



UTURN

A training tool designed to help churches engage with society in effective mission.

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THE PRIORITY OF MISSION

UTurn is a training tool designed to help churches engage with society in effective mission.

As members of Christ's living body, our vocation is to continue his work in the world. The mandate, 'Go and make disciples of every ethnic group' (Matthew 28:19), is Christ's final charge to his Church before his ascension into heaven. Significantly, the main participle is not 'go' but 'make disciples'. Christ is not launching a recruitment drive for a particular church or denomination, but is instructing his disciples to reproduce and conquer the earth. Making disciples, therefore, is not a process whereby we cull initiative, vision and the entrepreneurial spirit and turn people into compliant church members. On the contrary, our task is to train people, develop their gifts and potential and turn them loose in the world.

The momentum of the Church should always be outwards. Teaching, pastoral care and the sacramental duties of the Church are facilitatory and set firmly in the context of mission. If these ministries usurp the priority of mission, the church will lose momentum. This may not be evident for one or two generations, but ultimately the church will degenerate into a religious sub-culture; a condition we describe as 'living in a bunker'. The Church's disengagement from the world has had tragic consequences in Europe. We are regarded as irrelevant; too out of touch to have anything worthwhile to say.

CWEST'S approach to mission is holistic: serving churches by helping them to think of evangelism/community action in terms of the total life of the church. Inevitably, a church that makes disciples will be committed to teaching, pastoral care and training. How else can we create disciples? Growth through conversion presents new challenges. The demands of training disciples will keep a church on its toes. New life is always disruptive, forcing us to re-evaluate our structures and discover new solutions. We attempt to help churches negotiate the changes and transitions that often accompany the activity of the Holy Spirit.

SHAPING UTURN TO THE NEEDS OF YOUR CHURCH

CWEST has struggled with the word 'programme' to describe **UTurn**. 'Programme' suggests a formula: a prearranged plan of consultancy and teaching that leads automatically to growth. This is not our approach. Programme without prayer and spiritual power will make very little difference to a church. Without God, the initial

enthusiasm that accompanies **UTurn** will probably be followed by relapse and disillusionment.

UTurn has four modules which are described below.

We try to be as flexible as possible and tailor **UTurn** to the requirements of each church. A module can be removed or adapted to fit the special needs of a congregation. **UTurn**, therefore, does not have a rigid prearranged syllabus but is adapted to the particular needs of your church.

Delivery of **UTurn** is equally flexible. Some churches ask us to work with them for three or four months; others request a shorter or longer period of involvement. Providing there is continuity and momentum, we will schedule the modules to your requirements.

Some of the modules may seem academic, but we do our best to make them entertaining, informative and practical. Philosophical theories like post-modernism are de-mystified and explained in non-academic terms. Our approach is not merely to cut a path through the UK's diverse cultural landscape, but to anticipate future trends so churches can adapt accordingly. Our belief is that effective evangelism requires both **cultural connection** and **spiritual dynamism**.

Much of the training is done 'in house' but we may use external specialists for some modules.

U Turn is for all churches; CWEST has no denominational bias.

MODULE 1: DIALOGUE, PRAYER AND RESEARCH.

The first module is for the leadership of the church. This is a learning and orientation experience which also allows **UTurn** personnel to dialogue and pray with leaders, ask questions about the church, and review the demographics of the area. The questions are typically presented in the form of a comprehensive questionnaire.

This module is important in establishing relationships and trust between the CWEST team and church leaders. Our approach is not to come in as church growth gurus or a SWAT team of trouble shooters, but to co-operate with the pastor and leaders in mission. Dialogue and prayer with leaders are determinative in the training CWEST offers. The imposition of a single strategy for all churches is untenable. To the best of

our ability, therefore, we try to adapt the training to the specific requirements of each church. Furthermore, we set ourselves firmly in the Church's ancient tradition of Contemplation. Our vocation is to help church leaders and members listen to God's voice for their church and follow his guidance. Prayer and contemplation are fundamental to our approach.

MODULE 2: PRAYER AND RENEWAL.

In this module, we concentrate on individual and church renewal. It is optional and only introduced into **UTurn** at the discretion of local church leaders. Its purpose is to encourage intimacy with God, prayer, unity and a fresh connectedness to the Holy Spirit. Workshops include prayer, intimacy with God, the ministry of the Holy Spirit and related topics. The teaching is intensely practical and attempts to make spirituality accessible to everyone. Our objective is to show the correlation between relationship with God and effective service in the world.

Critical to this module is our emphasis on prayer. Our approach draws on diverse traditions of Christian spirituality and shows their practical relevance. There can be no effective evangelism and mission without a renewed commitment to prayer and a deeper life in God.

MODULE 3: TRAINING AND EVANGELISM.

CHURCH MEMBER MOBILISATION.

CWEST's training in evangelism and social action is always linked to action and assignments. Why train in mission if there is no practical application? The type of training given in this module is determined by demographics and the needs of church members. Our aim is to encourage Christians to seize spiritual ownership of their workplaces and neighbourhoods. Evangelism should be a natural and spontaneous expression of love for God and other people. Research indicates that most people who become Christians have been influenced by a friend, family member, neighbour or work colleague. The most effective evangelism, therefore, is relational. That does not mean that we abandon evangelistic events altogether, but recognise that their success depends on the daily witness of rank and file Christians.

MISSION IN THE MARKETPLACE.

The rift between the secular and sacred has done enormous damage to the credibility and witness of the Church. Evangelism is often regarded as the ministry of a maverick and eccentric minority. These religious recruiters give out tracts on street

corners, preach in crowded buses, and spearhead doorstep visitation programmes that market 'church' to the public. In religious terms, they're the equivalent of the infamous press gangs who mugged innocent bystanders and forced them to join the Royal Navy. The rationale behind the press gang was simple: no one in their right mind would ever volunteer for the Royal Navy of their own free will, so send in the heavies to encourage conscription.

A 'press gang' may not be the appropriate title for your evangelism team, but they are often regarded with similar suspicion. Indeed, fellow Christians often deliberately avoid evangelism team members in case the affliction is contagious and they become the tactless and eccentric champions of the Christian Faith.

In dialogue with churches, the ministry of the evangelism team is often cited by the pastor and leaders as proof that the church is obeying the Great Commission. The presence of Christians in neighbourhoods and workplaces and their duty to witness and live for Christ is often ignored. Consequently, there is often little concept of 'home' and 'workplace' as spheres of Christian influence, ministry and mission.

CWEST is committed to encouraging churches to rethink evangelism and train people to be effective witnesses in their neighbourhoods and workplaces.

CROSS CULTURAL EVANGELISM

Another key element in our training is teaching Christians to cross ethnic divides and reach people from other cultures. Our workshops on cross-cultural evangelism are very practical and give advice on befriending people from different ethnic groups, leading them to Christ, and integrating them as disciples into the full life of the church. The teaching is not theoretical but based on many years of practical experience.

APOLOGETICS

A comprehensive course of workshops is available: the existence of God, pluralism and uniqueness of Christ, suffering and a God of love, evolution and creation, the reliability of the Bible, the reliability of the New Testament manuscripts and evidence for the resurrection of Jesus.

EVANGELISM AND THE POWER OF GOD

This is a recommended series. Topics include the Holy Spirit and evangelism, the power of the gospel, signs and wonders, healing, deliverance and the gifts of the

Spirit. If churches request this module, we always include a workshop on 'Discernment'.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND SOCIAL ACTION

CWEST's workshops on social action and community involvement are commensurate with the resources of the local church and are based on knowledge of the church locale. To avoid parochialism, we also encourage a global perspective on social action.

MENTORING

During CWEST's service with a church, we attempt to identify and train people with evangelistic gifts. The training will often be relational and informal, but we also provide opportunities for more formal mentoring. We run a Mentoring Mission programme in which people with talents for evangelism and related ministries can join a team of trainers for a week.

EVANGELISTIC EVENTS

Churches are encouraged to schedule a series of evangelistic events to coincide with **U Turn**. CWEST is a media and mission organisation. Many of our co-workers are creative artists performing in theatre, film and music. We encourage creativity and cultural relevance in evangelism and are delighted to lead workshops in the Performing Arts.

EVANGELISTIC BIBLE COURSES

Courses like 'Alpha' are highly effective at introducing people to Christ. These courses work because they are church based, interactive, and rely on local Christians to engage with their non-Christian friends.

South Asian Concern has devised an evangelistic course for Asians. We highly recommend this course to churches in predominantly Asian neighbourhoods.¹

¹ For details contact South Asian Concern, PO Box 43, Sutton, Surrey SM2 5WL. Tel 0208 770 9717

MISSIONS

The evangelistic mission must be rethought for the 21st Century. It can still be effective in lifting the profile of church and reaching out to people. For the expense and effort to be justified, however, there must be adequate preparation. A 'mission' may give **UTurn** training a goal but it must never be perceived as an end in itself. In cycling parlance, a mission is merely an increase in peddle revolutions, a short and sustainable burst of speed before the riders revert to normal cadence. A mission is convened for evangelism not burn out!

MODULE 4: THE PASTORAL CARE OF CONVERTS.

The family of God is analogous to a human family. Remove a child from a happy family, and you drastically reduce his or her chances of a successful and mature adulthood. Family is the crucible of character and the catalyst of achievement. Church plays a similar role in the life of the young Christians. The Father lays his new born sons and daughters in the cradle of a church and instructs us to care for them. During this period of high dependency, the church is responsible for providing nurture, support and protection.

CWEST is passionate about convert care and is committed to training churches in follow-up. Our training includes guidance on teaching, pastoral care, spiritual direction² and the identification and nurturing of a young Christian's gifts. If required, we can advise on a nurturing programme for your church.

THE DELIVERY OF UTURN TO CHURCHES

THE TRAINING

The duration of CWEST's involvement and the number of modules taught are decided by each church. Indeed, a church may only require a single module, or may request topics from a number of modules. We try to be as flexible as possible in our training approach.

² 'Spiritual Direction' is a term taken from monasticism. A 'spiritual director' is a person who guides individual Christians in their relationship with God.

UTurn training is interspersed by reviews to assess its effectiveness and relevance. Strict quality control is imperative to maintain the highest standards of teaching and practice.

CWEST's **UTurn** training concludes with a full review and an action plan. The action plan is a team exercise that includes leaders, church members and CWEST personnel.

We have learnt through experience that it is crucial for people to be **stake holders** in a mission plan. If church members are excluded from the creative planning, decision making and goal setting, they rarely own and commit to the vision. Mission is the responsibility of the whole church. **U Turn** training in many different churches has taught us that some of the most creative thinkers, talented evangelists and social activists are not part of the church leadership. Leaders need to develop a strategy to include members in the creative and decision-making process. Without this, the mission plan will be another programme imposed from the top with minimal church support. We empower people when we include them.

THE FOLLOW-UP

Four factors are integral to **UTurn's** effectiveness:

- the determination of leaders to implement a radical and sustained culture change that will make mission the church's priority.
- the recognition and training of people who have the vision and gifts to lead others in evangelism and community action.
- the determination of the people to witness for Christ in their neighbourhoods and workplaces.
- a new energy and tenacity in prayer for the community and world.

In order to consolidate the gains of **UTurn**, churches often benefit from ongoing support. Aftercare generally lasts for a year or two and normally involves reviews of progress and continued mentoring and training.

WHAT NEXT?

If you would like further information on **UTURN** or wish to discuss its application to your church, please contact us. Our contact details are provided below.

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