

Question: *What is most important to you about ministry? What is your most sacred commitment?*

### Presuppositions

- Defined: Presuppositions are understood assumptions of fact which affect our approach to ministry and the expression and style of our ministry to students.
- Defined: they are assumptions or prior held beliefs that inform and affect how we do ministry
  - Our operating system
  - Our DNA
  - Our rudder
- Your presuppositions are just who you are. They're facts about you before you ever go to meet with a student, before you ever go to church. They're just truths underneath everything you do
- Our presuppositions develop and should be moving towards what is true. We believe that there are at least 7 assumptions that should steer, shape and form the way we apply the gospel and word to the lives of others.
- They can be considered under three categories:
  - Confessional
    - God is at work
    - Reformed Understanding of Scripture
  - Covenantal
    - The Church
    - The Family
  - Contextual
    - Demographics
    - The Individual
    - The Learning Process

Absence of these presuppositions results in a truncated view/approach to ministry...

- Conservative churches are typically confessional and covenantal, but not contextual.
- Liberal churches are typically contextual and covenantal, but not confessional.
- Parachurch ministries are typically contextual and confessional, but not covenantal.

Development/Nurture of the Presuppositions (what is the assumption and what would ministry be like without it?)

### **God is at Work**

- Operating in the background: Deep dependence on God's providence.
- God is more committed to your students than you are. He was at work before you and will be at work after you.
- His providence provides you a place to rest.
- *Opposite: we are at work, ministry as manipulation, Constantinian ethic*  
*I AM JESUS AND MUST SAVE MY STUDENTS*

### **Reformed Understanding of the Bible/Scripture**

- Operating in the background: Scripture as our only rule of faith and practice
  - It shows us what is true
  - The Bible is inspired (writer's not have aha moment...God breathed it out, it comes from him, Bible is God's words)
  - The Bible as authoritative; a non negotiable as to what it means to be human, how to live, etc. Bible - I want to rescue you from your sin and misery, and I want to show you what it means to flourish in me
  - The Bible is inerrant - not mean ESV doesn't have errors in it - means the original autographs did not have errors in it
  - The Bible is infallible...truthful - nothing false
  - The Bible is sufficient for us - to show people the Good News, to show you what it means to be a thriving human being - don't need anything else...
    - This doesn't mean we can't use other resources. There are many that can help us! It means that we need not feel like "the answer" is somewhere "out there" in some great book or speaker or curriculum, etc.
  - Some other things (we didn't really unpack them) - an approach to Scripture that embraces the major tenants of the Reformation, including total depravity, hopelessly in need of God's grace, the sovereignty of God, the means of grace, election, etc.
- No sacred/secular dichotomy
  - God is the Lord of all of life, not just parts.
  - Just as "spiritual" to dig a ditch as it is to watch a game as it is to preach a sermon
- We are not apologetic for this view (gives us confidence)
- We are not jerks with this view (fosters humility)

### **Reformed Understanding of the Bible/Scripture (continued)**

- *Opposite: No scriptural authority... or you have a view of scripture that is relativistic/pluralistic; avoidance of the Bible; seeing scripture as good advice, but not good news; I AM MY OWN AUTHORITY*
- **Last word: Do NOT underestimate the POWER of God's word**

### **The Church**

- Operating in the background: Church as central to the Christian Life.
  - The church is an institution that we compose
  - You and the church a lot like marriage...
    - like someone complimenting you but insulting your wife
    - not gonna play out well!
    - the church is the bride of Christ, dear to Him
  - Being the church means knowing God's people and seeing yourself as less without them.
  - Current cultural moment about everything focused on the individual
    - Christian radio - so much about me
    - Christian books - so much about me
    - But - God and his work is more about us than me...all the one anothering in the Bible
  - Participation in the church is less about attending programs and more about knowing and caring for one another with the gospel
  - This is HARD for us. (1) thinking about the we and not the me...even more so (2) teaching/promoting this truth into the lives of students and families when they are swimming in the me-soup of our day
- *Opposite: Individualism; Lone Ranger approach to Xian life and ministry; we aren't made for just Jesus and me (made for community); spiritual growth can be programmed; Young Life; youth ministry narcissism and isolation; living out ½ the great Commission; compartmentalization of the church as a social club; MINISTRY IS ABOUT ME*

### **The Family**

- Operating in the background:
  - Family as a primary means in which God brings his Kingdom...
  - and the typical way in which he relates to His people (marriage, father, brother, etc.)
  - We will know that we (the church/our ministry) must not only seek to serve and minister to the students, but also seek the gospel flourishing of families, parents, etc.!
- *Opposite: Western approach to ministry (individualistic); Focus on moment of salvation rather than context of salvation; Short term view of ministry*

*that leads to impatience; I DISCOUNT THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY IN MINISTRY*

### **Demographics**

- Operating in the background: Understanding the culture of my group is essential to applying the gospel to their lives.  
EXAMPLE - Buck's Mercer JV Basketball students and Hunter's Emory students outside of GA robotics convention. Both groups are college students, but are from two different demographic settings
  - God's work doesn't change, but people do, places do, YOUR GROUP does, etc.
  - We need to be experts in our contexts! We need to be able to understand and answer our students' objections (to God, Christ, truth, etc.) and their culture better than they do!
  - Our volunteers and parents need to be trained to not be dismissive of the culture, but learn from it to better love our children
  - Engaging the Soul of Youth Culture - Walt Mueller (cpyu.org)
- *Opposite: Pragmatism and traditionalism drive ministry; Desire to do ministry like you experienced it as a kid; Dismissal of culture as silly and worthless; Fortress mentality; I DON'T CARE ABOUT YOUR CULTURE, I HATE YOUR CULTURE*

### **The Individual**

- Operating in the background: Understanding the uniqueness of the individual is essential to gospel ministry.
  - We MUST know our kids, each, not just the aggregate!
  - One-on-Ones are essential for gospel ministry
  - "Your LGs and SGs will only be as good as your 1:1's" | *how well you know actual individuals*
  - 1:1's are both deliberate meetings and unintentional encounters
  - "Contact" ministry includes but is not limited to 1:1 meetings. Postcards, emails, texts, letters, recitals, games, school, etc.
- *Opposite: Formulaic ministry (discipleship in a box approach); Overly Programmatic ministry; Emphasis on group size rather than pastoral ministry; I CARE ABOUT PROGRAMS MORE THAN PEOPLE*

## The Learning Process

- Operating in the background:
  - We typically learn in the pattern of T-D-O-E-E.
    - Teach
    - Demonstrate
    - Observe
    - Evaluate
    - Encourage
  - We ARE formed by habits/liturgies (read *You Are What You Love* - James K.A. Smith)
    - Watch him speak on the ideas in the book - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ziz-x3htfEk>
  
- *Opposite: We don't need to teach theology, just a relationship with Christ; we don't need a relationship with Christ, just theology; Too lofty of expectations OR too low of expectations; babysitting approach; hands off approach; I TEACH/LEAD IN MY WAY IN MY TIME*