

What Everyone Ought To Know About Reaching New Neighbors

Facilitator: John Elias

We all want to reach our new neighbors, but it can be a challenge. A starting point is adapting your church's outreach strategy in order to open new relationships. We'll explore how to adapt outreach to meet new opportunities.

How does a ministry adjust to address this new opportunity?

Head and Heart and You

Head

 Who are the new neighbors?

 Survey and research - Often we are unaware story

Internet- *group* markets, our website has a Muslim search engine for finding everything from Mosques to markets

 Where are they in relation to the church?

Think about the people, not the building

Plot out where your members live;

Identify schools

 FOQUS

 ▶ F - ocusing on the community and/or people group

▶ O - bserving the people group intentionally

▶ Q - uestioning people with user-friendly approach

▶ U - nderstanding the barriers and writing them to clarify/organize

▶ S - trategizing from facts gathered to make ministry decisions.

 Some sample questions

▶ What's a typical day like for your family?

▶ What is worship in a mosque like?

▶ I'm wondering what it is like to come to 'our city' from your country.
Tell me about that.

▶ What are the important holidays for your community?

- ▶ Your family has been through some major changes. How does your family make those decisions?
- ▶ What do people in your community do when they have free time?
- ▶ What are some of the challenges facing this community?

 The goal is to understand your people group by:

- ▶ knowing all you can about them so that you know how to pray for them, love them, live with them, communicate truth, & work with them;
- ▶ making the gospel the only barrier to people coming to Christ.

 What will be the congregation's main problems about accepting them?

-  **Prejudice** used to be a black white issue, but now there are so many areas with which we can look down on others. Race , Economic status, Citizenship
-  **Political** – Refugees and Immigrants
-  **Fear** – recently a Muslim friend told me he had visited a number of churches looking for one that would help him understand English and Christianity. One took all his details and then reported him to the FBI
-  **Complacency/Comfortable** – worked with a church, very verbal wanting outreach and growth. Finally told them ‘You talk a good story but if they aren’t a white 2 parent family, stay at home Mother, Father makes 70000+, and they have 2 ½ well behaved children you don’t want any part of them
-  **Busy-ness** – already doing a lot, don’t want to burn out our people,

 What problems might the neighbors have about being accepted by you?

-  **Language**
-  **Fear** – very common feeling, **crossing street story**

● **Perception of Christians or of your type of congregation** – pastored a very white, middle upper class church, concerned we didn't have anybody from the lower class black or Hispanic communities near us. Finally a black, visiting speaker asked us why we thought that group would ever want to visit us, we worshipped differently, had different music, dressed differently, and even had different problems and concerns than them

● **Indoctrination to be wary of church contacts**

All they want to do is proselytize you or attack you

Idea – quarterly schedule a church luncheon where you invite a representative of an ethnic community to come and tell you about their culture, needs, fears, hopes, etc. Tell them they can invite their friends too. Safe contact for both groups; they will be pleasantly surprised and may have their prejudices challenged. Some may even attend church that day.

Story it may surprise you what can happen

● **Goal - To identify the BARRIERS and BRIDGES to the gospel according to their worldview**

● Transition to **Heart**

● **Diversity booklet**

● Assimilation or Integration – what is your agenda

● Page 10 Inventory – don't just take it yourself

Distribute to different groups - Ethnic background, ultra-rightwing conservatives, age groups

Maybe have a different Elder responsible for distribution among each subgroup; his name or code on inventory so you can see which subgroup responses came from

WHY – one group may rate high another poor because of their values, if you know where they are coming from you can see what they are trying to say,

Example question 11

Preparing the Saints

-  Eph 4:11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the Pastors and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

Looking around I can suppose that many of us began our ministry in circumstances where on Sunday we taught SS, led the service, preached the morning sermon, preached the evening sermon, collapsed on Monday and on Tuesday began to prepare for the Wednesday evening Bible Study and Prayer Meeting. Our free time was filled with visitation, hospital calls, picking hymns, and printing bulletins. We finally learned what this verse meant and began to let go, train, and delegate.

Willingness to let go

The balance between the perfection you imagine you accomplish and the less than perfect the learner does

Preparation of the Church

-  **Attitudes and Values challenged and brought into line-** I think this is an area where it is crucial that the Church is prepared, equipped, maturing, and embracing the opportunity. Remember the part about the congregation's problems about accepting new groups, Don't minimize the power of these issues.

we visited one church and were surprised in the welcome to hear the Pastor say 'If you are a visitor here, you are welcome. But, we want you to know that we believe that God has us here to make an impact on this local community by actively living for Christ as we are actively involved with the spiritual needs of this community. If this is what you are looking for in a church, we hope you stay and join us. If you are looking for a place to just

attend on Sundays and be comfortable, then please think about going somewhere else.’

 **Specific Training**

-  apologetics, culture, Islam
-  the Perspectives Course
-  bridges DVD from CP
-  the Bridges Option

Key is make it Practical – we do a 6-12 session training course on Islam and almost every week has a do something component – identify a Muslim, pray for a Muslim, patronize a Muslim owned business , step by step up to talk about Jesus.

What is an indication that we are starting to equip the saints, that they are starting to mature?

They will begin to see people as Individuals who just like them can be nice or nasty, but are all needy. See them not as an anonymous mass of scary strangers but lost and hurting individuals

They will willingly and creatively want to Be at places where they are
There will be an evidence of increased outward focused prayer.

A statement that really challenged me about prayer, I think by Blackaby, *We spend more time praying to keep sick Christians out of Heaven then we do to keep healthy sinners out of Hell*

 **You**

 Writing about his growing understanding of Eph 4:11-13, one Pastor observed ‘The only thing, then, that I had to do was focus on perfecting the saints. (Except, of course, for the fact that I was supposed to be one of the saints, so I was expected to do the same work of the ministry that they did.)

Commending Pastor who came to outreach on day off

● When does a Pastor punch out? Never, one aspect blends into another
My Muslim friend wants me to take him to a baseball game- during that time we will talk about spiritual things professional or personal?
But professional preparation does not and must not replace personal piety
Professional performance doesn't replace personal doing work of the ministry

● At churches I will often pose the meddlesome question 'When is the last time an unbeliever found out you were a Christian?' I would rephrase it a bit to ask you to think about 'When is the last time in a one to one conversation you talked about Jesus to an unbeliever?'
Piper's book '*Brothers we are not professionals*'
Lead and teach by example – take someone with you
Being with and observing
Participating in it like a real person

● **An important reality**
Our people perceive the value we place on an activity by the level of our commitment and involvement in it. This is especially when it is new, challenging, or frightening.

I worked in a church in an area with large and growing Muslim population; stagnant – kind of unwelcoming to outsiders, only baptisms were their own children; multicultural – but white English were fearful and resentful of the way their community was changing, Pakistani members were intimidated by and fearful of Muslims because of persecution in Pakistan and locally. In 2 years they were regularly having events with Muslim groups where upwards of 50 Muslims would come to hear the Gospel and 12 of the 25 women coming to the Moms and Tots weekly meeting were from outside the church. By the time 2 more years had passed, 10 Muslims had been baptized.

I Got an email from the pastor a little ago. He Said I showed up in a dream of his. We were out on the high street witnessing to people. Thought to myself that's not a bad way to be remembered.

The growth in the Mother/Tot group was easy. We put posters on the front of the building that had all the details in English but said everyone welcome in about 6 different languages that were found in the community. People knew from the sign that while the event was in English, those with other heart languages were welcome

We had a booth at a Pakistani/Indian festival giving out free water and providing a place to sit out of the sun. We went to Muslim events and made contacts. We had a Meeting for Better Understanding with a Muslim group. [MBU booklet](#). Pastor was host and moderator and I spoke. Some of the church attended others were in another section praying. As we had 2nd and 3rd meeting, more of church was there and more praying. I was approached by a group who asked if I would teach them to talk to Muslims the way that I could. They became bolder in meetings and in life. When I left the church a young Pakistani man volunteered to carry on the meetings if I would teach him how to organize them. 3 mtgs. I did/he watched; he did/I watched; he did/I was available for advice. A year later he called me and said mtgs have continued there and he would be willing to be a speaker for me if I had any mtgs in my area because he had trained another man to do the organizing and he was freed up.

This is why they were soon baptizing Muslims who had come to faith in Jesus.