

Weekly Newsletter: 6th February 2024

Reflection: Five Lessons on Becoming a Missional Church

By Joe Barnard

I want to take you back two and a half years. Our Mission Team organised a day conference to help us think about what it means to be a missional church. In one session, Jon Gemmell described the multistage process that typically must be undergone for a stranger to become a contact, an acquaintance, and (God willing) a convert. He also gave examples of out of the box thinking which can result in church events that are not humdrum and boring. Jason Nelson of 20 Schemes also gave a talk. In his message, he described in concrete detail what a community church looks like. Such a church is not just open for services and prayer meetings; it's a revolving door that sees people in and out of the building all through the week. Finally, Andy Chittick gave a message about how to avoid discouragement. His main point was that, if God closes one door, try another. Eventually, one of them is going to crack open and, when it does, that is the one to keep pushing on.

Let's now fast forward to the present month and review what just happened during Community Week. First, praise God for a full week of remarkably attractive events. From Pickleball to Cream Tea, International Food Night to a Scottish ceilidh, each event had a strong appeal to a particular group in the community. Second, this jam-packed week accelerated our presence in the area. Although we're limited right now in what we can offer day-by-day, at least for one week we were able to turn on the lights as brightly as possible as if to say, "Here we are, ready to serve you!" Finally, Community Week was not a haphazard enterprise. The week was carefully designed to apply further pressure on the doors that God had already unlocked for us.

Just pause for a moment and give thanks for all that God has done among us since our mission conference two years ago. Yet, also look forward. The journey is not complete. Who knows where God might lead us if we continue to step out in the space of trust and obedience!

Now, one thing I've been doing since the end of Community Week is collecting some lessons that are worth pondering. Here are six things that have been on my mind as I reflect on how to carry the momentum of January forward.

1 – It's Easy to Invite a Friend to a Great Event

Personally, I found it easy to talk to people about Community Week. For example, as I told people about a shared meal in the building that would be catered to by local restaurants, I watched as peoples' eyes lit up. Some even said, "What a great idea!". A few actually attended.

We need to learn from this. No one wants to attend a boring event. Equally, no one wants to invite a friend to a boring event. If we want people to show up at our events, and if we want our members to invite friends to our events, we need to make sure they pass a simple test of being appealing.

2 – Evangelism Happens When Salty Christians Sit Next to Non-Christians

Multiple times through the week I looked out and saw members of HEC seated among people in the community. Later I heard stories. Some were of people sharing their testimonies; others of people engaged in honest conversations about spiritual topics; others of people listening attentively to stories of pain and suffering.

Now, we often think of evangelism in terms of a formal sermon or intentional conversation, but this is not the only way that the gospel is communicated. A lot of us who lack gifting as preachers and apologists are very skilled in listening and conversing. Given the right setting, we are able to point people to Christ in ways that are gracious and self-effacing.

The lesson to take away from this is the evangelistic power of finding ways to scatter non-believers among believers. Here food is an invaluable asset. People who eat together speak together.

3 – Extravagant Generosity Is an Appetizer of Grace

I'll never forget a moment that happened last Thursday night. It occurred toward the end of the meal as trays of delicious and beautiful desserts were being passed around tables. There was a look on the faces of people all around the room. It said this: "Who would do this!" People were astounded by the generosity of the evening. It surpassed what was expected – perhaps what even seemed reasonable.

Such astonishment is a foretaste of grace. Is this not the response of anyone who has encountered the sacrifice of Christ, "Who would do this!" Let's continue to find ways of being extravagant in our gifts of love.

4 – People Volunteer If a Project Is Worth the Effort

How do we get more volunteers? One method is badgering. This is rarely effective. Another method is casting a vision for a project that fulfills the longings of God's people. Christians want to see the hungry fed, the lonely visited, and prodigal sons returning home. Let's continue to cast a vision for missional projects that capture and direct the goodwill of God's people.

5 – Effective Publicity Takes Money and Effort

I'm confident of one thing: people around Easter Road knew that Community Week was happening. This itself was a significant "win". Often poor publicity is a basket hiding the lamp of the church. A great event is planned, but very few people make a choice to attend or not because very few people know about it.

If we are going to make a difference in the Meadowbank area, we need to continue to be strategic – not just in planning events – but in publicising them. Let's budget accordingly.

Prayer Meeting

Our prayer meeting this Wednesday (7th February) will be in person at 7pm. Tea, coffee and home baking will be served from 6.45pm so come early!

Christmas Appeal Thank You - Scripture Union

Dear Joe, I just wanted to write to say a massive thank you to the whole fellowship at Holyrood Evangelical Church for your incredibly generous donation towards the work of Scripture Union Scotland. We are so grateful to everyone who donated and want to thank you for partnering with us in our vision to see every child and young person in Scotland exploring the Bible and responding to the significance of Jesus. In Christ, Elaine Kinloch, Scripture Union Scotland.

No Baby and Toddler Group

It is the school half term next week and there will be no Baby and Toddler Group on Monday. Warm Space will be on as usual from 12 noon.

Women's Discipleship

It is a joy to get together as women in the church family to study God's word, pray and share fellowship. There are two events coming up, please save the dates and come along if you can-

- **Bible studies (on Zoom) on Tuesday evenings** starting on 13 February from 7-8pm. We'll be looking at the next section in Navigating Gospel Truth by Rebecca McLaughlin. There's no prereading or homework to do, just come along with your Bible. We'll run for six weeks until 19 March. Contact Liz@holyroodevangelical.org if you would like to receive the Zoom codes and don't already.
- Our next **Ladies Breakfast** will be on Saturday 2 March at 9.30am. Our speaker will be Amy Wicks from St Silas Church in Glasgow. More details will be sent out nearer the time.

Solas Events - Duncan Street Baptist Church



Duncan Street Baptist are having a mission with Steve Osmond from Solas Scotland this week. There are three evening talks being given on the following topics. Everyone is welcome to attend and hear Steve address these big questions. Bring along your friends!

- **Can Happiness Last?- Thursday 8th February at 7:30pm**
- **Can God and Science Co-exist? – Friday 9th February at 7:30pm**
- **Why Jesus? – Saturday 10th February at 7:30pm**

Events in HEC

There are a couple of events to highlight that we are hosting at HEC. It would be great to support them-

- **CARE's Protect Life Tour: Thursday, 7th March at 7.30pm.** The new assisted suicide legislation will soon be debated at Holyrood. At this event we will consider a theological and medical response and provide tips on political engagement. Everyone is warmly invited to attend.

- **Biblical Fatherhood: Saturday, 23rd March** from 9.30am to 3.30pm. A day to be equipped, challenged and encouraged in the God given calling of fatherhood. Joe is speaking at this event along with Andy Murray, Kevin Wong and Adri Van Den Broek. For tickets and more information go [here](#).

Save the Date: Children and Youth Discipleship Workshop at HEC

We all long to see our children and young people grow in their faith. What does it look like for us as a church family to disciple and evangelise our children and youth well? What are the spiritual needs of children and youth? These are questions that we need to keep asking as parents, Sunday Club leaders, and church members.

On **Saturday 16th March** David Kunzi, the UK Director of the International ministry *Word of Life*, is going to do a workshop at HEC. There will be two sessions with a coffee break and Q&A after. This event will help us refine our vision for youth discipleship both as individual families and as a congregation. Whether you are a parent, grandparent, volunteer with children's ministry, or just a member of the church family, please feel welcome to attend. If childcare is an issue for the morning, please let Liz know.

- Date: Saturday, 16th March
- Time: 9:30am-12pm.

Church Calendar

- Tuesday: Pickleball and Table Tennis at 7pm in the church
- Wednesday: Prayer meeting at 7pm in person
- Sunday:
 - Worship Service at 10.30am (and live streamed). Joe Barnard preaching.
 - Hope Explored at 6pm in the church and Home Groups meeting. Please contact Liz@holy-roodevangelical.org if you're not in a Home Group and would like to be.
- Monday:
 - No Baby and Toddler Group
 - Warm Space from 12noon - 3pm



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