

Intercultural Leadership

Session 1, Part 1 — “Our Changing Context — Blessing the Nations”



Watch this episode: 



THINK

Considering the rise of visible minorities, what are some of your own personal challenges and opportunities in embracing people who are distinctly different from you?

Take a few minutes to reflect on your changing ministry context. What implications can you draw upon for your own context(s)?

How might this lens of Vision, Context, Strategy, and structure better inform your approach to ministry in our changing context.



REFLECT

How do the Apostle Paul’s words help us understand our changing demographic context?

“From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. ²⁷ God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us” Acts 17:26-27

Robert and Tim start their talk on changing context by calling for adaptive strategies. Read “A Ministry Model” (page 2) and take a few minutes to compare the adapted strategies of Saint Paul in bringing the gospel to Antioch (Acts 13), Lystra (Acts 14) and Athens (Acts 17).



DISCUSS

In what ways is your local context changing because of immigration patterns?

What are some of the challenges and opportunities you and your church face in this changing multicultural ministry context?



ACT

How might you adapt your ministry approach, considering your changing context?

How might the Samaria principle challenge the way you engage in ministry in your local context?

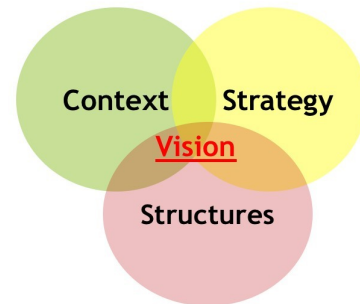


A Ministry Model for Adapting to our Changing Ministry Context

Throughout this course we will be referring to this model to assist us in reflecting on our personal and ministry context.

Vision: God Desires to bless the Nations

Every ministry needs a clear and compelling vision. It is important that our vision aligns with God's vision. Old Testament scholar Chris Wright suggests, "A missional hermeneutic proceeds from the assumption that the whole Bible renders to us the story of God's mission through God's people in their engagement with God's world for the sake of the whole of God's Creation." We as God's peoples are called to join in His mission of blessing the nations.



Context: Constantly Changes

Although a biblical vision should not change, the context into which it is communicated is constantly changing. This course will focus on understanding this changing context in which we live and how we can be more effective in living out and communicating the gospel in our everchanging context. Just as we exegete scripture so too we must exegete our ministry context.

Strategy: Adaptable yet focused on implementing the Vision.

Strategy is the process whereby we see our vision become a reality. The apostle Paul was a master at strategizing how to adapt the gospel to different cultural contexts. In Antioch (Acts 13) In Lystra (Acts 14) and In Athens (Acts 17) Paul adapted his ministry strategy considering the changing context. We too must adapt our mission strategies to our changing context to see God's vision become a reality.

Structures: Need to be Flexible not Fossilized.

Too often we see our ministry structures as somehow sacred. Often, we are unwilling to adapt our structures to the realities of our ministry context. Structures must be flexible reflecting the principle that, "**Form must always follow Function.**" New wine cannot be put into old wine skins (Matt 9:17) and structure, like old wine skins, must be adapted so that the vision and strategy can bridge into our everchanging ministry context.

Application: Take a few minutes and reflect on your changing ministry context. How might this lens of Vision, Context, Strategy, and structure better inform your approach to ministry in our changing context?

Session 1, Part 2 — “The Missional Church — Blessing the Nations”



Watch this episode:



THINK

How does the following challenge our traditional understanding of mission?

“A proper understanding of missional begins with recovering a missionary understanding of God. By His very nature God is a “sent one” who takes the initiative to redeem His creation. This doctrine, known as *missio Dei*—the sending of God—is causing many to redefine their understanding of the church. Although we frequently say, “the church has a mission,”... a more correct statement would be “the mission has a church”.



REFLECT

Reflect on the following concepts of “Missional” vs “Attractional”:

“The **Attractional model**... seeks to reach out to the culture and draw people into the church—what I call outreach and in-grab. But this model only works where no significant cultural shift is required when moving from outside to inside the church. [In] post-Christian [societies], the attractional model has lost its effectiveness.”

“**A missional theology** is not content with mission being a church-based work. Rather, it applies to the whole life of every believer. Every disciple is to be an agent of the kingdom of God, and every disciple is to

carry the mission of God into every sphere of life. We are all missionaries sent into a non-Christian culture.”

- In what ways does a missional church differ from an attractional church?
- How would you describe your church? Missional or Attractional. What are some indicators that would support your choice?



DISCUSS

What is the relationship of being missional and being intentionally intercultural?

“Our commitment to intercultural life is rooted here: God (Father Son and Holy spirit) embodies, and initiates love that embraces differences and crosses boundaries and calls us to a gospel of reconciliation and love” (Branson Pg.51)



ACT

The missional nature of the church requires being willing to cross cultural boundaries.

- Describe some ways you and your church could cross cultural boundaries in your ministry context?
- How might this course help you to cross cultural boundaries to share God’s love in word and deed?



Session 1, Part 3 — “Celebrating Diversity — Blessing the Nations”



Watch this episode:



THINK

Please give a personal example of experiencing difference that made you uncomfortable?

What are some practical ways that have helped you to move from tolerating to celebrating diversity?



REFLECT

Reflect on the following ways diversity is part of the DNA of God and His Creation. How should this motivate Christians to embrace and celebrate diversity?

- God’s very own being is diverse.

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. How does this influence our view of diversity being good or bad?

- In Genesis chapters 1-2 we read that God created a world full of different plants, animals. We are told he looked at His creation and said _____ Gen 1:13

- When God created Adam, he was not “complete” until he created Eve. God looked at this diversity in human beings and said it was good? No, he said it was _____ Gen 1:31.

- God blessed Abraham in order that he might be a _____ to the nations.

What does this tell you about God's heart for diversity and the nations?



DISCUSS

Robert and Tim contrast the church in Jerusalem and Antioch as it relates to their missional engagement in seeking to cross cultural boundaries to share the gospel.

- Why did the church in Antioch become an intercultural church? (Acts 11:20-21) What is the lesson here for the church and followers of Christ living in our multicultural cities in Canada?



ACT

Miroslav Volf suggests:

“At the very core of Christian identity lies an all-encompassing change of loyalty, from a given culture with its gods to the God of all cultures.”

- In what ways might God ask for a change of loyalty from your culture to celebrate and embrace all cultures?
- How might you and your church cross cultural boundaries in your ministry context?
- How might this course help you to cross cultural boundaries to share God’s love in word and deed?

