

June 2010 – making homiletics hum

Next week I head for the UK to help coordinate a consultation for teachers of preaching (homiletics) from the majority world. If you had told me twenty years ago that I'd be doing something like this, I'd have said %you gotta be kidding! Who put me in the lolly store?+

Let me tell you a bit about it...

The need

In order to facilitate a change in the culture of preaching in the countries of the majority world, Langham Preaching recognises that the current grassroots strategy needs to be complemented with an initiative which targets the teaching of homiletics in the seminary.

The vision

The idea is first to *gather* 15-20 teachers of homiletics from the majority world for a consultation . and then, as a long-term goal, to *scatter* into the various regions of the majority world for smaller consultations. We want to work towards ensuring that every region of the world has a cluster of colleges where homiletics is about training biblical preachers and where it is seen to be a central and integrating discipline within the curriculum.

The people

We've looked for participants who are: (a) experienced teachers of homiletics; (b) credible practitioners of biblical preaching; and (c) people of influence in their college environment.

For security reasons I will not divulge the names of the participants . but they are coming from Jamaica, Peru, Colombia, Belarus, Zambia, Kenya, Zimbabwe, India, Nepal, Malaysia, Singapore, and Philippines. Sadly, four people from Francophone Africa were ALL denied visas into the UK . and we were unable to recruit someone from the Middle East. But then, it is just a start...

Travelling as companions for the journey through the week are three people who teach homiletics in the UK, the USA . and then myself from New Zealand.

The programme

The focus will be on a sustained engagement with ten topics during ten sessions together. The idea will be to have every participant contribute to a topic at some point during the week. These contributions will be shorter and be used to provoke a wider discussion by the whole group together. About 50% of the time in each session will be given to this discussion. Then we will set aside time to gather specific outcomes to each discussion.

Here are the topics we will be covering:

1. *Laying the Foundation*: what are the theological convictions which must shape a course in homiletics?
2. *Building the Curriculum*: what is essential in the content to be included in a course in homiletics?
3. *Imitating a Model*: what can a course in homiletics learn from the Book of Acts?
4. *Assessing the Learning*: how do we measure a student's progress towards excellence in preaching?
5. *Developing the Partnership*: how can the college and the church work together in the training of preachers?

6. *Finding a Home*: how can homiletics become a central, and integrating, part of a college curriculum?
7. *Engaging the Context*: when we move beyond ~~western~~ approaches to homiletics what challenges are faced?
8. *Accessing the Resources*: how can the diverse range of resources available in various media be utilised to assist in teaching homiletics?
9. *Establishing a 'School of Preaching'*: how can the college serve the local church in the area of preaching?
10. *Plotting the Pathways*: how do we make it possible for preachers to travel on to postgraduate study in homiletics?

These sessions will be placed within the framework of worship and preaching in the mornings and storytelling and prayer in the evening. The goal is to provide a context where the majority world people are able to talk with each other while the rest of us guide and facilitate.

I am pretty excited about some of the sessions. For example, I will be facilitating the *Engaging the Context* session which will be a panel discussion with a Kenyan, a Jamaican, a Malaysian, a Belarussian, and a Colombian. How cool is that?!

Appreciate your prayers for this project.
It has so much potential...

Paul Windsor
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