

THE PUBLIC CHURCH

(PART 2 OF 2)



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Why must the church become public?

1. Because people are no longer seeking out the church to help them make meaning about life. So the church must go to them.
2. Because God is a relational God.
3. Because this relational God creates us for relationship with all of creation.
4. Because God, in Christ, has entered the world (the neighborhood) for the sake of healing relationships.
5. Because God also calls us to enter into the world for the sake of healing relationships.
6. Because humans' lives are not only private, they are also public.
7. Because the church will lose meaning in peoples' lives if it does not allow their relationship with it to become increasingly complex.
8. Because we are formed by disorienting dilemmas, not comfortable confines.
9. Because all education and initiation is always either for domestication or liberation.



1. ACCOMPANIMENT

2. INTERPRETATION

3. DISCERNMENT

4. PROCLAMATION

Good News – Bad News

Theology is that ongoing activity of the whole church that aims at clarifying what "gospel" must mean here and now. . . The good news is good because it challenges and displaces bad news.

Gospel addresses us at the place where we are overwhelmed by an awareness . . . of what is wrong with the world and with ourselves in it. It is good news because it engages, takes on and does battle with the bad news, offering another alternative, another vision of what could be, another way into the future.

(Douglas John Hall)



- 1. Artforms** – How do we move towards proclamation of good news?
- 2. Best Questions** - What questions should these artforms answer?
- 3. Strategies | Practices** - How will you enact these artforms?

Accompaniment

1. The movement into the community to encounter your neighbors.
2. This is not market research. It is for the neighbor, not your church.
3. Identify your listening posts and then show up.
4. We listen for how our neighbors are already experiencing bad news AND good news so we might know how to proclaim or participate in good news for and with them.
5. This is outreach AND discipleship.



Accompaniment

Best Questions

1. Who are our neighbors? - demographics AND stories
2. How do they experience hope in our community?
3. How do they experience despair in our community?
4. What are their dreams & aspirations for our neighborhood?
5. What are the things making those dreams & aspirations possible?
6. What are the roadblocks to those dreams & aspirations?



Accompaniment Strategies

1. Help members of your congregations find or create listening posts in the neighborhood.
2. Put yourselves in places where you will hear your neighbors' stories, joys, concerns, celebrations, and fears?



SCAN ME

The Episcopal Church
One-to-One Relational Meetings
<https://tinyurl.com/one-to-one-meetings>

Interpretation

1. The movement into your faith community's core theological convictions.
2. Who is God? What are God's desires for our world? How does God work in our world? What role do humans have in this work?
3. Seeking to understand how these core beliefs help you understand your neighbors' stories.
4. Seeking to understand how your neighbors' stories might help you understand your core beliefs in new ways.
5. This is outreach AND discipleship.



Interpretation Best Questions

1. How do we understand God and how God works in our world?
2. What are our faith community's most important claims about God and God's work in the world?
3. How do these claims impact the way we think about our neighbors' stories?
4. How do their stories impact the way we think about our claims?
5. Where did we hear and see despair?
6. Where did we hear and see resurrection?



Interpretation Strategies

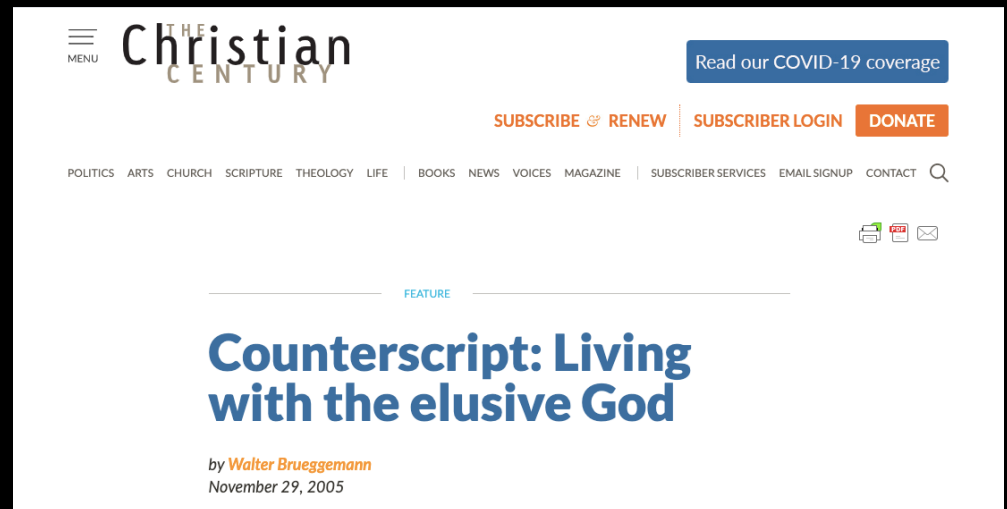
1. Help your congregation identify and articulate their core beliefs.
2. Help them use those core beliefs as an interpretive lens to better understand their neighbors' stories.
3. Help them explore how the neighbors' stories might push back against and challenge those core beliefs.

Walter Brueggemann's Script and Counterscript

The dominant script is the story we are forced to live that is not life giving. The counterscript is the story of the gospel that has a very different way of thinking about the world and our place in it. This is a nice way to begin seeing the importance of thinking theologically (counterscript) about our lived realities (dominant script).



theworkofthepeople.com/scripts



religion-online.org/article/counterscript/

A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a metal sieve over a body of water. The sieve is filled with a mixture of small, wet stones and pebbles of various colors (brown, tan, grey). The person's hands are visible, with one hand holding the handle of the sieve and the other supporting it from underneath. The background is dark and out of focus, suggesting an outdoor setting near water.

Discernment

1. The movement as a faith community into deep listening to the movement of God's spirit.
2. A belief that God is continually calling us to show up in our particular place and time as co-workers with God in redemption and resurrection.
3. Discernment is different than decision making.
4. This is outreach AND discipleship.

A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a shallow metal pan. The pan is filled with water and numerous small, light-colored stones or pebbles. A finger from the right hand is pointing towards the stones in the water. The background is dark and out of focus.

Discernment Best Questions

1. Given what we've seen & heard in accompaniment & interpretation, WHO is God calling us to be for and with our neighbor?
2. Given what we've seen & heard in accompaniment & interpretation, WHAT is God calling us to do for and with our neighbor?
3. What is the good news that needs to be proclaimed in word or deed?

Discernment Strategies



1. Create space for your faith community to listen together for what God might be calling them to.
2. Collectively practice patience as you wonder together without hurriedly jumping to a solution.
3. Learn to practice the Ignatian Awareness Examen together, seeking moments of desolation and consolation.

patheos.com/blogs/spiritualdirection101/table-of-contents/

Part Two: Elements of Spiritual Direction

Awareness of God

Silence

Remembering an Experience of God

Discernment as a Way of Life

- **Basic Principles to Help You Discern**
- **A step-by-step Discernment Process**
- **Discernment in community, Quaker style**
- **Discernment, Wesley style**
- **Simple questions to help you discern**



Proclamation

1. The movement back into our neighborhood with a message of good news.
2. The news will be good because it will give hope in the midst of bad news.
3. Proclamation can be word or deed.
4. Proclamation can be prophetic or pastoral.
5. Proclamation can be introducing something new or pointing out what is already present.
6. This is outreach AND discipleship.



Proclamation Best Questions

1. What will we say & do to proclaim this good news?
2. When, where & how will we say & do it?
3. How will it either engage despair or celebrate the presence of hope?
4. How will our neighbor be involved with us in this proclamation?

Proclamation Strategies

1. Through accompaniment, interpretation, and discernment you have encountered the presence of bad news or good news in your neighbors' lives and how God is calling you to participate
2. Imagine what it would actually look like to either address the bad news in your community or become involved in the good news that is already unfolding.
3. Be specific. Avoid retreating into your heads. How will you do this work with your bodies?
4. Proclamation might look like an afterschool program, parenting classes, a food distribution program, marching with Black Lives Matter, working to make healthy food or affordable housing available in your community, a community garden, a neighborhood cookout, etc. It's good news because it is liberating both you and your neighbor from bad news.
5. Keep in mind the beauty of iterations. Try something, then improve it.
6. Don't do this work TO your neighbor. Do this work WITH your neighbor.

