

# ***Thriving in New England Consultation***

## **Table Notes Summary**

### **June 20, 2018**

**Instructions for reading:** This report is broken down by the sessions which guided the Consultation. Under each question all the answers are organized by common themes/responses. Each bullet point represents a different table group's answer.

**Challenge:** Always what is most difficult to see is what has been missed. If you have something you believe should have been listed, please email us at [office@enetne.org](mailto:office@enetne.org).

# Building an Evangelistic Culture || Neal Patel

## Table Talk #1

*Question 1: Where do you see a passion for evangelism in your church? How is it influencing the larger church?*

### **In Pastor/Leadership**

- Pastoral example - teaching series (“Neighbor Series”)
- Own leadership goals - transfer excitement
- Church leadership providing opportunities for involvement “to make a difference” - passion starts at the top
- If preach it, must do it - challenged all congregation to share gospel 1x per week
- Key evangelistic drive in thriving church is the lead pastor (from report) - “passion is contagious” - what does this look like? Is it a matter of having the right personality in the pulpit?

### **In Care for Youth**

- Concern for youth/children in community - movement away from VBS to day camp, and now parents come because kids are coming (a lot of kids that come to camp are un-churched)
- Sports ministry (floor hockey) as catalyst for gospel conversation

### **Within Small Groups**

- Missional prayer meetings for those engaged with others
- In small group relationships

### **In Young Adults**

- College-aged, 20’s engaging in relationships
- Developing relationships prior to evangelizing and leading by lifestyle

### **In New Believers**

- Man in 50’s coming to Christ and sharing gospel
- New believers are better at evangelism than older members

### **Only in a Few Individuals**

- Specific to individuals but not church as whole yet
- Example of two parishioners (60-year-old woman and 20-year-old man) with passion for evangelism flowing into the community

### **In Shifting Paradigms**

- Mindsets and church culture shifting from Christendom to attractional to now missional

### **Actually, it’s Difficult to See Passion**

- Lacking, but there are a few couples - a majority of folks don’t know lost people

- Non-existent
- Evangelistic guilt within church
- Money to missions = fulfilling obligation - where do we share the story?
- People don't know what the gospel is/how to tell the story - picturing door-to-door evangelism and see it as ineffective
- Affirm evangelism as important but question what it looks like on the ground - very few know how to go about it

## ***Question 2: What evangelistic strategies have you experienced as contagious and effective?***

### **Reaching Out to Newcomers/Neighbors**

- Send new neighbors welcome baskets
- Bake cookies - eventually invite to church

### **Connecting Evangelism and Service**

- Marrying the practice of evangelism and service - challenging congregation, "Why do we serve?"
- Evangelism content is important and needs to apply to "real life"

### **Being Intentional as a Leader**

- Sermon series on being a good neighbor
- Show how Bible is a "Missional Text"
- Encourage people on their "frontlines" - be in the community
- Evoke passion - can't teach it
- Encourage the "right" discontent - express the urgency of sharing the gospel
- Preaching the gospel in a way that is directed toward non-believers

### **Backpacks for Homeless**

- Have kids help put them together during VBS week

### **Running Family-Focused Ministries**

- Kids Night Out once a month - reaches 72 kids from community and allows church to get to know families
- Mom-to-mom group and women's events (e.g. breakfast)

### **Baptisms**

- Quarterly baptismal service
- Showcase baptism through photos to build excitement and give others an opportunity to respond with a desire to get baptized themselves

### **Connecting with/in the Community**

- Make community connections
- Connecting with business owners, schools, city government - personal, face-to-face ministry - get out into community, to strangers

- Serve the community - fix up the playground - why? Because we love the community
- Service-oriented ministries and community partnerships - “Think & Drink”, conversations with people in the community
- Using bi-vocational methods to “get out into the community”
- Monday Night Meal Program
- Pastoral discipline of getting out into the community - this isn’t a waste of time because it directly informs her/his preaching - “cultural exegesis and rumination”

### **Building Relationships**

- Using a relationship-based method - one-by-one
- Church originally reached out by a passionate man handing out tracts - congregants don’t want to follow this method anymore
- Most comments circled around building relationships with non-believers
- Develop relationships
- Acknowledge that evangelism is slow and takes time - establishing relationship is the primary step in evangelism - you don’t have to be outgoing, and getting out of comfort zone might not be as difficult as it seems
- Process of connections - belong and then believe, rather than the other way around
- Ongoing engagement and real/significant contact

### **Creating Place of Belonging**

- Build a community that people want to be a part of - belong before believing - create a welcoming environment
- Be a place where the un-churched would want to come
- Welcome outsiders

### **Sharing Stories**

- Use of story - on a Sunday let a church member (not a pastor) share a story about sharing Christ with others
- Role of testimony and seeing God at work in the “normal” - role of spiritual renewal through testimonies of the “normal”
- Sharing 3-minute conversion stories in church service - goal is to shift away from cognitive preaching to effective stories that “spur the congregation on”

### **Evangelizing**

- You don’t build a culture to evangelize, you evangelize to build a culture

### **Affirming Giftings**

- Come alongside people and help them discern their spiritual gifts, affirm them in that

### **Leadership Open to New Ideas**

- Creating a “Permission” culture - posture of leadership: open hands/willingness to try new things

### **ALPHA course**

#### **Prayer**

- Prayer for each day: God, grant me an opportunity to share the gospel
- Pray for revival

#### **Helpful Acrostic**

- *BLESS*: B - begin with prayer, L - listen, E - eat, S - serve (practical), S - story (share your story of God)

#### **Church Planting**

- Just start over - more outsider-focused
- Restoration House in Manchester, NH, planted 16 churches since 1999

#### **Welcoming Sunday Morning Services**

- Sunday morning service: do we plan a service to make ourselves comfortable or to help others find Jesus?

#### **Stepping Across Cultural Borders**

- Focus on specific community and adapt to the culture and context
- Engagement with second-generation immigrants

#### **New Growth Measurements**

- How do you measure growth?
- Attendance is not a good measurement

#### **Meeting Together**

- Fellowships that focus on connecting work/vocation with the Kingdom of God

#### **Recognizing History’s Impact**

- Acknowledge harm done by church, historically, locally, globally

#### **Reaching out to Opioid Community**

# Leading for Evangelistic Impact | | David Jackson

## Table Talk #2

*Question 1: Where are you most challenged as you lead in evangelism?*

### Sharing Vision

- Conveying passion to the people
- To find their passion and empower them to serve in that area
- How to motivate people to share/speak to others?
- Leadership casting vision so the community buys in
- Understanding difference between *pastoring* (personal care) and *shepherding* (leading God's people where they need to go); getting congregation to look outward

### Changing Church Culture, Mindset, and Practice

- Shifting church's DNA from "family" to "hope of the world"
- Most natural relationships are with other Believers - need to develop outside connection
- Difficulty of a tribalistic, *us vs. them* mentality
- Challenge: not losing people to nostalgia when change starts happening
- Revitalization/evangelism (harder than church planting)
- Getting church involved in support groups

### Being Open and Humble

- Leader as learner
- "Where there's humility there's change"
- Learn to care about what the people care about
- Having leadership represent those whom the church seeks to serve

### Language

- In the language we use (e.g. *testimony*)

### New England Region

- Demographics of New England - townie culture
- Learning new area - what does it mean to be missional in urban contexts versus suburban contexts?

### Managing Time

- Balancing administration, pastoral care, and leadership toward evangelism
- Time management - getting into the community - seeing oneself as both the pastor of the church and the pastor of the community
- Shifting away from event-driven ministry which results in burnout - moving toward being "pastor to community" - outward focus - thinking missionally - who can I connect with? Follow-up calls and emails to congregants

- Overcoming survival mode
- Steering away from events/programs
- Finding space for servant evangelism requires evaluating and cutting - send people into community with purpose
- Visiting members on their frontline - model evangelism to the congregation

#### **Engaging with Millennials**

- Understanding their needs, not just the needs you tell them - find points of agreement

#### **Delegation**

- Involving others when it seems easier to just do it yourself - mentality of the pastor just being “it”; equipping the congregation so the pressure shifts off of the staff doing all the evangelistic work (professionalization of ministry makes it hard to equip church)
- Don’t go it alone

#### **Finding the Most Effective Way to Share Faith**

##### **To Meet Real Needs in Community**

- Finding the “gatekeepers” in the community (e.g. town hall) - be persistent and consistent in asking, “How/where can we help?” - serve without expectation of anything in return
- Do a lot of service as a way of “pre-evangelism” (i.e. building trust)
- What are our motives for evangelism?

#### **Thinking Both Locally and Globally**

### ***Question 2: How would you best describe your “current location and destination” regarding evangelism?***

- **Current:** trying to raise levels of passion in people  
**Destination:** reaching out to people of catholic background or of no religious background
- **Current:** trying to recover the past  
**Destination:** shift to mindset of missionary - “How would missionaries think?”
- **Current:** evangelism is what we do  
**Destination:** evangelism is part of who we are
- **Current:** *conversion* focus  
**Destination:** *conversation* focus - you’re responsible for the conversation not the conversion
- **Current:** striving for “Promised Land”  
**Destination:** learning to live in “Exile” - post-Christendom
- **Current:** mentality of “just getting people in the door”

- Destination:** developing a multiplying mindset

  - **Current:** primarily in office/study

**Destination:** relationships, visiting congregants, spending 50% of time in community
- **Current:** reactive

**Destination:** proactive
- **Current:** comfortable with “good” stuff

**Destination:** moving toward “better” stuff
- **Current:** evangelizing for self-promotion

**Destination:** evangelizing for God’s glory
- **Current:** known for what we’re *against*

**Destination:** known for what we’re *for*
- **Current:** “holy huddle”

**Destination:** agents of God’s Kingdom in the community
- **Current:** worship model as attractional

**Destination:** worship model as missional
- **Current:** separation of life and ministry

**Destination:** work/vocation as ministry - world outside of the church matters
- **Current:** program

**Destination:** being



# Discipling for Evangelistic Impact || Maureen Smith, Dana Olson, Jim Longhurst

## Table Talk #3

*Question 1: What has helped believers in your church start taking their “frontline” seriously?*

### **Preaching**

- Preaching to encourage people to live out faith in workplace and commissioning people in their everyday walk - finding our place in God’s mission through our work
- Using the rhythm of life
- Preaching through Neil Hudson’s material on fruitfulness - encouraging folks to see meaning outside Sunday services
- Helping congregants be intentional lay people
- Sermons and helping people see their identity as a *witness*

### **Starting Small**

- Just starting with one person
- Taking baby steps to connect

### **Movement Outside Church Walls**

- Giving people permission to leave their church ministry to be involved in community

### **Vulnerability**

- “We don’t have to be perfect, we have to be honest”

### **Prayer**

- Connection between prayer and ministry
- Prayer drives/walks and prayer huddles for non-believers
- Starting with prayer - everyone can do it fearlessly

### **Engaging with their Neighborhoods**

- Adopting 1-mile radius of neighborhood as mission field
- Having neighborhood parties
- Church intentionally embedded into its community and building relationships with institutions in community (e.g. schools, police department, etc.)

### **Story-Telling**

- Hearing stories of faith experiences
- Tell stories to surface other stories - builds faith to do what we’re called to do - asking the question, “Where did you see God today?”
- Sharing experience with others in the congregation
- Learning stories and impromptu testimonies on Sunday mornings

## **Discipleship**

- Training for sharing testimony (checking their language)
- Mentoring in evangelism

## **Finances**

- Budget - putting the money where our values are

*Question 2: What in the discipleship process has been most transformative in encouraging a fruitful witness in a person's world?*

## **Preaching**

- Yearlong teaching series on finding your "go" - where is your circle of influence and how does God want to use that?
- Changing people's understanding of evangelism at work - do work ethically

## **Sports Leagues as Ministry Opportunities**

### **Small Groups**

- Missional small groups for prayer and encouragement in outreach - an intentional time to think through opportunities
- Small groups of only 3 people
- Revitalization groups within church and encouragement
- Meeting with groups to challenge them - gave money to each, to use missionally and then had them come back and share stories

## **Checking Motives**

- Getting people to love their neighbors without agenda/ulterior motives (e.g. I'm just trying to get you to come to church)

## **Books**

- *Imagine Church* by: Neil Hudson
- *Multiply* by: Francis Chan

## **Deeper Discipleship**

- Increased biblical knowledge comes with increased passion for evangelism
- Leading question/discussions
- Having people "report back"

## **Prayer and Sharing**

- Congregational prayer includes individuals praying aloud during service - hearing from/praying with one another

## **Managing Time**

- Cutting down in order to free up more time to do new things/evangelize

# Organizing for Evangelistic Impact | | Adam DePasquale

## Table Talk #4

*Question 1: On a scale of 1-10 (“10” being the worst!), where is your church in organizational freedom or resistance toward evangelistic outreach? What word or phrase would describe this?*

3.

- 1 - very flexible
- 2 - establishing new work
- Lots of organizational freedom

4-5

- 4 - pretty flexible
- 5
- Move forward then drag
- Teaching and discipleship themes that come from the top prevent collective ownership of the evangelistic vision

6-7

- “Passion without skill” - “spinning our wheels” - programmatic
- Easy to do a lot without doing anything well
- Evangelism is important but other things take space
- Move from *missions* to mission

8-10

- Open resistance
- “We don’t have the time!”
- Deeply entrenched churches: fairly inflexible
- Resistance
- “Frozen”
- Need for younger people in elder/leadership positions - older people pass on the baton, without dropping away
- Too much on the schedule, and no one wants to give up their “thing”

*Question 2: How have you experienced some breakthrough in building a more flexible vision or a more effective process toward outreach?*

### Intentional Gatherings for Vision

- Having planning retreats and meetings

- Breakthrough meetings
- Evaluating vision for evangelism and assessing recourses

#### **Prayer**

- Through prayer
- Prayer in groups - infusing Kingdom prayer in every church ministry

#### **Taking Risks**

- Creating a culture of “testing” and re-evaluation - test for 6 months and then re-evaluate

#### **Empowering Pastors/Staff**

- Executing authority in the staff, not the committee
- As a pastor, being affirmed when implementing change

#### **Getting Congregation Onboard**

- Focusing on outreach leads toward flexibility
- Bottom-up rather than top-down (grass roots) - plant the seed in the congregation first

# What's my Take Away? | | Jim Harrell

## Table Talk #5

*Where can you personally engage a non-believer on your frontline?*

### **Just getting into community**

- Need to find opportunities
- Connecting with foot traffic in the neighborhood
- In the building where I live
- Going to the gym to connect with people outside church

### **With Leaders in the Community**

- Get involved in town committees
- Get connected with fire or police department

### **Movie Night for the community**

*Where can you pilot an initiative with others on your frontline?*

- In running groups
- Smaller cohorts
- Forums

# Next Steps

## Table Talk #6

*Where to go beyond table talk...*

### **Keep Praying**

- Continue to pray for evangelism to grow within our church
- Pray

### **Keep Moving Forward**

- Distill information into our own contexts
- Experiment with new ideas - just pick 2-3 key ideas from consultation and try to implement
- Continue to wrestle with questions that were brought up at consultation

### **Be Patient and Faithful**

- Dare to stay where you are long-term

### **Be Part of a Group**

- Get into roundtable/pastors group
- Cohort learning
- Talk to like-minded people - roundtables and partnerships for ministry within a town/area
- Figure out ways to connect as New England pastors

### **Begin Process of Moving into Zero-Based Ministry Programming**

#### **Discipleship-Making**

- Encourage growth in those we have reached

#### **Small Town Summits**

- Help smaller churches

**Remind ourselves that evangelism is built into everything we do - it's not a separate mission**