Archdeaconry Study Day
Being Disciples
Learning in Today’s Church

‘Speak as you find and tell it like it is’
18 October 2003

Sam Cappleman
Agenda

• What
  – Education and learning are strongly linked to culture and environment

• So What
  – What might be the implications and insights be for the church and ourselves as we communicate, teach and learn

• What Now
  – Do we need to change and expand the way we communicate the gospel?
However…

• We live in an uncertain (pluriform) world and in an uncertain world people look for leadership and answers in many places. This drives a quest to find spirituality and the ultimate life force where answers are found in many places through both absolutes and mystery. Paradoxically knowledge of the bible is poor and declining.

• Communicating the Gospel is about us working in collaboration with the Holy Trinity, not (just) about smart techniques or new fangled methodologies mixed together with the existing practice

• We have a responsibility to those we lead to continue learning

• As communicators we need to decide whether we want to ‘prove we are right’ or get people thinking and awaken sleeping wisdom within those who would listen and help them along their spiritual journey
So just what is culture?

Culture is complex…

 Artefacts
Espoused
Basic Beliefs
Values

Supporting Structures e.g. churches
Our Denomination
Our Churchmanship *(sic)*
The core of our Christian Faith

…often with major disjoints across different generations
So just what is culture?

…and culture is pluriform and multifaceted

…and changing with ever increasing speed
Culture and Society

3 Discernable Traits

Self oriented and atomic, questions received wisdom and big stories
Migrates from truth to values
Values drama and experience over logic

Fosters individualism, pragmatism, pluralism, multiculturalism and consumerism in communities of time and space not geography
Merges humans and technology

Collapses hierarchies and boundaries of knowledge, taste and opinion in the interest of individual & local
Values image above word and logic
# Culture and Society

## 3 Discernable Traits

| Self oriented and atomic, questions received wisdom and big stories | Legalistic ‘my rights’ culture |
| Migrates from truth to values | Disbelief in the ‘big story’ of the Bible |
| Values drama and experience over logic | Euthanasia, abortion, homosexuality… |
| No right and wrong, superficial and sensual | No right and wrong, superficial and sensual |

| Fosters individualism, pragmatism, pluralism, multiculturalism and consumerism in communities of time and space not geography | Short termism ‘the quick fix’ |
| Merges humans and technology | Fragmentation of institutions e.g. Church |
| | Eating habits, hypermarkets and e-trading |
| | Consume services/events not just goods |
| | The Matrix, call centres, ‘fly by wire’ |

| Collapses hierarchies and boundaries of knowledge, taste and opinion in the interest of individual & local values image above word and logic | Male/female, body/soul, God/human |
| | Time/space via internet e.g. chats & blogs |
| | Mass personalisation nor mass customisation |
| | Rap music, Twin Peaks, X-Files, The Simpsons |
# Culture and Society

## 3 Discernable Traits

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<th>Implications for learning</th>
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<td>Interactive, relevant, timely and accessible Culturally sensitive, non linear content Focused not generic content Blend of word and image</td>
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Learning is more than a course!
Social Philosophy would tell us…

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# Culture and Society

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<tr>
<th>Modern</th>
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<tr>
<td>The real is logical</td>
<td>Life is more than logic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unity</td>
<td>Multiplicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholes</td>
<td>Fragments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stability</td>
<td>Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patterns</td>
<td>Ruptures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power over</td>
<td>Power with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equality</td>
<td>Uniqueness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre</td>
<td>Margins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>Difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mind</td>
<td>Body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rational</td>
<td>Emotional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answers</td>
<td>Questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is seen</td>
<td>What is unseen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith is illogical</td>
<td>Faith goes beyond knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master Story</td>
<td>Stories</td>
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<td>Truth</td>
<td>Truths</td>
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<td>God the Father</td>
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**Culture and Society**

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**And its not all bad news…**

Our relationship with God incarnate through Jesus is a personal story beyond objective logic and knowledge alone, ‘we come to Christ as a child’

We are called to reflect Christ in whatever geographic, extended or virtual community we are a part of and where our actions speak louder than empty words

Our relationship with God incarnate through Jesus is a spiritual and personal relationship where we ‘work out our own salvation’
### Culture and Society

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Therefore accept Post-modern culture but don’t embrace it uncritically

See: Nomo Pomo – A Postmodern Rant

www.christianitytoday.com/leaders/newsletter/2003/cln30130.html
# Theological Interlude

What they might have thought…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theologian</th>
<th>Thought</th>
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Theological Interlude

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Pannenberg: Link theology to history to understand our relationship with God
Our range of communication...

3 Discernable Traits

Self oriented and atomic, questions received wisdom and big stories Migrates from truth to values Values drama and experience over logic

From stories to sound bites

Fosters individualism, pragmatism, pluralism, multiculturalism and consumerism in communities of time and space not geography Merges humans and technology

From tracts to technology

Collapses hierarchies and boundaries of knowledge, taste and opinion in the interest of individual & local Values image above word and logic

From verbs to visualisation
From Stories to Sound Bites

Why Stories?

Provide structure (curriculum path) to make sense of facts and help us learn
Provide a plot to link together context and content – Mind Mapping
Great at capturing and explaining paradox – Do you always tell the truth
Inherent power through personal experience and relationships
Often reflect our own reality and therefore ‘plausibility structures’
We often use stories but call them illustrations, Jesus called them parables
Why Stories?

Provide structure (curriculum path) to make sense of facts and help us learn
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**Good Stories (like good sermons) have…**

A beginning A captivating start
A middle The Central truth
An end The crucial close
**Why Stories?**

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**Good Stories (like good sermons) have…**

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**NOT…**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A beginning</th>
<th>A rambling start</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A muddle</td>
<td>Something unclear but supposed to link the beginning and the end</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And a tail off</td>
<td>‘…er, I think that’s all I planned to say…’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From Stories to Sound Bites

Tall stories tend not to work… …short ones do
6 Good stories to know

1. Who I am Stories – important when talking to new audience

2. Why I am here Stories – also important when talking to new audience

3. The Vision Story – how do we motivate people to change

4. Teaching Stories – e.g. parables, when did you last write a new one?

5. Value in action Stories – how do we engender and make real our values

6. I know what you are thinking Stories – useful if with sceptical audience

Good for communicating to those outside the church
# 7 High Value forms of Storytelling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Need a story that…</th>
<th>Story need to…</th>
<th>Actions required..</th>
<th>Use/inspire phrases like…</th>
<th>Result if successful…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communicate complex idea</td>
<td>Identifiable person, is true</td>
<td>Told in minimalist fashion</td>
<td>Frame story Give guide rails</td>
<td>Just think.. Imagine if…</td>
<td>Idea understood Action stimulated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get people working together</td>
<td>Is moving, has listeners stories</td>
<td>Told with the context (why)</td>
<td>Have open agenda and plan</td>
<td>That reminds me</td>
<td>Collaborative working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share info and knowledge</td>
<td>Include problem and solution</td>
<td>Reflect multiple perspectives</td>
<td>Check story is true</td>
<td>We’d better watch for that</td>
<td>Understand how and why</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tame the grapevine</td>
<td>Reveal humour or incongruity</td>
<td>Be amusing or satirical &amp; caring</td>
<td>Tell the truth Check gossip</td>
<td>I’d never thought of it like that</td>
<td>Gossip neutralised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate who you are</td>
<td>Reveals strength or vulnerability</td>
<td>Told in context</td>
<td>Ensure audience listens (has time)</td>
<td>How interesting I didn’t know that</td>
<td>Known as person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transmit values</td>
<td>Exemplifies relevant values</td>
<td>Consistent with actions</td>
<td>Context relevant</td>
<td>We should do that all the time</td>
<td>How and why things are done</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead people into the future</td>
<td>Clear, positive outcome of future</td>
<td>Evocative with little detail</td>
<td>Take account of past and present</td>
<td>When do we start Let’s do it</td>
<td>Know where we are heading</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Good for communicating to those inside the church**

© Steve Denning 2002
Stories can be very long or extremely short

The Saga versus The elevator pitch
From Stories to Sound Bites

Tell us a story (or parable)…

30 seconds to explain why the Christian faith should be important to a non believer
- can use story
- can use personal story
- or use facts / logic
- all should have
  - beginning
  - middle
  - end

The elevator pitch
From Stories to Sound Bites

Tell us a story (parable)…

OR

30 seconds to explain the story of what brought you here today (not transport!)
- it should have
  - beginning
  - middle
  - end

The elevator pitch
From Stories to Sound Bites

Notes, Humour, Laughter and the Golden Silence
From Stories to Sound Bites

Sound bites – the ultimate short story?

‘This is not a time for sound bites but I feel the hand of history on my shoulder…’

‘Come close to God and He will come close to you…’

‘While we were still sinners, Christ died for us…’

‘Fear is the dark room where the devil develops our negatives…’
From Stories to Sound Bites

Sound bites – have a nibble yourself…

‘God is…’

‘With Jesus…’

‘Without Jesus…’

‘The rich majesty and ritual of the church…’

‘The Bible…’
From Stories to Sound Bites

How we learn is more than mere words or smart verbal images…
From Tracts to Technology

There are many different learning styles which we need to reflect in our teaching and learning.
### From Tracts to Technology

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<th>Characteristic</th>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observer</td>
<td>Wants to think and reflect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pragmatist</td>
<td>Wants it to be applicable now</td>
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*Bernice McCarthy, David Kolb, Gordon Lawrence

AKA*  
Concrete perceiver  
Abstract perceiver  
Reflective processor  
Active processor

After Honey and Mumford
## From Tracts to Technology

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Our predominant learning style is probably our predominant teaching style.

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After Honey and Mumford

What’s your favourite gospel?
### Learning Style | Characteristic | Favourite Gospel
---|---|---
Activist | Likes to get engaged quickly | Mark
Theorist | Like to know how it fits | Matthew
Observer | Wants to think and reflect | John
Pragmatist | Wants it to be applicable *now* | Luke

After Honey and Mumford
From Tracts to Technology

Web sites
Chat Rooms
E-mails
Blogs and Wiki
Visualisation Technology (Powerpoint)
Radio, TV, Video, DVD

Technology can support our face to face communication never replace it completely
From Tracts to Technology

Web sites
www.thisischurch.com
www.sundayschoollessons.com
www.textweek.com
www.synodresourcecenter.org/wma/worship/worshiplinks2.html

Blogs and Wiki
www.martinrothonline.com
www.jesusjournal.com
www.blogs4god.com

www.theconnexion.net/cgi-bin/wiki.pl
An explosion of (more ‘visual’) learning theories…

- Instructivist
- Control theory
- Communities of Practice
- Social cognition
- Observational learning / social learning theory
- Constructivism
- Accelerated learning
- Piaget / cognitive maps development stages
- Behaviourism
- Brain-based learning
- Multiple Intelligences

Good web site: [www.funderstanding.com](http://www.funderstanding.com)
An explosion of (more ‘visual’) learning theories…

Instructivist

Focus on behavioural change as a result of a natural reflex or response to reinforced stimulus
Disregards activities of the mind

Constructivism

Construct own meaning and understanding by reflecting on experience and determining need
Need to understand whole not just parts

Good web site: www.funderstanding.com

Teacher and fact centric
Abstract perceiving and reflective processing centric
Instructional design focus

Communities of Practice

Learning a social phenomena
Knowledge integrated into the life of a community with shared values
Knowing by doing/practice

Behaviourism

Boom!!

Boom!!
From Verbs to Visualization

An explosion of (more ‘visual’) learning theories.

Instructivist
- Focus on behavioural change as a result of a natural reflex or response to reinforced stimulus
- Disregards activities of the mind

Behaviourism
- Focus on actions and outcomes
- Uses reinforcement and punishment to modify behaviour

Constructivism
- Communities of Practice
  - Learning a social phenomena
  - Knowledge integrated into the life of a community with shared values
  - Knowing by doing/practice

We need a blend of all

Instructivist
- e.g. Sermons, communicating Gospel ‘truths’, books

Constructivism
- e.g. Alpha, House Churches, Blogs

Behaviourism
- e.g. Sermons, talks, exhorting change

Learning theories
- e.g. Home/bible study groups
- video/image
- Wikis

Good website: www.funderstanding.com
Another 30 seconds…

What sermons/talks do you remember and why?
- your own?
- from last week?
- from last month?
- anytime?
From Verbs to Visualization

Newspaper advertisements
Street cards, welcome packs

Visual aids – like Disney, not just for kids
- Joshua tree – can be big
- Pearl necklace – can be small
- Shrek
- Painting
- Psalm 23
- A polo and psalm 90
- Bible in 50 words
The Bible in 50 Words

God made, Adam bit,
Noah arked, Abraham split,
Jacob fooled, Joseph ruled,
Bush talked, Moses balked,
Pharaoh plagued, People walked,
Sea divided, Tablets guided,
Promises landed,
Saul freaked, David peeked,
Prophets warned, Jesus born,
God walked, Love talked,
Anger crucified, Hope died,
Love rose, Spirit flamed,
Word spread, God remained.
From Verbs to Visualization

Visualisation is not just about Powerpoint presentations and technology…

Match the visualisation to the setting and context

Maximise the impact of the Church’s own visuality

The Sacraments
- The Eucharist
- Baptism
- Weddings
- Funerals

The Seasons
- Advent
- Christmas
- Easter
- Lent
Lessons for learning…

What do we want to learn and what might be the best way to learn it? If we had to make changes to the way we help others learn what would they be?

- Personalised learning and curricula
- Small, self paced, learning nuggets
- Mentoring and support structures
- Simulations, games, short stories and drama
- Task based broad content ‘on demand’
- Choice/mix of means/methods, old/new
- Collaboration, groups and community
- Gurus not teachers
- Motivational triggers and stimulation critical
- Interactive, relevant, timely and accessible
- Culturally sensitive, non linear content
- Focused not generic content
- Blend of word and image
Lessons for learning…

If we had to make 3 additions to the ways we communicate

- To the people inside the church
- To the people outside the church

What would we do?
An Awesome responsibility
Questions?