

## Canada Youth 2018 – Stir It Up

### REV. DR. ROSS LOCKHART - FACILITATOR

#### Overview

Ross Lockhart was the workshop facilitator for *Stir It Up*. He is Director of Presbytery Formation at the Vancouver School of Theology and author of *Lessons from Laodicea: Missional Leadership in a Culture of Affluence*; *Gen X, Y Faith: Getting Real with God*; and most recently, *Beyond Snakes and Shamrocks: St. Patrick's Missional Leadership Lessons for Today*.

#### Introduction

The workshop started out great but a review of St. Patrick's life and how it provides lessons for today was confusing.

#### Changing Situation Today

In the past, the "missional church" – the church of the missionaries – was found only overseas or inner city (e.g., Scott Mission). Missionaries were trained with a clear understanding of mission.

Nowadays, however, we need to train clergy to do mission, and recommended David Bosch's book, *Transforming Mission* (1991) – *I have this book in my library*.

#### The Star Wars Universe

The challenge facing ministers is how to communicate the Gospel to people who know nothing about Christianity or the Bible. He compared this to trying to explain the *Star Wars* universe to someone who had never seen any of the films:



You can talk about the individual movies, or you can focus on the individual characters.

However you do it, youth ministers face the same challenge: **how do you engage the Bible with the universe found in the Bible to people who know nothing about either?**

**One suggestion:** once a month, serving bacon and eggs for youth – with an elder or adult present to teach the lesson.

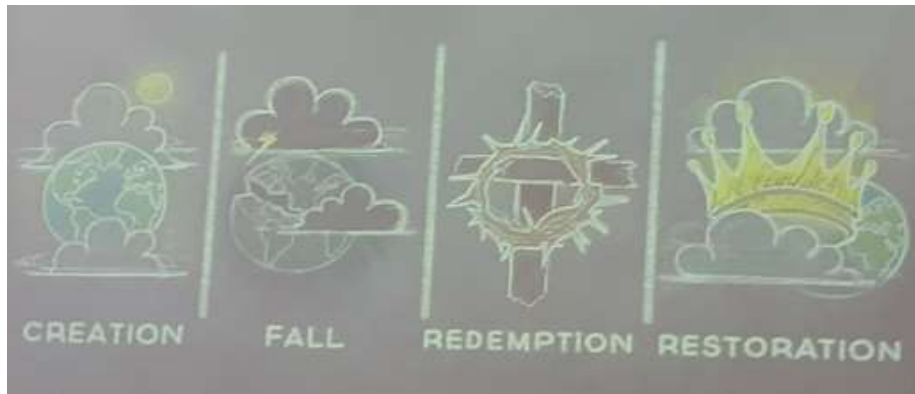
- When we encounter God's word, we are entering into a larger story.

## The Christian Universe

### The Christian Drama

One way to do this is to present the Gospel in terms of the larger story or in terms of a play:

- Act 1 – Creation
- Act 2 – Fall
- Act 3 – Redemption
- Act 4 – Missing
- Act 5 – Restoration



**We are Act 4 – improvising the story here. We are called to play our part in the ongoing story that God has given us.**

### The Believer's Backpack (the Quadrilateral)

- Scripture (the Bible)
- Tradition
- Experience (Revelation?)
- Reason

Lockhart distinguished between tradition, defined as “living faith of the dead,” and traditionalism, “dead faith of the living”.

The important thing is that the Quadrilateral is always interpreted within the community, and Scripture trumps everything else.

### Reformed and Reforming

When we look at God/Jesus, who do you see? The problem is that we each see the world differently. One's location affects the way we look at Scripture.

- In the West – particularly in North America – many people don't see the need to be saved *from* anything or *for* anything.

## 2 Timothy 4:1-8 New International Version (NIV)

<sup>4</sup> In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: <sup>2</sup> Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. <sup>3</sup> For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. <sup>4</sup> They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. <sup>5</sup> But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.

<sup>6</sup> For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is near. <sup>7</sup> I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. <sup>8</sup> Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

- Social Location – how does this text read us in our own world and our assumptions
- Caveat – we should be wary as to how we see the world.
- How does this text evangelize us? (we are awash in a culture of conversion and evangelism – think of the push to convert us from Coke to Pepsi)
- How do I receive the text as good news?
- In other words, how does this text convert us in our personal and corporate lives?
- How does this text send us into the world and equip us for witness.
- How does this text orient us to the reign of Christ?

### How does this text *read* us and our world?

There has been considerable emphasis in recent years on what the reader brings to the text, and on the reader as interpreter of the text – it is not common to have readings of Scriptures from various angles of “social location” (e.g., from the vantage point of ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation).

This question reverses the logic by **NOT** asking how we read the text, given our assumptions, but rather, how does the text read us and our assumptions!

What does a given text have to say about us, our assumptions, our values, our culture, our world?

How do we see ourselves if Scripture is the story of God and God’s truthful dealings with the world?

How do we locate ourselves within this story?

### How does this text *send* us and *equip* our witness?

It assumes that the Bible is a text designed for the purpose of forming communities for mission/witness, and assumes that God is a missionary God who calls and empowers a people to himself so that they would be his witnesses.

It assumes that the Gospel sends us, as individuals and communities, to be witnesses in word and deed – and that to be equipped for this task we need to be transformed by the Gospel (cf. Eph. 4)

### How does this text *convert* us in personal and corporate life?

The assumption here is that all Christians are called as disciples to ongoing transformation as disciples, the metaphor of “continuing conversion” is used by Missiologist Darrell Guder to speak of this process.

Note that the question is framed in terms of personal **AND** corporate life. My observation is that most evangelical preaching aims at applications that are private or individual, rather than corporate.

A key assumption here is that the church itself needs to be converted to the gospel – not just non-churchgoers – to become a Gospel-centered community.

How does this text *evangelize* us with good news?

The assumption here is that all of Scripture is the story of God's good news, and that God's initiative by grace to bring all nations under the reign of God, permeates both the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament.

This means that, without convoluted and forced exegesis, we should find Good News in the whole Bible.

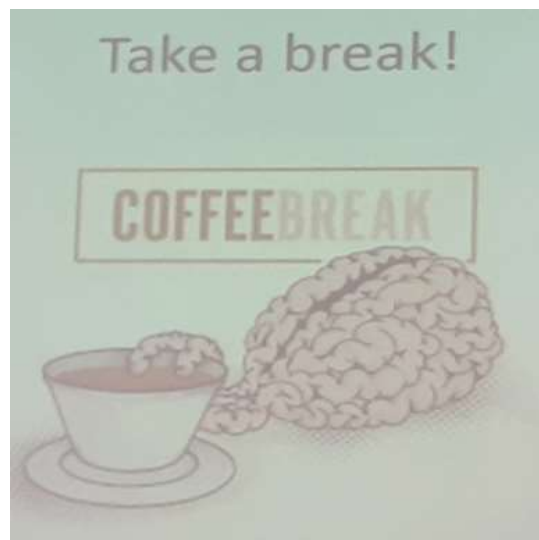
This assumes that the role of the Bible in personal and corporate life is to speak Good News to us, day after day, week after week.

How does this text *orient* us to the coming reign of God?

It assumes that central to God's mission is the establishment of his Kingdom, a righteous rule that establishes reconciliation, justice and peace. The Kingdom is already underway but not yet consummated.

It assumes that God's people are already participants in the distinctive ways of the Kingdom, and will become partakers of its full expression in God's time.

This question deliberately opens up the eschatological horizon of Scripture, and helps us to see texts about the fulfillment of God's purposes.

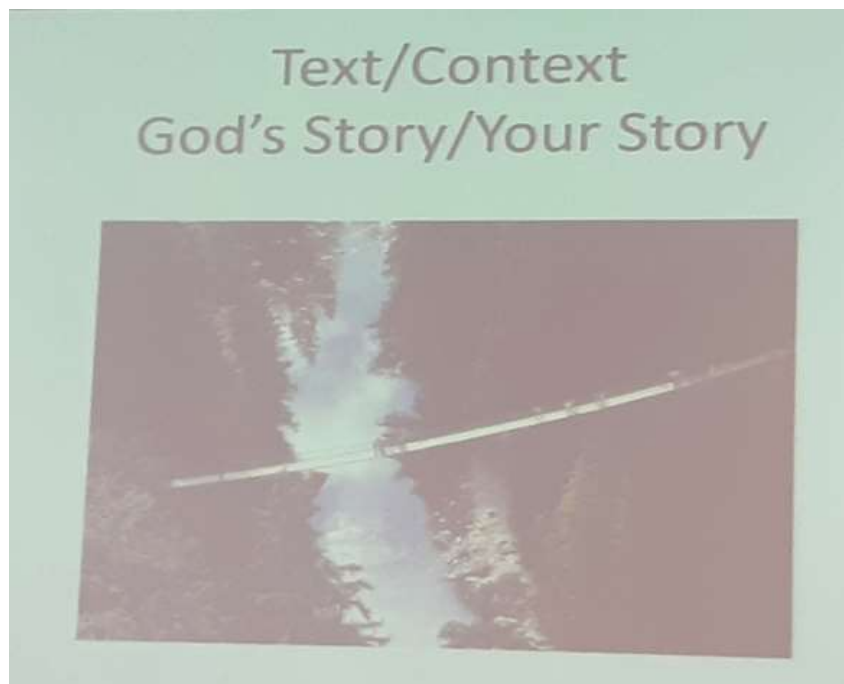


## God's Story & Our Story

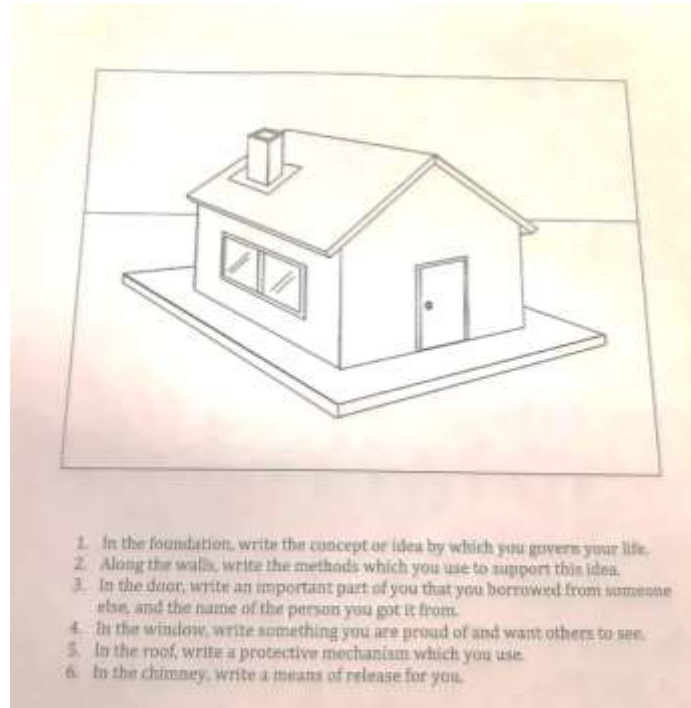
### Seeing Our Story within God's Story

The importance of praying for illumination – before we read Scripture we need to pray for the ability to understand Scripture (“Double Inspiration Theory”)

One of the important challenges for *all* ministry is changing *God's story* so that it becomes *Our story* – i.e., showing that we are Act 4 – we have been woven into God's story – or rather that we are part of that story so we need to discover our place in the narrative – that's what makes it “Our Story”.



## Our Life as a House



One way to do this was to look at our life as a house.

1. In the foundation, write the concept or idea by which you govern your life.
2. Along the walls, write the methods which you use to support this idea.
3. In the door, write an important part of you that your borrowed from someone else, and the name of the person you got it from.
4. In the window, write something you are proud of and want others to see.
5. In the roof, write a protective mechanism which you use.
6. In the chimney, write a means of release for you.

### My answers:

1. Being true to God – values: integrity, authentic, respectful
2. Methods – prayer without ceasing, seeing God in all situations, Bible study, meditation
3. Alistair MacLean (*The Last Frontier*) – learning to look at life/history from other perspectives
4. Teaching, passion, honesty, faithfulness
5. Time alone – withdrawal from others
6. Music, piano, dreaming, video games

## St. Patrick as Missionary

### Background

St. Patrick is often associated with snakes but snakes are not indigenous to Ireland. He is also associated with the shamrock, but the shamrock does not show up in Ireland until the 8<sup>th</sup> century.

What we do know – Patrick was a Roman Britain. He was born around A.D. 387 as “Patricius” – i.e., Roman nobility in Britain. Patrick grew up as a cultural Christian.

In A.D. 410, the Visigoths sacked Rome. The Roman navy was brought from Irish Sea to the Mediterranean. Irish pirates attacked his home village, captured Patrick and sold him as a slave.

### Growing Up Christian

On a particular mountain, God began to speak to him. He offered 100 prayers by day and 100 prayers by night. Others began to notice his holiness and started referring to him as “Holy Boy”.

He spent 6 years in captivity before he was finally able to return home. There was a banquet for him at home and he was served by his own slaves, but his attitude had changed – because of his experience of having been a slave himself.

He discovered that the only thing worse than being seasick at sea was being homesick at home, and in A.D. 432, Patrick returned to Ireland and began his mission there.

### History vs Hagiography

History – your actual golf score

Hagiography – what you tell people your score was.

## Concluding Comments

As you can read – up to coffee break, Lockhart focused on how we can use “stir up” youth ministry – primarily by presenting the Gospel as a drama and asking specific questions about any text.

After the break, we did an interesting exercise about our life as a house. I would love to do this with youth.

Then, we ended up with a biography of St. Patrick and never got to any discussion of how he accomplished his mission in Ireland.

Some good points were raised but overall this tended to be very academic and removed from youth ministry. I found some of the questions really worth considering for myself as minister and in my preaching.

## Questions to Ponder

- Growing Up Christian
  - How has the church in society changed since your childhood – what would you count as gain or loss?
  - Who first taught you the Christian faith? How did their teaching and lifestyle shape your living?
- Captivity and Crisis

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- When did your faith in God become real? What happened and who did you tell?
  - How has God used adversity to shape your discipleship?
- Homesick at Home
  - Recall a story of homecoming in your own life story. Who was there? How did they respond? What had changed since you left?
  - What does the idea of being “homesick at home” mean to you?
- Theological Education
  - What is the most significant thing God has taught you in the past year?
  - If you had unlimited time and resources, what’s one course you would love to enroll in? What would you like to learn and why?
- Church Planting
  - Tell a story about a time in your life when you started something new. What did you learn about yourself in the process?
  - If you could start a new church what would you do? What would you keep from your old church? What new things would you introduce?
- Confronting the Powers
  - Where have you encountered resistance to the sharing of the gospel in your own context? What did you do to overcome or work around that resistance?
  - If there is a force at work in the world that would do us harm, how does that shape our faithful witness as Christians?
- Conversion
  - If you could introduce someone to Jesus, what would you say about him to others? What does abundant life in Jesus look like in the world? What does it look like in your life?
  - What are some of the stumbling blocks to people converting to Christianity today in your context?
- New Monasticism
  - If you were to share daily life in community with other Christians, what “rules” would you expect to live by?
  - How are you accountable to others in your discipleship to Jesus?
- Social Justice
  - When have you been outraged by injustice enough to speak up and speak out about it?
  - What examples of injustice are currently taking place in the world that must surely break God’s heart?
- And End and a New Beginning
  - What hope and strength does the promise of resurrection offer for life before death as well as life beyond death?
  - What would you hope to be remembered for?