



ENGAGING TRIBES

Tradecraft Week 8

Tribe | group of people who are connected to one another, a leader and an idea.

Common characteristics:

- Clear definition of who's in and who's out (defines the group)
- Cost of entry/right of passage (simple as buying a product or complex as hazing or training)
- Set of rules (spoken or unspoken)
- Consequences for those who break the rules
- Insider language
- Uniforms or physical appearance
- Leadership (formal or informal)

Four Major Levels of Belonging

1. Public (i.e. Titan's fan)
2. Social (Talking to neighbors on the porch)
3. Personal (sharing personal problems, asking for advice)
4. Intimate (between two people, uninhibited, completely open, honest relationship)

People choose their tribe to meet their needs.

Function of a Tribe

- Help process new information (*What do I believe about this?*)
- Rather than sort through information on our own, people seek influential narrators who filter through the data and offer a complete perspective.

Missionaries employ a methodology that relies on one-to-one proclamation of the gospel. The thinking is that a decision to follow Christ is personal and individual. However, as tribally connected people, we are limited in our capacity to process major life decisions on our own. Tribal people do much of their thinking in community.

Communicate the Gospel

- In order to translate the Gospel across cultures, we must consider every tribe's unique pattern of communication.

***The Gospel will not be spread
where it is not appropriately communicated!***

Churches Waiting to Happen

- It's tempting to look at tribes as barriers to the spread of the gospel (how do we break into the group to have influence?)
- Tribes meet regularly, enjoy fellowship, tell stories, counsel, support, serve one another, and provide members with a sense of identity.
- Just waiting to be jumpstarted by the Holy Spirit!

Extraction

- Extraction removes a new believer from his existing social surroundings in order to assimilate him into an established church.
- Effective in the short term because it results in gathering Christians and removes new Christians from negative influences of the previous environment.
- Extraction is destructive to the relational channels the gospel would spread (What do the other members of the tribe see?)

Extraction

- *Extraction divides, isolates, and confuses. Instead of encouraging the tribe to consider as a group the implications of the gospel for their lives, it forces them to process the good news as individuals - something they're not equipped to do. Because people are tribal, we shouldn't be in such a rush to plug everyone into a church.*
- *What if instead of seeing existing social structures as barriers to the spread of the good news, we began to see them as direct lines of communication? Instead of considering every person as an individual, we could consider them as representatives of the tribe.*
- *The gospel is trusted to permeate the tribe's discussion and haunt its members' interactions with one another. The resulting group can then take charge of communicating the good news within the tribe.*

Life Support

The Spirit must lead us in this area! Some ties need to be broken.

- We must serve as the spiritual life-support for the individual(s) who believe by encouraging, teaching, and praying until the body comes to life.
- New believers learn to apply their faith to real life, a process that results in authentic expressions of "church".

Oikos (household)

Oikos - household or everyone who pertained to a person's societal group - family, extended family, employees, servants - anyone who shared an interdependent life together.

The early church spread through Oikos:

- Zacchaeus (Luke 19)
- Levi (Luke 5:27-32)
- Cornelius (Acts 11:14)

Oikos (household) – house church...etc.

²⁶ Well, my brothers and sisters, let's summarize. When you meet together, one will sing, another will teach, another will tell some special revelation God has given, one will speak in tongues, and another will interpret what is said. But everything that is done must strengthen all of you.

1 Corinthians 14:26

How to Identify Tribes

1. Public space tribes tend to be expressed openly (low barrier for entry)
2. Social space connections tend to have more specific meaning for a person's tribal identity (community groups, subculture, Facebook groups)
3. The relationship in the personal space is the modern-day equivalent to the social tribe. (small groups, peer groups on your job, etc)
4. The intimate space is filled only by one or two people and can be difficult to identify. (spouses, best friends - who do you go to with life changing events)

How to Join a Tribe

1. Study the influence (expose yourself to whatever influences the tribe - research through immersion)
2. Adopt a rhythm (sit where they sit, live as they live)
3. Learn the narrative (learn bridges and barriers to the communication of the gospel)

It is here that you can begin to understand just how the gospel is good news to this tribe.