is a two-way piece. It requires a broadcaster and a receiver.
- What makes social media attractive is that in many cases, we are the broadcaster, and we control (intentionally or through algorithms) what we receive.

Activity – in tables of 3 or 4 people: SWOT analysis of social media
Feedback from the exercise

Session 4 – Examples and good practice

Examples

Twitter remembrance – in 2011 and 2012, the Methodist Church were inspired by a small group of young people to provide a Twitter based remembrance service for those who were unable to attend an act of worship on Remembrance Day and Remembrance Sunday. It received over 30,000 followers in 10 days, with an international footprint

Tell Show Be – www.tellshowbe.com – An award winning example of how to use technology well in order to gain momentum, conversation and resource the church. Designed as an evangelism campaign the videos are in 6 languages and are a free download. There was also an interactive part to the site which never really worked. It cost nearly £8000 for the whole project, as each video is a separate piece of design, plus interpretation and web coding.

Beloved Life – <http://www.belovedlife.org/> a site for spiritual reflection. It includes facebook posts and twitter feed of visual encouragement throughout the liturgical year, based on Ian Adam's work on rhythms of life. A good example of the use of photography and spirituality

CEA – www.christianity.org.uk – “the easiest form of evangelism you will ever do.” – Archbishop John Sentamu. Where could you put this URL? It provides a safe place for people to go, in their own time, with their questions. The website has a range of questions, but people also have the opportunity to enter into an email dialogue with a trained Church Army evangelist. The Methodist church is a funder of this site, and thus it is a trusted place for early evangelism.

How can you use this URL on your notice sheets and orders of service?

NB NEXT EG IS 15MINUTES LONG

I Am Second – <http://www.iamsecond.com/> a USA based concept, collating the testimonies of celebrities with the aim of enabling people to share powerful personal stories. (Show Jim Munroe video in an Evangelical setting <http://www.iamsecond.com/seconds/jim-munroe/>). Challenge – what would your circuit/district version of this look like? Methodists know the power of testimony...why not do something similar?

Good practice – social media policy

One from the Methodist Church policy

http://www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/conf_social_media_guidelines_part2_0710.pdf

For youth and children's workers:

<http://www.methodist.org.uk/media/1465950/Social-Media-Guidelines-for-workers.pdf>

For parents:

<http://www.methodist.org.uk/media/1465944/Social-Media-Guidelines-for-parents.pdf>

One from a Benedictine Nun who blogs under '@ibenedictine' <http://www.ibenedictines.org/2011/10/16/10-rules-for-online-engagement/>

Good Practice

1. Check for your privacy settings
2. Be authentic. It is too easy to be seduced by too many smiling people doing pleasant smiling things

Pope Francis has said:

"Our technological society has succeeded in multiplying occasions of pleasure, yet has found it very difficult to engender joy."

3. Be available. Social media can be great at helping maintain long distance relationships and communications. But it can also eat into our time when we need to be physically present with people
4. Use the right tool for the right task. Make sure you know what you are trying to achieve. What's App is great for short messages and factual details (be at the store for 8pm). Facebook is good for sharing news. Twitter is good for engaging in debates of the day.
5. It's only words. Be aware of how your words are interpreted
6. Maintain your credibility. What you say online, stays online
7. Start a conversation not an argument
8. Join a conversation not an argument. Try not to join in with the noise. Don't be reactionary or incendiary
9. Develop your character not your caricature – how can you be a blessing in any given situation?
10. Share your story, not someone else's (unless it's an article or meme, in which case share away!)
11. Keep your reading broad – be intentional about hearing other people's perspectives
12. Keep it fresh. Post new content regularly and encourage others to engage with it to raise the profile