



Lay preaching

Development Pipeline



Commission for
**EDUCATION &
DISCIPLESHIP**

CONTENTS

Why develop lay preaching within the diocese?	page 4
The 3-lane model	page 6
Lane 1 — Dipping in your toe: Start one-2-one	page 7
Lane 2 — Starting to swim in the shallows: One-2-one preacher training	page 9
Lane 3 — Swimming in the deep end: Lay preacher training days	page 10
The 3 laned model and existing lay preachers	page 11

Why?

The Anglican Diocese of Armidale is a rural diocese with its fair share of small-town churches.

What place does lay preaching play in supporting Christian health and growth in churches like ours? And how can we best identify, equip and encourage our lay preachers to be faithful and effective in the important responsibility that has been entrusted to them?

That's what the Lay Preaching Development Philosophy/Pipeline is all about...

There are 4 main reasons why we want to develop lay preaching in the diocese:

1) It brings glory to God.

God's word is powerful. God by his word brought everything into existence, sustains all things and transfers people from the dominion of darkness into the kingdom of his Son (Colossians 1.13-14). This brings glory to God because it is his work. It also brings glory to him as his creatures rightly acknowledge his Son as Lord and saviour. Preaching (defined for the purposes of this document as *'the public monologue¹ explaining the meaning of God's word and applying it to the hearts and minds of people assembled'*) does this.

2) God uses it to present everyone mature in Christ

God's word achieves what he sends it out to do. Paul's great purpose, along with his co-workers, was to see everyone presented mature in Christ on the day of Christ (Col 2:6). Paul achieved this goal, with God's powerful help, by preaching Christ, teaching and admonishing everyone with all wisdom (Colossians 1:28). While not all of us are called to be preachers like Paul, there is a basic call for every member of Christ's church to be ministering Christ's word to one another (c.f. Col. 3:15-16).

¹ Monologues can get a bad wrap in today's world, but there are good, biblical reasons for retaining the 'proclamatory' aspect of preaching. See Christopher Ash, *The Priority of Preaching* (pp. 53-57).

3) There are needs

The reality in our diocese is that Vicars can do with help. Godly lay preachers can help carry the joy and the burden of feeding God's flock. The other reality is that not all congregations in our diocese have access to full-time clergy. Having well trained lay preachers unleashes suitably qualified members of Christ's body to exercise their teaching abilities for the benefit of others, which in turn helps to see God's people fed and grow.

4) Leads to vocational gospel ministry

The Lord Jesus encouraged his disciples to pray because the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Recruitment, training and support in lay preaching can lead some to consider vocational gospel ministry. It can be a step the Lord uses to raise up more workers.

The three-lane model

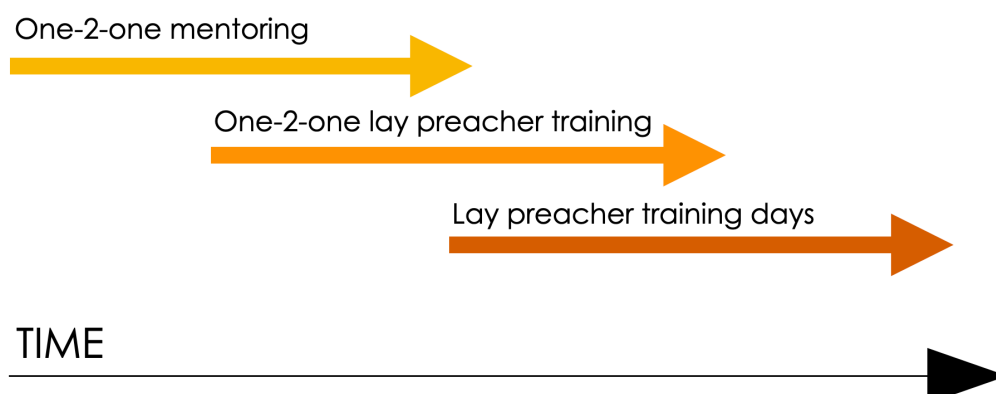
As a commission we are developing a 3 lane model to recruiting, developing and supporting lay preachers.

Just as in swimming there are various elements to a healthy training regime (e.g. the coach/swimmer relationship; the weekly lap sessions; the major swim meets), so too there are some basic elements in developing preachers.

We believe there are three key elements for lay preaching development.

- 1) **One-2-one mentoring**
- 2) **One-2-one lay preacher training**
- 3) **Lay preacher training days**

The lay preacher development pipeline



To be a preacher of God's word is both a great privilege and a sober responsibility. Appointed leaders and preachers amongst God's people are urged to pass the gospel on to godly men who will then in turn also pass it on to others (2 Timothy 2.2). Yet those who desire to be teachers will be judged more strictly (James 3.1).

These two exhortations should spur on experienced gospel ministers to give themselves to passing on the gospel and to do that with care.

This is why we propose the three-lane model where potential lay preachers

- 1) First begin by meeting one-2-one with an experienced preacher. Think of this like the basic coach/swimmer relationship.
- 2) Secondly, after a time, start to be trained one-2-one in preaching. You might think of this as the weekly lap sessions a swimmer does.
- 3) Third, meet with other lay preachers to develop their preaching ministry since iron sharpens iron. This is like the major swim meets that come round only once or twice a year.

It's like learning to swim. You dip your toe in the water and test if it is ok. You then hop in the shallow end and learn a few strokes and eventually you find yourself with others in the deep end, swimming with growing confidence and competence.

Let's think about those 3 aspects.

1. Dipping in your toe: Start one-2-one

The best Christian discipleship and training always happens in relationship.

We believe it makes a lot of sense that a trainer first starts with a potential lay preacher by meeting regularly to read the Bible one-2-one and to pray.

Why? There are four main reasons

1. Firstly we need to appoint with care (2 Timothy 2.2)

Paul, the veteran preacher and Apostle, urged his ministry trainee Timothy not to be hasty in 'the laying on of hands' (1 Tim 5:22).

The experienced gospel minister needs to take *care* in passing on the gospel. Starting in a one-2-one Bible reading relationship helps the leader do that.

Since one-2-one ministry is focused around God's word, it allows the experienced gospel minister to see if their potential candidate:

- Has the ability to understand the word
- Has the desire to understand it and wrestles with it
- Grows over time by reading and reflecting on God's word

When the leader proposes to meet one-2-one with a potential candidate he won't necessarily give the expectation that it is with a view to preaching in the future. Rather he will be wise to frame doing this with a view to growing in gospel ministry.

The type of person a trainer will be looking to do this with will be one in whom God is at work. In particular they will be:

- Not a new convert
- Regular at Church
- Already serving others
- Responding well to the teaching and preaching of God's word
- Godly and upright
- Show some ability to articulate Bible truths

2. Secondly we need to underline the seriousness of the task

All ministers of God's word are called to watch their lives and their doctrine closely (1 Tim 3:16).

The one-2-one relationship helps the experienced gospel minister to underline the seriousness and responsibility of preaching God's word. In the one-2-one meetings the trainer can see if the potential candidate:

- Takes God's word seriously
- Wants to put it into practice applying it to their own life

When mutual trust is built up, the trainer can see if there are issues in the life of the candidate that need addressing which may prevent them from preaching - at least for the time being. Issues relating to sexual purity, to relationships with the opposite or same sex, to drugs or alcohol and more may become apparent. In some instances it would be unwise to pursue training in preaching until there is a godly level of self-control shown and a

desire on the part of the candidate to work on leading a holy life with God's help.

3. Thirdly the trainer needs to model godly leadership

In the one-2-one relationship the experienced gospel minister models how to read God's word and what it means to put it into practice in his/her own life God's word. In this context they can also reflect on how it might apply to God's people.

The potential candidate must understand that all gospel ministry starts with the gospel minister's own heart. Doing gospel ministry is not just a job or task to be done, rather it engages personally the person who is seeking to serve others. We must preach to ourselves first, before we preach to others. A good trainer will model this and share his or her struggles, doubts, joys as they reflect on what God has to say.

They will also model complete, prayerful dependence on the Lord. A good preacher in this context may read a passage he/she will preach in the one-2-one relationship to model how they grapple themselves with what God is saying, asking God for help to serve him well.

4. Fourthly the one-2-one relationship builds trust

If a potential candidate is to be trained in lay preaching, they must trust their trainer. The trainer will give significant feedback, sometimes the feedback will be challenging and confronting for the trainee.

To build trust the trainer needs to be vulnerable and share his or her weaknesses. This opens an environment where honesty is valuable and trust is built.

Trust is so vital for the potential trainee needs to know that their trainer is for them, wants them to succeed so that they are not discouraged but rather make progress. A healthy one-2-one relationship sets the foundation for good growth in godliness but also in the service of preaching.

2. Starting to swim in the shallows: One-2-one preacher training

At some point or other, if you want to be a champion swimmer (or at least if you don't want to sink!), you will need to jump right in and get wet!

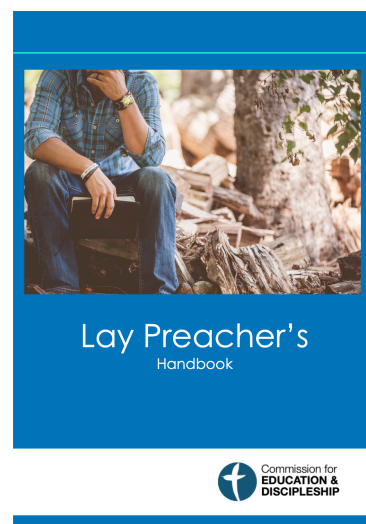
Sometime into the one-2-one relationship, if the mentor considers the time is right, he/she may think it good that their mentoree have a go at preaching.

The trainer will:

- Ask if the person they are meeting up with would like to do that.
- Give reasons why they think it would be good - how they see God at work in them, how they wrestle with God's word and understand it. How God uses the preaching of his word.
- Propose to support them following our 'Lay Preaching Handbook' model (See the separate handbook for the 4 week training model).
- Explain how that model will work.
- Give them an opportunity to preach.

We won't go into all the details of that method. They are outlined in the handbook.

See the following handbook:



In summary the four week training model:

- Provides clear, structured support to a lay preacher
- Underlines the seriousness of the task
- Sets them up to succeed since most of the feedback happens before preaching - a vital ingredient to this model's effectiveness
- Encourages them to have a second or third go
- Safe guards the pulpit
- Blesses the church, as congregations increasingly have the pleasure of sitting under faithful preaching that shows evidence of progress.

3. Swimming in the deep end: Lay preacher training days

You've spent years now developing a good working relationship with your coach. You spend hours each week doing the basic hard work of swimming laps in the pool. What motivates you and keeps you going? One last thing that keeps good swimmers in the pool year after year... is the annual swim meet.

Our diocese in the past has put on annual lay preacher training days. You may even have attended one or two of them! On those days basic preacher training was given. Often the focus was on how to put a message together.

The lay preacher would be taught to: 1) Start with prayer 2) Read the text in context, 3) Do the exegesis 4) Come up with the main idea 5) Consider the application 6) Package the talk. These days were repeated each year with similar content. Often an experienced preacher would preach and receive feedback as a teaching tool.

The content was good and helpful, but the approach had limitations. Any lay preacher who had done the basic training one year may experience less benefit by attending in subsequent years. Further more one off events like this have less impact in grounding the foundations to preaching. The one-2-one model, although more time intensive, grounds the fundamentals in a more significant way.

What this multi-lane development pipeline does is open up training days to be a supplement to this basic training. Training days, rather than focusing on the fundamentals of preparing a helpful message, will be dedicated to *developing on the basic model*. Ideally, they will encourage *all* lay preachers (whatever their level of experience or confidence) to hone their preaching craft.

In a sense, the 'floaties' are on in the one-2-one model, the training days help the lay preacher to develop beyond the basic model and *start swimming in the deep end*. The result of this is that the training days will hopefully never get tired or repetitive, and can once again become a regular and valued feature in our diocesan calendar.

On the training days specific issues relating to preaching can be addressed like:

- Preaching from the Old Testament and Biblical Theology
- Preaching different genres
- Preaching certain books of the bible
- Organising a balanced preaching program for Church life
- Issues in preaching - the preacher, application, the audience
- Topical preaching and its place
- Evangelistic preaching
- And more.

In this model, the trainer and trainee would come to a training day, interact with other trainers and trainees and develop on the basic model. Each year a different subject could be addressed so the lay preacher will feel like that he or she is not always going over the basics but is developing new strokes, trying out new styles. In short, being equipped to swim in the deep end.

This model also opens up a space for ‘trainers’ to interact together with each other and develop as ‘trainers’. Time could be given aside for trainers to share ideas and address issues in their training ministry.

In an ideal world a ‘trainee’ lay preacher would come to a training day after having followed the one-2-one training model a few times. For example, they will have preached three or four sermons, started to get some competence in preparing a message and therefore would benefit so much more from the training day. However, there will be a measure of flexibility extended to trainers to exercise their discretion in determining who they might invite.

The three-lane model and existing lay preachers

What if someone asks,

“what about our existing lay preachers?”

The model of going from one-2-one bible reading to one-2-one preacher training to attending preaching training days is a model very few in our diocese have followed.

There are a number of ways forward in regards to this:

1. Firstly there is no reason why existing lay preachers can't start doing the one-2-one model from wherever they are up to in their training. The wise trainer will adapt the model according to the experience and skill of the preacher.
2. Secondly existing lay preachers will still be encouraged to come to our training days and on those days they will meet others doing the one-2-one model. This may create in them a desire to enter into those relationships as well to develop and be supported.
3. Thirdly, to ensure the quality of lay preaching in our congregations into the future, our diocese could consider phasing in the recommendation or requirement that all new lay preachers go through this model, perhaps linked to the bishop's licensing process? Over the years this would change our preaching culture and, under God, it will hopefully lead to strengthened churches, and seeing more people going into vocational ministry.
4. Fourthly, at the lay preaching training days we could promote the possibility of doing vocational full-time ministry and start establishing concrete steps for lay preachers to investigate this.

"What about vacant parishes?"

There are a few ways forward in regards to this:

1. Firstly, we can use modern technology for remote locations as much as possible. Video meeting platforms like 'Google Meet', 'Zoom' or 'Microsoft Teams' can allow us to both follow the one-2-one model and do training in this context. The diocese and/or the Commission for Education and Discipleship (CED) could support this both financially and through technical support.
2. Secondly, we ought to be realistic. In some cases doing 'Lane 1' may not be able to be followed. It may prove to be just too hard and too time consuming as we may not have the clergy resources to meet up with every candidate one-2-one. In this case only doing 'Lane 2' and 'Lane 3' is a reasonable way forward.
3. Thirdly, we can find retired clergy who have the time and the technical know how to do 'Lane 1, 2 and 3' with lay preachers in remote and vacant parishes through video conferencing.

4. Fourthly, we need to build up a data base of trained experienced preachers who are willing to put in 8 hours per term and train lay preachers though video conferencing platforms and offer their services.

“What about women preaching?”

1. As a diocese we hold a complementarian approach to women’s ministry. In the right context and setting there is good reason for women to develop in preaching - especially for the sake of other women. We want to look for opportunities to develop women in our diocese to teach and preach God’s word in a way that honours him and also respects our Lord’s teaching in regards to the role of men and women in Church life.

It is our prayer that this development pipeline will help to ensure that our lay preachers are best prepared to support healthy, growing churches in big towns and small, which in turn helps *all of us* do our bit in introducing all people to Jesus and helping them home to heaven!

'Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.' (2 Tim. 2:15 NIV)