

Series -

Date/s -

26 June 2016

Topic - Rethinking Church and Missions

Speaker/s -

Pastor John Koe

Welcome [15 min]

You may want to look up the following websites for *icebreakers* suitable for your cell.

www.thesource4ym.com/games/

www.christianitytoday.com/smallgroups/articles/icebreakersbeyond.html < go to LEAD, click on ICEBREAKERS >

Worship [15 min]

You may select worship songs such as "Spirit Touch Your Church", "More Of You Jesus" and "Cornerstone".

Spiritual Objectives

At the end of the cell discussion, cell members will:

1. Understand that the ministry of the saints can be replicated in the modern setting; and
2. Rethink how we do church and missions.

Word [45 min]

Ps John Koe shared that after a prolonged season of fasting and praying and drawing upon Acts 2:42-47, God gave him a picture of what our modern church will look like. He saw a vision of believers from different backgrounds, all praying and meeting everywhere, including their workplaces and homes. Basically, wherever they do life that is where they do church and have fellowship; and using a not-yet-invented software tool to connect with one another. He saw house gatherings packed with believers and their friends, colleagues and relatives, many of whom are non-Christians seeking to know God. Needs are powerfully met with praise, worship, thanksgivings and testimonies of our God's manifest presence and glory. The ministry of the saints is fully alive and functioning as it was in the early church described in the Book of Acts, albeit in the modern setting.

Ps John coined the term "Uber Church" to describe a church with no building but only people/saints. A cataclysmic change is coming in the way we 'do' church, just like how in the past, Ps John saw change coming to China in the early 2000s and steered the Chinese believers toward house churches. The way we commonly do church today started around AD 300s and is antiquated. We need to rethink the way we do church and do missions. The forces of world population explosion, huge exponential growth in technology and the increasing wealth/power gap are driving the church to have a 'reboot' in order to be effective in doing God's work.

What can we do? We need to embrace change! Credentials lose their relevance quickly and education must therefore be continuous. Expertise in most fields are quickly outmoded. Leaders are no longer a bridge from the present to the future. The best we can do is to bridge people to the present and even this is a challenge. Resources, not just money, cannot be banked-in, they must be spent while valuable. The younger you are, the more adept you are at being missional in this rapidly changing environment. We should therefore be empowering the next generation. Strategic planning must be replaced with strategic people. 5-10 year plans would no longer work and we must learn on the go! We must change the way we operate due to all the rapid changes. We must hear God and move by faith! For instance, Christian businessmen need to seek God, remembering that it is the Lord who gives the ability to produce wealth – see Deuteronomy 8:18. Embrace change as a constant but God is faithful to His people. God has wired into His people the ability to hold this

faith and face the challenges. God is our sufficiency!

Our mode of church was designed when the earth was far less populated than now. What is scary is not how fast we have come but how much faster we will go. Are we ready for God's return? Are we living true to His calling in our lives? Are we not near the end? Ps John shared from John 9:4 that we must accord urgency and priority to God's work for "Night is coming when no one can work." The fastest growing churches in China, India, Cambodia, etc are house churches. They have no physical buildings and whatever money they have are used to reach out. The main features of these house churches are that (a) they are self-replicating with no need for outside help, (b) use the five-fold ministries and (c) the prevalence of signs, wonders and miracles – just like the early church in the book of Acts. Ps John encouraged us to give focus on equipping the saints to do God's work and to mobilise our home properties to do church. Fathers can minister to their own families in the power of the Holy Spirit in their own homes – see Joshua 24:15. 1 Chronicles 12:31 speaks of "leaders who understood the times and knew what Israel should do." We are similarly challenged in this fast-changing times to be faithful in the stewardship of His resources and to do His work. We will need to face God and give an account of what we have done with what God has given us. Let us be found faithful!

Discussion Questions

1. **Ps John Koe shared on the challenges of population growth, accelerating technological changes and fundamental economic/societal shifts. Share briefly your thoughts on one of these major challenges.** [10 min]

Leader's Notes: *This is a recap and ice-breaker question. The main gist is to conclude that change is a constant in this modern era and that it is accelerating.*

2. **Read Acts 2:42-47. The ministry of the saints was alive and functioning in the early church. Share what this would look like when we replicate this in the modern setting.** [15 min]

Leader's Notes: *This is a relate & reflect question for members to share their views on how a modern-day church, especially with the use of modern technologies, can be just like the early church as described in the book of Acts. This will also encourage them to prayerfully consider to emulate the early church. Leaders can refer to some of the following examples. Leaders can also ask members to relate on how these can be applicable for their own Christian living.*

- a. *Devoted themselves to the apostle's teachings (v 42) – use of modern study tools and broadcast/communications media*
- b. *Devoted themselves to the fellowship (v 42) – use of modern communications means (e.g. chat-groups, skype, apps, etc)*
- c. *Devoted themselves to the prayers (v 42) – prayer chains through chat-groups, prayer groups in cyberspace, etc*
- d. *Many wonders and signs being performed (v 43) – as we pray, we can expect healings, miracles, signs and wonders*
- e. *Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together... from house to house (v 46) – meeting everywhere from public places to homes and offices. Basically, wherever we do life that is where they do church.*
- f. *Praising God (v 47) – everyone sharing enthusiastically via face-to-face gatherings and various communications platforms of the revelation we have received from the Lord and testifying of God's wondrous working in our lives.*

3. **Ps John Koe outlined the challenges of population growth, accelerating technological changes and fundamental economic/societal shifts. This is the environment that the church faces. Discuss how you, your cell group and/or the church can be more effective to do God's work.** [15 min]

Leader's Notes: *This is a response question. The ministry of the saints is God's work. At a personal level, we are called to minister to our families – see Joshua 24:15. 1 Chronicles 12:31 speaks of "leaders who understood the times and knew what Israel should do." We are similarly challenged in this fast-changing times to be faithful in the stewardship of His resources and to do His work. Ps John gave the following practical advice on how we should respond:*

- a. *We need to embrace change!*
- b. *As credentials lose their relevance rapidly, we need to learn continuously*
- c. *A leader is no longer a bridge to the future. The best that leaders can do now is to bridge our people to the present.*
- d. *Resources cannot be deposited, they must be spent for God's purposes while valuable.*
- e. *We should be empowering, equipping and helping the new generation to bring in the final harvest because the young are more adept at being missional in this environment*
- f. *Strategic planning must be replaced with strategic people*
- g. *We need to embrace change as a constant, though it is exhausting*
- h. *We need to rethink how we do church and mission.*

May we be found faithful, having stewarded every gift, every talent, every resource and every opportunity for God's glory and purpose.

Works [10 min]

Let's pray:

1. In view that our Lord Jesus is coming back again, let us seek God for His blueprint in how we do church and missions.

Announcements

1. **RTF Transformation Conference 2016**

Thurs - Sat, 14 – 16 Jul | 9am – 9.30pm (14 & 15 Jul), 9am – 1pm (16 Jul) | Worship Centre

Subsidised rate for RiverLifers: \$100 per pax (applicable for on-site registration at RiverLife Church Only)

Register with payment at the Information Counter by Sun, 3 Jul. For enquiries, please contact Anita Cheok at 65114138 or email her at anitacheok@riverlife.org.sg.

2. **Precept Bible Study Class**

Tues, 2 Aug – 20 Sep | 8 – 10pm

Registration starts this Sunday, 3 Jul.

Topic 3: Rising to the call of leadership (6 weeks, course fee: \$11)

Topic 4: The essentials of effective prayer (6 weeks, course fee: \$11)

For enquiries, please contact Karen Koh at 65114146 or email her at karenkoh@riverlife.org.sg.