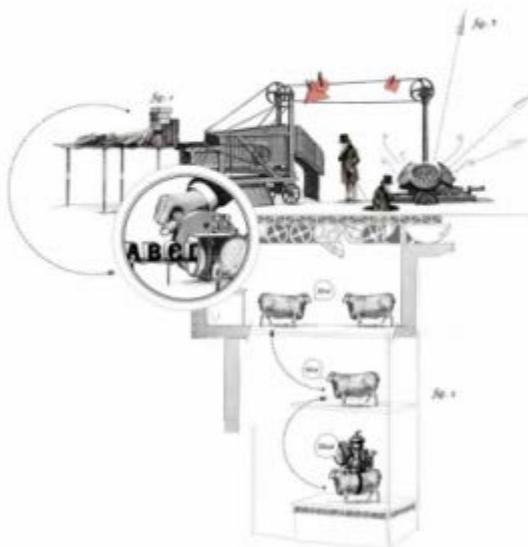




Fri 11 March 2016

‘Jesus begins his ministry by making a declaration or manifesto against the powers that held people in captivity when he announced the good news that the Kingdom of God is near,’ said Mike Breen, the keynote speaker at this year’s **Lay Ministry Convention scheduled for 6-7 May.**

Mike and Sally Breen are UK born church planters who live in the US and have encouraged the formation of the global 3DM movement. ‘The Kingdom is foundation to what Jesus came to reveal, as every Gospel shows,’ said Mike.



Mike Breen and the 3DM Team

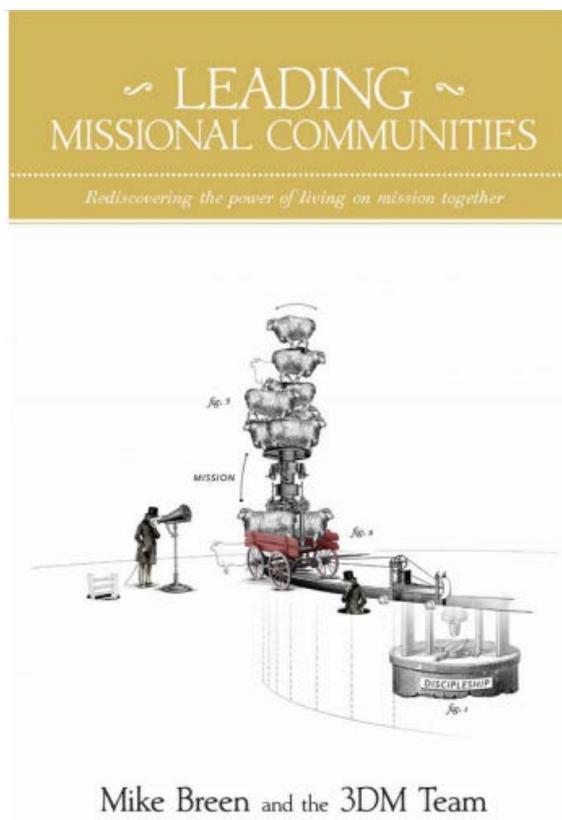
The concept of God's Kingdom is central to Mike and Sally's ministry but it is something they find that is hard to grasp by modern people. 'We think about kingdoms in terms of territory shown on maps. For Jesus, the Kingdom is all about identity because God the King has drawn near to set us free from any kind of captivity,' he explained. 'Listening to Jesus helps us because he has a word to share, a work to do and a way in which it is done. This is the complete picture of discipleship. We get stuck when we focus only on one or two of those elements,' he added. 'After all, Jesus says that the wise disciple is the person who hears his words and puts them into practice.'

How we are to put discipleship to work figures prominently in conversations about the church globally. Mike suggests that the church in the western world is in poor repair because too many congregations give all their attention on listening only. Therefore Mike and Sally encourage people to be disciples who listen to Jesus and put it into practice by joining him in his mission.

According to Mike, discipleship means answering the questions: What is God saying to me? And what am I going to do about it? 'Figuring our answers means that we need to get the necessary information, find the model of imitation and then being released to do some innovation of our own,' said Mike.

The 3DM movement seeks to recapture this New Testament vision for discipleship. If discipleship isn't simply a matter of knowledge but rather one of practice then as Sally explained, 'it's not a matter of theological information or going to college. The practical nature of discipleship makes it accessible to everybody wherever or however they live. This gives it the potential to change our community and the larger world we live in,' she added.

Central to Mike and Sally's ministry is the story of the early church found in the book of Acts. In the New Testament, Christians met at the temple and in households or extended networks of between 15 to 35 people. Today we might think of these as small groups.



'Most people today are good at going to worship and doing the Temple stuff,' said Mike. 'We're never really taught how to do the household stuff or being God's community in the world. We need to rediscover how to be communities or households engaged in God's mission.'

Mike and Sally's solution is to rebalance church life. The organised and the organic need to function together. The challenge is to develop low maintenance groups engaged in mission. These groups might take on a project for a season like working with children, the homeless or whoever they had a heart for and who needed some experience of God's new life. Mike explained the church becomes healthy when it engages, 'up towards God, in towards fellow believers and out towards the world. We set ourselves up for failure when we try to do anything less.'

This vision grew while Mike and Sally served at St Thomas' in Sheffield. 'We wanted lay people to take on their call and get involved in missional work. In a city where only 2% of people went to church, we could have stayed in the building listening to the Word but we couldn't reach the city that way. It was amazing to see what what would work despite my doubts. The group that won so many people to Christ was for hikers who spend Sundays in the hills. We used huddles to help leaders work on their spiritual formation and grow to be effective as they work out being a disciple in the world today.'

Mike and Sally Breen are keynote speakers at the Lay Ministry Convention to be held in Goulburn from 6-7 May 2016.

The Lay Ministry Convention is the new name given to what was the Bishops' Convention. The name was changed in order to more clearly communicate that the event is for everyone and that it's purpose is to encourage people to deepen their discipleship.

For further information [download the brochure](#) or register by visiting www.trybooking.com/JPPU