

CATALYTIC CONVERTERS

A practical programme of 6 workshops for Churches
who want to convert ideas into action
and make things happen!

Report of the Catalytic Converters programme
held at St Margaret's Barking

March to May 2003

CATALYTIC CONVERTERS

A practical programme of 6 workshops for Churches who want to convert ideas into action and make things happen!

CONTENTS

Foreword	Ven Michael Fox, Archdeacon of West Ham	3
Introduction	Revd Chris Beales, Course Leader	4
Workshops Programme		5
Evaluation of Programme		11
Reflection	Revd Steven Saxby, Course Organiser	12
List of Participants		13

For more information about the Catalytic Converters programme held in East London from March to May 2003, please contact

Chris Beales on 020 7401 5304 or c.beales@can-online.org.uk

Steven Saxby on 020 8556 9300 or saxby@fish.co.uk

Tim Scott on 01268 552 219 or scottlindatim@aol.com

A paper version of the report is available @ £5.00 (including P & P)

A CD of the final workshop is also available @ £10.00 (including P & P)

To order, please contact Chris Beales.

FOREWORD

Ven Michael Fox, Archdeacon of West Ham

As the twentieth anniversary of the publication of Faith in the City approaches, many people think "we've done that", and that the issues facing the churches in increasingly secular and rapidly changing cities - which in themselves have many different cultures and many expressions of faith - have somehow all been addressed.

Well, the answer is that they haven't! And they will continue to be a matter of primary importance to the church, since that church only exists for the society it is set in, in order to witness to the transforming power of the Gospel.

If you think the church is a little club, concerned with nothing more than its own life, think again and read the account that follows. It tells how some people in East London, who desperately want to engage with their own communities locally in service and witness, have had their vision enlarged and their presuppositions challenged... and how they have been encouraged to find new ways to work again at being the church for the people.

INTRODUCTION

Revd Chris Beales, Course Leader

If you're looking for a Catalytic Converter in East London, you're in for a shock! Thirty of them have been taking part in a new training programme - for Catalysts who want to convert their ideas into action in their parishes and communities. And on Thursday evening 15 May they were presented with certificates by former Foreign Office Minister John Battle MP, the faiths' link with Downing Street and Chair of Employment Forum (UK). "This kind of programme is exactly what we need", said John, "I look forward to more practical, life-enhancing involvement by the Churches in East London and everywhere".

The Catalytic Converters training programme has been specifically designed as a series of six workshops "for Churches and people who want to make things happen". The course has been held at St Margaret's Church Centre, Barking over 6 Thursday evenings between March and May, with clergy and lay people from 12 parishes and organisations in Barking and Dagenham, Newham, Waltham Forest, Hornchurch, Grays and elsewhere.

The course - designed and led by Chris Beales, with the support of Steven Saxby, Waltham Forest Deanery Development Officer and Tim Scott, Bradwell Area Education and Training Adviser - has focused on very practical themes: How can we get involved effectively in our neighbourhoods and communities? Where can we get the funding from for doing up our hall? Or employ a community worker? Or organise a luncheon club?

The course followed a simple framework: "Paint the picture" - this is what our community looks like (people, facilities, other churches or faiths); "Identify your resources" - within the congregation and among the extensive networks and contacts we have; "Prioritise" - key opportunities and problems; "Plan your action" - now get on with it!

During the programme, Paul Carbury of Unltd, Paula Griffiths of the Council for the Care of Churches and Jon Evens of Jobcentre Plus ran sessions on how to access resources, and several people had already succeeded in obtaining funding, computers and other benefits by the end of the series.

The fifth session focused on the spiritual and theological resources to sustain engagement in the community. And participants came to the final session with parish magazine articles and prayers drafted for use with their congregations, affirming the need to get involved and seeking the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit to do so.

"We now have a box with some tools in", and "the myth of fundraising has been broken into achievable bits" are just two of the comments from participants. The most telling conclusion was that Churches and congregations are already doing so many good things in their neighbourhoods - but these are often unrecognised and not seen as part of the Church's mission.

The Archdeacon of West Ham, Michael Fox, who commissioned the Catalytic Converters programme, said: "We've wanted to run a course like this for a long time. I am delighted that parishes have found it helpful to focus on practical community action and living the Good News".

CATALYTIC CONVERTERS - THE PROGRAMME

The aim of the first two workshops is to show people how much they already know and what skills they already have. We will work quickly and rigorously, but by the end of Workshop Two, we will have demonstrated the considerable expertise already present.

WORKSHOP ONE: You'll be surprised how much you know!

- 7.30pm Prayer, welcome and introductions - each person to say their name, church and one "personal strength"
- 7.50pm Exercise in groups:

You have 10 minutes to identify an innovative and distinctive way in which one of you, as a minister or member of your church or organisation, wish to use £10,000 for the benefit of the local community. Bear in mind the Parable of the Talents (Matthew chapter 25, v 14 to 30) - both the theological interpretation and the simple material content.
- 8.10pm Group feedback and brief discussion
- 8.40pm Chris Beales: the workshops, what we plan to do, methodology and homework.
- 9.00pm Work in groups: identify 3 key issues for us
- 9.20pm Plenary feedback
- 9.50pm Summing up and next steps: "homework" before the next session
- 10.00pm Conclude

Homework (for Workshop Two)

Before the next session, participants from each parish group should respond to the following questions:

- a). What is our mission?
- b). Who are our target groups?
- c). What do the target groups value?
- d). What have been our results?
- e). What is our plan?

The aim is not to burden people! An hour together would be sufficient to agree rough responses - the parish may already have a well worked out statement covering the questions! Someone should be ready to make a 3 minute presentation at the second workshop, in response to questions a) to e).

WORKSHOP TWO: Getting focused - what to do and how to do it

To begin with, 5 buzz groups will be formed, each containing at least one and not more than 2 members of each parish or group.

- 7.30pm Prayer, welcome and introductions
- 7.40pm Presentations: 3 minutes per presentation (yes, strictly 3 minutes!), each followed by 3 minutes of buzz group brainstorming (instant impressions) - one strength, one weakness. Buzz groups will each be given one particular presentation to respond to.
- 8.20pm Exercise (1) in parish groups (20 minutes):
Your local authority has asked you to do a presentation to the Council and local community members about who you are and what you have to offer. Rework your presentation, describing your distinctive and essential role in the local community, and highlighting how you benefit the community.
- 8.40pm Break
- 8.55pm Exercise (2) in parish groups (20 minutes): Identify
- Who are the people and organisations shaping the area?
 - Who among them do we know or have contact with?
 - Who do we need to get to know?
 - What do we want to ask of, say to or do with them?
- 9.15pm Plenary discussion - by this time, we should have lots to ask or say and a clear idea of who we should be listening and speaking to! 30 minutes of feedback about our priorities, what we are discovering, and how to focus.
- 9.45pm Chris Beales: *Creating an Action Plan*
- Paint the picture (this is our parish/neighbourhood...) - key features
 - Identify resources (people, skills, plant, premises, partners etc)
 - Problems and opportunities (priorities)
 - Plan for action
- 9.50pm Summing up and next steps: "homework" before the next session
- 10.00pm Conclude

Homework (for Workshop Three)

Before the next session, participants from each parish group should work together to create the following elements of a draft Action Plan:

- Paint the picture (this is our parish/neighbourhood...) - key features
- Identify resources (people, skills, plant, premises, partners etc).

Workshops Three and Four will build on the learning so far but will focus in particular on funding issues, including identifying sources of funding and presentation to funders. They will be very practical and hands-on.

WORKSHOP THREE: Engaging with our community - and accessing funding to do so

- 7.30pm Prayer, welcome and introductions ("How/Why" Chart)
- 7.40pm Drafting an Action Plan:
Feedback from parishes/organisations (3 minute presentations):
- Paint the picture (this is our parish/neighbourhood...) - key features
 - Identify resources (people, skills, plant, premises, partners etc).
- 8.10pm Paul Carbury will describe the work of Unltd and how to apply for funding and support.
"Unltd support people who want to make a positive change in their community... We help them by providing advice, training, cash awards, social venture funding and other types of support...".
- 8.35pm Break
- 8.45pm Practice filling out forms, drafting clear aims and objectives etc
- 9.00pm Steven Saxby: Completing the forms: what different funders require
- 9.45pm Summing up and next steps: "homework" before the next session
- 10.00pm Conclude

Homework (for Workshop Four)

Before the next session, participants from each parish group should work together to create the following element of a draft Action Plan:

- Problems and opportunities (priorities)

They should also do some local research, to identify

- Key contacts/partners in the following:
 - the local authority; Learning & Skills Council; Connexions; Jobcentre Plus; Council for Voluntary Service; Health Trust/Primary Care Trusts; business organisations (eg Chamber of Commerce, Rotary); other churches and faith communities etc;
- Local regeneration, health, education, volunteering or other programmes relevant to their neighbourhoods (eg Neighbourhood Renewal, Health Action Zone, FE College, Surestart, any local training providers etc) - and any participation by churches in them;
- Any funding rounds coming up, and application processes.

They should also check out websites, eg the Charity Commission website, www.volcomgrants.gov.uk, www.grantsonline.org.uk, the NCVO website, etc

WORKSHOP FOUR: how to raise funds for projects, initiatives, buildings and the Family Purse

- 7.30pm Prayer, welcome and introductions
- 7.35pm Practical Action: 2 groups -
a. Paula Griffiths, Council for the Care of Churches (and formerly working for English Heritage) will speak about use and development of church buildings and premises;
b. Jon Evens, Jobcentre Plus, will speak about Jobcentre Plus tendering (as an example of Government tendering processes); and provide some information on faith-based employment projects in and around London as examples of what can be done.
- 8.35pm Break
- 8.45pm Plenary discussion: brainstorm of problems and opportunities, priorities etc, contacts and partnerships. We will look for common themes.
- 9.45pm Summing up and next steps: "homework" before the next session
- 10.00pm Conclude

Homework (for Workshop Five)

Before the next session, participants from each parish group should identify how their priorities link with the purposes and priorities of local partnerships and funding sources and write them down briefly and clearly.

Unless participants can see how the workshops relate to their understanding of mission and the priorities of their congregation, organisation or group, they won't sustain the "action". In Workshop Five, we will explore theological themes and the spiritual resources needed to sustain incarnational engagement. We'll make connections between Trinitarian theology and practical involvement. We'll demonstrate how partnerships enable us to engage in mission and share "good news" around common concerns. We'll show how well placed churches and congregations are to reach the parts others can't. And we will stress the importance of taking the risk of engagement with secular bodies and other faith communities, whilst remaining true to our own faith and calling.

WORKSHOP FIVE: where is God in all this? Exploring the spiritual and theological case for engagement

- | | |
|---------|--|
| 7.30pm | Prayer, welcome and introductions |
| 7.35pm | Feedback: local partnerships and links established. Progress on identifying funding sources. |
| 7.55pm | <p>The spiritual and theological case for engagement:</p> <p>(20 minutes for discussion and feedback). In 4 groups:
 "List 3 main problems affecting... the world today, our town/area today, the church today, our church... ". Brainstorm and write up on flipchart.</p> <p>(30 minutes for discussion and feedback). In 4 groups:
 3 groups of non-clergy: brainstorm the different names, attributes and functions of: God the Father; God the Son; God the Holy Spirit. 4th group of clergy: what theological themes/models inspire you and undergird your ministry?</p> |
| 8.45pm | Break |
| 8.55pm | In 4 buzz groups, each participant to share one significant benefit from attending the workshops, and one key question/issue/need - in the context of faith and action (nb these will be used as themes for prayer) |
| 9.15pm | <p>Pulling it all together. Living dangerously. Risking compromise. Building partnerships and alliances. Making things happen...</p> <p>What we have been trying to do:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paint the Picture • Identify the resources • Prioritise • Action Plan <p>and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Make sense" - theologically and spiritually |
| 9.45pm | Feedback in plenary. |
| 10.00pm | Conclude |

Homework (for Workshop Six)

Before the final session, participants from each parish and group should work together in order to

- a). put together a bundle, folder or pack of materials gathered from the course (handouts, notes of presentations etc)
- b). draft a brief article for the parish magazine, or a sermon outline, or a presentation to the project management committee, PCC or congregation saying what you will now do as a result of participating in the Catalytic Converters course (you may wish to use the "Paint the Picture.." framework, or the "What is our Mission, Who are our Target Groups" framework. It may help to state your aims and objectives)
- c). draft thanksgiving prayers for the benefits identified in Workshop Five and/or intercessions focusing on the questions/issues/needs identified (giving thanks and praying for our own areas and needs and those of other participants and parishes). These prayers could be for personal use, for use in Church and/or for sharing more widely in the Diocese.

In our final Workshop, we will devote most of the time to a "surgery" - giving participants the opportunity to raise questions, issues and problems. We can do this either in plenary or in groups, and we will have several key resource people available to respond. We will finish by celebrating the achievements of participants and presenting them with certificates acknowledging their achievements.

WORKSHOP SIX: surgery and celebration

7.30pm Prayer, welcome and introductions

7.435m Sharing of homework tasks (articles, prayers and feedback/responses).

8.00pm Surgery (in plenary or groups): with

- Jonathan Pedre, Diocesan Building Projects Officer
- Michael Fox, on what funders are looking for, and what LOB does
- Cllr Kay Flint, Mayor elect of Barking & Dagenham, on how to approach the local authority

9.00pm Presentation of certificates of achievement by John Battle MP.

10.00pm Conclude

CATALYTIC CONVERTERS : EVALUATION

VENUE: St Margaret's Church Centre, Barking

Please grade the following elements of the event using the scale (1-poor; 2- satisfactory; 3-good; 4-very good; 5-excellent); please make sure you tick the correct code.

	1	2	3	4	5	total
• General Organisation			3	8	1	12
• Venue and Facilities				10	2	12
• Booking/Administration			3	3	3	9
• Refreshments			4	6	1	11
PLEASE SCORE EACH WORKSHOP:						
• Workshop 1: You'll be surprised how much you know!		1	1	5	4	11
• Workshop 2: Getting focused..			5	3	2	10
• Workshop 3: Engaging with our community (with Paul Carbury, Steven Saxby)			5	1	4	10
• Workshop 4: How to raise funds.. (with Paula Griffiths, Jon Evens)		1	4	4		9
• Workshop 5: Where's God in all of this?		2	2	6	2	12
• Workshop 6: surgery			5	3	5	13
• Group work - how effective was it for you?		1	6	4	2	13
• Plenary discussion - how effective was it for you?		1	4	4	2	11
• Homework - how useful was it for you?		3	3	1	2	9
PLEASE SCORE LEADERS/SPEAKERS						
• Programme leader (Chris Beales)			3	9	2	14
• Speakers (Paul Carbury, Unltd, Steven Saxby, Paula Griffiths, Jon Evens)			3	8	3	14
• Surgery group speakers			6	2	3	11
GENERAL COMMENTS						
• Value of "networking" and exchanging ideas with others		1	1	7	3	12
• Overall Course - its usefulness			3	4	3	10
• Value for money?			3	4	3	10

TOTAL: 1 (POOR)	- NONE (0%)	4 (VERY GOOD)	- 92 (43.2%)
2 (SATIS)	- 10 (4.7%)	5 (EXCELLENT)	- 47 (22%)
3 (GOOD)	- 64 (30%)	TOTAL	- 213

(100%)

- Any comments/suggestions for improvement? Hold some more courses; I thought workshop 5 would cover ethics of fundraising, lottery etc; Evaluate after each session; First two weeks covered similar ground
- From the programme as a whole, what did you find most helpful? Feeling others have similar problems/contact with like-minded people; practical assistance in seeing how to speak the 'right' language; Advice on form filling etc; planning, research, hearing other's ambitions and successes; Being given the confidence to claim for grant money; contact names and organisations to approach; All of it, especially how much we all have to offer in our churches; Hearing from the diocesan professionals! Enthusiastic confidence building
- What will you do as a result of attending the workshops (one key thing!)? Do a proper social audit; Contact Jonathan Pedre; Put in for lots of grants! Fill in more forms/continue to make claims; Approach people with confidence for work or funding; Start from the beginning; Pray, plan, persuade
- How did you hear about the event? Through my parish priest/vicar; Through Steven Saxby

- Would you like to be involved in future events and activities? Yes..

REFLECTION

Revd Steven Saxby

The Bishop chose a wise priest to conduct our ordination retreat and was keen that he should tell us about his tool-bag. Father Ron (and his curates) would all make pastoral visits equipped with light-weight hammer, screwdriver, nails, screws, curtain hooks, etc. They would often secure loose carpets, re-hang curtains, fix furniture and so on: what a wonderful example of faith showing itself in loving action!

Through my work helping churches relate to the wider community, I've discovered that many churches are enthusiastic to serve the communities around them. However, they often lack the tools they need to turn their compassion into a practical project. They need a tool-bag and some extra tools to put in it.

Churches do have many of the tools that others in the community lack. They have enthusiasm, the ability to inspire others, buildings (sometimes in need of repair), a volunteer base, a knowledge of the community and its needs, long-term commitment sustained by faith, and much more. Yet, they often lack the funding needed to make things happen. They've never filled in a funding application. They are not familiar with the jargon on the application forms. They are not sure who else to connect with in the community or how to build support for a proposal. They need a fully equipped tool-bag!

I first heard the name Chris Beales, not through the church, but from a local council officer. Chris had been engaged to consult local people on plans for the redevelopment of the Town Centre. I next heard his name through a proposal for him to help churches tap into the considerable funding available for church projects from non-church sources. By this time it was clear that Chris would be an ideal person to help some of the churches I was working with: Catalytic Converters was born.

I was tremendously encouraged by the course. Through the short process of thinking, sharing and learning - facilitated by Chris - participants benefited enormously. They became more confident in writing and talking about their ideas. They learnt to focus and present clear aims. They became clearer about how they were going to do something and why they wanted to do it. They filled in application forms - and received money back. They were able to de-mystify the jargon. They gave impressive presentations to an MP and Councillor. They linked up with others in the community, some of whom were able to provide invaluable support. They sharpened the tools they already had and gained a tool-bag in which to put their new ones.

If I have one disappointment about the course, it is that more churches did not benefit from it. Why do churches find it so hard to believe that there are plenty of non-church resources available (if they can learn how to access them) to help them fulfil their aspirations within the wider community? Those who took part in Catalytic Converters are already making things happen. Roll on another course!

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Revd Nigel Anstey
Bernard Aarons
St Luke's, Walthamstow

Wendy Coxhill
Revd Alison Kennedy
Marion Ward
St Gabriel's Walthamstow

Father Rob Page
Georgina Ali
Heather Steadman
St Margaret's Leytonstone

John Stacey
Vivien Osbourne
Youth for Christ

Justin McKenzie
The Corner Stone, Leyton

Modicum Okello
Geoff Eze
St Matthew's West Ham

Peter Lustcombe
Stephen Wiggs
St Barnabas Woodford Green

Jenny Clarke
Berny Groves
Elaine Pagni
Revd Paul Shrubsole

St Andrew's Hornchurch
Canon Ron Herbert
Joy Palmer
John Wallace
Hartley Brook Church, Becontree

Dianne Challis
Jim Karstegl
Kathy McAuley
BASIS

Jon Evens
St Margaret's Barking

Revd Lynley Lee
Alan Falder
Grays Team Ministry

ORGANISERS

Revd Tim Scott
Bradwell Area Team Leader and
Education and Training Adviser

Revd Steven Saxby
Waltham Forest Deanery Development
Officer

Ven Michael Fox
Archdeacon of West Ham

Revd Chris Beales
Course leader