

Jesus' Template for Urban Mission

Luke 10:1-20

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Introduction

The problem of missiology

Pragmatism v Principle: "Too busy to think what we're doing" or "Too clever by half"?

Tweaking the Bible's "wax nose" – selective and superficial use of Scripture to support our own activities and impulses.

The place of Jesus' Ministry in our missiology – can we ground mission in the Gospels as well as in the Acts? Can a pre-Pentecost ministry be equated with ours? Are Palestinian villages models for a modern metropolis?

The concept of a template

- flexible framework, not a rigid blueprint
- an accountability checklist

A Twelve-Point Template for a Jesus-shaped Urban Mission

1. The Geometry of Urban Mission (UM) (verse 1)
 - Sent out – invading the territory of unbelief. "Go!"
 - Sent ahead – the Christ who is here, and who is Lord of all.
 - The subtle allure of Mosaic geometry ("Come to our lovely church...")
2. The Setting of UM (v 1)
 - Jesus' community-engaging street ministry - the sample of his encounters (e.g. Lk 9:37-62)
 - "Streets with a roof"- replicating settings within an individualised and privacy-obsessed society
3. Vision and Confidence for UM (verse 2)
 - The intimidating city should not inhibit us – e.g. Acts 18:9; current fear of muslims
 - Harvest seasons – our whole era as harvest-time
 - God's control of times and seasons (Esther; Paul: Acts 17:26)
4. Prayer and Dependence (verse 2)
 - The person, not the programme
 - God's assistants – He is the active sender and our co-worker
5. Vulnerability and Faith (verse 3)
 - Are we hopelessly materialistic?
 - Is identification with our contacts part of our message?

6. Resources and funding (verse 4)
 - Can the church be too wealthy?
 - Is tent-making a rule or an exception?
7. Positive Engagement (verses 5f)
 - The motivation and patience of love
 - the danger of despising the people we serve: James, John, and Jonah?
8. Key Relationships (verse 7)
 - Discipling as we evangelise (see Lydia, Acts 16:15)
 - Potential leaders (Acts 18:3, 7)
9. Ministry in deed and word (v8,9)
 - Christ's own pattern (Matthew 4:23): wholeness, not tension
 - Deeds that authenticate our words
 - Deeds that embody our words
 - Deeds that attract to our words
 - The unstable balance of a simplistic society
10. Dealing with Rejection (verse 10-12)
 - The positive check of disbelief – are we more ready to affirm than to confront?
 - The positive use of rejection (see John's Gospel, eg ch 7:25; 12:37ff; 20:24ff)
11. The Perspective of Judgment (verses 13-16)
 - Despite a "Now" generation
 - The "already"/"not yet" of grace and judgment
12. The joys and perils of success (v17-20)
 - The all-compensating thrill of a God-owned ministry
 - The all-undermining peril of a God-ignoring pride

Comments and cautions:

1. These are not options. All twelve are essential. We need clothe each of them in meditations and questions that relate to our individual situations.
2. It is difficult to be wisely accountable to ourselves. A complex, subtle and demanding activity. It cannot be avoided, but it does need to be supplemented by the mutual challenge and counsel of a healthy fellowship.
3. We are all in Christ's school of mission, in which he teaches us through our indwelling sin and repentance, and through our sufferings, even more than through conferences and study.
4. Heaven is a city. We have every reason to harvest in hope.